

The Civil War in Lebanon

Inquiry question: Why did the war erupt in Lebanon in 1975?

This learning activity focuses on enabling students to understand the complex causation of the civil war that erupted in Lebanon between 1975 and 1990. This enquiry is part of a larger unit that covers the civil war period.

Although this period is still absent from the national history curriculum in Lebanon, that was not reformed after the war, the Lebanese Association for History embarked on a process of experimentation to address questions raised by the youth about the war and its causes.

In the absence of textbooks covering the civil war period, we decided to provide students with a rich collection of resources that help them to understand the complexity of the causes leading to fifteen years of war.

Indicative Age

16 – 18

Approximate time

2 periods of fifty minutes

Learning outcomes

Students will>>>

Acknowledgements

*This activity was developed by
Nayla Hamadeh for the Lebanese
Association for History.*

*Resources used were collected from
a variety of sources, each indicated
as appropriate.*

Key question: Why did the war erupt in Lebanon in 1975?

Introduction

In this lesson your students will be working as historians. They have found a collection of resources that help them explain the causes that led to the war in Lebanon in 1975. They are in a retreat and together they will analyse their findings.

TEACHER NOTE 1

Obviously, historians find themselves their sources but it works as a learning activity and encourages the idea of professional conversations.

Arrangement of the class

Put your students into groups of 4-5. They will be working as small teams of historians until the last display of their findings.

TEACHER NOTE 2

It is important to prepare the grounds for a quality conversation especially if the lesson is applied in Lebanon.

Running the causation activity

TEACHER NOTE 3

Materials needed

1. Start with a reflective question: what was the main cause of the war in Lebanon? Ask students to write their answer on cards that they stick on a bulletin board.
2. Share the enquiry question: Why did the war erupt in Lebanon in 1975? Tell them that the answers that they have posted are ideas brought to them from here and there. Today they will be working as historians (TN1), scrutinizing several sources, drawing conclusions, and making new historical claims that explain why a war erupted in Lebanon in 1975.

- Copies of student worksheet (1) - 1 per group
- Copies of the resources (1 set of the sources for every group)
- Blank rectangular cards (around 10 per group)
- 1 circular card per group
- Big white sheet - 1 per group
- Blue gum to stick cards on white sheet
- Flip chart

3. Prepare for quality conversation: Ask groups to brainstorm how does a Quality Conversation look like and sound like. Ask them to filter their answers to 2 ideas that they will share with others. Collect their answers on a flipchart then ask them to commit to respect these rules.
4. Provide sources and materials: Ask them to pick up the packs of sources (one pack per group), a flipchart paper, a circle blank card, a pack of blank rectangular card, and markers.
5. Task 1: Identifying the causes
Using the resources given to them, they are asked to write, on rectangular blank cards, the factors that led to the war by putting each factor on a separate card. Allow at least 20 minutes for this task.
6. Task 2: Deciding on their relevance
They are asked to stick the circular card that shows the EQ in the middle of a big white paper. In the circle the EQ is written. Then they are asked to place the causes close to the circle if deemed highly relevant, far from the circle if deemed slightly relevant, and if a factor is deemed irrelevant they will place it outside the white sheet.
7. Debrief:
You will ask for a round of debrief. Probing questions could be: Did they eliminate any card and why? Did they have a big argument around one particular card? Which one? What was the argument about?
8. Task 3: Deciding on importance
Students are now asked to remove the cards, place the EQ in the bottom corner of the white sheet. Keep the cards deemed 'irrelevant' on the side. Use the rest of the causes cards to create a ladder shape that reflects importance. Which causes they think had greater effect? This task will need at least 20 minutes. The teacher could pass around to challenge them to think further. You could also add a source to further challenge them, or provide an additional blank card on which they have the right to add a cause from pre-requisite knowledge.
9. Task 4: A higher level of challenge
Students are now asked to create their own map that will show the interconnection between each of the causes and the war, and between the causes themselves. They are given 20 minutes to prepare their work and post it on one of the walls in the classroom.

Students feedback

“Gallery feedback”

- Reflect on what is a constructive criticism.
- Groups rotate to examine another group's work and gives feedback.
- Feedback is written on the maps in form of question.

Suggestion for assessment

Students are asked to write a short essay in which they present the three causes that they think played a crucial role in leading to the war.

Taking the enquiry further for themselves

Your students could learn more about the civil war by reading the books used as references in the sources selection.

They could also watch the documentary 'badna na'ref' by Carol Mansour to form a critical image of the war. This will help them prepare for the following lessons.