

The Voyage of the *MS St. Louis*: The Refugees No Country Wanted

Author Mary McBride
Grade Level 7
Duration 3 class periods

National Standards

GEOGRAPHY

Element 1: The World in Spatial Terms

1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information

Element 2: Places and Regions

6. How culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions

Element 6: The Uses of Geography

17. How to apply geography to interpret the past
 18. How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future

AZ Standards

ELA

Reading

Key Ideas and Details

7.RI.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Writing

Production and Distribution of Writing

7.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7.W.7 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

TECHNOLOGY

Concept 4: Original Works

PO. 1 Create innovative products or projects using digital tools to express original ideas.
 PO 2. Use digital tools to collaborate with a group to communicate original ideas, products, or projects effectively in a creative or innovative style.

Arizona Social Science Standards

GEOGRAPHY

The use of geographic representations and tools helps individuals understand their world.

7.G1.1 Use and construct maps and other geographic representations to explain the spatial patterns of cultural and environmental characteristics.

Examining human population and movement helps individuals understand past, present, and future conditions on Earth's surface.

7.G3.4 Evaluate human population and movement may cause conflict or promote cooperation.

HISTORY

Economic, political, and religious ideas and institutions have influenced history and continue to shape the modern world.

7.H3.2 Analyze how economic and political motivations impact people and events.

7.H3.4 Explain the influence of individuals, groups, and institutions on people and events in historical and contemporary settings.

SIOP Elements

Preparation	Scaffolding	Grouping Option
Adapting content	Modeling	Whole class
Linking to background	Guided practice	Small groups
Linking to past learning	Independent practice	Partners
Strategies used	Comprehensible input	Independent
Integrating Processes	Application	Assessment
Reading	Hands on	Individual
Writing	Meaningful	Group
Speaking	Linked to objectives	Written
Listening	Promotes engagement	Oral

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Arizona English Language Proficiency Standards

Grade 6-8

Basic

Listening and Reading

Standard 1 By the end of each language proficiency level, an English learner can construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade appropriate listening, reading, and viewing.

B-1: determine the central idea or theme and explain how they are supported by using some text evidence.

B-2: recount specific details and information in a variety of texts.

Speaking and Writing

Standard 4 By the end of each language proficiency level, an English learner can construct grade appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence.

B-1: construct a claim about a topic or text.

B-2: supply a reason that supports the opinion and is based on some textual evidence.

B-3 use grade appropriate words and phrases.

B-4: provide a concluding statement to an opinion.

Standard 5 By the end of each language proficiency level, an English learner can adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing.

B-2: use general academic and content specific words, phrases, and phrases to express ideas.

Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing

Standard 6 By the end of each language proficiency level, an English learner can participate in grade-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, responding to peer, audience, or reader comments and questions.

B-1: participate in discussions about familiar topics and texts.

B-2: participate in written exchanges about familiar topics and texts.

B-5: contribute relevant information and evidence to collaborative oral and written discussions.

Standard 7 By the end of each language proficiency level, an English learner can conduct research and evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems.

B-1: gather information from multiple provided resources to answer questions.

B-2: paraphrase observations/information notes with labeled illustrations, diagrams, or other graphics, as appropriate.

B-3: cite sources used in research.

B-4: restate the main idea using evidence from text or presentations.

Standard 9 By the end of each language proficiency level, an English learner can create clear and coherent grade-appropriate speech and text.

B-1: introduce and present facts about an informational topic and provide a conclusion when writing and speaking.

B-2: introduce and develop a sequence of events, using an increasing range of temporal and other linking words to connect, compare, and contrast ideas, and information (e.g., before, because, also) when writing and speaking.

Overview

Who is responsible for the lives of our fellow humans? This essential question transcends all time but has great application when looking at World War II.

Purpose

In this lesson, students will read primary and secondary sources, calculate distance, and locate places on a map to discover the history of *MS St.*

Louis, a ship of Jewish refugee passengers that no country would accept. This lesson is designed to make students aware of an extraordinary event in history that has relevant connections today. This lesson includes strategies for teaching diverse learners.

Key Vocabulary

- **Kristallnacht:** Night of the Broken Glass, a pogrom against (persecution of) German Jews that occurred on November 9-10, 1938

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- **Nazi:** a member of the National Socialist German Workers Party, which controlled Germany from 1933-1945 under Adolf Hitler and advocated totalitarian government
- **upstander:** someone who stands up against a person, idea or event that is not humane
- **bystander:** someone who watches an event that is unfair and does nothing to stop the problem
- **refugee:** a person who flees for refuge or safety, especially to a foreign country, as in time of political upheaval, war, or economic turmoil
- **MS St. Louis:** ship with 937 Jewish refugees which was refused by Cuba, the US, and Canada

Materials

- Social studies notebooks (journals)
- Access to electronic versions or printed copies of these articles:
 1. SS *St. Louis*: The ship of Jewish refugees nobody wanted
<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-27373131>
 2. Seeking Refuge in Cuba, 1939
<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007330>
 3. The Voyage of the *St. Louis* (Chapter 7 of Holocaust and Human Behavior)
https://www.facinghistory.org/sites/default/files/publications/Holocaust_Human_Behavior_revised_edition.pdf
 4. Voyage of the SS *St. Louis*: Journey toward a better future
https://www.thestar.com/opinion/2008/05/27/voyage_of_the_ss_st_louis_journey_toward_a_better_future.html
 5. No Turning Back
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/daily/holoship0826.htm>
- The *St. Louis* Refugee Ship Blues
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/opinions/outlook/st-louis-refugee-ship-blues/static.html>
- World Map
<http://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/World-at.pdf>
- Sol Messenger video (6.5 minutes long)
<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/turned-away-ms-st-louis>
- Voyage of the *St. Louis*—Animated Map (3 minutes)
https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_nm.php?ModuleId=10005267&MediaId=3544
- Rulers
- News magazines (optional)
- I Am poem (optional)
- Venn Diagram

- Computer lab or computer access
- Who is a Refugee Essay Scoring Guide
- Possible Image for Session One
- Vocabulary Cards
- Vocabulary test
- Upstander video (optional) (2.5 minutes long)
<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/who-upstander>

Objectives

The student will be able to:

- identify main ideas from primary or secondary sources
- write a summary
- locate places on a map
- measure distances on a map
- use technology to create a product
- identify push and pull factors
- describe how intolerance or racism leads to being a refugee

Procedures

Prerequisite Knowledge: Students should have been introduced to the Holocaust and World War II.

Teacher Note to explain why the ship is called both MS and SS St. Louis: Built by the Bremer Vulkan shipyards for the Hamburg America Line, the *St. Louis* was a diesel-powered ship and properly referred to with the prefix "MS" or "MV", but she is often known as the "*SS St. Louis*". The ship was named after the city of St. Louis, Missouri. Her sistership was the *Milwaukee*. The *St. Louis* regularly sailed the trans-Atlantic route from Hamburg to Halifax, Nova Scotia and New York and made cruises to the Canary Islands, Madeira and Morocco. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MS_St._Louis

Prior to the Lesson: Students will answer the following questions in their social studies notebooks.

1. What would they would do with \$300? Include on whom, on what, when, where and why they would spend the \$300 on this purchase.
2. List all the most important people in their lives, like their mom, dad, siblings, other relatives or friends. They can list up to twenty people.

(Application: Promotes engagement, Preparation: Linking to background)

SESSION ONE

Engage:

1. Write this essential question on the board: "What can we learn about history and ourselves by our

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researching, reading, discussing, and writing about an event?"

Project one of the pictures of the people on board the *MS St. Louis*. Have the students describe what they see in their social studies notebooks. Instruct them to include who, what, when, where, and why regarding the image. Have them support their statements with evidence.

(Application: Promotes engagement, Integrating Processes: Writing)

- Next have the students count the number of people they listed in their notebooks from the homework assignment. Inform the students that \$300 in 1939 would be about \$5,173 today. If passage for one person was \$300 in 1939, how much would it take to transport all of their important people in today's costs. Have students calculate the cost in their notebooks. **(Application: Promotes engagement, Grouping Option: Independent)**

Explore:

- Introduce the vocabulary words. If a clarification for "upstander" is needed, show the video found at: <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/who-upstander>
- Project the Sol Messenger video. <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/turned-away-ms-st-louis>
- Have students write out a reflection of their feelings.
- Close the day with having two or three students share their reflections. **(Integrating Processes: Writing, Listening, Reading, Speaking)**

SESSION TWO

Explain:

- Divide the students into 5 groups. Give each member of the group one of the readings. Each member of the group will read their assigned reading and highlight or write down their opinion of what are the ten most important sentences.
- When each member of the group has identified their ten important sentences, then the group will reach a consensus on the group's 10 most important sentences for their group reading.
- Each member of the group will then write a summary of the article using these sentences. Each group will select the best summary to read to the class and who will read it.
- Have groups share with the class their summaries. Instruct students to write at least one sentence in their social studies notebooks summarizing the content of each group's presentation. **(Integrating Processes: Writing, Listening, Reading, Speaking; Grouping Option: Individual, Small group; Application:**

Linked to Objectives; Scaffolding: Comprehensible input)

Elaborate:

- Explain push factors (those that drive you out) and pull factors (those that keep you in the same place). Have students write in their social studies notebooks, three factors that were push factors for the German Jews and three factors that were pull factors for the German Jews based on what they know from studying the Holocaust and from the presentations about the *St. Louis*. Have students share their responses. Record the responses in two categories (Push/Pull) on the board. Have students add ideas not already recorded in their social studies notebooks to their original thoughts. **(Application: Linked to Objectives; Scaffolding: Comprehensible input)**
- Project the video of the ship and its journey found at: https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_nm.php?ModuleId=10005267&MediaId=3544
- Distribute World Maps and play the video again. Have students identify the stops the ship made by marking the locations on their maps.
- Have students use the scale to measure the distance that the ship covered before the refugees disembarked. **(Application: Hands on)**
- Conclude the class by projecting the *The St. Louis Refugee Ship Blues* found at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/opinions/outlook/st-louis-refugee-ship-blues/static.html> Have students discuss what the symbols are in the image and what is/are the image's message(s). **(Grouping Option: Whole class)**

SESSION THREE

Evaluate:

Option 1: Explain that each student will be using information in their social studies notebooks and additional resources to create an electronic version of an essay on "Who is a Refugee?" Their essay should include information about the people on the *St. Louis* and a group of modern day refugees. Share the Who is a Refugee Scoring Guide. To help them plan their thoughts, they should complete the Venn diagram. **(Scaffolding: Comprehensible input)** Have students use the internet to begin collecting pictures and information.

Option 2: Explain that each student will be creating an electronic version of an essay

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reflecting on what they have learned and felt about refugees. Share the Refugee Reflection Scoring Guide. Using the computer lab or their devices, have students find an image of a refugee. They will then reflect on who they know/think about this person and how it makes them feel. **(Assessment: Individual, Written)**

<http://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/world-at.pdf>

Assessment

ELA and Social Science

Students will score:

- 80% or higher on the Vocabulary Test for a social studies or language grade.
- 48 points or higher on the Who is a Refugee Essay Scoring Guide or 36 points or higher on the Refugee Reflection Scoring Guide for a language and social studies grade.

Extensions

Students can complete the I AM poem to gain more empathy for what it must be like to be a refugee.

Sources

SS *St. Louis*: The ship of Jewish refugees nobody wanted

<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-27373131>

Seeking Refuge in Cuba, 1939

<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007330>

The Voyage of the *St. Louis* (Chapter 7 of Holocaust and Human Behavior)

https://www.facinghistory.org/sites/default/files/publications/Holocaust_Human_Behavior_revised_edition.pdf

Voyage of the SS *St. Louis*: Journey toward a better future

https://www.thestar.com/opinion/2008/05/27/voyage_of_the_ss_st_louis_journey_toward_a_better_future.html

No Turning Back

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/daily/holoship0826.htm>

The *St. Louis* Refugee Ship Blues

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/opinions/outlook/st-louis-refugee-ship-blues/static.html>

World Map