



Dwight D.
Eisenhower
Memorial

NATIONAL EISENHOWER MEMORIAL EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

LESSON

Eisenhower and the Troops: The Story of a Photograph



Duration

One 45-minute period

Grades

7–12

Cross-curriculum Application

U.S. History, English, Art



Historical Background

On June 5, 1944, the day before the Normandy invasion, Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, visited with paratroopers from the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment, part of the 101st Airborne Division. In an effort to gauge morale and to put the troops at ease, Eisenhower chatted with the soldiers about their hometowns and stateside hobbies such as hunting and fishing. The photographs of this encounter circulated widely and quickly became some of the most famous of the war — rich with details that can be used to understand more about General Eisenhower, perceptions of D-Day, and the war itself.

Objective

Students will examine closely an image of Eisenhower talking with soldiers before D-Day, to observe details, reflect, and interpret what the source conveys. How does this photograph represent leadership in general and American ideas about leadership in particular? Students will also examine the scene in a variety of contexts and explore how context affects the perception of an image.

The image of Eisenhower speaking with the troops has appeared in many different contexts including as the basis of a sculpture for the Eisenhower Memorial in Washington, DC. Using what they have learned through careful study of the image, students will create a brief presentation that explains the scene and its meaning to a tour group at the memorial. The presentation will reference specific details of the scene from relevant source material and use these details to support a reasonable claim about Eisenhower's military leadership.

Essential Questions

1. What does it mean to be a leader? What qualities define a good leader? Was Eisenhower's style of leadership distinctly American? Why?

Sources

- » General Dwight D. Eisenhower Meeting the Troops Prior to the Normandy Invasion. Department of Defense. June 5, 1944. National Archives and Records Administration. <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/778813>

Teacher Notes: This photo is one of the most famous from D-Day. It shows Eisenhower casually chatting with a group of paratroopers the day before the launch of Operation Overlord in Normandy, France.



Interesting details:

- *Eisenhower is not speaking from an elevated platform addressing the troops. Instead he appears to be in the middle of the crowd.*
- *Everyone else in the photo is looking at him and turned toward him, an indication of his rank and importance.*
- *While the scene is crowded, Eisenhower has space around him as well. This space implies a higher status.*
- *Eisenhower's staff officer's uniform contrasts with the soldiers' combat gear.*

- » Dwight D. Eisenhower Speaks with Paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division. June 5, 1944. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

Teacher Notes: Another photo from the same day depicting a slightly different scene.

Interesting details:

- *Eisenhower is speaking with a different soldier.*
- *He is still in the middle of a group, but it does not appear as crowded as the first scene.*
- *The photo is taken from a different angle, and it is unclear if there is a larger crowd around Eisenhower.*
- *There were likely many photos taken that day. Why was the first photo so widely used?*

- » "The Decision That Changed The World." Eisenhower Memorial.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ip3htBMu-EQ>

Teacher Notes: Eisenhower E-Memorial short video (6:06) on the the decision to launch the invasion of Normandy.

Interesting details:

- *Footage of Eisenhower meeting with troops begins at 2:12 point in film and ends around 2:38.*
- *The segment includes footage of Eisenhower speaking with and circulating among the troops.*
- *Eisenhower interacted with the troops in a variety of ways: walking through a large crowd, reviewing the troops in formation, and talking with them in small groups or one-on-one.*
- *The segment concludes with a slow zoom into the famous photo above.*



- » Photograph of the Eisenhower Memorial. Eisenhower Memorial Commission.
Teacher Notes: This image shows the bronze sculpture inspired by Eisenhower's meeting with the troops which is part of the design for the Eisenhower Memorial in Washington, D.C. Interesting details:
 - *The sculpture is a slightly different depiction of the first photo. For example, Eisenhower is depicted here speaking to a small group of soldiers rather than in the middle of a larger group.*
 - *The perspective of the scene is reversed compared to the photo—the troops are on the left and Eisenhower is on the right.*
 - *The position of Eisenhower's arm and the rendering of the troops suggests it is the same scene.*

Materials

- » Source Discovery Handout 1 & 2
- » Photo Analysis Worksheet adapted from National Archives and Records Administration (2 pages)
http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/photo_analysis_worksheet.pdf

Preparation

- Print one copy of the Source Discovery Handout 1, Source Discovery Handout 2, and Photo Analysis Worksheet for each student.
- Print out copies of the primary source materials for students.
- Cue video for classroom use.

Procedure

1. Warm-up discussion: What can we tell from a photograph? How does a photograph become widely seen today (i.e. via social media, web, print)? How do you think photos circulated in the 1940s? Who do you think made decisions to take and publish photos in the 1940s compared to today?
2. Project the photograph, "General Dwight D. Eisenhower Meeting the Troops Prior to the Normandy Invasion," or pass out printed copies for each student.



3. Pass out the Photo Analysis Worksheet and instruct students to examine the photo and complete the sheet. Guiding questions: What is the image's focus? What is in the center? The periphery or edges? Examine each person's clothing, body language, and facial expression. Trace the sight-lines: where is each person looking?
4. Ask the students, "What story is the photo telling? How is Eisenhower presented as a leader? How is the United States military presented? What does Eisenhower's approach as a leader appear to be? What does this photo say about D-Day?" Students can record their answers in the Source Discovery Handout 1 as part of a class discussion, a "turn-and-talk" with each student working with a partner, or with each student working independently. The handouts can be used later by students as notes for their presentation.
5. Invite the students to compare the original photo to other presentations including the second photo of the meeting with troops, the video on D-Day, and the sculpture from the memorial. Ask students to note the following on their Source Discovery Handout 2: How is each image different than the first one? How are they the same?
6. Lead the class in a discussion that explores the similarities and differences in the photographs. Why did the first photo circulate so widely? What does each photo, sculpture, or video emphasize and how does that change the "story" it is trying to tell?
7. Assignment: You have been hired as a tour guide at the Eisenhower Memorial. You will be showing visitors the photograph of Eisenhower talking with the paratroopers on which the sculpture is based. How would you explain this image to visitors? What kinds of questions might they ask? Prepare a brief written presentation of what you would say to visitors.

Differentiation

According to academic level, the teacher may assign every student to analyze each source or assign a group of students to a particular source. Teachers may also direct students to fill out only selected sections of the Photo Analysis Worksheet. Teachers may also have students film a presentation based on their notes rather than submitting their work in writing.

Teachers may also make use of the Teacher Notes that accompany the above sources. Providing these notes to students may help them to notice important details within the sources.

Possible extension: Invite the students to do a Google reverse image search or TinEye.com (see *Resources* below) of one of the photographs to see the many ways it has been used in different



contexts. What do these varied uses tell us about the photograph and how people interpret it today? For advanced students, assign each student to research one of the other individuals in the photograph.

Assessment

See attached rubric. Students will be assessed on their ability to synthesize details of the photograph using the Photo Analysis Worksheet. Close observation and interpretation of sources will be assessed through students' written work in the presentation assignment. Students will demonstrate understanding of how context affects how an image is interpreted. The presentation should reference specific details of the scene from the source material and use these details to support a reasonable claim about General Eisenhower's military leadership.

Related Resources

Lesson Plans

- » *What Do You See?": Using Photographs to Learn about World War II.* Understanding Sacrifice: An Education Program of the American Battle Monuments Commission.

<http://abmceducation.org/understandingsacrifice/activity/%E2%80%9Cwhat-do-you-see%E2%80%9D-using-photographs-learn-about-world-war-ii>

These lessons encourage students to understand events in World War II using non-textual sources (photographs, film, interactive websites, and apps). Photographs are grouped into collections (D-Day Build-Up, D-Day Beaches, D-Day to Berlin, Homefront, U.S. Service Members, The Price of Freedom) so teachers can select the topics most useful for their classroom.

- » *Where in the World? Mapping the Geography of D-Day.* National WWII Museum.

<http://enroll.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-teachers/lesson-plans/pdfs/where-in-the-world-war.pdf>

This lesson directs students to explore maps to better understand the scale of the Normandy invasion.

Secondary Sources and Digital Resources

- » *American Experience: D-Day.* Public Broadcasting Service.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/dday/index.html>

This site, a companion to the PBS documentary film, features maps, soldiers' letters home, interviews, a timeline and lesson plans.



- » *The Normandy Campaign: The Advance Inland*. American Battle Monuments Commission. https://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/normandy/index.html
This interactive website has video footage of both the 82nd and 101st Airborne divisions on the eve of D-Day. Viewers can track their progress on maps of northern France with commentary and footage included.
- » *The 101st Airborne Division*. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10006152>
This entry from the museum's Holocaust Encyclopedia provides a brief history of the 101st Airborne and its contribution to D-Day. Also features the famous photo of Eisenhower speaking with the paratroopers.
- » *TinEye Reverse Image Search*. Free Technology for Teachers. <http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2010/07/tineye-reverse-image-search.html#.VjDEkoTZpmg>
This post explores how teachers can use TinEye or Google Reverse Image Search to explore where on the web an image has been used. In general, TinEye is very good for finding the image in different contexts and Google works better for simply trying to determine what the image is.

Primary Sources

- » *The Normandy Invasion: The Story in Pictures*. U.S. Army Center of Military History. <http://www.history.army.mil/html/reference/normandy/pictures.html>
This site features several photos and prints of the Normandy invasion with informative captions that place sources in context.
- » *World War II: D-Day, the Invasion of Normandy*. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library. <https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/world-war-ii-d-day-invasion-normandy>
This site features an excellent collection of primary sources related to D-Day and the invasion of Normandy, including Eisenhower's Order of the Day for June 6, 1944 and his handwritten "In Case of Failure" message to be used in the event the invasion did not succeed.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower Meeting the Troops Prior to the Normandy Invasion. Department of Defense. June 5, 1944. National Archives and Records Administration.





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Dwight D. Eisenhower Speaks with Paratroopers. June 5, 1944. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.





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Photograph of the Eisenhower Memorial. Eisenhower Memorial Commission.





Source Discovery Handout #1

Examine the photo of Eisenhower talking with the troops closely. Observe each person in the photo: Where are they standing? Where are they looking? Answer the following questions:

How is Eisenhower presented as a leader?

How are the soldiers presented?

What does this photo say about D-Day?



Source Discovery Handout #2

Examine the other photo of Eisenhower and the troops, the scene in the video, and the sculpture of this scene. Record one way each is different from the first photo:

Second Photo

Video

Sculpture

Why do you think the first photo became so widely circulated?



Photo Analysis Worksheet

Step 1. Observation

A. Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.

B. Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities in the photograph.

People	Objects	Activities



Photo Analysis Worksheet

Step 2. Inference

Based on what you have observed, list three things you might infer from this photograph.

Step 3. Questions

A. *What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?*

B. *Where could you find answers to them?*

Eisenhower and the Troops Rubric

	Fully Meets Expectations <i>3 points</i>	Minimally Meets Expectations <i>2 points</i>	Not Yet Within Expectations <i>1 point</i>
Factual Understanding	The presentation and Source Discovery Handouts demonstrate understanding of the main idea of each source (or piece of evidence) and identifies its key details.	The presentation and Source Discovery Handouts demonstrate understanding of the main idea of each source (or piece of evidence) but does not identify key details.	The presentation and Source Discovery Handouts do not demonstrate understanding of the main idea of each source (or piece of evidence).
Sourcing	The presentation and Source Discovery Handouts demonstrate understanding of each source's origin: especially when it was created and the creator's goal.	The presentation and Source Discovery Handouts demonstrate partial understanding of each source's origin: when it was created and the creator's goal.	The presentation and Source Discovery Handouts demonstrate insufficient understanding of each source's origin: when it was created and the creator's goal.
Evidence-Based Claim	The presentation makes a reasonable claim about the image of Eisenhower meeting with the troops and uses appropriate sources and evidence to support that claim.	The presentation makes a reasonable claim about the image of Eisenhower meeting with the troops but the sources and evidence only partially support that claim.	The presentation makes a claim about the image of Eisenhower meeting with the troops that is not supported by appropriate sources and evidence.
Presentation	The presentation is well-organized and clear. It is well-paced and clearly articulate. No (or only minor) spelling and grammar errors in the presentation script.	The presentation is somewhat disorganized and unclear. It is poorly-paced or difficult to understand. Several spelling and grammar mistakes in the presentation script.	The presentation shows little or no organization. Unclear or confusing layout. Repeated major spelling and grammar errors in the presentation script.