***Periodization Debate: When did World War II Begin and End?***

**Introduction**

Periodization of chunks of time in history is a key reflection of the historian’s view of the past. Large events such as World War II have been periodized differently by historians from various parts of the world. This activity will help you act like an historian by seeing that the beginning and ending dates for big events can be changed by arguments with clear evidence.

**Directions -** Use the timelines below to select one of the dates for the beginning of World War II and one date for the ending of the war. You may use the posted class resources and other sources to find evidence to defend your choices.

1. Give TWO reasons for selecting the date you think World War II began.

2. Give TWO reasons for selecting the date you think World War II ended.

3. Give TWO reasons for NOT selecting one of the other dates for the beginning of World War II.

4. Give TWO reasons for NOT selecting one of the other dates for the ending of World

War II.

5. Write a short response to the following question: “In what ways might world historians have different perspectives on the beginning and ending dates of major events like World War II?”

***Timelines on Beginning and End Dates of World War II***

**Possible Beginning Dates for WII**

1931 Japanese invasion of Manchuria

1937 Japanese invasion of China

1939 German invasion of Poland

1940 German attacks on Britain

1941 Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor and Singapore

**Possible Ending Dates for WII**

February 1943 German army surrendered to Soviets

June 1945 German army surrendered to Allies in Germany

August 1945 Japanese government surrendered to Allies on US naval ship