

WORLD WAR I: LESSONS AND LEGACIES

Educators' Guide



Le Tumulte Noir/Jazz Band by Paul Colin. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution © 2017 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

This exhibition examines how the Great War accelerated major changes already underway in the lives of Americans—changes that continue to impact our world today. The set includes eight posters, one introductory and seven supporting, which can be used to augment and enrich your lessons on World War I, by:

- guiding student inquiry into and understanding of American politics, economics, and culture during and after World War I;
- challenging learners to identify connections and changes between this critical time in American history and today; and,
- building students' critical thinking, communication, and historical analysis skills.

How to Use this Poster Exhibition

The learning begins with a compelling question: “How has our world been shaped by the legacies of World War I?” Set the stage for this investigation with the title poster. Invite students to closely examine the images and consider what changes they think might have come out of the war, citing evidence to support their ideas.

Stepping into the role of historians, students can investigate this question further using the primary source materials on each poster: photographs, objects, and archival materials, as well as guiding text.

Comprehension and critical thinking questions together with guided looking prompts are provided to help students pay close attention to the historical evidence.

This exhibition is designed around the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies, and models the C3's inquiry arc:

Dimension 1: Developing questions and planning inquiries

Dimension 2: Applying disciplinary tools and concepts

Dimension 3: Evaluating sources and using evidence

Dimension 4: Communicating conclusions and taking informed action



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World War I: Lessons and Legacies is organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and the National Museum of American History, with funding from The United States World War I Centennial Commission and the Smithsonian Women's Committee.

Suggested Strategies for Examining the Posters & Communicating Findings

Investigation Stations: Have students dive deep into one or several topics using the posters, supporting questions, and supplementary resources. Guide students to communicate their findings through small group discussions examining the compelling question.

Panel Discussion: Challenge students to analyze the compelling question through a facilitated panel discussion where students are the experts and use the resources included in the posters as evidence to support their arguments.

Bell Ringers and Exit Tickets: Engage students in a warm up discussion or thoughtful reflection about the events and lasting legacies of the war as part of your WWI unit.

Inquiry Walk: Spark students' interest with a structured gallery walk that prepares them to generate their own exploration and examination questions.

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Additional Resources

Smithsonian's *History Explorer* website,
<http://historyexplorer.si.edu>

National Museum of American History "Engaging Students with Primary Sources" teaching guide,
<https://historyexplorer.si.edu/sites/default/files/PrimarySources.pdf>.

World War I, National Museum of American History,
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/topics/world-war-i>

Advertising War: Selling Americans on World War I exhibition website,
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/advertising-war>

Modern Medicine and the Great War exhibition website, <http://americanhistory.si.edu/modern-medicine>

Uniformed Women in the Great War exhibition website, <http://americanhistory.si.edu/uniformed-women-great-war>

Artist Soldiers: Artistic Expression in the First World War exhibition website,
<https://airandspace.si.edu/exhibitions/artist-soldiers>

The Price of Freedom: Americans at War exhibition website, <http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory>

World War I, Library of Congress,
<https://www.loc.gov/topics/world-war-i>

Standards Alignment

This poster exhibition provides content and teaching strategies that align to national standards of learning, including:

Common Core Anchor Standards for Reading and Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Common Core Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social studies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media in order to address a question or solve a problem.

College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies State Standards

D2.His.2.6-8. Classify series of historical events and developments as examples of change and/or continuity.

D2.His.14.6-8. Explain the multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.

D2.His.16.6-8. Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.

D2.His.2.9-12. Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.

D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

National Standards for History

Standards in Historical Thinking:

- Standard 1: Chronological thinking
- Standard 2: Historical comprehension
- Standard 3: Historical analysis and interpretation
- Standard 5: Historical issues-analysis and decision-making

United States History Standards, Era 7: The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930)

- Standard 2: The changing role of the United States in world affairs through World War I

National Standards for Social Studies

Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

Theme 6: Power, Authority, and Governance

Theme 8: Science, Technology, and Society

SELLING THE WAR

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would the U.S. government need to create an advertising campaign to persuade Americans to support the war effort?
2. In your opinion, what do you think was the most effective strategy for rallying people's support? Fear? Patriotism? Guilt? What current examples of advertising can you identify that use the same strategies?
3. How do you think the advertising success of 100 years ago set the stage for how advertising is done now?

Take a Closer Look

Posters were printed by the millions. Notice how they are plastered alongside or on top of product advertising that covered nearly every inch of public space. How is this similar to or different from advertising today?

Even celebrities got in on the act. Here, Hollywood star Fatty Arbuckle helps put up posters with a brush that has been dipped in a bucket of paste. Why would having a "celebrity endorsement" help sell the war?



Pay attention to the words and images on the cover of this sheet music. What is the title of the song? What is the mom imagining would happen to her son?

What can this tell you about public opinion before the United States' entry into the war?

What different elements do you see in this liberty bond poster? Notice how the German soldier is depicted with menacing eyes and bloodied hands looming over a body of water, presumably the Atlantic Ocean.

What strategy is this poster using to "sell" the war? How is it similar or different to the poster featuring Columbia?

OVER THERE

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What do you think it would have been like to be a soldier in the trenches? What would the experience have been like for those not on the front line, like nurses?
2. In what ways was World War I fought differently than wars of the 19th century? How did advances in technology change how war was fought?
3. How is warfare approached today? What current examples of advanced military technology, weapons, or strategy can you identify?

Take a Closer Look

These plaster faces show the process of making prosthetic masks for soldiers disfigured by war. The top row has casts of the soldiers' injured faces. In the middle are sculptures of what their faces might have looked like before their disfigurement. On the bottom are masks for the soldiers to wear based on the sculptures.

In 1921 President Harding said war had become "cruel, deliberate, [and] scientific." Do you agree?

I WANT YOU FOR U.S. ARMY
NEAREST RECRUITING STATION

Two million Americans joined the armed forces and 2.7 million more were drafted. Nearly half of them saw combat in France. All who went abroad understood the inescapable tragedy of total war, a war that spared no one.

He waits for death—
He knows—
He watches it approach—
He hears it coming—
He can feel it underneath his feet—
Death bearing down on him from every side,
Violent death that tears the sky to
shrieking pieces...
—Mary Borden, excerpt from poem "Unidentified," 1917

OVER THERE

Over 350,000 African Americans served in segregated units, where many were assigned menial tasks. Others were deployed with the French Army and fought with distinction, earning France's highest military honor, the Croix de Guerre.

Many who went abroad experienced first hand the muck-filled and rat-infested trenches that stretched for miles across northern France. They witnessed the horrors of modern warfare: machine guns, flamethrowers, poison gas, tanks, warplanes, and an endless rain of exploding shells from near-line artillery. Americans learned that warfare had become "cruel, deliberate, scientific destruction," a phrase President Warren Harding described it in 1921.

Tens of thousands of women served for the first time in the armed forces—in supporting roles or as nurses in the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marines.

Pay close attention to the details included in this painting of soldiers advancing into the barbed-wired entangled battlefield—also known as "no man's land."

Compare this image to the poem below it. What can these two sources tell you about what it was like to be a soldier in World War I? What other evidence from the poster supports your answer?

Both sides used new weapons that could inflict mass casualties from a distance. What war technologies are shown on the poster?

Look closely at this uniform. What parts of the soldier are covered? What might it be designed to defend against?

OVER HERE

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what ways would the lives of people who moved to cities for industrial jobs change? What would have been different about the type of work they did?
2. What opportunities do you think people were looking for when they left their homes in Europe or rural areas in the United States to move to American cities? Was it only to take a job, or were there other possible reasons?
3. How did the need for more industrial production during the war shape the modern American economy? How did it change where population centers are in the country—is it the same today?

Take a Closer Look

Read the poem excerpt on the poster and then take a close look at this painting. Many of the people are shown carrying all of their belongings in bundles or suitcases similar to the one shown on the poster as they migrate to take jobs in war factories.

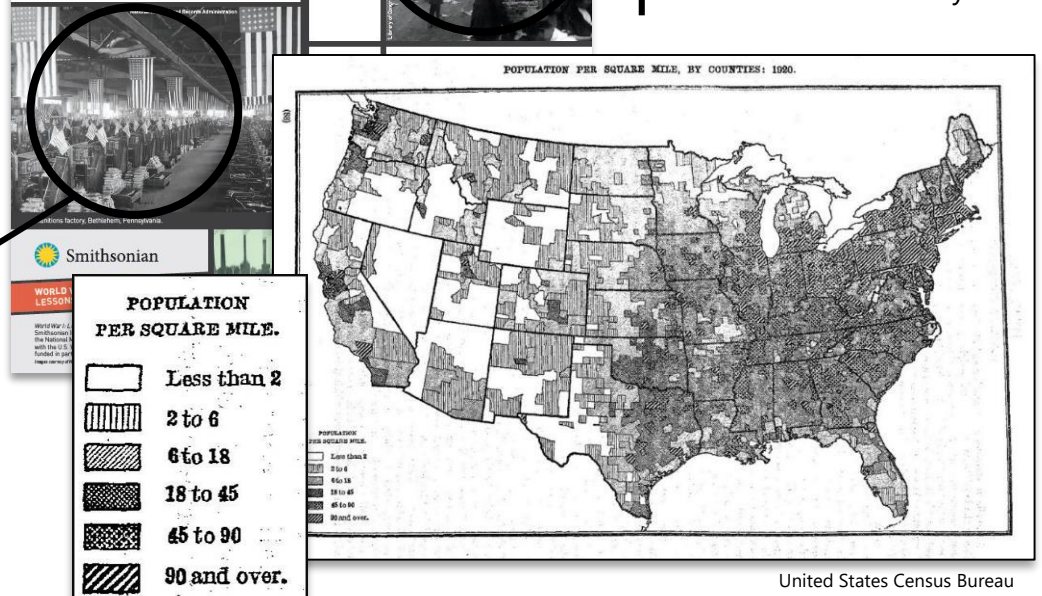
What are the ages of the people depicted? Look at how they are walking—what different emotions are shown in this painting?

This factory produced munitions for use in long-range artillery. Pay attention to the number of flags hanging in this factory. How would this have made you feel if you were working here?



Notice how many people are shown in this image of an urban street.

Now look at the map and key below, which show population density in 1920. Where are there higher population numbers—rural or urban areas? How similar is this to where people live in the United States today?



WOMEN IN THE GREAT WAR

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What do you think it would have been like for women who joined the war effort? Exciting? Exhausting? Frustrating? Why would women have seen this as an opportunity?
2. Can you think of reasons why some women felt that their service to their country earned them equal rights? Why would the fight for suffrage become more urgent during and after the war?
3. Do any of the inequalities faced by women a century ago still exist today? How might the success of the woman suffrage movement have inspired the fight for women's rights today?

Take a Closer Look

Notice that these women are wearing men's uniform jackets. Women would eventually receive their own specially designed uniforms.

Wearing official uniforms helped validate women's participation in the war effort. How might this have changed perceptions of women and their ability to be responsible and active citizens?

Women who worked in war factories made everything from machinery to uniforms, similar to what you see here. For many women this was a new and exciting opportunity to earn their own money and learn job skills.

Why would these jobs have become available to women during the war?



This uniform was worn by women in the U.S. Army Signal Corps Female Telephone Operators Unit, as shown in the poster below.

Look closely at the two posters below. What is different about how the woman is depicted in each one?

How might these posters reflect the different attitudes about women and their place in society during the war?



A WORLD SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY?

Critical Thinking Questions

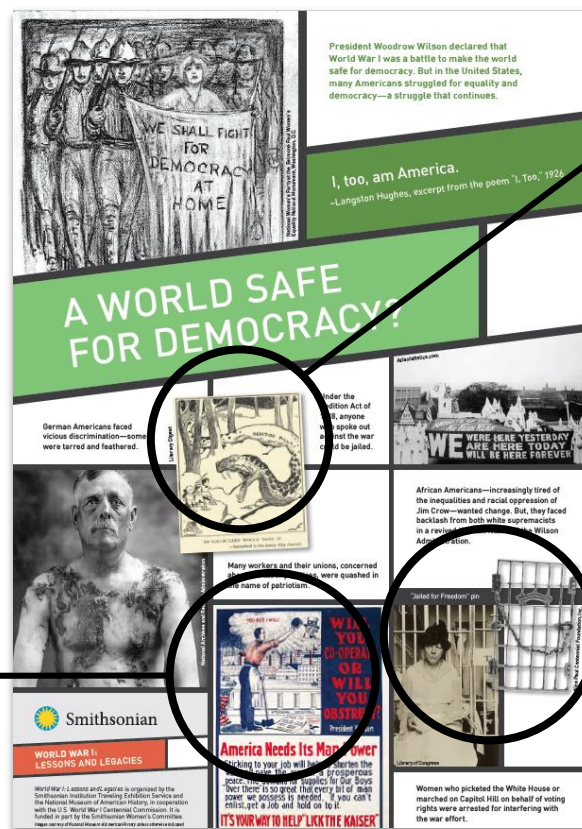
1. What rights and freedoms do you think were limited during the war? Which groups of people may have been affected by this?
2. How did the war either spark or increase social tensions in the United States? Why might some have wanted to suppress or ignore movements for civil rights during this time?
3. Can you think of any groups that are fighting for equality today? How might the tense fights for equal rights 100 years ago have set the stage for discussions about democracy today?

Take a Closer Look

In the decades before WWI, many workers had joined unions that advocated for higher wages, safer workplaces, and shorter hours.

This workplace poster calls on workers to support the war effort, stating that they can either “co-operate” or “obstruct.”

Look closely at the images and text of the poster—what does it mean to co-operate? What might it mean to obstruct?



The Espionage (1917) and Sedition (1918) Acts made it a crime to speak out against the war or share any information that might possibly harm the U.S.’s war effort.

Pay attention to the figures in this image and what they represent. According to this political cartoon, what rights did some Americans feel this “gag rule” suppressed?

Look at this photograph of suffragist Lucy Bird, taken after she was arrested during protests for woman suffrage.

She and other protesters with her were later awarded this pin by the National Woman’s Party. What do you think it represents? Why would the women who received these pins have worn them proudly?

MEDICINE AND WAR

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what ways did the field of medicine advance during World War I? How did it become more scientific?
2. Why would war have caused an increase in medical innovations? How might these advancements have benefited both soldiers and the American public?
3. Can you identify any examples of innovative medical practices that are being used today? How do you think the advancements made during World War I helped the field of medicine get to where it is now?

Take a Closer Look

This painting depicts wounded soldiers being moved off the battlefield. Notice the soldier walking with assistance in the foreground, the bandaged man on the stretcher, and the fallen on the ground.

Look closely at the injured soldiers. Can you tell if they have already received any first aid? How? Where do you think these soldiers are being taken?

A highly organized system was put in place to move wounded men quickly off the battlefield. They were taken to field hospitals, then to evacuation hospitals, and, if necessary, to evacuation and base hospitals where they received successively more complex treatment.

Medic's belt

Doctors developed new antiseptics and liberally administered tetanus antitoxins in an attempt to prevent infections.

"A war benefits medicine more than it benefits anybody else. It's terrible, of course, but true."
-Dr. Mary Merritt Crawford, surgeon at the American Hospital in France, about 1919

Many soldiers were killed in the horrific fighting, often by exploding artillery shells. But the desperate needs—and sheer number—of those who survived their wounds or gas

In trauma care, medical evacuation strategies, surgical and nursing procedures, and rehabilitation practices.

Before millions of recruits were sent to France, military physicians evaluated their health and physical condition, providing the basis for the nation's first comprehensive health assessment.

Smithsonian

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Many of those who survived underwent new types of physical and occupational therapy in order to return them to "usefulness." Stateside, the government established a system of special veterans hospitals that in 1921 became part of a newly established Veterans Bureau.

New understandings about germ theory changed how injured soldiers were treated on the battlefield. This medical belt included pockets for sterile dressing packets, iodine swabs, and antiseptic gauze.

How would having sterile equipment and antiseptics help save soldiers' lives?

After the United States entered the war, the military evaluated the mental and physical condition of over 4.7 million draftees and volunteers.

Look closely at the items shown in this image. Name the medical tools that look familiar. What sort of information might have been gathered during these examinations?

A WORLD TRANSFORMED

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How would you describe the national mood after the war? What do you think Americans worried would happen if the United States became too involved in international affairs?
2. Would it have been easy for the United States to become isolated from the rest of the world after the war? How had the United States become a global player?
3. Can you think of examples of how the United States has become a global player? How might the national interest in isolationism 100 years ago still influence how the United States interacts with other countries today?

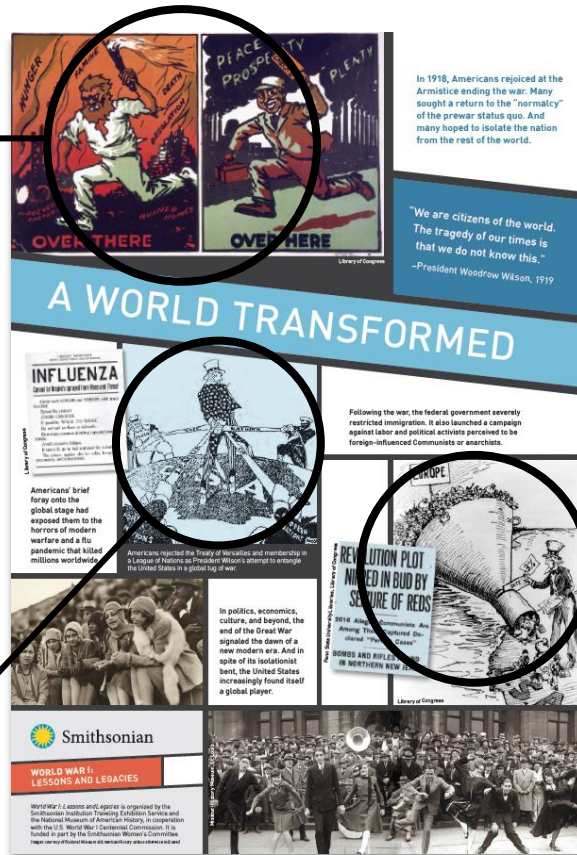
Take a Closer Look

Look closely at the words, background images, and physical appearance of the figure in each of these pictures. If "Over Here" refers to the United States, where is "Over There"?

The figure representing "Over Here" is holding a lunchbox and paycheck. What is the other figure holding? What could each one be running towards?

This cartoon shows Uncle Sam, representing the United States, with his hands tied by the League of Nations. Who is holding the ends of the straps?

What could this image tell us about the public's opinion of this proposed alliance? Do those feelings still exist today?



Pay attention to the funnel—who is shown trying to immigrate to the United States? What is different about the number of people going in as compared to how many are coming out?

Is this cartoon in support of or against immigration control? What evidence from the image supports your answer?