

Grades 9-12

Shanghai 1937: Where World War II Began

When did World War II begin? Americans might say December 7, 1941-the day the Japanese Imperial navy attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. For Europeans, it was September 1, 1939 when Nazi Germany invaded Poland. But in China, people will tell you a different date-August 13, 1937, the start of the Battle of Shanghai. That day, after what is called the "century of humiliation," including six years of repeated "incidents" initiated by the Japanese military, China at last "stood up." Shanghai was the most international city in Asia, with a large foreign population, so at the time of the military conflict, it was headline news around the world. Based on the book *Shanghai 1937: Stalingrad on the Yangtze* by Danish author Peter Harmsen, *SHANGHAI 1937: WHERE WORLD WAR II BEGAN* introduces key figures in the conflict, chronicles how the battle unfolded over the course of three months, and explores the aftermath and years of war that followed. *SHANGHAI 1937* incorporates rarely seen archival footage as well as interviews with author Peter Harmsen, military historian Edward Drea and professor of modern Chinese history Hans Van DeVen, in addition to two Chinese experts on this subject: Su Zhiliang, Ph.D. of Shanghai Normal University, and Ma Zhendu, director of the Second Historical Archives of China. The film also includes vivid recollections of men and women, such as Ronald Morris, Liliane Willens and Patricia D. Silver, who experienced these events as foreign children living in Shanghai.

After watching this episode, choose from the following questions and/or tasks to extend your learning

Question Box 1

- What is the central message in this program? Explain?
- What are the program's supporting claims or reasons that support the central message?
- What is the author trying to say through the TV program? What from the text makes you believe this?
- What evidence does the TV show director give to support his or her central idea?
- What is this program "saying"? Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support your analysis.

Question Box 2

Continued on the next page...

- What was most challenging or least interesting about this program?
- What about the show stood out to you?
- What did you find most interesting and why?
- How much did you know about the subject before we started?
- How do you feel about this program? Why?

Box 3 (Tasks)

- The Republic of China had approximately 725,000 troops, 180 aircraft and 40 tanks. The Imperial Japanese Army had 300,00 troops, 500 aircraft, 300 tanks and 130 naval ships. Use mathematics to explain why Japan, the invading army, with less than half the number of troops, was able to defeat the Republic of China in the Battle of Shanghai.

Box 4 (Enrichment)

- We often associate the beginning of World War II with the bombing of Pearl Harbor? Why does this program argue that World War II begins with the Japanese attack on Shanghai? What was the Japanese treatment of the Chinese like?
- China was in the midst of their own Civil War at the time of the Japanese Invasion; they stopped infighting in an attempt to stave off the Japanese invaders. Research the deep divides that take place in the American Civil War where there are numerous stories of brother's fighting on opposite sides of the war. What devastation could have befallen the US that would have caused the US to temporarily reunite in the midst of its Civil War?
- In the same way that Shanghai truly starts the beginning of World War II, D-Day is not the turning point of the War in the Atlantic. What battle is truly the turning point of the war on the Eastern Front? Where are England and the US during this battle? What are the far-reaching ramifications of their absence?

Box 5 (Extend/Real-Life)

- How can learning about historical events impact current events and future actions? Not sure watch this short video:
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMqolZqpZAc>
- Think of one historical event that has impacted the way you live today. This could be beliefs, laws, material objects. Etc.
- If that historical event never happened how would your life be different?
- Does knowing that a historical event impacts you change your opinion of the importance of history? Why or why not?
- How would recording historical data in a business impact the future actions of the business? Not sure watch this short video:
<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/forecasting.asp>