

Lesson 7: Clash of Steel - The major tank battles between Russia and Germany during WWII.



Essential Question:

- What was the effects of these major tank battles on the Eastern front?

Overview:

As the Allied invasion in Western Europe gains traction and begins to push the Germans back, in the East the Russians handed the Germans a devastating defeat at Stalingrad. That battle had cost the German army dearly and is considered the turning point in WW2 in the East. Although they would have a few setbacks the initiative was now with the Soviet Union. In the summer of 1943, the largest tank took place at the Battle of Kursk A year later east of Warsaw a lesser know but another large tank battle takes place at Wolomin. At both battles the Russians were the victors but at a very high cost of men and material.

Materials:

Reader Board

Clash of Steel Video

Panzer V. Auf. A (Panther)

T-34(85)



Procedures:

Have the students watch the “Clash of Steel” video to understand the perspective of both a German and Russian tank commanders during the war. The video is from each of their points of view and the comparing of their tanks. The last minute of the video focuses on the Panther and its restoration by Jacques Littlefield. Break the students up into small groups and have them brainstorm the comparisons between them. Follow up asking them which tank would rather be a crew member in.

The students can also read the reader board to get further details regarding the battle and outcome.



Panzer V Auf. A (Panther)

The Panzer V Auf A, more commonly known as the Panther tank, was a medium tank used by the German Wehrmacht during World War II. It was introduced in 1943 and quickly became one of the most effective and feared tanks of the war. In this lesson, we will learn about the design and capabilities of the Panther tank, as well as its role in the war.



T-34/85

The T-34 was the mainstay of the Soviet Red Army armored forces throughout the war. Its general specifications remained nearly unchanged until early 1944, when it received a firepower upgrade with the introduction of the greatly improved T-34-85 variant. Its production method was continuously refined and rationalized to meet the needs of the Eastern Front, making the T-34 quicker and cheaper to produce. The Soviets ultimately built over 80,000 T-34s of all variants, it was the most-produced tank of the war, as well as the second most-produced tank of all time (after its successor, the T-54/T-55 series). With 44,900 lost during the war, it also suffered the most tank losses ever.