

## What would you have done?

Previous compulsory steps / Prior students' knowledge	Basic knowledge of the Second World War.
Learning objectives	Developing an in-depth understanding of the aftermath of the Second World War and the psychological effects of war.
Subjects	History, Politics, Social Science
Recommended Age	All
Material needed	Laptop or phone with the video game installed
Sequence duration	150 minutes (2.5 hours)
Individual or group activity	Individual or in groups
Inclusion best practices	The dialogues of the video game are simple and there are also subtitles, so it is easy to play for students with basic knowledge of English. The topic of the game might be sensitive for children that have lived through war (i.e., asylum seekers, refugees, etc.)
Expected production	Visual presentation on equality, inclusion, countering racism
Skills developed	Critical thinking, historical comprehension, cultural skills, communication, problem-solving
Price range of the game	<20€

## Step by step: how to implement the sequence

In this pedagogical sequence, students will be introduced to the history of the Second World War and the immediate aftermath of the war on the daily lives of people.

Students will play the first chapter of the game: “My Child Lebensborn”, to understand the aftermath of the Second World War and the effects of war, mainly on children. Children are always the most innocent victims of all wars, but in the Second World War, more children were either killed or orphaned than at any other time in history (Shields & Bryan, 2002). The players play as the foster parents of a child that was part of the Lebensborn programme and they have to help the child with its basic, daily needs. The child’s mood depends on the player’s actions and how the player uses their resources to buy what the child needs throughout the day.

This is not a game about preparing food and bathing a child. Instead, it is a game that shows how bullying, racism, and xenophobia can shape someone’s life and what the role of the family should be in such cases. Ultimately, this game offers an insight into the lives of children that lived through the Second World War, drawing upon real testimonies, and it shows how the Second World War changed the world forever.

**Note: This topic may be sensitive for some students and playing the game might be very emotional. Although all ages can play the game, it is not recommended for very young children due to the sensitivity of the topic.**

- **Step 1: Introduction of the main topic (20 minutes)**

As an introduction to the topic, you can ask the students what they know about the Second World War and the Holocaust. Ask your students to describe their emotions when referring to this topic and guess how life changed in the years immediately after the war.

Due to the sensitivity of the topic and the inhumane crimes that occurred during the Second World War, it is important to make sure your students feel comfortable in class and highlight that the end of the Second World War led to the Declaration of Human Rights to ensure that such crimes won't occur again. Avoid having an extensive discussion about the Holocaust and the crimes that occurred during the Second World War as this could be a very sensitive topic, especially for younger students.

For a quick introduction to the emotional effects of the Second World War, you can show your students some brief videos:

- [German Soldier Remembers WW2 - Youtube](#): (10.30 - until the end) this video shows the experiences of a German Soldier and his thoughts following the end of the war.
- [When a former Nazi meets a Holocaust survivor - Youtube](#): this video shows a former Nazi meeting a Holocaust survivor more than 70 years after the outbreak of the Second World War.

My Child Lebensborn refers to a specific crime that took place during the Second World War, known as the Lebensborn Program. The Nazis' regime developed the Lebensborn program to increase Germany's population (Holocaust Encyclopedia, 2020). During the Second World War, the program included kidnapping foreign

children and raising children at private maternity homes (known as the Lebensborn houses) (ibid.)

Video introduction to the Lebensborn program:

- [Lebensborn. Nazi 'Super Kids' Factory | RT Documentary - YouTube](#): this video is a short introduction to the Lebensborn program and it explains how those children's lives changed after the end of the war. Show the video with caution.

- **Step 2: Introduction to the video game and assigning it as homework (90 minutes)**



Image 1: Steam, "My Child Lebensborn", ([https://store.steampowered.com/app/1114070/My\\_Child\\_Lebensborn/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/1114070/My_Child_Lebensborn/)).

Following the introductory discussion about the Second World War and the Lebensborn program, you can introduce the game "My Child Lebensborn" to the class. This video game takes place in the immediate years after the Second World War and it deals with the psychological effects of the war on the children that were part of the Lebensborn program.

The video game can be bought on steam and it costs 6.59€. You can use this link: [https://store.steampowered.com/app/1114070/My\\_Child\\_Lebensborn/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/1114070/My_Child_Lebensborn/).

Students will be assigned to play the first chapter of the game as homework. Ask your students to take notes on what they identify as the main consequences of the war in the lives of children, as well as their own emotions while playing the game.

To prepare the students for their assignment, you can show an introductory video of the game in class:

- [My Child Lebensborn \(Game Beyond Entertainment Winner\) and Empathy - Youtube](#): this video refers to the empathy students should develop for the characters of the game.

To get a broader perspective of the effects of war on children, you can assign your students to play the video game in different approaches. For example, some students could choose to read a bedtime story to the child, others might prefer to play with the child during the day instead. If someone doesn't have enough money to feed the child, would this bring any memories of the war? What are the psychological effects on the child and how does a parent react when realising they don't have enough money to raise their child? The overall aim of this gaming session is for students to be able to empathise with the child they are raising in the game.

- **Step 3: Visual Presentation (30 minutes)**

After playing the game as part of their homework, the students will come together and produce a visual presentation on the effects of war on the lives of children. You can divide the students into groups of 3-4 students. Each student can share their emotions when playing the game and what psychological effects of the war they had identified.

Students can either produce a digital visual presentation (i.e., using PowerPoint or creating a video) or a poster with drawings and images. The aim of this exercise is for students to understand the importance of equality and inclusion and why countering racism in schools is necessary.

- **Step 4: Debrief (10 minutes)**

The class will come together to share their presentations. You can ask each group to explain how they created their presentations and what emotions they felt when playing the game. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, it is important to use this time to check how the students feel.

## References

Bryan B., Shield L. (2002). "The effect of war on children: the children of Europe after World War II". <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12094836/>.

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