

EYEWITNESS TO HISTORY: THE GREAT WAR

Grade Level: 7th Grade Social Studies

Presented by: Lizabeth Thompson. Laurens Academy. Laurens, SC

Length of Unit: 6 Lessons plus culminating project (approximately 10-12 days total)

I. Abstract

Transform your students into eyewitnesses of history as they learn the causes and effects of the "Great War." They take notes from the "general" on geography, war technology, and trench warfare in their own classroom trenches. They analyze and create propaganda and prepare for war as the nation shifts from neutrality to full mobilization. The young "soldiers" also have an opportunity to share in the agony of war and the pros and cons of everyday life in the trenches as they send home letters to their parents. The class then becomes political, celebrating the close of the war as they represent Europe's punitive demands and America's Fourteen Points at the Treaty of Versailles negotiations. Finally, your eyewitnesses to history look ahead as they evaluate the results of the war and its treaty. The moments are captured in detail as the students produce quilts about the time period

II. Overview

- A. To analyze the motivating factors for alliances and powers of World War I
- B. To develop and refine spatial map reading skills
- C. To evaluate the causes and effects of World War I
- D. To interpret and analyze propaganda
- E. To categorize and rank ideas for an argument
- F. To synthesize content by creating a quilt

III. Background Knowledge

- A. For the teachers:
 1. Garraty, John. *The Story of America*.
 2. Remarque, Erich Maria. *All Quiet on the Western Front*. (Also available in some areas in movie version)
- B. For the Students:
 1. Hakim, Joy. *An Age of Extremes*
 2. Hakim, Joy. *War, Peace, and All That Jazz*
 3. Hirsch, E. D. *What Your Sixth Grader Needs to Know*

IV. Lessons

Lesson One: Europe in 1914

- A. Objectives:
 1. To identify all alliances before and during the war.
 2. To locate the countries and allied powers on a map.
- B. Materials:
 1. Poster: "Alliances in Europe" and accompanying handout. McDonald's Publishing.
 2. Globes or atlases for reference
 3. Colored pencils
- C. Key Vocabulary: alliance, Triple Entente, Triple Alliance, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire, Central Powers, Allies
- D. Procedures/Activities:
 1. Motivator: "Where in the world are we?" Have students find several European countries

- on modern class map. Save Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire for last. When they realize the two countries are no longer on the map, ask "Where did they go?"
2. Pass out copies of a map of Europe in 1914 and copies of teacher created materials on alliances and geography.
 3. While working in cooperative groups, students must locate the members of the alliances and color them the assigned colors. They must also include any neutral countries, land masses, and waterways addressed in the teacher materials.
 4. The teacher reviews the main ideas orally.
 5. Closing or Homework: Have students categorize W.W.I powers and neutral countries on a tree map. Be sure to color code the countries to the colors on their maps.

E. Assessment: Map Rubric

Lesson Two: Europe at War

A. Objective

1. To analyze the reasons for a world war in Europe
2. To record the reasons on flashcards for review purposes

B. Materials:

1. Poster: "Reasons for War." McDonald's Publishing
2. Worksheet: "Causes of the Great War" Teacher Created Materials
3. Scissors
4. Teacher created material on causes of war
5. *What Your Sixth Grader Needs to Know.* E. D. Hirsch

C. Key Vocabulary: nationalism, imperialism, militarism, alliances, Archduke Franz Ferdinand

D. Procedures/Activities:

1. Motivator: Read account of assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand to class. Have volunteers reenact episode as the teacher reads.
2. Distribute "Causes of the Great War" sheet and have students cut into flashcards.
3. The teacher introduces the terms and definitions using the World War I poster.
4. Have students reword the definitions on the front side of the cards.
5. Working in pairs, students then find examples of each card in the Core Knowledge books. Write these examples on the back side of the card.
6. Debrief students giving them the opportunity to fill in additional details.
7. Homework: Tell students to wear comfortable clothes for tomorrow when they report for boot camp!!

E. Evaluation/Assessment: Informal assessment in debriefing.

Lesson Three: New Technology (*Note: This requires some advance set up time. See # 3 below for arrangements)

A. Objectives

1. To differentiate among the new weapons of war
2. To experience life in the trenches.

B. Materials:

1. Handmade poster of trench warfare
2. Handmade "barbed" wire (make sure there are no sharp points)
3. *History Alive* slides, script, and parent letter
4. Handmade slides depicting new weapons. Sources: Shermer, David. *World War I* and Marshall, S. L. A. *The American Heritage History of World War I*

C. Key Vocabulary: trench warfare, machine guns, tanks, airplanes, submarines, U-boats, mustard

gas/gas masks

D. Procedures/Activities

1. Motivator: Boot Camp-- Outside the classroom, have students line up alphabetically in two single file lines. Their "orders" are to stand at attention with pencil and paper ready while the "general" inspects them.
 2. Instruct the soldiers that Row 1 represents the Allies and Row 2 represents the Central Powers. Then unveil the battle plans: the handmade trench warfare map. Their next orders are to copy the map. Once everyone is finished, form up according to alliances and march into class.
 3. Trench warfare is a lesson in the *History Alive* notebook. All diagrams and instructions can be found in it. For those who do not have *History Alive*: Arrange desks to form trenches, one row on each side of the room. You can push the desk tops towards the wall to form a long trench OR push the desks together desk top to desk top. Either way, the students must crawl under the desk tops to get into the trenches. Warn them that they must stay down or they might risk being shot. They also cannot venture into no man's land.
 4. Show the six *History Alive* slides and read the slide script (excerpts from *All Quiet on the Western Front*). Students jot down notes while the general lectures. Students are invited to actively participate in the slide show by providing action and sound effects where applicable.
 5. Show handmade slides on the new war technology and its effects. Students take notes.
 6. Using the questions at end of the slide script, debrief students on life in the trenches.
 7. Distribute letter home to parents and assessment rubric.
 8. Homework: Pretend you are a soldier on the western front. Write a letter to your parents describing the conditions, etc. of life in the trenches.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment: Letter Rubric. After checking the letters, mail home to parents.
Optional: invite parents to respond.

Lesson Four: The Course of the War

A. Objective

1. To chart the course of the war in the Western, Eastern Fronts and the Atlantic

B. Materials:

1. Teacher created chart
2. Teacher created materials
3. Classroom map, globe, or atlas (for reference)
4. Worksheet: Graphing the Great War: *Teacher Created Materials*
5. Poem: "In Flanders Fields" by John McCrae

C. Key Vocabulary: Eastern Front, Western Front, War in the Atlantic, U-boats, Gallipoli, Lawrence of Arabia, Battle of the Marne, war of attrition

D. Procedures/Activities:

1. Determine directions North, South, East, and West in the classroom.
 2. The teacher explains the different fronts and refers to map.
 3. In cooperative groups, the students must use the teacher materials to fill out a chart on the fronts of the war. The teacher reviews at the end.
 4. Homework: Graphing the Great War, *Teacher Created Materials*. Graph the casualties of the war in Europe.
 5. Closing: Read "In Flanders Fields" by John McCrae
 6. Homework: Write a letter to President Wilson urging him to support one of sides of the war in Europe.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment: Informal assessment as the groups work

Lesson Five: From American Neutrality to Full Involvement (1-2 days)

- A. Objectives:
 - 1. To analyze isolationism and involvement
 - 2. To analyze the reasons for the shift from isolation to involvement
 - 3. To evaluate the process of American mobilization
- B. Materials
 - 1. *History Alive* slides and script
 - 2. teacher created timeline
 - 3. teacher created materials on mobilization/ matrix.
 - 4. War Bond sheet *Teacher Created Materials*
- C. Key Vocabulary: neutrality, isolationism, involvement, Lusitania, Zimmerman Note, Woodrow Wilson, war bonds, rations, mobilization, War Industries Board, Bernard Baruch, Food Administration, Herbert Hoover, Committee on Public Information, George Creel, Fuel Administration, War Labor Board, Selective Service Act, American Expeditionary Force, General John J. Pershing
- D. Procedures/Activities
 - 1. Motivator: Briefly debate for 3-5 minutes: Should the U.S. help Europe? Why or why not? If we do help, which side should we help?
 - 2. Show *History Alive* slides and have students fill out timeline during the class lecture.
 - 3. In cooperative groups, have students complete matrix on mobilization.
 - 4. Homework: Create a war bond poster according to the rubric.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment: matrix rubric

Lesson Five: Propaganda

- A. Objectives:
 - 1. To analyze and interpret examples of propaganda
 - 2. To create propaganda.
- B. Materials
 - 1. *History Alive* placards, slides, and matrix
 - 2. Construction paper, white paper
 - 3. scissors, glue, and markers
- C. Key vocabulary: propaganda
- D. Procedures/Activities
 - 1. Motivator: Distribute copies of national tabloids and enjoy the students reactions to them. Ask them: "Is it believable? How did you react to it?"
 - 2. Distribute matrix.
 - 3. In pairs, students must analyze and interpret propaganda. Discuss when finished.
 - 4. In pairs, students must create their own propaganda about World War I.
 - 5. Closing: Debrief on matrix propaganda examples.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment:
 - 1. Informal evaluation of matrix propaganda.
 - 2. Propaganda rubric for creative propaganda.

Lesson Six: The end of the War (1-2 days)

- A. Objectives:
 - 1. To rank in descending order the student's main ideas for a peace treaty
 - 2. To negotiate a treaty to end the war
 - 3. To evaluate the Treaty of Versailles
 - 4. To analyze the lasting effects of World War I

- B. Materials:
1. *History Alive* unit on Treaty of Versailles for treaty negotiations (3 worksheets)
 2. *Teacher Created Materials* chart: "Causes and Effects of World War I"
- C. Key Vocabulary: Armistice Day, treaty of Versailles, Fourteen Points, disarmament, war reparations, League of Nations, collective security, self-determination
- D. Procedures/Activities:
1. Motivator: Put a student-generated list of favorite activities among the students. Have the students rank them in descending order of most favorite to least favorite.
 2. Distribute the European leaders/ Woodrow Wilson sheets. Give Europe to half of the class and Wilson to the other half. Students must rank the ideas from most important to the peace process to least important.
 3. In pairs of European and American negotiators, students must negotiate and draft their own peace treaties to end World War I. Sign and post them.
 4. The teacher reviews the end of the war, the peace treaty, and the Fourteen Points. Students take notes.
 5. Students must read and complete the worksheet "Causes and Effects of World War I."
 6. Without using notes, have students post a class chart of the Treaty of Versailles.

VI. Culminating Activity: World War I Quilt (1-2 days)

Working in cooperative groups, the students must create a four-squared quilt about World War I. It must have a visual and caption in every square and must also cover the following categories: Causes of the war, U. S. involvement, new technology, results/lasting effects

Assessment is based on a quilt rubric

VII. Handouts/ Worksheets

All handmade handouts, poems, and worksheets are listed in the appendices.

VIII. Bibliography

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- Teachers' Curriculum Institute. *History Alive*
- Sanders, Wardie (U. S. History teacher at Hartsville High School, Hartsville, SC). *The U. S. Prepares for War*
- Shermer, David. *World War I*. Hong Kong: Mandarin Publishers Limited, 1973, ISBN 0-7064-0245-6

Appendix A

Map Rubric: (5/5 total points)

Assignment: Create a map that shows the sides and powers in Europe in 1914. Label all countries, waterways, and territories listed in bold on your information sheets. Be sure to color them the assigned colors.

Rubric:

For full credit you must have all of the following:

- ___ All countries labeled correctly.
- ___ All countries are colored the correct color.
- ___ The name and date is written in a visible area of the paper.
- ___ The map is completed on time.
- ___ The group works quietly and all members participate

Your Grade ____ / 5

Find these countries and color them **green**. Label all countries. They represent the **Allies** in WWI

Britain

France

Russia

Italy

Find these countries and color them **red**. Label all countries. They represent the **Central Powers** in WWI

Germany

Ottoman Empire (Turkey)

Austria-Hungary

Bulgaria

Find these countries and color them **yellow**. Label all countries. They represent the **neutral** countries in WWI

Switzerland

Spain

Sweden

Denmark

Netherlands

Finland

Find these waterways and color them **light blue**. Label all waterways.

Atlantic Ocean

Mediterranean Sea

English Channel

North Sea

Baltic Sea

Aegean Sea

Adriatic Sea

Black Sea

Locate and label this land mass.

The Dardanelles

Appendix B

Letter Rubric:

Assignment: Pretend you are a soldier in the trenches in Europe. Write a letter home to your family describing how life is. You must address all of the following:

- \$ feelings of fear and anticipation at the war front
- \$ living conditions and boredom of the trenches
- \$ reports on the morale of the troops

Rubric:

For Full Credit, You Must Have All of the Following:

- È The letter must cover all categories listed above
- È The letter must be neat and legible
- È The letter must be spelled correctly
- È The letter must be turned in on time
- È The letter must have your parents' correct names and address

Your Grade: ___ /5

Appendix C

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
 that mark our place; and in the sky
 The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
 Loved and were loved, and now we lie
 In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
 the torch; be yours to hold it high.
 If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
 In Flanders fields.

--John McCrae

Appendix D

FOR HOMEWORK, READ THE SELECTION AND CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING ASSIGNMENTS. WRITE A 4-6 SENTENCE LETTER TO PRESIDENT WILSON EXPLAINING YOUR POINT OF VIEW.

At the outbreak of war, the thought of American involvement seemed impossible. As a result, President Wilson promptly issued a neutrality proclamation. Neutral feelings toward the war were impossible for many Americans, however. Close to half of the American population could trace their heritage back to British or Canadian sources. Many cultural and economic ties connected the United States to Great Britain. In addition, France was a traditional friend of the United States, having helped America to win its independence. The war in Europe had a serious impact on the American economy, too. Farmers lost their markets in Europe due to the British blockade, but American businesses began loaning money and selling war supplies to European countries. Germany was considered a risk because of the blockade, so, businesses virtually ignored the country.

On the other hand, there were some in America who were upset that America, a supposedly neutral nation, was supporting only one side of the war in Europe. There were thousands of German immigrants who still felt loyalty to their homeland. Added to that were the many Irish-Americans who cheered any foe of their ancient enemy Great Britain. These Americans were quick to point out that Germany was starving because of the British blockade. Germany had no way of getting goods into the country unless it was by sea. The British navy not only kept war supplies from entering the country, it was also starving the women and children by keeping out the necessary food items the country imported. With regards to the rules of the sea, Germany thought that they were old and outdated. The rules stated that a ship can sink another ship only after provisions had been made for the safety of the passengers and crew. Germany claimed the invention of their U-boats gave them a new weapon-- the element of surprise. If the U-boat surfaced to warn the ship of an attack, then the U-boat would be more vulnerable to an attack. While Great Britain argued that the submarines should be outlawed because of their attacks on non-military ships with international citizens on board, Germany argued that the rules, not the boats, should be outlawed, or at least changed. Great Britain refused and Germany announced that it would continue with its surprise attacks in a campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare. Their argument was simple. They were officially warning everyone in advance that all ships were targets. With this knowledge, all ships now sailed at their own risk.

Choose one of the topics and write a letter to President Wilson. Your purpose is to persuade the president to see your point of view. Remember, it must be 4-6 sentences in length.

Choices:

1. You are a descendent of Thomas Jefferson, a man who always supported France. You think the United States should enter the war and help the Allies. Why?
2. You are a German-American whose family came to America during the potato famine in the late 1800's. You think it is unfair that America, a neutral country, seems to be favoring the Allies. Instead, you think America should also support Germany. Why?

Appendix E

Selective Service Act

Congress had hotly debated the best way to raise an army. Should volunteers be recruited, or should all able-bodied men of a certain age be drafted? President Wilson favored the draft as the most rational and democratic means. Thus, the **Selective Service** Bill was passed which drafted men between the ages of 18-45 into the army. All total 2 million men crossed the ocean but only 1.4 million saw action.

Committee on Public Information

To win public support for the war effort, President Wilson created the **Committee on Public Information (CPI)** and appointed journalist **George Creel** to head it. This committee whipped up support for the war by using propaganda techniques such as writing songs criticizing Germany, producing movies about the war, designing American book covers for school children's books, placing billboards around towns that supported America's efforts in the war, and by holding pep rallies that encouraged American support of the war.

This group was so successful in winning support for the war that it turned American enthusiasm for the war into hatred for the Germans. As a result, no German was taught in schools, no German music was played, and no use of German words were allowed in our vocabulary. People renamed sauerkraut "liberty cabbage," German measles "liberty measles," and hamburger "liberty steak."

War Industries Board

To create order, President Wilson established the **War Industries Board (WIB)** to increase industrial output and coordinate industries. Bernard Baruch was named head of the board. He established strict controls over industries. The government took over all factories and ran them like one big factory. The board instructed the factories on what to produce, how much to produce, and the cost of the items. Women's blouse factories made signal flags, radiator manufacturers made guns, automobile factories made airplane engines, and piano companies made airplane wings.

War Labor Board

President Wilson created the **National War Labor Board (WLB)** to unify labor policies. He wanted to insure that management and workers cooperated during the war to prevent strikes. It was absolutely essential that the workers were kept satisfied so that industries could produce goods for war. As such, Wilson threw the government's full support behind workers' rights. The WLB also worked to improve working conditions. An eight-hour workday was established in some areas, and standards for the employment of women and children were established.

Food Administration

When the U. S. entered the war, the people of France, Britain, and Italy along with their armies, were facing starvation. Thus increasing American food production became a top priority. To get the job done, President Wilson appointed **Herbert Hoover**, an engineer and self-made millionaire, as head of the **Food Administration**. Hoover had full authority over food production, distribution of food and farm

supplies.

Hoover did not resort to the rationing of certain goods as the U. S. will do in WWII. Instead, he relied on **voluntary cooperation** to conserve our food products. This means that Americans were not made to sacrifice, but were asked to voluntarily give up certain items. "Food will win the war. Don't waste it" became a famous slogan. The top food priorities were wheat, pork, and sugar. Farmers were encouraged to raise hogs. Women were encouraged to save their cooking fat to be used for explosives. Victory gardens were planted by many, including the Boy Scouts. On certain days of the week, Americans were encouraged to conserve wheat, bread, and meat. The results of this sacrifice were staggering. The U. S. almost tripled the amount of food sent to the Allies.

This is a famous poem written to encourage voluntary cooperation for the war effort.

"My Tuesdays are meatless,
My Wednesdays are wheatless,
I'm getting more eatless each day.
My coffee is sweetless,
My bed, it is sheetless,
All sent to the YMCA."

Fuel Administration

President Wilson established the **Fuel Administration** to control America's use of fuel. Fuel was needed by the soldiers over seas. As with the Food Administration, Americans were asked to voluntarily conserve their use of fuel. Lightless nights and gasless days were observed. Daylight Savings Time was observed for the first time in our nation's history. This cut back on our use of fuel and electricity.

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Appendix F

War Bond Rubric: (5/5 total points)

Assignment: Your job is to create a war bond that will encourage Americans to participate in the war effort. It must be colorful and informative. You must also include at least one visual.

Rubric:

For full credit you must have all of the following:

- Ë The war bond has a colorful visual display (this includes your visual).
- Ë The war bond is completed on time.
- Ë The war bond has the name and date on the paper.
- Ë The war bond shows a clear understanding of America's mobilization needs.
- Ë The war bond poster has all words spelled correctly.

Your Grade: ____ /5

Appendix G

Propaganda Rubric: (5/5 total points)

Assignment: Your job is to create war-time propaganda for either the Allies or the Central Powers. It must be colorful yet creative and persuasive. It is up to you to help convince the public to help us in the "cause" (the war effort). You can design either a positive cartoon supporting "your" side or a negative cartoon against the "other" side.

Rubric:

- Ë The propaganda has an appropriate visual
- Ë The propaganda has a caption that shows a clear understanding of the uses of propaganda.
- Ë The project is completed on time.
- Ë The name and date are in a visible place on the paper.
- Ë The project has all words spelled correctly.

Your Grade: ____ /5

Appendix H

The Road to War Key

Results:

1. European countries are growing suspicious of each other.
2. War is declared in Europe!!
3. America does not want to get involved.
4. Germans are starving and they are forced to take drastic measures. They step up their U-boat attacks.
5. America condemns the attack. Our tempers are flaring.
6. Americans are outraged and can't take it anymore!! It is the last straw and we declare war.
7. Men are drafted to go to war.
8. All of America is geared up for war and is helping with the war effort in some way.