**Subject area/course**: History/U.S. History

**Grade level/band**: 11

**Task source**: Providence Schools

**Does the End Justify the Means?**

**STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS**

1. **Task context**:

Does the end justify the means? In life, we ask ourselves this question all the time, even if we don’t realize it. The “end” is our goal. What are we trying to accomplish? Where do we want to *end* up? The “means” are the things we will do to accomplish our goal. What are we willing to do? Are there things we would NOT do, even if that might mean failing to achieve our goal?

For example, what if our goal is to get rich? That’s the end we want to accomplish. What means would you use to get rich? Would you work really hard? Hopefully. But would you lie, cheat, and steal if that was necessary to accomplish your goal? If you answer yes, then you would say “the end justifies the means.” If you answer no, you would say “the end does not always justify the means.”

As you reflect upon your recent classes on World War II, what have you learned about war and its place in human endeavors? For this assignment, you will explore the implications of some key episodes and challenges facing the Allies during the war using the following essential questions:

* *During times of war, do the ends ever justify the means?*
* *Did the ends justify the means used by the Allies in World War II in one of the following episodes of that war?*

1. The bombing of Dresden, Germany.
2. The refusal to bomb the routes into the Nazis' Auschwitz death camp.
3. The dropping of the Atomic Bombs on Japan.
4. **Final product**:

There are two parts to this assignment:

1. You will choose one of the three episodes listed above. Read the sources on it in the Materials/resources section below. Then write a position paper in response to the two essential questions listed above. *(You may use the graphic organizer to gather your ideas and plan your paper.)*
2. You will join a small group of others who chose to write about the same episode as you did. The group will give a 5-10 minute oral presentation in class that defends its position. Your group can choose what presentation software it would like to use (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi). This includes a question and answer session with classmates.

Paper Requirements:

* Your introduction should explain the concept of ends and means in your own words. Explain how these concepts fit into the decisions that United States had to make with regard to the episode you have chosen to write about. Explain some of the overall context of the war, what caused it, what the key powers were fighting for? In other words, what were the ends each side wanted to achieve? And how does your episode fit into the overall pattern of the war?
* Your body paragraphs should describe the means used by the Allies in the episode you are focusing on. Evaluate the steps that were and were not taken to accomplish the goal central in that episode. Be specific. State your position. Do YOU think the means the Allies used or refused to use were justified? Why or why not? If you agree with what the Allies did, explain in detail why you think their decisions were necessary and justified. If you disagree, explain what the alternatives were. What would you have done instead?
* Your conclusion should restate your opinion. It should also include a call to action. What are the implications of your episode for the idea of formulating rules about what means are allowed in war? If not, why not? If yes, what should some of those rules be?

PowerPoint Requirements:

* Use images on several slides wherever this will help to convey your idea.
* Have at least one slide with quantitative information that supports your position (e.g., graph, chart).
* Number of slides: Minimum - 5, Maximum - 10

**Additional Information**

1. **Knowledge and skills you will need to demonstrate on this task:**

* Analyze primary and secondary sources
* Write a persuasive essay
* Create a PowerPoint presentation
* Present and defend fact-based arguments

1. **Materials needed:**

* U.S. History textbook coverage of World War II
* “The Bombing of Germany” documentary (short excerpt), A PBS "American Experience" program, accessed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVrK0hX40CQ>
* "The bombing of Dresden," a History Channel article at: <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/battle-of-dresden>
* "The United States and the Holocaust: Why Auschwitz Was Not Bombed," from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's "Holocaust Encyclopedia." <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10008041>
* "U.S. Rejects Bombing of Auschwitz," from WW2History.com, <http://ww2history.com/key_moments/Holocaust/USA_rejects_bombing_of_Auschwitz>
* Why the allies didn't bomb Auschwitz, *The Guardian*, at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/09/auschwitz-allied-bomb-second-world-war>
* Nathan Donohue, "Understanding the Decision to Drop the Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki," the Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 10, 2012, at: <http://csis.org/blog/understanding-decision-drop-bomb-hiroshima-and-nagasaki>
* Richard Frank, "Why Truman Dropped the Bomb," *The Weekly Standard*, July 17, 2015, at: <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/005/894mnyyl.asp?nopager=1>
* Additional sources as identified by students

1. **Time requirements:**

You will have approximately three weeks to complete this task.

1. **Scoring:**

Your work will be scored using the QPA Common Position Paper Rubric and the QPA Common Oral Communication Rubric. You should make sure you are familiar with the language that describes the expectations for proficient performance.