

The Warsaw Uprising

Lesson II - progress

Learning objectives - general	Lesson objectives:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I, 4. Placing historical processes, phenomena and facts in time and putting them in order and establishing cause and effect relationships. II, 3. Distinguishing between informative, explanatory and evaluative layers in historical narrative. II, 4. Explaining cause and effect relationships, analysing historical phenomena and processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student knows the framework course of the Warsaw Uprising, indicates the main points of fighting. The student is able to explain the reasons for the fall of the uprising. The student evaluates the attitude of the Allied countries towards the uprising - confronts different historical assessments.
Specific content - detailed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> XXXIV, 4. the student characterizes the political and military activities of the Polish Underground State, including forms of resistance to the occupiers; XXXIV, 5. the student explains the causes and describes the consequences of the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising and evaluates the attitude of the Allies and the Soviet Union toward the uprising. 	

Forms:

exploratory method, analysis of source materials, discussion.

List of sources and tools:

1. The Warsaw Rising computer game
2. Appendix 1: Texts to compare historical narratives.

Introduction - a reminder of the most important issues from the previous lesson.	5 minutes
<p>What emotions and impressions did the game Warsaw Rising arouse in students? An invitation to discuss the game. The teacher can ask auxiliary questions - what surprised the students the most in the interactive reflection of the uprising? Did they learn anything new about the uprising during the game? What was most memorable for the students in the game? In what way do they think the virtual creation differs from the reality of the uprising?</p> <p>Leading the discussion, the teacher makes sure that the following points are clear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>the number of combatants on both sides was similar, but there was a huge disproportion between them in the quantity and quality of armaments.</i> - <i>the Home Army command anticipated that the uprising would last several days. If the offensive failed, it was expected that the insurgents would be able to defend themselves</i> 	15 minutes

<p><i>for about 14 days. The insurgents' initial successes could not be sustained without support.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>One of the key challenges was that the areas occupied by the insurgents were not connected and were separated from each other. Moving units between city districts was extremely difficult and dangerous.</i> - <i>prolonged fighting resulted in famine and a sanitation crisis, the challenge itself was to survive in an increasingly devastated city.</i> - <i>supply airdrops were difficult and not very precise, and many of them fell into the hands of the Germans.</i> - <i>contrary to the visions maintained in culture, children rarely participated in the uprising, and single exceptions performed auxiliary service. Children did not fight.</i> 	
<p>Why didn't the Red Army support the insurgents? As stated in the previous lesson - the engagement of Soviet troops was one of the main hopes of the Home Army command. What might have been the reasons behind this? The teacher collects the students' hypotheses. Students are then given <i>Appendix 1 texts to compare historical narratives</i>. Half of the students receive text 1, the other half receive text 2.</p> <p>After reviewing their content, they evaluate their hypotheses.</p>	10 minutes
<p>Why are there such different assessments of the USSR's involvement in not providing aid to the insurgent Warsaw? Which of these texts should we trust more?</p> <p><i>Text 1 It reflects the historical narrative promoted in the USSR and the People's Republic of Poland after the war to justify the lack of Soviet aid. Text 2 provides more detailed facts and is based, among other things, on diplomatic notes declassified many years after the war. For many years, the historical truth about Stalin's deliberate political decision was concealed.</i></p> <p>It is difficult, in retrospect, to reliably assess whether the decision to start the uprising based on the hope for Soviet help was justified and whether the Home Army authorities at the time could have foreseen Stalin's cynicism - this is still a matter of dispute among historians today.</p>	10 minutes
<p>During the next lesson we will look at the consequences of the Warsaw Uprising. If the course of the uprising itself is of more interest to anyone, then apart from playing the Warsaw Rising game, the characters of which are fictional created for the purpose of the game, it is worth reading the accounts in the Oral History Archive of the Warsaw Rising Museum - students learned about this source in the previous lesson. Learning about the true fate of those who fought will certainly be interesting and valuable.</p>	5 minutes

Appendix 1 Texts to compare historical narratives:

Text 1

Operation Bagration, the Red Army's offensive on the Eastern Front in the spring of 1944, was one of the greatest defeats of the Third Reich in the entire war. Within 2 months, the Red Army regained control of almost all the territory lost during Operation Barbarossa. At that time, the Soviets were moving the front line by an average of 20 kilometres a day - a very high rate that was impossible to maintain for a long time. While a man can go forward exhausted, armoured equipment will not go without fuel regardless of the willingness and determination of its crew. The offensive had to slow down to allow logistics and supply lines to reach the front line and replenish the losses. In addition, from 25 July, the largest armoured battle of this military campaign took place on the outskirts of Warsaw. The 2nd Panzer Army suffered heavy losses in it and was effectively stopped by the German defence.

Despite its desire to help Warsaw, the Red Army could not take the risk and, seriously weakened, throw its exhausted forces into landing on the left bank of the Vistula River. The decision to launch the uprising was made prematurely, without consulting the Soviet authorities - when full Soviet aid was not possible. As far as possible, the USSR made attempts to support the insurgents, e.g. by airdrops and air support.

Text 2

On 1 August 1944, the Prime Minister of the Polish Government in Exile, Mikolajczyk, was in Moscow for diplomatic talks. When the insurgents, on 2 August, radioed the information about the outbreak of the uprising, the information reached Stalin, but it was denied by him. The next day Mikolajczyk met with Stalin in person and asked him to support Warsaw. Stalin's attitude toward the uprising was unequivocally negative, which was related to the recognition of the intentions of the Polish authorities - the desire to prevent the Sovietization of Poland and to strengthen the position of the Government in Exile and its Delegation for Poland against the pro-Soviet PKWN.

On 4 August, Stalin was also urged to provide aid by Churchill, who declared support of the British air force. On 5 August, Stalin refused, arguing that the scale of the uprising was much smaller than it actually was and it was not worth giving support to insignificant small-scale fighting. The Soviet authorities expected that the uprising in Warsaw would quickly collapse, and that the Germans themselves would remove the obstacle to the Sovietization of Poland, i.e. the Home Army and the Polish Underground State.

As late as the second half of August, the Soviet Union was not only failing to help, but making it difficult for other Allied countries to help. The U.S. ambassador asked for permission for U.S. aircraft dropping supplies to Warsaw to use airfields in Russian-occupied areas. Molotov, the head of Soviet diplomacy, replied that *"the Soviet Government not only does not agree to this, but additionally warns that even damaged Allied planes making flights over Warsaw will not be allowed to land at Soviet airfields"*.

Under pressure from the Allies, the Soviet Union began providing support to Warsaw when the command of the Home Army was already conducting capitulation talks with the Germans. The belated help was symbolic and was intended to dismiss allegations of failure to meet allied obligations.