

PROJECT TITLE:

What's so Great about the Great War?

AUTHOR: **Stephanie Hammer**

SUBJECT & GRADE LEVEL

US History II, Grades 6, 7

CLASSROOM PRACTICE

1. HI Overview & Teaching Thesis

This lesson helps students to understand the historical significance of World War I. Through the examination of primary source documents, students will explore the importance of the war to people at the time, how the war affected their lives, and how it helps to understand life following the war. By answering the leading question of the lesson, what's so great about the Great War, students will use historical thinking to explain the significance of World War I. By analyzing the significance of World War I, students will broaden their understanding of the war that will then help them understand other events of the 20th century.

2. Suggested Grade Level and Length of Activities Grades 6, 7; 120 minutes (2-60 minute classes)

3. Significance & Relevance

This lesson brings historical thinking to the surface to make it a central part of history teaching. Historical thinking is a set of reasoning skills that students should learn as a result of the study of history. Students can't make sense of historical thinking without prior knowledge, but "knowing the facts" is useless without knowing how historical events might be important.

Using an inquiry process, the lesson will guide students to establish the historical significance of World War I and develop evidence-based opinions. Students will develop historical argument using primary source documents as evidence. The lesson is framed with a selection of primary sources, probing questions, and reflective analysis in a structured learning experience.

Virginia Standards of Learning –

- USII.1 The student will demonstrate skills for historical analysis, including the ability to
 - a) Analyze and interpret primary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history from 1865 to the present;
 - b) Make connections between past and the present.
- US II.5 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the changing role of the United States From the late nineteenth century through World War I by
 - c) Explaining the reasons for the United States involvement in World War I and its international leadership role at the conclusion of the war.

OAH Historical Inquiry Skills –

Historical Analysis and Interpretation:

Students will use historical analysis and interpretation of primary source documents to determine:

- The importance of World War I to the people at the time.
- How deeply World War I affected people's lives.
- An understanding of life following World War I.

4. Technology : The lesson is guided by a power point presentation.

5. Modifications, Differentiation, and Extensions

- For students that struggle with higher-level conceptual learning, the teacher may direct the historical analysis lesson by direct teaching Lesson Two. The teacher may choose to print the primary sources for student use as the lesson is conducted or the sources may be projected on a screen to allow the whole class to discuss the documents at one time.
- In order to limit the length of the lesson, the analysis for how World War I contributes to an understanding of life following the war is limited to an analysis of the Treaty of Versailles impact on Germany. To extend the analysis of World War I, students can explore connections between World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution that led to the creation of the Soviet Union and then the problems that resulted from the Cold War. A fourth component of historical significance that can be explored is the creation of the Arab States following World War and how that continues to impact present-day life.
- The United States does not have a national memorial commemorating World War I. Share the War Memorials pdf with students as examples of World War I memorials around the world. Conduct a design contest for a World War I memorial that demonstrates the significance of World War I. A rubric for a written proposal for a memorial is attached if desired to use.

6. Related Materials and Resources:

- Historical Analysis Power Point Presentation
- World War I Primary Source Document Packet
- Historical Analysis Chart Historical Analysis Chart
- Memorials Around the World pdf (Optional)
- World War I Memorial Proposal Rubric (Optional)

7. Lesson Overview

Guiding Questions	Objectives	Assessment	Activities to support objectives and assessment
<u>What's so Great about the Great War</u> • What do primary sources reveal about importance of World War I? • What was the importance of the war to people at the time? • How deeply were people's lives affected by the war? • How does the war contribute to your understanding of life following the war? • What's so Great about the Great War?	Students will be able to • Examine primary source documents and draw conclusions about the historical significance of World War I by completing an analysis chart. • Support their conclusions by identifying evidence of historical significance found in the primary source documents. • Construct closely reasoned argument about the significance of World War I by writing a persuasive essay about the historical significance of World War I.	1. Students will document their group work with the Historical Analysis Chart. 2. Students will write a summary that explains the historical significance of World War I.	Following a power point presentation that introduces students to historical analysis, the students will work in small groups to analyze primary source documents to determine the historical significance of World War I.

Primary Source Documents Bibliography

American Leaders Speak: Recordings from World War I and the 1920 Election. *American Leaders Speak: Recordings from World War I and the 1920 Election.* Library of Congress. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/nfhhtml/nfhome.html>
Two useful recordings related to World War I are found in the website. *From the Battlefields of France*, recorded by U.S. Commander-in-Chief John Pershing in 1918, was a patriotic appeal intended to boost the recruitment effort back home in the U.S. Pershing's key reasons for America's involvement in the war shows the importance to people at the time to have a strong belief that Americans were fighting for a just cause. Samuel Gompers, head of the AFL, identifies labor's contribution to the war in *Labor's Service to Freedom*. Students can grasp the theme of total war and the importance of all Americans making contributions to the success of the war.

The American Red Cross *The American Red Cross: American Treasures of the Library of Congress.*

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trm215.html>

With more than 18,000 Red Cross nurses serving with the Army and Navy Corps both in Europe and on the home front, World War I led to an increase of women involved in nursing. This propaganda poster uses the Red Cross as a beacon above United States' landmark buildings. These opportunities for women demonstrate the war's importance to women. It illustrates how the importance of the scale of the war extended beyond soldiers fighting in the war. The poster also suggests importance with how nations at war were dependent on each other.

Colored Soldier Wins Croix De Guerre. *The African-American Experience in Ohio 1850-1920.* The Ohio Historical Society, 2011. <http://dbs.ohiohistory.org/africanam/page1.cfm?ItemID=7578>

This newspaper article, from September 21, 1918, describes the bravery of an African American soldier in France. As an example of African American in the war, helps students to see not only the importance of opportunities for African Americans, but also suggests how important the war was to Americans because we have African Americans willing to fight for a country while facing racial segregation at home.

Comments of the German Leaders on the Draft Terms of the Treaty of Versailles, 7 May 1919. *The Great War 1914-1918.* The National Archives. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/greatwar/g5/cs1/g5cs1s3a.htm>

Germany, presented with the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, had to accept it without discussion. They were allowed to comment in writing. This written response excerpt can deepen the understanding of life following World War I for students.

Evelyn Albright's "Letters" To Frederick Albright. *An Echo in My Heart.* The Archives and Research Collections Centre.

<http://sites.google.com/site/echoinmyheartsite/the-letters/part-four>

Evelyn Albright wrote this letter two weeks after receiving a telegram that informed her of her husband's death at Passchendaele on October 26, 1917. Evelyn and her husband, Fred, wrote over 550 letters to each other, beginning in 1910 and throughout his military service. Students can grasp an understanding of how deeply the war impacted people, as this is just one example of the thousands of people that were affected by war deaths. Extracts of correspondence are from *An Echo in my Heart: The Letters of Elnora Evelyn (Kelly) Albright and Frederick Stanley Albright*, compiled and edited by Lorna Brooke. Letters and material pertaining to the Albright collection are housed in The Archives and Research Collections Centre in the D.B. Weldon Library at Western University, London, Ontario, Canada.

Events and Statistics. *Newspaper Pictorials: World War I Rotogravures.* The Library of Congress American Memory.

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/rotogravures/rotoevents4.html>

The map, *Boundaries of Germany Under Terms of Treaty*, identifies four areas of boundary changes in Germany. It illustrates the impact on life following the war for people living these areas. The *Growth of National War Debts Chart* is also found on this site. Identifying the cost of war for individual countries, it can help students understand both how important the war was to people living at the time since countries were willing to spend this kind of money and also life after the war, since these debts are going can impact the finances of countries for a long time.

The King's Letter of Welcome to American Troops. The National Archives.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/images/education/nations-in-conflict/files/wo32-5768-i.jpg>

Written on Windsor Castle stationery, King George V writes a welcome letter to the soldiers of the United States. Students can sense the gratitude of the British people as the American soldiers join the fight for human freedom.

Lord Northcliffe on the Battle of Verdun, 4 March 1916. *Firstworldwar.com.*

http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/verdun_northcliffe.htm

British newspaper baron, Lord Northcliffe, wrote this dispatch about the Battle of Verdun, one of the longest and most devastating battles of the war. This excerpt of the letter helps students to understand how deeply soldiers lives were affected by battle experiences that had no comparison to earlier wars.

Nations at War.

<http://freepages.military.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~worldwarone/WWI/TheGeographyOfTheGreatWar/images/Figure9-Page11.jpg>

Published on December 31, 1914, this world map shows what countries were involved in the war in 1914. Students can use this map to understand the scale of the war and the importance of the war to nations throughout the world.

Neiberg, Michael. **Verdun Graphs.** *America on the World Stage: Fresh Approaches to Understanding and Teaching World War One.*

The graphs compare the duration and casualties of the Battle of Verdun to the Battle of Gettysburg. The visual representation of both battles helps the student to see, as an example of battles during WWI, the devastation and the deep impact on soldiers fighting in the war.

Poison Gas Attack Victims. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/images/education/nations-in-conflict/files/cn4-4-i.jpg>

These photographs of poison gas casualties from a May 24, 1915 German gas attack illustrate the human experience of war. As a new military operation, poison gas was used by the military on both sides of the conflict. This document demonstrates the conditions faced by soldiers and the deep impact of those conditions.

Be a Trained Nurse. *Posters: World War I Posters.* Library of Congress.

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/wwipos/item/00650746/>

This poster demonstrates to students that WWI provided opportunities for women to support the war as military nurses. It helps students grasp an understanding of the war as this was the first time women were officially a part of a major war.

President Poincare's War Address, 4 August 1914. *Firstworldwar.com.*

http://firstworldwar.com/source/poincare_aug1914.htm

When Germany declared war with France on 3 August 1914, an enthusiasm for the war spread throughout France. The French President Raymond Poincare wrote this war address about the reasons for involvement in the war. Students gain an understanding of the importance of the war to the French people.

Prime Minister Lloyd George on the British War Aims. *World War I Document Archive.*

http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Prime_Minister_Lloyd_George_on_the_British_War_Aims

David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Great Britain, gave this speech on January 5, 1918. Its purpose was to discuss the British war aims and peace conditions. Students are able to understand from the document what Britain was fighting for, "a just and lasting peace", but also what they were not fighting for. As with the other speeches, it helps students to understand the importance of the war to the people living at the time.

Reaction to the Treaty of Versailles. *The Great War 1914-1918.* The National Archives.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/greatwar/g5/cs2/g5cs2s1b.htm>

This photograph shows a speaker addressing a crowd in reaction to the Treaty of Versailles. The number of people in the crowd demonstrates a sense of importance of the treaty to Germans. The image can help students understand life following the war for Germans.

Soldier Giving Direction to a Family, amid Chaos and Destruction of War. Library of Congress.

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003668495/resource/>

This image illustrates the deep impact on civilians during war. Students can see how closely soldiers and civilians were to each other and how families can become displaced as an outcome of the war.

Statement Showing American Troops Transported to United Kingdom and France.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/images/education/nations-in-conflict/files/wo106-517a-i.jpg>

This chart identifies the number of troops transported in one week in May 1918. This allows the student a different view on the scale of the war by seeing weekly movement of troops transported to the United Kingdom and France. It demonstrates how deeply people at the time felt about the war with the quick involvement of such a large number of American troops.

Walsh, Ben. **Europe Before and After the War.** *The Great War 1914-1918.* The National Archives.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/greatwar/>

These two maps show the boundary changes that were made in Eastern Europe following World War I. The maps can help students to understand life following the war by visualizing the loss of empires, particularly the German, Russian, and Austria-Hungarian empires, that followed the war.

Wilson's War Message to Congress. *World War I Document Archive.*

http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Wilson%27s_War_Message_to_Congress

On April 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson addressed Congress to ask for a Declaration of War. He starts his speech with a review of the problems the United States had experienced with Germany since February along with stating that the Americans "have no quarrel with the German people." He addresses the war aims of the United States fighting for the protection of the United States and free people around the world. The excerpt from the speech included in the documents should help students to understand the importance of the war to people to protect democracies at home and around the world.

A Wrecked German Ammunition Train, Destroyed by Shellfire World War I. *The Library of Congress American Memory*. Library of Congress, 10 Dec. 2010. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/jun28.html>

The image of the German train illustrates the destruction caused by the war. Students can speculate from this image the damage done to the train, casualties caused by the destruction, and the cost to the war effort for not only making war materials, but also resupplying due to damage. The Ypres, Belgium image was taken in 1919. This image shows not only the destruction that occurred, but with the known date, life following the war when people continued to live with the destruction long after the war ended.

Ypres, Belgium, 1919. *The Library of Congress American Memory*. Library of Congress. <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/pan:@field%28NUMBER+@band%28pan+6a23352%29%29;displayType=1:m856sd=pan:m856sf=6a23352>

Ypres, Belgium was a key battle area during the war to prevent the German's from gaining access to the English Channel. Three major battles were fought in this area in 1917 alone. Thousands of soldiers from died in battles fought in Ypres. This image illustrates the scale of destruction faced by communities and the difficulties people faced as they adjusted to life after World War I.