



# Picturing World Wars: The Great War & The Greatest Generation at War

Resource ID#: 60278 Primary Type: Lesson Plan

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This 3-day lesson focuses on helping 7th grade students analyze propaganda posters from both world wars to better understand how the U.S. government used propaganda to acquire civilian support. Students will analyze the images and phrases used in the posters, the purpose for each poster, any biases exhibited, and even generate questions about each poster that can be used for additional research. Through analysis of the posters students will be introduced to some of the challenges America faced by going to war. For the end of lesson assessment, students will write an explanatory essay about the government's use of propaganda in these wars. The posters, graphic organizers, answer keys, and a rubric to assess student writing have been included with the lesson.

**Subject(s):** Social Studies, English Language Arts

**Intended Audience:** [Educators](#)

**Instructional Time:** 3 Hour(s)

**Resource supports reading in content area:** Yes

**Keywords:** World War One, World War I, World War Two, World War II, WWI, WWII, Nazis, propaganda, propaganda posters, patriotism, Greatest Generation

**Instructional Design Framework(s):** [Direct Instruction](#) , [Writing to Learn](#)

**Resource Collection:** [CPALMS Lesson Plan Development Initiative](#)

**Grade Level(s):** 7

**Suggested Technology:** Document Camera, Computer for Presenter, Internet Connection, LCD Projector, Speakers / Headphones

**Freely Available:** Yes

**Instructional Component Type(s):** [Lesson Plan](#), [Worksheet](#), [Assessment](#), [Video / Audio / Animation](#), [Image / Photograph](#), [Formative Assessment](#)

## ATTACHMENTS

- [Chart Picturing World War Propaganda.docx](#)
- [Portable Word Wall.pdf](#)
- [Student TChart Comparing Benefits Costs of War.docx](#)
- [Student TChart Comparison WWI WWII.docx](#)
- [TE TChart Comparing Benefits Costs of War.docx](#)
- [Rubric for Student Essay.doc](#)
- [CPALMS Propaganda Posters WWI and WWII.doc](#)
- [TE TChart Comparison WWI WWII.docx](#)
- [TE Chart Picturing World War Propaganda.docx](#)
- [Notes for Teachers WWI and WWII Posters.doc](#)

## LESSON CONTENT

**Lesson Plan Template:** General Lesson Plan

**Learning Objectives: What should students know and be able to do as a result of this lesson?**

By the end of the 3-day lesson, students should be able to:

- Determine the central ideas presented in each propaganda poster from WWI and WWII analyzed in the lesson.
- Cite specific and appropriate textual evidence from propaganda posters from WWI and WWII when answering questions about these sources.
- Identify aspects of WWI and WWII propaganda posters that reveal the posters' purpose and the biases the posters exhibit.
- Through construction of a clear and well-organized explanatory essay, convey an understanding of how the American government used propaganda posters during WWI and WWII to convince citizens to get involved in the war effort.

**Guiding Questions: What are the guiding questions for this lesson?**

- 1) What techniques did the U.S. government use in war propaganda posters to acquire civilian support during WWI and WWII?
- 2) How do the use of images, color, and words in war propaganda posters reveal the purposes of the posters? The biases?
- 3) What groups of people did the U.S. government target as their audiences for propaganda posters?
- 4) In what ways did the U.S. government want its citizens to get involved in the war effort during WWI and WWII?

**Prior Knowledge: What prior knowledge should students have for this lesson?**

**Vocabulary & Concepts** (Note: some of the concepts may not require front loading, but may require emphasis/review and/or clarification during the lesson):  
propaganda

bias

liberty

patriotism

common good

patriotic symbols of the U.S.

civilians

espionage

rationing

gardening for personal consumption

farming for mass consumption

government war bonds

isolationism & neutrality (the U.S. tried to remain neutral during both world wars, but was unable to maintain a position of neutrality)

Huns (WWI)

Hitler and the Nazis (WWII)

swastika (WWII)

that Germany was an enemy of America in both world wars

### Writing Skills:

Students should be able to create an essay based on an assigned prompt with a clear introduction, body paragraphs supported with appropriate evidence, use of transitions to connect and sequence ideas/information, and a conclusion that summarizes the main points of the essay.

### Teaching Phase: How will the teacher present the concept or skill to students?

#### Day 1 (60 min class):

##### Step 1 (10 min.)

- Hook – Have students respond to the following prompt: What would make you willing to fight in a war or support a war?
  - Individual Students – Brainstorm 3 reasons why you would be willing to fight in a war. Brainstorm 3 reasons why you would support a war.
  - Regroup students into pairs of 2 – Students will share results with each other.
  - Regroup pairs into groups of 4 - Students will share results with each other.
  - As a group, select the top 2 reasons you would fight in a war and the top 2 reasons you would support a war.
  - The groups of 4 will report results out to the whole group while the teacher collates the information for the class.

##### Step 2 (15 min.)

- Building background information – refer to the [video clip](#), "Causes of WWI," from the History Channel website (clip is less than 3 minutes in length). Refer also to the [video clip](#) "Lusitania" (clip 2 minutes).
- After watching the video clips, have students write 3 facts they learned from each video. Have students share out information and allot time to answer student questions about the video clips.
- Discuss with students: when America entered WWI, the government needed to convince the citizens to support the war effort if America was going to have a chance to win. The government used posters as advertisements to help get the citizens' attentions, and it used propaganda in these posters to try to convince citizens to support the war. In the next steps in this lesson, explain to students that they will be analyzing propaganda posters the government used in World War One.

##### Step 3 (25- 30 min.)

- Distribute copies of the [Propaganda Posters \(just for WWI\)](#) to students.
- Distribute a [blank student chart](#) to help students with their analysis of the WWI posters.
- Reminder: The teacher may need to review or clarify some vocabulary or concepts listed in the prior knowledge section during this activity.
- The teacher will use Doc A for the WWI posters to model how to analyze the propaganda poster and record data onto the student chart.
- A [teacher key for this chart](#) (this should be used as a guide only- not all possible answers or interpretations are included) is available as well as [notes to assist teachers](#) (these should be used as a guide only) for each poster.
- As a whole group the teacher may want to look at Doc B and complete the student chart together.
- In pairs, students will complete the remaining WWI posters--analyzing them and filling out the chart for each document.
- Whole group discussion – the teacher will provide students the opportunity to report their responses, and the teacher should review and clarify information by asking/answering questions and providing corrective feedback when needed.
- 10 min-- Have each student write a brief summary (using the posters and their chart) explaining how the U.S. government used propaganda to acquire civilian support during WWI and in what areas they needed citizens to get involved to help the U.S. win the war. Direct student attention to the completed student chart, specifically the row summarizing the purpose of each document. Next, students should consider the targeted audience and how citizens could assist in the war effort either on the homefront or the battle field. Victory depended upon teamwork and sacrificing for the common good of the nation.
- **Note:** Summarizing enables each student to organize the content into a coherent form that reinforces what has been learned. Furthermore, written summaries highlight gaps in knowledge and in the synthesis of information. The teacher can "spot check" student summaries as students work, or as students share out, or the teacher can collect these and provide brief written feedback.

#### Day 2 (60 min class):

##### Step 1 (5- 8 min.)

- The teacher should conduct a quick review of the previous day's lesson on WWI. Ask for volunteers to share something they learned from the two videos shown or something they learned through the propaganda posters activity.

##### Step 2 (10 min.)

- Building background information: The teacher should show a You Tube [video](#) titled "WWII- How Did It Start?" (3 minutes). The teacher should also show the [video](#)

clip about the attack on Pearl Harbor from the History Channel (2 minutes).

- After watching the video clips, have students write 3 facts they learned about the start of WWII and 3 facts they learned about the attack on Pearl Harbor.

### Step 3 (25- 30 min.)

- Distribute the propaganda posters (they are in the latter half of this [handout](#)) for WWII.
- Distribute the [blank student chart](#) (page 2) for students to use as they analyze the propaganda posters for WWII.
- The teacher will use Doc A for the WWII posters to model how to complete the student chart. The teacher can use the [chart key](#) and the [teacher notes handout](#) to assist them with this modeling.
- As a whole group the teacher may want to look at Doc B with students and complete the student chart together as a class.
- In pairs, students will complete the remaining WWII posters.
- **Whole group discussion – the teacher will provide students the opportunity to share what they put on the chart, and the teacher will review and clarify information by asking/answering questions and providing corrective feedback when needed.**

### Step 4 (10 min.)

- Have each student write a summary explaining how the U.S. government used propaganda to acquire civilian support during WWII and which areas the government needed citizens to get involved in to help the U.S. win the war. Students should consider the targeted audience and how citizens could assist in the war effort either on the homefront or the battle field. Like in WWI, victory depended upon teamwork and sacrificing for the common good of the nation.

### Guided Practice: What activities or exercises will the students complete with teacher guidance?

#### Day 3 (60 min. class):

#### Step 1 (5-8 min.)

- The teacher will conduct a quick review of the previous day's lesson on WWII. Ask for volunteers to share a fact they learned from one of the videos shown or from the propaganda posters examined.

#### Step 2 (20 min.)

- The teacher will distribute the [blank student T-Chart](#) so students can compare the American government's use of propaganda during WWI and WWII. The teacher should refer students to use their completed student charts from the WWI and WWII propaganda poster activities to help them with filling out this chart. When completing this T-Chart, have students list topics or concepts illustrated in the propaganda posters for each world war. The teacher might want to model one example for students before releasing them to work on their own. A [key](#) has been included (it should be used as a guide only) for teachers to use.
- Regroup students in groups of 4 to compare and discuss their findings/results. Students may add to their lists during this process.
- **Whole group – Have each group share one finding/result while the teacher collates the information for the class. The teacher can provide corrective verbal feedback at this time.**

#### Step Three (30 min.)

- The teacher will go over the summative explanatory writing assignment with students. Instruct students that they will create a 5 paragraph essay responding to the following prompt: What techniques did the American government use in propaganda posters for WWI and WWII to try to convince citizens to help the war effort? Which people in American society were the intended audiences for these posters? In what ways did the government want Americans to help? Do you think the techniques used in these posters would have successfully convinced citizens to support these wars? Why or why not?
- Make sure that students know they must answer all parts of the prompt in their essay. Before moving on, go over any questions or concerns students have about the prompt.
- Tell students they can use the propaganda posters for WWI and WWII and all their charts and summaries from this 3-day lesson in order to construct their essay.
- Make sure that students understand that throughout the essay they must cite the documents they use as evidence (for example: Document A). When appropriate, they should cite specific aspects of a document as evidence (for example: referencing colors used in the poster, phrases used, images used, etc.).
- To help students with the organization of their essay and to make sure that they answer all parts of the prompt, the teacher may instruct students to:

--Create an introductory paragraph to make the topic and main points of their essay clear. Remind students to provide background information the reader will need to understand the topic.

--In the first body paragraph they can focus on WWI posters (how the government tried to convince specific groups of citizens to support the war and what the government wanted them to do to help). Again, the students should cite the documents as evidence.

--In the second body paragraph they can focus on WWII posters (how the government tried to convince specific groups of citizens to support the war and what the government wanted them to do help). The students should cite the documents as evidence.

--In the third body paragraph students can make a claim as to whether or not they believe any of these posters would have convinced citizens to support the wars. As with the other paragraphs, they should use the documents as evidence to support their claim, but they may also use information from any of the videos shown in the lesson as well. Students should pick two to four specific posters to discuss (one or two from each war) and make a claim about each.

--A concluding paragraph to wrap up their essay. It should restate the topic and summarize the main points and highlights from the body paragraphs.

- Give students time to look back through their materials and brainstorm in writing what main points they will make about WWI propaganda posters and the evidence they will use to support their points, what main points they will make about WWII propaganda posters and the evidence they will use to support their points, and what posters they will use to make their claims in the last body paragraph and what evidence they will use to support their claims.
- Time permitting, the students may share their brainstorming notes with a partner or in small groups to get feedback on their ideas. The teacher could also circulate as students work to provide verbal feedback and help students know if they are headed in the right direction.
- Before releasing students to begin their draft, the teacher should go over the grading rubric with students. Teachers can use their own or the [rubric](#) that is attached.

### Independent Practice: What activities or exercises will students complete to reinforce the concepts and skills developed in the lesson?

The independent practice is the summative writing assessment for this lesson. Students will write a 5 paragraph essay responding to the following prompt:

What techniques did the American government use in propaganda posters for WWI and WWII to try to convince citizens to help the war effort? Which people in American society were the intended audiences for these posters? In what ways did the government want Americans to help? Do you think the techniques used in these posters would have successfully convinced citizens to support these wars? Why or why not?

Written essays will demonstrate each student's thinking process and ability to use content vocabulary, concepts, and other information.

The final draft of students' essays will serve as the summative assessment. Teachers can use the attached [rubric](#), adapt the rubric, or create one of their own to assess students' essays.

**Note:** Depending on available instructional time, teachers may have students complete their essay in class (this would add additional days to the lesson) or they may complete it at home for homework.

**Closure: How will the teacher assist students in organizing the knowledge gained in the lesson?**

Suggested options to serve as a closure for this 3-day lesson:

- 1) Ask for volunteers to read their essays aloud to the class.
- 2) The teacher may select an essay that demonstrates strong content and evidence and contains components of a well-developed essay. The teacher can go over this essay with students, highlighting these aspects and showing how they earned a high score based on the rubric that was used to assess the essay.
- 3) The teacher may conduct a brief final class discussion using any of the Guiding Questions.
- 4) The teacher may have students complete an Exit Slip listing examples of 3 new pieces of information learned, 2 ways the student contributed to creating a positive learning environment, or feedback on the student's favorite aspect of the lesson.

## ASSESSMENT

### Formative Assessment:

This lesson offers a variety of opportunities for the teacher to assess student comprehension and knowledge acquisition through academic conversations, recording information on charts, and written summaries:

- Student charts to analyze images, phrases used, purpose, and bias in propaganda posters used by the American government in WWI and WWII
- Student summaries explaining how the U.S. government used propaganda to acquire civilian support during WWI and WWII and in what areas the U.S. needed citizens to get involved to help the U.S. win each war
- Student T-Chart comparing focus of propaganda during WWI and WWII

### Feedback to Students:

- Students will receive verbal feedback about their performance and depth of knowledge acquisition during the lesson through academic conversations with their peers and the teacher (think-pair-share groups, groups of 4 people, and whole group settings).
- The teacher will provide verbal corrective feedback as students share out their work on the WWI and WWII propaganda posters analysis chart.
- The teacher will provide verbal corrective feedback as students share out their work on the T-Chart comparing the focus of propaganda during WWI and WWII.
- Throughout the lesson, students are encouraged to pose and ask questions about the content, as well as reflect upon and make observations about the content. The teacher will provide verbal feedback as needed.
- The teacher will also provide verbal feedback (and has the option to provide written feedback) as students brainstorm ideas for their summative assessment essay.

### Summative Assessment:

Students will write a 5 paragraph essay responding to the following prompt: What techniques did the American government use in propaganda posters for WWI and WWII to try to convince citizens to help the war effort? What people in American society were the intended audiences for these posters? In what ways did the government want Americans to help? Do you think the techniques used in these posters would have successfully convinced citizens to support these wars? Why or why not? Written essays will demonstrate each student's thinking process and ability to use content vocabulary, concepts, and other information.

**Note:** Please see the end of the guided practice section and the independent practice section for more information.

## ACCOMMODATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

**Accommodations:** Suggestions of how to scaffold the lesson to accommodate students with special needs and to differentiate instruction include:

- 1) Pair students with a partner(s) throughout the entire analysis process for the WWI and WWII propaganda posters
- 2) Increase the teacher modeling (more "I Do" and "We Do") before releasing students to work independently
- 3) Graphic organizers have been built into and included within the lesson for analyzing the propaganda posters; the teacher could add a graphic organizer, brainstorming tool, or checklist to help students with their essay
- 4) Increase opportunities to review and reflect upon the content before moving to the next activity
- 5) Provide students the opportunity to ask questions of personal interest at specified times during the class day
- 6) Allow students to turn in the rough draft of their essay, receive written feedback from the teacher based on the rubric used to assess the essay, and then allow students to make revisions based on the teacher's feedback before being graded on their final draft

**Note:** The activities in the lesson are scaffolded to provide guided practice and, concurrently, to move students into a model of increasing student engagement and analysis. Fostering academic conversations among students promotes increased student engagement, analysis, and responsibility for learning. Student movement from working in pairs, to groups of four, to a whole group setting facilitates greater opportunity for clarification and reinforcement of concepts.

**Extensions:** Suggestions for extensions to the lesson:

--The teacher may provide opportunities for students to further explore topics of personal interest from this 3-day lesson during class or for homework. Students could use some of the questions generated on their WWI and WWII propaganda posters chart as areas to research.

--The teacher could also present some topics from WWI and WWII and students could pick an area(s) to explore/research on their own. The History Channel website offers a wealth of short, high interest videos covering a variety of topics. Have students pick 2 topics of their choice to research. As students conduct their research they should complete a [Portable World Wall Chart](#) for each of the 2 topics. This chart is designed to help students focus on, develop, and reinforce content area vocabulary.

World War I [History Channel videos](#):

Topics:

- WWI Firsts

- Bet You Didn't Know: Trench Warfare
- U-Boats Sink the Lusitania in 1915
- Trench Warfare
- Outbreak of WWI
- Maginot Line
- Woodrow Wilson
- Treaty of Versailles

World War II [History Channel videos](#):

Topics:

- FDR – A voice of Hope
- Tuskegee Airmen
- U.S. Home Front During WWII
- Japanese-American Relocation
- Bombing of Hiroshima & Nagasaki
- Franklin D. Roosevelt
- WWII Battles

-- The teacher could also construct a follow-up activity to this 3-day lesson (or as part of a larger unit) to have students examine the costs and benefits of war. A blank student [T-Chart](#) and a [teacher key](#) (to be used as a guide only) have been included with the lesson to assist teachers with creating this follow-up activity.

**Suggested Technology:** Document Camera, Computer for Presenter, Internet Connection, LCD Projector, Speakers / Headphones

**Special Materials Needed:** All necessary materials have been included with the lesson.

**Further Recommendations:** The National Archives at Docs Teach offers a variety of primary source materials. See World War I resources [link](#) and WWII resources [link](#).

Other recommendations include:

- Interviewing a family member or family friend who lived through WWII and writing a summary of the interview.
- Contacting a VFW Hall to see if there are WWII veterans willing to come and speak to the class.
- Writing a letter about what was learned and sending it to a VFW Hall.
- Having students grow a 'Victory Garden' at school.
- Researching popular songs during WWI and WWII and presenting the music to the class.

## PUBLIC REMARKS

### By Author/Submitter

This lesson is designed as a 3-day lesson examining the use of propaganda posters in WWI and WWII by the American government; it is not intended to serve as an in-depth analysis of WWI or WWII. Ideas for extending the lesson are included, however.

## SOURCE AND ACCESS INFORMATION

**Name of Author/Source:** Virginia Parra

**Is this Resource freely Available?** Yes

**Access Privileges:** Public

**License:** [CPALMS License - no distribution - non commercial](#)

## Related Standards

Name	Description
<a href="#">SS.7.C.2.11:</a>	Analyze media and political communications (bias, symbolism, propaganda).
<a href="#">SS.7.C.4.1:</a>	Differentiate concepts related to United States domestic and foreign policy.
<a href="#">SS.7.C.4.3:</a>	Describe examples of how the United States has dealt with international conflicts.
<a href="#">LAFS.68.RH.1.1:</a>	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
<a href="#">LAFS.68.RH.1.2:</a>	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.
<a href="#">LAFS.68.RH.2.6:</a>	Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
<a href="#">LAFS.68.WHST.1.2:</a>	Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</li> <li>Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</li> <li>Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</li> <li>Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</li> <li>Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.</li> </ol>

f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.