

RESOURCE EVALUATION PRACTICE
(Formative Assessment)

1. **Basic Information:** *Our Longest Days: A People's History of the Second World War*, by the writers of Mass Observation, edited by Sandra Koa Wing, diary entries, 2007.

2. **QUANTITATIVE FACTORS:**

- **Readability:** The result of the Fry Readability graph for *Our Longest Days* was grade 8. The reading level was standard/average and is appropriate for 12-14 year old students. Although the formula only measures sentence length and number of syllables, I do find the grade level it offered appropriate. The bulk of the book is journal entries, written in non-academic language. While the language itself might be simple, the concepts require deep thought. Students will need to think about what these personal accounts tell them about World War II, which I think is absolutely achievable for middle school students. Additionally, each chapter opens with informational writing about the war. With this, students will be able to read two different types of writing, which makes the book a little more challenging. However, the informational piece at the beginning of each chapter is straightforward and concise. I inserted a journal entry and the historical outline section into the Fry Readability graph.

3. **Text Organization and structure**

- **All texts:** There a clear and predictable logic/pattern to how the text is organized, thus readers would be able to recognize the pattern. The book is broken into 7 chapters; each chapter is one year of World War II (for example, Chapter 1:1939). Each chapter begins with the editor's summary of the highlights of that year, and then the rest of the chapter is composed of diary entries from people living throughout World War II. Most diarists consist throughout the book, so readers can follow their journeys for all seven years of war.
- **Genre:** The genre of the chapter introductions is informational. The rest of the book is diary entries.

4. **Language and syntax:**

- **Academic Language:** The vocabulary is standard and clear. The diaries are in non-academic language.

5. **Clarity:**

- **Informational texts:**
-The text's explanations are extremely clear. I think the editor did a nice job of concisely summarizing the events of the war during each year. She condensed the

information, so it wasn't as overwhelming. The reader does not necessarily need to make inferences while reading the summaries at the start of each chapter, but the student absolutely needs to make inferences about/make connections to that summary while reading the diaries. For example, the student may think, "This diarist seems really empowered, which I wouldn't have expected during wartime. I wonder if this has to do with her ability to work out of the household in the factories, which allows her to develop independence. According to the summary, women weren't typically allowed to work in the public sphere before this time."

6. **How appropriate is the text for the intended audience?**

- **Knowledge Demands (Prior Knowledge, background knowledge, cultural knowledge, vocabulary knowledge):**
 - The text assumes that readers have basic knowledge of WWII. I think the summaries are straightforward and give a nice outline of the war, so readers can give meaning to the diaries. However, the author does not define key people or terms. For example, she writes about Hitler's invasion of Poland, without stating who Hitler was. While for some, it is obvious who Hitler was, this won't necessarily be the case for all of my students.
 - The readers will definitely need some prior knowledge of the war: What was going on in the world at the outbreak of war? What caused the war? Also, cultural knowledge is required. In my Adolescent Development class, I worked with a refugee from Nepal. She might not necessarily know much about WWII. While WWII is common to teach in American classrooms, she might not have had the same experience before coming to the USA. Also, WWII impacted America much differently than it did Nepal.
- **Bias of the Text:** The text does have a cultural bias. The diarists are all people living in Britain during the time of the war, leaving out wartime experiences of Germans, Americans, Russians, etc. However, the book does do a nice job of sharing entries of both men and women and of people of all ages.

7. **Levels of Meaning and Purpose:**

- **Informational Text:** The purpose of the text is explicitly stated in the introduction: To share the ordinary experiences of the British people living during WWII.

8. **Instructional Devices:**

- **What features in the text aid the reader in comprehension?**
 - Each chapter is a year of the war
 - Each chapter begins with a summary of the important events in the war of that year
 - Next to each diary entry is the name, age, occupation, and location of the diarist

Reflection Questions:

1. One major challenge I see my students having is overlooking the importance of the diary entries. At times it may seem like the entries include wasteful details, but each detail tells us something about the war. Students need to look at the picture the diaries are painting of the war as a whole and pick out major themes.
2. I would want to know: How many students have a basic understanding of WWII? What reading level are my students at? Have they read diaries before? I would take a survey/make an accommodation matrix before starting. Also, to discover student knowledge on WWII, I could have my students fill out a KWL chart.
3. My purpose for using this text is for students to learn about WWII and the people who lived during wartime. In reading, students should empathize with the diarists and think about what it must have been like living during the war. I will communicate this with my students by sharing with them clear objectives before they begin reading.

Lesson Plan

This lesson plan is for once students have completed reading the book in entirety.

8th Grade/ World War II Course

Time: 90 minutes

Content Objectives:

- Students will be able to understand the meaning of a “People’s War” and why WWII was considered a “People’s War.”
- Students will be able to empathize with the diarists and picture what it would have been like to live in Britain during the war.
- Students will have a better understanding of the chronology of WWII.

Literacy Objectives:

- Students will be able to summarize the main ideas of the text (both of the informational writing and of the diaries).
- Students will be able to connect the reading to course themes: gender, class, race, geography, politics, and morality in WWII.
- Students will connect the personal narratives to the chronology of the war.

PBGRs

Time	Instructional Strategy (what you do as a teacher)	Learning Opportunity (what students are doing)
5 min	Discuss objectives and agenda for lesson	Listen and ask clarifying questions
20 min	Check-in with students. Assess understanding.	Students get in their diarist groups (the one diarist they decided to focus on while reading the book) and have a discussion about their diarist. A worksheet with guiding questions will be provided: How did the diarist change from 1939 to 1945? Was there a period of time they stopped writing? If so, why do you think that is? How did their gender/race/class impact their wartime experience? How did your diarist feel about the war? Did the war empower them or depress them? Why do you think they reacted that way to the war? What does their experience tell us about WWII? Students can use their notes chart/graphic organizer, they have been keeping with key information/events to help them answer these questions. This group discussion acts a final check-in or a final reflection/overview of their diarist. While reading the book, students have met with this same group frequently to share notes/thoughts on the chapter they just read.
20 min	Check-in with students. Assess understanding.	Students will participate in a jigsaw activity. Students will be broken into seven groups for each year of the war. Each group will have one representative for each diarist. As a group, students will re-read the summary at the start of each chapter, recalling major events/moments of the war during that year. Then, each member will share the experiences of their diarist for each year. Together, students can talk about why they think that diarist was having that experience based on what they read in the summary. They will answer what are the similar or different experiences of these diarists? Why is that?
5 min	Stretch Break	Stretch Break
10 min	Check for chronological understanding of the war. See what students left out and what gaps I might need to fill.	Create a class timeline. A big timeline will be drawn on the board. In the same “year” groups, students need to write on blue sticky notes 5 events of the war for that year. On yellow sticky notes, each diarist representative will write what was going on with their diarist during that year. They will go up and paste the sticky notes on the board.

		While reading the book, students have been using a timeline app on their chromebooks/IPads to keep track of major war events. Students can open this app to assist them.
15 min	Review timeline, lead group discussion, and record student comments.	Students will take notes on the gaps I fill. As I go through each year, students will explain what they wrote on the sticky note to the class.
15 min	Closing- answer final questions, explain exit slip.	Students will ask any final questions and share any final thoughts. Students then will complete the exit slip, in which they will reflect on what they learned and how the diaries changed their impression/didn't change their impression on WWII.

LITERACY PLANNING

	PURPOSE: 1. How will this strategy support students (consider purpose for reading the text, challenges and features of the <i>text</i> as well as <i>students' needs</i>)?	GOAL/OBJECTIVE: Is it content or skill? Is there a CCSS connection?	STRATEGY	ASSESSMENT
P R E- R E A D	By demonstrating for students how to read a diary, they will know what I expect of them as they read the rest of the novel.	Skill: To practice/to learn how to properly read a diary.	Model how to read diaries by annotating a diary entry for the class. I will show them how to think about context-when/where were they writing, grammar/language how that	Students will try on their own. I will provide them with practice entries.

I N G			could suggest class/occupation, etc.	
D U R I N G R E A D I N G	Students are struggling to keep track of each diarist because not all entries by one diarist are grouped together.	<p>GOAL/OBJECTIVE: Students will take note of each diarist and what those experiences are telling them about the war.</p> <p>CCSS: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.</p>	Students will be given a graphic organizer with columns for each diarist and rows for what I want them to specifically notice about that diarist. (Students will begin to focus on one diarist—more detailed observations/broader questions will be asked about this diarist.) During class, students will meet in groups based on who is focusing on the same diarist. As a check-in, students will review their graphic organizers with their group members after each assigned night of reading.	Collect organizers and assess using checklist.
P O S T- R E A D I N G	Students will have time to reflect on what they read and make connections to the war as a whole. So, what does this all tell us about WWII?	Students will be able to discuss with the class/groups about the diarists and about the war as a whole.	Jigsaw activity; timeline activity	Listen to discussion to determine if objectives were met.