

Title:

World War I: War in a Democratic Society

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Abstract:

In this three to five day unit, students (grades 9 through 12) will research opposition and support for World War I from a number of perspectives. Perspectives will include labor, industrialists, women's groups, politicians, soldiers and military leadership. Students will analyze a number of primary and secondary sources, while considering what (if anything) makes a war just. The student will then write a letter expressing his/her views regarding the U.S. and its entry into World War I, and develop a political cartoon supporting their beliefs about the war. This activity can then be utilized as a model for examining current U.S. military involvement in the Middle East, as well as any other foreign war.

State Standard(s):

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

B. 12.11: Compare examples and analyze why governments of various countries have sometimes sought peaceful resolution to conflict and sometimes gone to war.

Essential Historical Question:

What were the various American opinions about World War I?

Perspectives on the Question:

Politicians (pro and con)	What are the sentiments of my constituency? My own conscience? How are the interests of the U.S. involved?
Recent Immigrants/German-Americans	Will I be the target of nativist persecution? What impact will this have on my family here and in Europe?
Communists/Socialists and Anti-Imperialists	How are capitalists profiting from this war?
Conscientious Objectors/pacifists	Is war ever just?

Bankers and Industrialists	How will this impact my business?
Military leaders and Soldiers	What is this war about? What is our strategy? What will happen to me? Why am I fighting?
Labor leaders	How will this war effect the labor movement?
All	Why are we entering this war? What will be the ramifications?

Learning Targets:

Knowledge:

Terms, Historical Figures, Historical Issues:

Causes of World War I (such as militarism, imperialism, nationalism, alliances)

“Just” war

Conscientious Objection

Woodrow Wilson

Robert LaFollette

Victor Berger

Jeanette Rankin

JP Morgan

Alvin York

V.I. Lenin

Samuel Gompers

Processes and Skills:

Research: use of internet, library materials, primary and secondary source materials

Read, summarize, analyze, organize, and write.

Reasoning and Creative and Critical Thinking:

History Thinking Standard 2: The student comprehends a variety of historical sources

History Thinking Standard 3: The student engages in historical analysis and interpretation

History Thinking Standard 4: The student conducts historical research

History Thinking Standard 5A: Identify issues and problems in the past

Standard 5E: Formulate a position or course of action on an issue

Dispositions and Attitudes:

Appreciation of different views on controversial issues and the complexities of decision-making in a democracy.

Instruction:

Preliminary Activities:

Small and then Large group discussion of possible “just” causes of war.

Review:

What were the underlying causes of WWI?

What events led the U.S. into WWI?

New Learning Activities:

Working in pairs using the internet, hand-outs, books, etc. gather primary sources to analyze the differing viewpoints surrounding U.S. involvement in the first world war.

Each student will defend a position in a letter to the President or an editorial to a newspaper. Each student will supplement this letter with a political cartoon that presents their view.

Post-Learning Activities:

What did students discover about war and dissent?

How did the view of WWI change AFTER the war?

(possibly use clips/excerpts from *All Quiet on the Western Front, Johnny Got His Gun*)

Discuss the issue of “just war” in regard to the current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In what ways do Americans display their support/opposition to the current military actions?

What is the response of the government to opposition?

Assignment:

The student will write an editorial/letter expressing the viewpoint of a particular perspective and design a political cartoon to support that viewpoint.

Assessment:

Goal of Performance or Product:

Understand and defend a position on a controversial subject.

Role of Student:

Upon conclusion of research, the student will adopt the role of a supporter or opponent of WWI.

Audience of Performance or Product:

Editorial/letter and political cartoon illustrating their position.

Situation:

Decision-making, political activist, citizen, defense of a position

Criteria Used to Evaluate Performance or Product:

Editorial/letter must clearly state the position and must include 3 supporting arguments.
Political cartoon must clearly reflect the position and use recognizable symbolism.

Scoring Rubric is available online at the Teaching American History Grant Program website.

Resources:

Internet:

American Memory/LOC – American Leaders Speak

<http://www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/nfhtml/nfexww1.html>

APUSH WWI weblinks

<http://www.historyteacher.net/APUSH-Course/Weblinks/Weblinks21.htm>

BBC's WWI remembered

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1998/10/98/world_war_i/197437.stm

BBC History

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/wwone/index.shtml> -

The Doughboy Center

<http://www.worldwar1.com/dbc/dbc2.htm>

First World War

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/>

PBS series companion site on the First World War

<http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/>

Trenches on the Web

<http://www.worldwar1.com/reflib.htm>

World War I Primary Document Archive

<http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/>

WWI poetry

<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/lgt/projects/jtap/tutorials/intro/>

Teacher-Made Resources are available online at the Teaching American History Grant Program Website.