



## LESSON PLAN

### Listening and Responding to Women's Stories from War

#### OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will learn the history of an often-overlooked part of World War II - the girls and women forced into military sexual slavery under the occupation of the Japanese army. In *The Apology*, three of the surviving women, nicknamed “the Grandmas,” Adela Barroquillo from the Philippines, Cao Hei Mao from China and Gil Won-Ok from South Korea, relate their experiences as young girls during the war and reflect on the scars this violence left on their entire lives.

Sexual violence and rape during war is not unique to World War II, nor are women and girls the only victims. Governments and the military use rape as a weapon of war to dehumanize and humiliate populations, exert their power and damage communities for generations.

For over 70 years these women, euphemistically called “comfort women,” have carried the weight of shame, trauma and fear of rejection. Many did not speak about what they had experienced. They were sometimes pressured into silence by their communities, who regarded the women as shameful or even blamed them for what occurred. It has taken decades for their stories to emerge, but as Director Tiffany Hsiung of *The Apology* says, “They still need us to listen and respond.” Learning to listen deeply to and acknowledge the stories of survivors is a form of justice. This lesson uses first-hand testimonies to understand the consequences of war through the eyes of women who are sharing their stories as an act of healing, a form of resistance and an attempt at historical reconciliation.

**Note to Educators:** *The Apology* is a documentary film about women's experience of sexual violence and rape during war. While the focus on the lesson revolves around what we can learn from their stories and how it can inspire change, students are asked to be active listeners as the women share traumatic memories. Setting the historical and emotional context for this lesson and creating a safe space within your classroom to discuss this topic is critical. It is expected that this lesson would be integrated only within courses where students have been prepared to encounter this history and have the maturity with which to share and process the information.

In the Resource section of this lesson you will find several recommended organizations and materials to use as you prepare to approach this topic with students.

#### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand the historical context of World War II on mainland China
- Listen to the experience of women survivors of war and reflect upon what it means to live through war
- Write a reflection on each of the stories
- Create a cinquain poem as a creative response to stories of wartime sexual violence

The extension activities also offer students the opportunity to:

- Engage with “The Space We Hold” - an online interactive space that allows audiences to listen to each of the women in *The Apology* tell their entire story
- Learn about the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize award to Nadia Murad and Dr. Denis Mukwege for their work fighting sexual violence as a weapon of war
- Learn about international war crimes, including militarized sexual violence and rape
- Connect this history to other current events such as sexual violence occurring in refugee camps

**GRADE LEVELS:** 10-12

### **SUBJECT AREAS**

World History, Psychology, English/Language Arts, Asian Studies and History, Women and Gender Studies, AP World History, AP Human Geography, AP Seminar

### **MATERIALS**

- Film clips from *The Apology* and equipment on which to show them

### **ESTIMATED TIME NEEDED**

One class period with homework and possible extension activities.

### **FILM CLIPS**

Film clips provided in this lesson are from *The Apology*. Access the streaming clips for free on POV's website by visiting [www.pbs.org/pov/educators](http://www.pbs.org/pov/educators). Borrow the full film from our DVD Lending Library by joining the [POV Community Network](#).

#### **Clip 1: Meeting Grandma Gil (4:23 min.)**

Vimeo: 2:33 - 6:56.

We meet Grandma Gil, who embarks on a two week long trip to Japan to protest the Osaka mayor's statement that it was necessary to have “comfort women” during the Japanese occupation.

#### **Clip 2: Meeting Grandma Cao (3:22 min.)**

Vimeo: 9:30 - 13:12

In Grandma Cao's village in China, we hear from villagers about what they know of her experience. We also listen to author Zhang Shaun Bing, who has collected and published the testimonies of wartime sexual violence victims in the book *Comfort Women Survey Records*.

#### **Clip 3: Meeting Adela (4:15 min)**

Vimeo: 15:30 - 19:05.

We enter Grandma Adela's community in the Philippines and meet the community of fellow survivors from the war who get together for companionship.

#### **Clip 4: The Power of Story: Part I (2:07 min.)**

Vimeo: 25:28 - 27:35 (2:07)

We learn more about the work Grandma Gil does when speaking out on behalf of all wartime survivors of sexual violence.

#### **Clip 5: The Power of Story: Part II (4:20 min.)**

Vimeo: 53:55 - 57:35 (4:20)

Grandma Gil tells her story in more detail to a group of Chinese women as part of a conference.

**Clip 6: “Asking the World to Participate” (2:35 min.)**

Vimeo:1:15:05 - 1:17:00

It is the 1,119th protest in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, South Korea, where Grandma Gil and hundreds of others call for the Japanese government to apologize.

**Clip 7: “Give Us Strength” (2:30 min.)**

Vimeo:1:18:30 - 1:22:00

1.5 million signatures are delivered to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

**ACTIVITY: A Listening Inventory**

Explain to students that they will be watching a series of short clips from the documentary film *The Apology*. The clips offer a window into the lives of three women forced into military sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II.

**Step One: Setting the Historical Context**

Review the historical context of World War II in the Asian-Pacific region. There are many maps of this period of time including [this one](#) from West Point.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this review is to have students get a sense of the geographic scale and span of the Japanese occupation.

We highly recommend reading this brief overview of Japan’s quest for power from 1931-1945. See [“Japan’s Quest for Power”](#) in Asia for Educators from Columbia University.<sup>2</sup>

**Step Two: Introduce the Exercise**

Set the format: Have students get a clean sheet of paper and pencil and ask students to remain quiet throughout the activity in order to help foster a space for reflection.

Explain the activity: Share with students that they will now be watching a series of short clips from the documentary film *The Apology*. Explain that after watching each clip a question will be posed to prompt reflection on a particular detail from the segment. Explain that after watching the sequence of clips, students will use their answers to construct a cinquain poem to help them reflect upon these women’s stories and this episode of World War II history.

**Step Three: Watch and Write**

Watch Clip 1, then, read aloud this statement from Grandma Gil:

“I understand that my visit is not appreciated. It is very difficult for someone like me to come to Japan. I don't know what you think about people like us who have been abused like us. We were born human, but haven't been able to live like normal humans. I will keep talking until the day I die. I am sincerely asking the Japanese government if they can speak the truth. Once we resolve the 'comfort women' issue, this war can finally end.”

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.westpoint.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/World%20War%20II%20Pacific/WorldWarTwoAsiaOverview.gif>

<sup>2</sup> [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan\\_1900\\_power.htm#war](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan_1900_power.htm#war)

Writing Prompt: Thinking of the public statement Grandma Gil made at the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, and what you watched about Grandma Gil's life. Write two words that you feel describe her personality.

Watch Clip 2, then have students respond to this writing prompt:

At the time of filming Grandma Cao lived alone in China at the age of 92.<sup>3</sup> After "meeting" Grandma Cao through this film clip, write four words that describe her personality and/or her home.

Watch Clip 3, then have students respond to this writing prompt:

In this clip we "meet" Grandma Adela and her fellow Filipina World War II survivors at their monthly meeting. Choose six individual words or create a short phrase that describes Grandma Adela and her community of women.

Watch Clips 4 and 5. After watching the clips, ask students to respond to this writing prompt:

Write down eight words that describe the emotions you felt or observed in these two film segments of Grandma Gil.

Watch Clips 6 and 7. Have students note one word for each clip that describes the actions of the Grandmas and their supporters.

#### **Step Four: Writing a Cinquain Poem - Processing Difficult Content**

A cinquain poem is a 5-line poem that does not rhyme and can be written about anything. The syllable pattern of a cinquain is 2, 4, 6, 8, 2; with this pattern, a unique visual shape emerges.

Instructions for students: Write down the words you used after viewing each of the film clips from *The Apology*. You may elect to assemble them as they were written or you may elect to move the words around to create another form.

Continuing to be silent, have students spend ten minutes creating their cinquain poem from their written responses to *The Apology*. If time allows, have students share their poem in pairs or invite volunteers to share with the entire class.

Collect the poems from students. You may begin the next class in one of these ways:

1. Posting the cinquain poems around the class and have students silently walk around and read the poems.
2. Assemble students in small groups and have students share their poems.
3. Passing out the poems randomly in class. Have each student write a response to the author of the poem on the back of the paper. Ask them to sign their name and return the poem to the author.

#### **EXTENSIONS/ADAPTATIONS**

##### **The Space We Hold<sup>4</sup>**

An interactive web project inviting students to interact more deeply with the stories of Grandma

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<sup>3</sup> Since the release of *The Apology*, Grandma Cao has died.

<sup>4</sup> <http://spacewehold.nfb.ca/>

Gil, Grandma Cao, and Grandma Adela. From the website, “In an era where rape continues to be used as a weapon of war and where sexual shaming and online harassment is commonplace, *The Space We Hold* asks us to imagine new ways of listening and responding to sexual violence.”

### **The 2018 Nobel Peace Prize**

In 2018, Nadia Murad and Dr. Denis Mukwege were awarded The Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict. In the press release announcing the award, the Nobel Committee stated:

This year marks a decade since the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1820<sup>5</sup> (2008), which determined that the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict constitutes both a war crime and a threat to international peace and security. This is also set out in the Rome Statute of 1998, which governs the work of the International Criminal Court. The Statute establishes that sexual violence in war and armed conflict is a grave violation of international law. A more peaceful world can only be achieved if women and their fundamental rights and security are recognized and protected in war.<sup>6</sup>

Have students research the work of Dr. Mukwege and Nadia Murad on The Nobel Peace Prize website.<sup>7</sup> Go here to see lessons on the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize.<sup>8</sup> As a homework assignment, have students research and write a Nobel Peace Prize nomination for a leader of their choice who has advanced the mission of ending violence against women.

### **Learn about International Law and Conventions on Sexual Violence during War**

Read “UN Background Information on Rape as a Tool of War.”<sup>9</sup> Read the Historical Timeline from United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.<sup>10</sup>

### **Memorials**

In *The Apology* we see the unveiling the Peace Statue to commemorate the 1,000th Wednesday demonstration of the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan.<sup>11</sup> This statue is one of many around the world to commemorate this wartime atrocity and the ongoing struggle for a full acknowledgement and reparations. To learn more about the history of the Peace Memorial we see in *The Apology* see “Japan Recalls South Korean Ambassador in Protest of ‘Comfort Women’ Memorial.”<sup>12</sup> Students may research the World War II memorials in their area and draft a proposal for incorporating the history of

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<sup>5</sup><https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/CAC%20S%20RES%201820.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>The Nobel Peace Prize for 2018. NobelPrize.org. Nobel Media AB 2018. Mon. 15 Oct 2018. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2018/press-release>. As a gynecologist Dr. Mukwege remains one of the world’s leading experts on repairing the injuries of rape and Nadia Murad, a member of the Yazidi minority in northern Iraq, was herself a victim of rape at the hands of the Islamic State Army and now speaks out to raise awareness and on behalf of other victims.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nobelprize.org/peace-2018-nobel-prize-lessons/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/about/bgsexualviolence.shtml>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1472-historical-timeline.html>

<sup>11</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Korean\\_Council\\_for\\_the\\_Women\\_Drafted\\_for\\_Military\\_Sexual\\_Slavery\\_by\\_Japan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Korean_Council_for_the_Women_Drafted_for_Military_Sexual_Slavery_by_Japan)

<sup>12</sup> <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/comfort-women-statue-south-korea-japan-814244>

“comfort women”—or other underrepresented victims of war. Have students design an informational poster to place on/near a local memorial, to make the commemorative work more inclusive.

### **Calls to Action**

The focus of the women’s activism in *The Apology* is personal and political. We see the Grandmas and hundreds of supporters organizing to pressure the current Japanese government to accept responsibility and be held accountable for their past crimes and to offer reparations. To learn more about this campaign see the [100 Million Signature Campaign](#).

### **Research Extensions**

#### **Rape in Current Refugee Camps**

“Women and children ‘endure rape beatings and abuse’ inside Dunkirk’s refugee camp,” *The Guardian*, February 11, 2017.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Rohingya Refugees**

“Violent rape just one of many disasters for Rohingya refugees,” *NBC News*, December 19, 2017.<sup>14</sup>

#### **United Nations High Commission for Refugees**

“UNHCR study uncovers shocking sexual violence against Syrian refugee boys, men,” December, 6, 2017.<sup>15</sup>

“Why the ‘Comfort Women’ Issue Still Matters, 70 Years Later,” *The Diplomat*, June 18, 2018.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Film**

#### ***The Apology***

<https://www.nfb.ca/film/apology/> — The National Film Board of Canada’s website about the film includes purchase information and streaming clips.

[www.pbs.org/pov/theapology](http://www.pbs.org/pov/theapology) — Offers a streaming video trailer for the film; an interview with the filmmaker; a list of related websites, articles and books; a downloadable discussion guide; and special features.

### **POV: Media Literacy Questions for Analyzing POV Films**

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/educators/media-literacy.php> — This list of questions provides a useful starting point for leading rich discussions that challenge students to think critically about documentaries.

### **STANDARDS**

#### **Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects**

([http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI\\_ELA%20Standards.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf))

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/12/dunkirk-child-refugees-risk-sexual-violence>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/violent-rape-just-one-many-disasters-rohingya-refugees-n830351>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2017/12/5a27a6594/unhcr-study-uncovers-shocking-sexual-violence-against-syrian-refugee-boys.html>

<sup>16</sup> <https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/why-the-comfort-women-issue-still-matters-70-years-later/>

## **Anchor Standards**

### Reading Literature and/or Information: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.

RL/RI.X.7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

RL/RI.X.9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

### Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.X.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.X.2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally

SL.X.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Range of Writing:

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Blueshift is a team of education specialists with background in social impact work. The team recognizes and builds on the power of documentary film in reaching broad audiences to spark energy for deep and lasting social change. The team works with filmmakers, photographers and writers to develop innovative educational strategies, experiences, tools and resources that bring stories off the screen and into viewers' lives.