

Title: A Soldier's Story

Author: Mary Barcroft

Course: American History, Wars of 20th Century

Time Frame: This activity is designed as an outside of class project, with a timeline of approximately two weeks from assignment to due date. At the discretion of the teacher, some class time can be set aside for research and peer editing, and to present their pr

Subjects:

World War I, Analyzing Primary Sources

Grade Levels:

9, 10, 11, 12

Classroom/Homework Activity to be performed:

This is designed to be an individual capstone project for a unit on World War I by using primary sources to allow student insight into the personal side of the Great War. The students will use archive based research to create a story about one particular soldier. If possible, find names and pictures of local soldiers to further personalize the experience.

Rationale:

Through this activity, students will learn to analyze primary source materials such as pictures, letters, and diaries, and synthesize that information with material presented in the classroom to produce an original story. It exercises research and writing skills, and as stated earlier, allows students to personalize the World War I experience.

Lesson objectives - the student will:

- Conduct original research using primary source material regarding a specific soldier and/or division.
- Conduct secondary source research based on the primary source material in order to confirm or expand information in their primary source material.
- Using material gathered, the student will write a 5-6 page "autobiography/short story" about their soldier, incorporating authentic details learned in research.

District, state, or national performance and knowledge standards/goals/skills met:

- Conduct original research using primary source material regarding a specific soldier and/or division.
- Conduct secondary source research based on the primary source material in order to confirm or expand information in their primary source material.
- Using material gathered, the student will write a 5-6 page "autobiography/short story" about their soldier, incorporating authentic details learned in research.

MISSOURI STANDARDS

2. Continuity and change in the history of Missouri, the United States and the world
6. Relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions

7. The use of tools of social science inquiry (such as surveys, statistics, maps, documents)

KANSAS STANDARDS

Benchmark 5: The student engages in historical thinking skills.

1. (A) analyzes a theme in United States history to explain patterns of continuity and change over time.
2. (A) develops historical questions on a specific topic in United States history and analyzes the evidence in primary source documents to speculate on the answers.
3. (A) uses primary and secondary sources about an event in U.S. history to develop a credible interpretation of the event, evaluating on its meaning (e.g., uses provided primary and secondary sources to interpret a historical-based conclusion).

Secondary materials (book, article, video documentary, etc.) needed:

- Books and films selected by the teacher in reference to World War I.

Primary materials (book, article, video documentary, etc.) needed:

- Pictures from website: Photos of the Great War <http://www.gwpda.org/photos/greatwar.htm>
- Letters from website: American Letters and Diary Entries

www.libertymemorialmuseum.org/FileUploads/AmericanLettersandDiaryEnt.doc

- Any other documents and web sites to provide insight into the war

Technology Required:

Computer with internet access, book and video library and means to play them.

Full description of activity or assignment:

The teacher will explain the assignment to the students at the beginning of the unit on World War I in order for them to work as the unit is presented. The teacher will present the unit information on World War I to the students in whatever manner planned. At the end of the unit, as a capstone experience, the students will write a creative short story, autobiography based on the photographs and letters available on the above mentioned website, or other photos and letters located by the teacher. Students will randomly select a photo and a letter from those provided. Using the photo and document analysis sheets provided by the National Archives, students will conduct a detailed analysis of both of the documents to make some determinations about their composite "soldier." Using available information, students should research the area and battles the soldier was engaged in, if they can determine the location.

Students will use the research they have done as background to create a story for their soldier. The story should be approximately 5-6 pages double spaced and should include at least five realistic details from their research. These details can be specific to their soldier, from his letters and available background information, and historical facts from the war materials.

Peer editing, teacher editing, and use of the writing lab are recommended as the paper will be graded on grammar and spelling in addition to creativity.

Optionally, teachers can allow class time to work on the story, peer edit, and presentations to the class. Other options would include expanding the assignment to include people other than soldiers, such as the Red Cross nurses.

Full explanation of the assessment method and/or scoring guide:

SCORING RUBRIC FOR A Soldier's Story

	Strong	Moderately Strong	Average	Moderately Weak	Weak
Provides at least five realistic details regarding their subject and his/her circumstances	5	4	3	2	1
Provides specific examples from the letters or photographs to support their details	5	4	3	2	1
Demonstrates understanding of the situation Americans found themselves in during the War	5	4	3	2	1
Conveys clear meaning by using proper grammar, spelling and punctuation	5	4	3	2	1
Follows instructions with regard to mechanics of writing the paper	5	4	3	2	1

A 5 paper presents a well-developed story and demonstrates good control of the elements of effective writing. A typical paper in this category

- clearly identifies important features of the analysis and develops them in a generally thoughtful way.
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- develops ideas clearly, organizes them logically, and connects them with appropriate transitions
- sensibly supports the main points of the analysis
- demonstrates control of the language, demonstrating ability to use the conventions of standard written English but may have occasional flaws.

A 4 paper presents a competent analysis and demonstrates adequate control of the elements of writing. A typical paper in this category

- identifies and analyzes important features of the analysis
- develops and organizes ideas satisfactorily but may not connect them with transitions
- supports the main points of the analysis
- demonstrates sufficient control of language to convey ideas with reasonable clarity generally follows the conventions of standard written English but may have some flaws.

A 3 paper demonstrates some competence in analytical writing skills and in its control of the elements of writing but is plainly flawed. A typical paper in this category exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

- does not identify or analyze most if the important features of the discussion, although some analysis is present
- devotes most of its time to analyzing irrelevant issues
- is limited in the logical development and organization of ideas
- offers support of little relevance and value for points of the analysis
- does not convey meaning clearly, or contains occasional major errors or frequent minor errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

A 2 paper demonstrates serious weaknesses in analytical writing skills. A typical paper in this category exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

- does not present a critique based on logical analysis, but may instead present the writer's own views on the subject
- does not develop ideas or is disorganized
- provides little, if any, relevant or reasonable support
- has serious and frequent problems in the use of language and in sentence structure, containing numerous errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that interfere with meaning.

A 1 paper demonstrates fundamental deficiencies in analytical writing skills. A typical paper in this category exhibits more than one of the following characteristics:

- provides little evidence of the ability to understand and analyze
- provides little evidence of the ability to develop an organized response
- has severe and persistent errors in language and sentence structure, containing a pervasive pattern or errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that results in incoherence

0---Off-topic