



World War One Veterans: Sorting Out the Evidence

Lesson Summary

Grade Level:

10th-12th Grade

Number of Class Periods:

About three 50 minute periods

Unit Overview:

The First World War was one of the most destructive conflicts in human history, and it was the world's first truly global war. In this lesson, students learn about American veterans who served in the First World War. To do so, they learn to interact with primary sources, experiencing first-hand both the capacity of such sources to shed light on the past as well as the frustration of working with limited source information.

Essential Questions:

"How do historians use primary sources to reconstruct the lives of individuals in major world events, and what kinds of sources are available to them?"

"How do historians use primary sources to construct a historical narrative of significant events, furthering our understanding of history and the individuals within it?"

Florida State Social Studies Standards:

SS.912.A.1.2 Utilize a variety of primary and secondary sources to identify author, historical significance, audience, and authenticity to understand a historical period.

SS.912.A.1.3 Utilize timelines to identify the time sequence of historical data.

SS.912.W.1.6 Evaluate the role of history in shaping identity and character.

LAFS.910.RH.1.1Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

LAFS.910.RH.1.3Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

LAFS.910.RH.3.7 Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

LAFS.910.WHST.3.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

LAFS.910.WHST.3.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.





Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to understand how primary sources are used to reconstruct the lives of individuals.
- Students will be able to evaluate the capacity and limitations of using primary sources to reconstruct the past.

Materials:

Henry Jenkins - Source Packet (Attached)

- World War I Draft Registration
- List of Men Ordered to Report
- World War I Service Card
- Interment Card

Robert Jones - Source Packet (Attached)

- World War I Service Card
- World War I Draft Registration
- List of Men Ordered to Report
- Interment Card

Alexander Lucas - Source Packet

- 1900 US Census Records
- 1910 US Census Records
- 1920 US Census Records
- 1940 US Census Records
- Army Widow Form

William Henry Oliver - Source Packet

- Registration Card
- World War I Service Card
- Infantry Discharge Sheet
- 1915 New York State Census Records
- 1925 New York State Census Records
- 1940 US Census Records

Nelson Oren Phelps - Source Packet

- 1905 New York State Census Records
- 1925 New York State Census Records
- Military Discharge Form
- 1920 US Census Records
- Marriage Record
- 1940 US Census Records
- 1930 US Census Records
- 1910 US Census Records
- 1900 US Census Records





Lesson Preparation:

To prepare for this lesson, the teacher will need to print off and laminate the associated 35 source documents listed in the materials section and cut them out. For documents such as U.S. Census Reports, transport lists, orders to report for duty, and other lists, the teacher will need to highlight or otherwise mark the name of the soldier with whom that source is associated. The teacher will also need to label five manila envelopes for five student groups (group 1, group 2, etc.). Seven documents should be placed in each of the manilla envelopes at random.

Activity 1: Sorting Things Out

- 1. Students are divided into groups. Students are instructed that each envelope has documents from five soldiers, and they are not to open them until instructed to do so.
- 2. The teacher posts the names of the five soldiers on the classroom whiteboard: Henry Jenkins, Robert Jones, Alexander Lucas, William Henry Oliver, and Nelson Oren Phelps.
- 3. Teacher gives students about 30-35 minutes and one goal: to end the class period with an envelope made up of only one soldier's docs. Throughout the class period, students are asked to move around the room asking for and trading documents, trying to complete the set. Part of the challenge is that the sources are not clearly named with the soldier that possessed them.
- 4. As student groups finish assembling their document sets, the teacher should check and make sure that students have done so correctly. During this time, the teacher might also take a moment to emphasize the challenges that historians have in researching and collecting sources such as the ones the students are now working with in class.
- 5. As a closing discussion for this activity, the teacher can lead a conversation with students about the sources that they came into contact with during that class period. The teacher may ask students probing questions about what the most interesting documents were, which documents revealed the most about the lives of U.S. veterans, and what historians could learn from the different documents available to the students.
 - * With five minutes remaining, the teacher ought to have students return their documents and envelopes separately. The teacher should then shuffle the documents and place them back in the envelopes at random in preparation for the next class.

Activity 2: Telling a Soldier's Story

In the second activity of the unit, students reconstruct the biography of a U.S. veteran's life using only the sources available to them. Here they will experience firsthand the challenges historians meet everyday: that sources can be very illuminating but also hard to find and decipher. This activity will likely take two class periods and is divided into two parts.

Lesson Preparation: The teacher should make sure prior to the second day of activities that all document sets are complete. This can be accomplished in the last class period participating in the first activity, by simply having students return their already complete envelopes.





Part I

- 1. The students return to their groups from the previous class period. The teacher returns the manilla envelopes to those groups with complete document sets.
- 2. The teacher presents the students with a simple challenge: "On your desks, you have all the documents known to us of an individual veteran's life who served in the First World War. Using the information available, briefly tell the story of your assigned soldier's life." To guide the soldiers' story as told by the students, the teacher poses the following guided questions on the classroom whiteboard:
 - a. Do we know when the soldier was born?
 - b. Do we know anything about the soldier's childhood and education?
 - c. How did the soldier enter the war, and how do we know?
 - d. What role did the soldier have in the war, and how do we know?
 - e. Do we know where the soldier was deployed to, and how?
 - f. Did the soldier survive the war, and how do we know?
 - g. Do we know anything about the soldier's life after the war?
 - h. How was the soldier commemorated?
- 3. Groups work together for the class period to develop a brief biography. Teachers should instruct groups to designate a recorder who will outline the answers to the previous questions as they develop their biography.

Part II

- 1. At the beginning of the next class period, students gather in their groups with their document sets and practice presenting their soldiers' story. The teacher instructs the groups that as they prepare their presentation, more than one student in each group will be required to present material (not necessarily every student). Students ought to plan their speaking roles accordingly. Teacher should allot 10 minutes for preparation time.
- 2. Each group is given five minutes to present their soldier's story. While listening to the presentations, all students are required to write down 3-5 historically relevant facts about the soldiers being presented. At the end of the presentations, all students will have 12-20 historically relevant facts about the four soldiers that were presented, excluding their own presentation.
- 3. Note: the teacher should emphasize that groups will only have a maximum of five minutes to present, and that once the groups reach the five minute mark, the presentation will be interrupted in the interest of time. The teacher needs to make sure all five groups have presented before the class period concludes, in order to move onto the next activity.
- 4. The teacher will instruct students to bring their fact sheets that they created during the presentations to the next class period.





Activity 3 - Option 1: Discussion on Reconstructing the Past

- 1. Students return to a whole group setting for a class discussion on the potential and limitations of working with primary source evidence. Seating arrangement is based upon teacher discretion, but a fishbowl or circular seating arrangement are well suited to this type of activity. The students should have their fact sheets from the prior activity.
- 2. The teacher distributes the attached rubric for participation in a class discussion, and explains how students may participate as well as the expectations to be met. The purpose of having class discussions is to give students a chance to practice speaking in a group setting, to show students the value of their ideas or contributions, and to arrive at a group consensus in response to larger questions.
 - a. Students need to speak to each other, and not their teacher, who is merely a facilitator.
 - b. Students may respond to a question posed by the facilitator (teacher), another student, or ask a question that builds on the discussion being had.
- 3. The teacher poses students with the following questions one by one. Students should be prompted at random to contribute to the class discussion. Students may either respond to the question itself or something another student has said or asked. During the discussion, students may be encouraged to make note of their thoughts, so that they are ready to speak when prompted. Meanwhile, the teacher should keep track of who has spoken on a class roster, making note of where students fall on the provided rubric.
 - a. How do historians reconstruct the past? Does the way in which historians work surprise you? Why or why not?
 - b. What were we able to find out about the veterans for whom we had sources?
 - c. What were we not able to find out about our veterans, and how might those gaps in our understanding have come about?
 - d. Of which veteran did we have the clearest/least clear biography? Why do you think so?
 - e. Based on what we saw in these documents, how do you think we should remember veterans?

Activity 3 - Option 2: Essay on Reconstructing the Past

- 1. Students return to a whole-group setting in order to write a short essay about their experience writing a biography for an American veteran who fought in World War One. The students should have their fact sheets from the prior activity.
- 2. The teacher introduces students to the prompt for writing: "Historians often work with rare and hard-to-find primary sources in order to tell the stories of people who played a part in our past. Based on your experience creating a biography on an American veteran in class, how can primary sources help historians reconstruct the past, and what challenges might they run into in so doing? Use specific examples of American veterans that we learned about in class in your response."
- 3. The teacher may choose to brainstorm a structure for the essay together with the class. For example, the first part of the body of such an essay might consist of how primary sources can illuminate personal details about people that would otherwise be lost to history, and could include examples of veterans.





- 4. Students are given thirty minutes to compose a short response to the prompt. During that time, the teacher may or may not provide coaching or guidance to students who have questions.
- 5. Once the allotted time has passed, students return to their working groups. They are prompted to trade essays with one another and give one another feedback on their ideas and writing. The teacher monitors the conversations as students talk and make additions or minor corrections to their writings. At the end of the class period, students submit their essay to the teacher.





Rubric for Scoring Group Presentations

Directions:

On your desks, you have all the documents known to us of an individual veteran's life who served in the First World War. Using the information available, briefly tell the story of your assigned soldier's life. Use the guiding questions below to help shape your response. One person in your group should take notes. As a group, you will be presenting a brief biography of your veteran to the class. To prepare, you should practice your presentation.

Guiding Questions:

- 1. Do we know when the veteran was born?
- 2. Do we know anything about the veteran's childhood and education?
- 3. How did the veteran enter the war, and how do we know?
- 4. What role did the veteran have in the war, and how do we know?
- 5. Do we know where the veteran was deployed to, and how?
- 6. Did the veteran survive the war, and how do we know?
- 7. Do we know anything about the veteran's life after the war?
- 8. How was the veteran commemorated?

Rubric for Grading

Scoring Criteria	Student Points Earned
Participation: did more than one group member participate in the presentation?	/5
Accuracy: Was the content of the presentation historically accurate?	/5
Evidence Presented: Did students use the guiding questions to construct their responses?	/5
Overall Presentation: The story of the soldier was clear, understandable, and well-presented.	/5
TOTAL POINTS:	/20





Socratic Seminar Scoring Guide

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	Incorporates others into the discussion
	Challenges ideas and conclusions in thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas
	Summarizes points of agreement and disagreement
	Qualifies or justifies own views and understanding
	Makes new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented
ficie	ent Criteria
	Student comes to discussion prepared (with completed preparation notes)

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_	Student comes to discussion prepared (with completed preparation notes)
	Uses body language and eye contact to indicate active listening

☐ Both **poses** and **responds** to **questions**

Sentence Starter Tips for Students:

Need some quick ideas on what to say? Here are some ways to get started.

- I really like how you ... and think that ...
- Why do you think ...?
- I agree with ... because ...
- I disagree with ... because ...
- I had a thought about ...
- What impressed me was ...

RUBRIC FOR GRADING:

	Advanced (100 pts.)	Proficient (90 pts.)	Developing (75 pts.)	Needs Improvement (50 pts.)
Expectation:	The student meets all of the criteria for proficiency and at least one of the advanced criteria.	The student meets three of the proficient criteria.	The student meets two of the proficient criteria.	The student participates, but does not clearly meet the criteria for proficiency.





Reconstructing the Past Essay

Prompt for writing:

Historians often work with rare and hard-to-find primary sources in order to tell the stories of people who played a part in our past. Based on your experience creating a biography on an American veteran in class, how can primary sources help historians reconstruct the past, and what challenges might they run into in so doing? Use specific examples of American veterans that we learned about in class in your response.

Assignment:

Write an essay that meets the following basic requirements:

- ☐ Your essay needs an introduction with a thesis or central argument. You may use the "BAR" format if you'd like (Background, Argument, Roadmap)
- ☐ The body of your essay should be well-organized and have a clear structure
- ☐ Please use examples from <u>at least two</u> of the veterans that we studied in class

Rubric for Grading:

	Exceeds Expectations (100%)	Meets Expectations (90%)	Almost Meets Expectations (75%)	Needs Improvement (50%)
Introduction/ Thesis	Exceptional introduction that grabs interest of reader and states topic. Thesis is exceptionally clear, arguable, well-developed, and a definitive statement.	Proficient introduction that is interesting and states topic. Thesis is clear and arguable statement of position.	Basic introduction that states topic but lacks interest. Thesis is somewhat clear and arguable.	Weak or no introduction of topic. Paper's purpose is unclear/thesis is weak or missing.
Body	Body of the essay is exceptionally well-organized Body paragraphs are very clearly focused	Body of the essay is well-organized Body paragraphs are focused	Body of the essay is somewhat organized Body paragraphs are somewhat unfocused	Body of the essay is not organized Body paragraphs are unfocused
Evidence	Very clear, relevant connections are made between examples from two veterans and the essay's thesis	Relevant connections are made between examples from two veterans studied and the essay's thesis	Some connections are made between examples from one veteran studied and the essay's thesis	No relevant connections are made or no examples are used





Henry Jenkins Packet

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"Henry Jenkins." Florida, World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919." Florida Memory.

www.floridamemory.com.



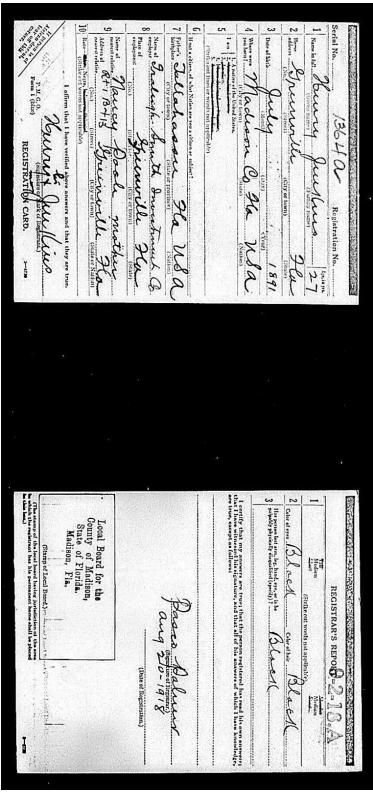


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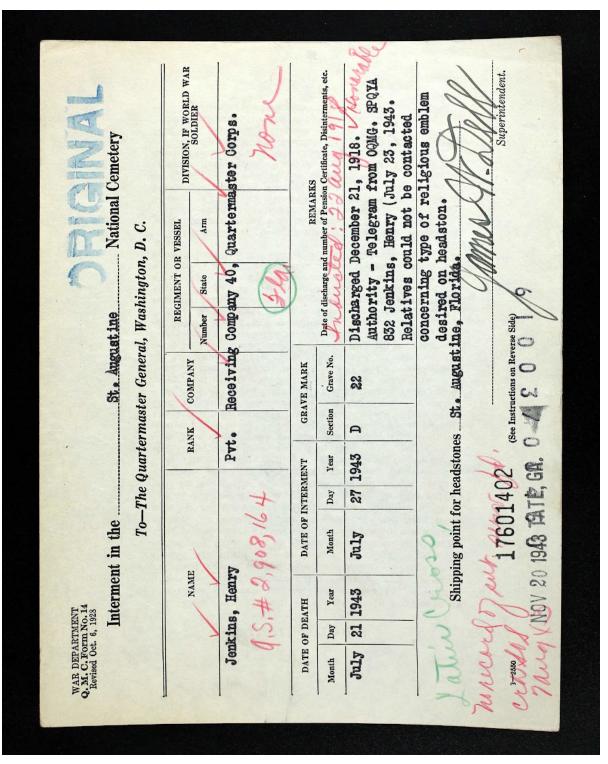




"Henry Jenkins." U.S. Draft Registration Card 1917-1918.







"Henry Jenkins." U.S. National Cemetery Interment Control Forms, 1928-1962."





Robert Jones Packet

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"Robert Jones." Florida, World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919." Florida Memory. www.floridamemory.com.



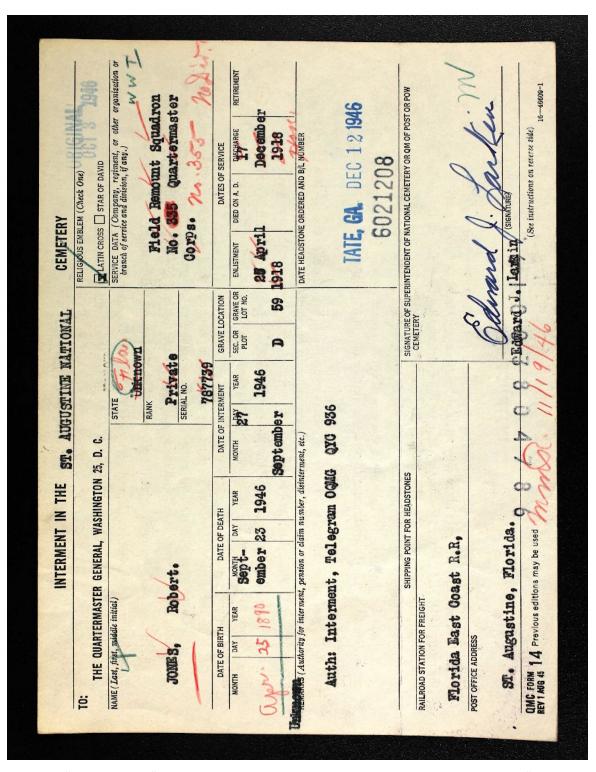


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