1A.1: Analyzing Historical Detail

1. Introduce the unit.
Explain that students will use primary and secondary sources to gain an understanding of the events leading up to World War II in Europe. Tell students that they will create visual timelines of key events and then choose an event to depict in a film scene. They will then create written storyboards for their film scenes.

Distribute **Handout 1: Unit Overview** and review it with students. Point out the vocabulary list and explain that students can refer to it throughout the unit, as needed.

2. Introduce the World War II movie and the purpose of viewing a clip.
Share enough of the movie's plot for students to understand the clip you have chosen. Explain that students should take notes on historical details in the scene, such as clothing styles, models of cars, and the way people speak to and interact with each other.

> **Note:** If your students would benefit from more structure for note-taking, discuss categories for the information, formats students might use, or other note-taking tips.

3. Show the film clip and lead a discussion.
Play the clip more than once, to allow adequate time for students to analyze it for historical details. Ask:

- What research should filmmakers conduct in order to make a film that is set in the past seem believable?

  Possible answers: Filmmakers need to research the types of clothing and military uniforms worn, the hair styles and accessories commonplace at the time, the architectural style and height of buildings, civilian and military car makes and models, informal language conventions used, and the appearance and bearing of any historical figures depicted in the film.

- What sources might filmmakers use for their research?

  Possible answers: Filmmakers might talk to people who lived during the time period; look at artifacts from the time period, such as newspapers, books, posters, journals, and letters; visit locations portrayed in the film; watch documentaries about the time period; and visit museums with clothing or furniture displays from the time period.

> **Note:** If you plan to show an "extra feature" from a DVD, allow time for an additional discussion about the specific kinds of research done for the film.

4. Describe the unit project.

Distribute **Handout 2:** *The Path to War* **Project Description**, **Assessment Checklist:** *The Path to War* **Project**, and **Self-Assessment Checklist: Teamwork**. Answer any questions students may have.

Handout 1:
Unit Overview

The Path to War: Using Visual Media to Understand the Causes of World War II

How do filmmakers bring history to life? How do they use the historical record to shape their own storytelling? In this unit, you will assume the role of a filmmaker creating a film scene from a key event leading up to World War II in Europe. Before choosing the specific event during which your scene takes place, you will need to learn about the circumstances, incidents, and motivations that created the conditions for war in Europe.

As you explore the causes of World War II, you'll examine images of historic events and read eyewitness accounts and documents created by historians and others. In the process, you'll learn what it takes to accurately portray stories based on occurrences in the past.

Your work in this unit will revolve around the following questions:

- What were the causes of World War II?
- What materials can help us understand significant events, such as the causes of World War II, that profoundly influenced the course of history?
- How do filmmakers and others who create media set in the past interpret history, and how do these interpretations influence our understanding of the past?

Unit Project

For the unit project, you and your team will create a written storyboard for a scene in a film set between World Wars I and II. With your team, you will create a visual timeline of events leading up to World War II. Each team member will then write a brief summary of the causes of World War II. Finally, as a team, you will choose an event from your timeline to depict in a film scene and create a written storyboard for the scene.

What You Will Do in This Unit

Learn about events in Europe in the years between World War I and World War II. Read about people, places, and occurrences during the interwar years in Europe.

Create a visual timeline. Work with your team to construct a timeline of key events that pushed Europe toward World War II.

Write a summary of the causes of World War II. Use your team's visual timeline to write a brief summary of the events in Europe that led to World War II.

Conduct research about an event leading up to World War II. With your team, choose and research an event to use as a backdrop for a scene in a historical film.

Create a written storyboard. As a team, develop the story behind your scene and create a written storyboard for the film scene.

Vocabulary Used in This Unit

Allied powers: The military and political alliance of countries led by England, the United States, and the Soviet Union that fought the Axis powers in World War II.

Appeasement: The political strategy of placating a potentially hostile nation by granting concessions in the hope of avoiding war.

Axis powers: The military and political alliance of countries led by Germany, Italy, and, later, Japan that fought the Allied powers in World War II.

Fascism: A movement, ideology, or attitude that favors dictatorial government, centralized control of private enterprise, repression of all opposition, and extreme nationalism.

Inference: A conclusion based on evidence or reasoning.

Nationalism: Excessive or fanatical devotion to a nation and its interests, often associated with a belief that one country is superior to all others.

National Socialism: The ideology of the Nazi Party; sometimes called *Nazism*.

Nazi: Short version for the German name of the *National Socialist German Workers Party*, a right-wing, nationalistic, and anti-Semitic political party formed in 1919 and headed by Adolf Hitler from 1921 to 1945.

The Reichstag: The seat of parliamentary government in Germany.

Reparations: Compensation demanded of a defeated nation by the victor in a war.

Storyboard: A "blueprint" depicting sequences of scenes for films, TV shows, video games, animations, and advertisements. Storyboards help filmmakers organize and sequence their work.

Synagogue: The place of worship and communal center of a Jewish congregation.

Handout 2:
The Path to War Project Description

You will work as part of a team to develop a story for a film scene from one of the key events leading up to World War II. Your team will:

- create a visual timeline of events in Europe between World War I and World War II
- choose an event from your timeline to use in a film scene dramatizing one of the causes of World War II
- develop a story that takes place during the event
- create a written storyboard for a film scene based on your story
- present your storyboard to the class

Storyboards are a series of drawings or sketches that are often used as "blueprints" for films, animations, and advertisements. Storyboards help film directors and others organize and sequence their work. For this project, you will create a written storyboard that describes the characters, setting, and events in your film scene.

Step 1: Create a Visual Timeline

Your teacher will assign readings about the circumstances in Europe between World War I and World War II. You and your team will use the readings, your notes, and class discussions and activities as the basis for your team's timeline.

With your team, you will create a timeline of important people and events leading up to the beginning of World War II in Europe. On your timeline, you will organize items—such as photographs, illustrations, and quotes—in chronological order, and create an information key for additional details and facts. Through class discussions and activities, you will add information to your timeline. You will include both primary source information, such as photographs, eyewitness accounts, advertisements, cartoons, quotations, and letters, and secondary source information from accounts given by historians.

Step 2: Choose an Event to Dramatize

With your team, you will choose an event from your timeline and create a story for a film scene that takes place during that event. Your story will powerfully dramatize one of the events that led to World War II.

To choose your event, you will consider four key factors:
- Real-life historical characters
- Visual and written information about the physical setting of the event
- Quotations
- Particularly dramatic episodes or moments

Step 3: Outline the Story

You and your team will describe the characters and setting in the story for your film scene and decide on a point of view from which to tell the story.

You will use historical details to help you visualize your film scene by looking carefully at the details you included on your visual timeline.

Step 4: Create a Written Storyboard

Using your story outline, you and your team will create a written storyboard for the sequence of shots in your film scene. You will describe what the audience actually sees as well as what you, as filmmakers, want the audience to infer during each shot.

Step 5: Present York Work to the Class

Your team will present your storyboard to the class. To help your classmates visualize your film sequence, you may decide to describe it orally, act it out, or create visuals to go along with the written storyboard. Your presentation should address these questions:

- Why did your team choose to depict this particular event? What is its historical significance as one of the causes of World War II?
- How does your written storyboard tell a particular story?
- What process did you use to choose the characters and setting for your story?

Be prepared to answer questions on your presentation and on the historical content of your work.

Assessment Checklist:
The Path to War Project

Use this assessment to help create your visual timeline and written storyboard. Make sure to include all the requirements. Your teacher will use this assessment to evaluate your work.

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
Visual Timeline		**Student Comments**	**Teacher Comments**
Includes key events that occurred in Europe between World War I and World War II.	**30%**		
Lists events accurately and in chronological order.	**20%**		
Provides important details associated with events, such as people, places, documents, and quotes.	**20%**		
Demonstrates knowledge of causative events leading up to World War II in Europe.	**30%**		
Total	**100%**		

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
Written Storyboard		**Student Comments**	**Teacher Comments**
Clearly and effectively details a film scene that occurs during an event leading up to World War II.	**40%**		
Provides a convincing description of setting and characters.	**20%**		
Includes both visual information about the scene (such as camera angle and the position of characters) and other details, such as character dialogue.	**20%**		
Accurately describes historical details.	**20%**		
Total	**100%**		

Self-Assessment Checklist:
Teamwork

Use this assessment to help you assess and improve your teamwork skills.

Criteria	Comments
My Individual Teamwork Skills: As a team member, I . . .	
Listen to my teammates' ideas	
Ask questions of my teammates, in order to help them clarify their ideas	
Actively participate in team discussions	
Contribute my own ideas, and/or piggy-back or build on my teammates' ideas	
Help my team evaluate information, and propose creative solutions	
Communicate my ideas clearly and defend my ideas and opinions, with specific evidence	
Respect my teammates and their opinions	
Compromise, when necessary	
Help and offer assistance to other team members	
Do my share of the work	

Criteria	Comments
Our Team's Teamwork Skills: As a team, we . . .	
Understand our team's goal	
Identify the tasks that we need to accomplish	
Assign tasks to different team members	
Know each individual's role and tasks	
Communicate clearly, listen, and resolve disagreements without attacking or blaming	
Plan tasks and set deadlines	
Meet deadlines	