



Teacher Guided Lesson Plan for Grades 7-12

Fort MacArthur and the War in the Pacific: A Walking Tour

60-90 minutes on site at the Fort MacArthur Museum and surrounding historic sites, 3601 S. Gaffey Street, San Pedro. 2-3 class periods pre- and post-visit.

Essential Question: *How is Fort MacArthur and the surrounding historic sites connected to the War in the Pacific and was it successful in helping the United States prepare and wage WWII?*

Basic Overview

Students work in groups to gather information about the role of Fort MacArthur on the War in the Pacific prior, during, and immediately after WWII. Using evidence collected from the various historic sites including surrounding batteries, gun emplacements, buildings, teacher guide, students will begin to understand the significance of the role of Fort MacArthur. Choosing from a set of essential questions, or crafting their own, students will focus on one aspect of Fort MacArthur. With the help of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources and internet research such as the LAUSD Digital Library, groups will dive deep into the stories behind the fort; the community's relationship to the fort; and the longer term impact of the surrounding historic sites. Finally, students will present their findings in a presentation that answers the questions, *How is the Fort MacArthur and the surrounding historic sites connected to the War in the Pacific? Was it successful in helping the United States prepare and wage WWII and does it have an impact that reaches beyond its initial purpose?*

Objectives

Students will gain an understanding of the following:

- Student-centered critical thinking
- Onsite evidence collection
- Analysis of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources
- Internet research such as the LAUSD Digital Library
- Visual thinking strategies
- Evaluation of historical outcomes
- Creation and presentation of research and argument
- Group presentation
- Structured group discussion
- Opportunities to engage with veterans

California Curriculum Standards

National Standards for History

Content Era 8, Standard 3A & 3B

Historical Thinking Standards 3-5

Common Core State Standards ELA:

Research to Build and Present

Knowledge

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.9-10.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6

Materials

Evidence Collection Forms (see attached document)

Website: www.ftmac.org

Internet Access: LAUSD Digital Library

Procedure

Anticipatory Set

Discuss the following questions in small groups or via pair-share:

1. What was the role of the United States during World War II? List examples that come to mind or find examples through the LAUSD Digital Library.
2. What was the difference between WWII efforts on the Home Front and the Pacific?
3. How do efforts on the Home Front impact local communities?

Background Information

On September 4, 1888 by Executive Order, the "Old Government Reservation" next to San Pedro Bay became property of the U.S. War Department. The property was originally a Spanish public landing and was reserved as "Government Land" when the United States gained control of Alta, California in 1848. In 1897 and 1910 additional tracts of land were added to the reservation in preparation for the construction of fortifications to guard the newly completed deep water harbor facilities of the port for the city of Los Angeles. The reservation was geographically divided into three parts: the Lower Reservation, Middle Reservation, and Upper Reservation.

In 1914 the property was named Fort MacArthur in honor of Lt. General Arthur MacArthur, Civil War Medal of Honor recipient and father of General Douglas MacArthur.

By 1919, construction had been completed on Fort MacArthur's main armament of four 14-inch rifles mounted on ingenious "disappearing carriages" and eight 12-inch mortars mounted in massive concrete emplacements. These guns protected Los Angeles Harbor and had a range of up to fourteen miles. In addition to the big guns, electrically controlled mines were stored on the Lower Reservation for rapid deployment across the harbor entrance and were protected from enemy mine sweepers by four 3-inch rapid fire guns located on a sand spit off the end of what is today known as Terminal Island. By this time, the barracks and administration buildings on the Middle and Upper Reservations were also nearing completion.

After World War I, Fort MacArthur was regularly used for training and housing of California National Guard units, Citizens Military Training Corps, Army Reserve units, and the Civilian Conservation Corps. In 1920, four 3-inch anti-aircraft guns were added to the post's arsenal and two 155mm guns were delivered in 1928. The biggest additions of firepower came to Fort MacArthur in 1925 and 1930 in the form of two 14-inch railway guns. Named Battery Irwin, these mobile guns could fire their 1400 lb. shells a distance of 27 miles and were eventually stored in special "breakaway" buildings.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, additional 155mm and 3-inch anti-aircraft guns were added to the defenses of Los Angeles and a new fortification program hurried toward completion. This included the addition of Battery Paul D. Bunker located at White Point, and another unnamed 16-inch battery at Bolsa Chica beach that was never completed. These batteries were armed with two 16-inch barbette mount guns enclosed under large concrete portals. These were the largest and most powerful seacoast defense guns ever deployed by

the United States and had a maximum range of about 26 miles.

To reinforce these batteries, three new 6-inch batteries were also built. Battery Harry J. Harrison at Bolsa Chica, Battery Barnes at Long Point, and Battery 241 located on the Upper Reservation. These guns were protected by 6-inch thick “teardrop” shaped metal shields, and looked like they would be more at home on a warship rather than on a hilltop overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Additionally, more than a dozen 90mm and 37mm guns were installed around the harbor area. As these new weapons were installed, the older guns were deactivated and shortly after 1945, all of Fort MacArthur’s big guns were cut up for scrap. Fort MacArthur continued to serve as an induction and separation center throughout the 1940s and 1950s.

Additional readings and resources:

(work in progress. Consult the Fort MacArthur Bookstore)

Evidence Collection at Fort MacArthur

1. Provide Evidence Collection Form to students and site map of Fort MacArthur grounds.
2. Conduct a brief tour starting at the parking area between the WWII barracks area and Battery Leary-Merriam. Provide an overview of the grounds. Walk along Leary Merriam Road down to Battery 241. Walk across to Battery Osgood-Farley.

* Invite students to take pictures of the structures to document experience, use in lesson presentations, and use as reference to complete the Evidence Collection Forms at the end of the walking tour portion.

3. Divide class into interest based groups based with respect to historic structures seen on walking tour. Assign each group a note-taker and a speaker.

5. Instruct students to complete the Evidence Collection Form as a group using observation of the grounds from the vantage point of Battery Osgood-Farley, group discussion, as well as the resources available at the museum, bookstore as well as the tour guide. (Students are to remain within the boundaries of the battery). Give students an opportunity to look at some of the collection objects on display inside the museum and bookstore.

6. Students should spend anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes gathering evidence and recording their discussions and be ready to share their findings.

**Teachers, chaperones, and/or guides roam among student groups and listen to conversations, providing necessary guidance only when necessary. For example, keep students on track or ask critical thinking questions such as, “What makes you say that? Where do you see evidence that supports your conclusions? Does anyone in the group disagree or have a different opinion?” . It is important for students to guide the discussions based on their observations and evidence gathered.*

7. Regroup and share outcomes to the whole group.

Student Reflection

Students reflect on the learning experience at Fort MacArthur, conducting research, and their personal thoughts on the experience. Reflection prompts:

- How was learning history at Fort MacArthur different from learning in the classroom? What were some positives? What were some negatives?
- What challenges did your group encounter in doing research for your evidence collection activity?
- In what areas of the lesson activity do you think your group was most successful?

- If you were to do this lesson activity again, what would you do differently? What would you repeat?
- What do you think was the most important lesson you took away from this experience?
- How did this experience change or reaffirm your thoughts on the War in the Pacific?
- What is one thing you were surprised to learn about the War in the Pacific?
- Do you think you will visit Fort MacArthur again? Why or why not?
- Would you be interested in writing an educational lesson on the relationship between Fort MacArthur and the War in the Pacific?