

“What Story Sells?”

How Tourism Shapes Historical Memory — KS3 Lesson Plan (50 minutes)

Simulating Silence — Secondary Teacher Resources

Key Stage	KS3 (Ages 11–14)
Duration	50 minutes
Sources used	Source Sheet: B, C, D, I, L
Curriculum link	Edexcel KS3: “Interpreting the British Empire: how has it been commemorated and contested?”
Key concepts	Interpretation, significance, evidence
Prior knowledge	None about Japan required

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify what information tourism sources include and exclude about a historical site
2. Explain how the way a place is presented to visitors shapes what people understand about its history
3. Compare how different types of tourism source (government, commercial, travel guide) frame the same place differently

Starter: What is this place? (5 minutes)

Project a photograph of Hashima Island from the sea (the “battleship” silhouette view). Do not name the island.

Ask students: What do you think this place is? What might have happened here?

Take 3–4 responses. Then reveal: This is Hashima Island, also called “Battleship Island,” off the coast of Nagasaki, Japan. It was a coal mining community where over 5,000 people lived on an island smaller than most school playing fields. It is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Today we are going to look at how this island is sold to visitors — and what that selling tells us about how history works.

Main Activity: The Comparison Grid (30 minutes)

Phase 1 — Reading the sources (15 minutes)

Distribute the comparison grid. Organise students into pairs. Assign each pair one source to read first. Each pair reads their assigned source and completes their row of the grid:

	Source B: Japan Tourism	Source C: Nagasaki City	Source D: GaijinPot	Source I: Yamasa Shipping	Source L: Digital Museum
Who made this source?					
Who is it for?					

	Source B: Japan Tourism	Source C: Nagasaki City	Source D: GaijinPot	Source I: Yamasa Shipping	Source L: Digital Museum
What words does it use to describe Hashima?					
What period of history does it focus on?					
Does it mention forced labour?					
What does it want the reader to DO?					

Phase 2 — Sharing and comparing (10 minutes)

Pairs report back. Teacher fills in a shared grid on the whiteboard.

What students should discover: Sources B, C, I, and L do not mention forced labour at all. Source D mentions it in one paragraph but then advises visitors not to ask about it. All five sources want the reader to visit, book, or buy something.

Phase 3 — The key question (5 minutes)

If a tourist visits Hashima using only these five sources to prepare, what would they learn about the island's history — and what would they never find out?

Plenary: So what? (10 minutes)

Introduce the concept of **interpretive framing**: the idea that how a place is presented determines what people understand about it. This is not the same as lying — none of these sources say anything false. They simply choose what to include and what to leave out.

Ask students to write a one-sentence answer: "How can a source be accurate but still misleading?"

Extension / Homework

Option A (Creative): Write a 100-word description of Hashima for a tourism website that is accurate but tells a completely different story from Sources B-D.

Option B (Analytical): Source D says "Tour guides are normally reluctant to address this issue so it's best not to push it." Write a paragraph explaining what this sentence reveals about how Hashima's history is managed for visitors. Use the word "silence" in your answer.

Differentiation

Support: Pre-complete the "Who made this source?" row. Reduce to three sources (B, D, L). Provide sentence starters for the plenary.

Stretch: After Phase 2, ask students to rank the five sources from "most informative" to "least informative" and justify their ranking.