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The Movie *300* & Hollywood's Responsibility to Historical Accuracy

Nicholas DeAntonis, Academy of Information Technology & Engineering, Stamford, CT

Grade level: 10

Number of class periods: 1

Objective

- Students will have a greater understanding of the role the media plays in shaping our cultural opinions of the Middle East (Persia).
- Students will learn how to articulate themselves through writing.
- Students will demonstrate their understanding of the author's arguments by using textual support to defend their position.

Common Core Standards

Comprehensive Common Core Alignments at end of lesson plan.

- Reading Standards for Literacy in History/ Social Studies Standards 2, 6,
- Writing Standards for Literacy in History/ Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects Standards 1, 4, 7, 8
- Reading Standards for Informational Texts Standard 8
- Writing Standard 1

Resources

- ["300: The Use and Abuse of Greek History," Subho Basu, Craige Champion, and Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn](#)
- ["300 Review," Josh Tyler](#)
- [Persuasive Essay Overview](#)
- [Preparing to Write Your Essay Argument Worksheet, Student Handout](#)
- [Essay Scoring Sheet, Student Handout](#)

Optional Preparation

- Students should be familiar with why the Persian War was fought and the three main battles: Marathon, Thermopylae, and Salamis.
- Students should have a basic understanding of the Persian Empire and its major accomplishments.
- Students should have a basic understanding of the Greek Empire and its major accomplishments, particularly the Spartan city-state.

Activity

Writing a Persuasive Essay

- This essay is given at the end of a comparative unit on ancient Greece and Persia.
- The class can watch the entire film or just the battle scene that articulates the controversial elements of the movie.
 - Movie: *300* (2006).
- The students will read two articles about the historical accuracy of the film *300* and take a position on ***whether or not Hollywood should be held responsible for producing historically accurate films***. In their essay, they must support or oppose the prompt. The students' essays should include information from *each* of the source materials.



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Assessment/Reflection

- Students should demonstrate the ability to support their thesis with evidence from the articles.
 - Students should demonstrate a detailed understanding of the controversy created by the film *300*.
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Common Core Alignments

This lesson could fit into a Social Studies unit on digital media and history through film, or could be part of an English unit on claims and counterclaims. The alignments were written with 10th grade in mind, but could be adjusted for an older or younger group.

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/ Social Studies

Key Ideas and Details

Standard 2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

- Students will be reading two reviews of the film *300* and will need to determine the central idea of each article and will need to be able to summarize the key idea in order to synthesize it into an independent argument.

Craft and Structure

Standard 6: Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

- Students will be comparing the points of view of the authors of the two different film reviews. They will need to compare this and evaluate the arguments made in each in order to formulate their own argument about Hollywood's obligation towards historical accuracy.

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/ Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects

Text Types and Purposes

Standard 1: Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

- Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
 - Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form and in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
- Students will be writing arguments about the role of the media in honoring historical accuracy and will need to present their own claim, or argument about the topic based on arguments that they have read from other authors. They will also need to address a counterclaim to their own claim.

Production and Distribution of Writing

Standard 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

- Students will be producing an argumentative or persuasive essay and must make sure their development and organization are appropriate given the task and the guidelines set forth by the teacher.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Standard 7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.



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- Students will be doing research in order to determine whether or not Hollywood films have the responsibility to be historically accurate. They have two articles to begin with but may, in some instances, use other sources to explore the issue as well. Regardless of how many sources students use, they must demonstrate understanding of the issue and its complexity.

Reading Standards for Informational Text

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Standard 8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

- Students will be looking at two reviews of the film *300* with an eye to understanding the argument made about historical accuracy. Students will evaluate the claims of these authors in order to formulate their own independent arguments.

Writing Standards 6-12

Text Types and Purposes

Standard 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. Explore and inquire into areas of interest to formulate an argument.

- Students will be writing an argumentative or persuasive essay in order to support their claim(s) about whether or not films have a duty to stay true to history. They will be using reasoning and evidence, partially generated from two film reviews of the movie *300*. They will also explore how films have shaped public perception of the Middle East in order to help them formulate an argument.