

# World War I

## Lesson Plan

### Biography

**Introduction:** Historians often have the difficult task of taking bits and pieces of information and putting them together to form an account of the past. Sometimes those pieces need to be connected and speculations need to be made based on the evidence available. In order to understand the lives of Brown County soldiers during the First World War, one is able to use the evidence left behind in the photos, letters, and records to write a detailed biography of their lives.

**Objective:** The project will help students build critical thinking and writing skills in a historical setting, and understand more fully the local involvement of the Brown County Soldiers in the Great War.

**Standards:**

**B.12.1** Explain different points of view on the same historical event, using data gathered from various sources, such as letters, journals, diaries, newspapers, government documents, and speeches.

**B.12.2** Analyze primary and secondary sources related to historical question to evaluate their relevance, make comparisons, integrate new information with prior knowledge, and come to a reasoned conclusion]

**B.12.5** Gather various types of historical evidence, including visual and quantitative data, to analyze issues of freedom and equality, liberty and order, region and nation, individual and community, law and conscience, diversity and civic duty; form a reasoned conclusion in the light of other possible conclusions' and

develop a coherent argument in the light of other possible arguments

**Level:** This project is designed for students at a high school level. A basic overview of World War I should be given by the teacher in order for the students to build some background knowledge of the war prior to this lesson.



**Procedure:** Display a sample file of one of the Brown County soldiers, including record, photo, and letters. Do an oral class exercise to demonstrate what type of information they may use in their biographies. Ask the students what types of things they see and what connections can be made based on the information. Encourage the students to develop their ideas further by asking follow-up questions based on their responses. Explain that even though there are only limited details available they must hypothesize other details of their lives to write a complete biography.

Discuss biographies as a class. Ask the students what does a biography look like, what kind of information is found in one, and in what style are they written? Make a list of the students' responses on the board.

Student task is then explained. Students are to write a 3-4 page typed double-spaced biography on a chosen Brown County soldier. Biographies should discuss the soldier's life from birth to death, with an emphasis on their war experiences.

**Materials:** Students should have access to the Brown County soldiers'

files, including photos, letters, and records and computer access to write their papers.

**Duration:** Discussion will take no more than one class period. Students' work time should be determined by teacher, however two to three writing days are recommended.

### Grading Rubric:

	<b>1 Minimal</b>	<b>2 Basic</b>	<b>3 Proficient</b>	<b>4 Advanced</b>
<b>Paper Layout:</b>	Spelling errors, incorrect grammar, paper did not flow from one paragraph to the next	Spelling was correct but grammar still lacked content. Paragraphs and content flowed	Student had the basic structure of a paper with minimal spelling and grammar errors	Few Spelling errors and grammar was proficient. Paper flowed from one paragraph to the next with an Intro, middle of the paper, and conclusion
<b>Content:</b>	Paper used only available details and made no connections nor was paper complete.	Paper used only available details and made few connections.	Paper went beyond available details; however did not make realistic connections or biography was not complete.	Paper went beyond available details and made realistic connections to make a complete biography.

### Teacher Resources:

1. Burg, David F., and L. Edward Purcell. Almanac of World War I,: The University Press of Kentucky, 1998.
2. Herwig, Holger H., and Neil M. Heyman. The Biographical Dictionary of World War I,: Greenwood Press, 1982.
3. "The Doughboy Center: The American Expeditionary Forces in World War I." The Great War Society. <http://www.worldwar1.com/dbc/dbc2.htm>.

4. "War Letters: World War I and II". <http://www.war-letters.com/index.html>
5. Fussell, Paul. The Great War and Modern Memory: Oxford University Press, 1975.
6. Falk, Karen. "Public Opinion in Wisconsin During World War I". Wisconsin Magazine of History. 1942, p. 390-407.
7. Keegan, John. The First World War. New York, NY: Vintage Books of New York, 1998.

8. Rampolla, Mary. A Pocket Guide to Writing in History. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2006.

9. "Nonfiction Teaching Resource Notes"  
<http://www.heinemannlibrary.com/tools/interactions/HistoricalBiographies.pdf>

10. "Student Writing Guide on About.com Homework/Study Tips"  
<http://homeworktips.about.com/od/biography/a/bio.htm>

11. *site link to soldiers' records*

12. *site link to chronology/timeline*