

Veterans Legacy Program Curricular Materials

World War I: The Impact on Diverse Americans

Grade(s): 9-12

Time (minutes): Five (5), 50-minute class periods

Lesson Overview:

Students will compare how the experiences of different groups of Americans varied while serving abroad in World War I. Students will compare the various biographies of Americans who served in Europe during the conflict and will analyze how the experiences for each were similar and different, as well as applying critical thinking skills to assess how the war changed the lives of these groups of Americans both during and after the fighting ended.

Relevant Social Studies Standards:

- SS.912.A.4.8- Compare the experiences Americans (African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, women, conscientious objectors) had while serving in Europe.
- SS.912.A.4.9 Compare how the war impacted German Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Jewish Americans, Native Americans, women and dissenters in the United States.
- SS.912.A.1.1- Describe the importance of historiography, which includes how historical knowledge is obtained and transmitted, when interpreting events in history.
- 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
- LAFS.1112.RH.1.1- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- LAFS.1112.RH.1.2- Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

Required Materials:

-[VLP Intro Video](#)

-Biography Graphic Organizer (Attached below)

-Biography documents: (Additional biographies can be found at [this link](#))

[Luther Pilcher](#)

[Riley Wright](#)

[Mary Sutherland](#)

[William Otto Grupp](#)

[Giosue Nasso](#)

[Alexander Miguel Roberts](#)

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[Fred White](#)

[Willie Lee Jones](#)

- Computer access to make Infographic. Recommended websites: [Snappa](#) or [Canva](#)
- [Windham Schools Powerpoint](#)
- Copy paper or other drawing paper
- Colored pencils or markers or crayons

Recommended Materials:

- Computer access to an online Learning Management System such as Canvas or Google Classroom or BlackBoard
- [Infographic Example](#)
- A timer or stopwatch

Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to analyze the biographies of Americans who served abroad in WWI, picking out key details and information contained in the text
- Based on the information contained in the biographies, students will compare the experiences and examine the similarities and differences between diverse groups of Americans (African Americans, Immigrants, Women, Mexican Americans, etc.)
- Students will use the comparisons to create an infographic that highlights the experiences of diverse Americans in WWI
- Students will research and discuss the experiences of Americans who survived the war, and the impact the war had on them when returning home

Special Vocabulary:

Stevedore, trench warfare, Selective Service Act, Homefront, enlistment/enlisted, draft

Procedure:

Day 1- Intro

1. Students will start by watching an intro [video](#) to the Veterans Legacy Project at UCF to understand the background to the project and why it's important to study veterans from our own state, and the importance of the project's mission in honoring and commemorating our nation's veterans. Teacher should pause after the video to discuss the importance of the project and ask students probing questions such as

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- a. Why would it be important to study veterans of WWI?
- b. Why is it important to compare the experiences of different Americans service in WWI?
What information can be gained from comparing these types of experiences?
- c. What differences do you predict might exist between different groups of Americans' service during WWI? Why would the US need to source enlistment from many different groups of Americans during the years of WWI?

(5-8 minutes)

To provide students with historical context of the US role in World War I, these videos can be assigned for viewing in class or at home:

- [The United States Joins the War](#)
- [The Battle of Chateau-Thierry](#)
- [The Battle of Belleau Wood](#)
- [The Meuse-Argonne Offensive](#)
- [After the Armistice](#)

2. Students should be placed into groups of 2 or 3. Pass out copies or provide digital access of the Biographies of the 8 WWI Veterans used in this case study (links above).

a. This can be modified at the teacher's discretion. The bios can be chunked for important information.

b. If completing in groups, students should "jigsaw" the biographies. Each student should be assigned either 2 or 3 biographies depending on the size of the groups.

c. Biographies can be given as class-sets to minimize the amount of copies.

(5 minutes).

3. Students should read and take notes using the Biography Graphic Organizer for each of their assigned biographies. Significant time should be given for this considering students will have several biographies to read and complete the organizer for (30 minutes).

a. This can be done on paper by passing out copies of the graphic organizer to students, or by providing digital access on an LMS course such as Canvas or Google Classroom.

b. Teacher should walk the room to monitor for completion of the Graphic Organizer and engage students in probing questions as they read.

4. When students are finished with their organizers, set a timer for a 6-minute discussion/comparison within the groups of what they learned about their person/veteran (2 minutes per person). On the back of their graphic organizers, students can jot down notes about the other veterans as they listen to their peers (6 minutes).

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5. Collect graphic organizers or instruct students to return to class the next day with their completed work.

Day 2- Analysis and Comparison

1. Pass out or instruct students to take out their graphic organizers from the day before. Teacher should lead a whole-group discussion about the similarities and differences of the different veterans. Some questions to address for each veteran include:

Pilcher: How old was he when he enlisted? Why did he lie about his age? (be sure to note to students that Pilcher is close to their own age and discuss how dedication and honor to one's country was a common trait of young people at the time). What does the timeline of Pilcher's enlistment suggest about why he didn't go off to Europe right away? What was Pilcher's legacy in the war?

Wright: What do you recognize about Wright's back story? What was unique about Wright's family and his upbringing? How did Wright come to join the military? What is different about Wright's service as compared to Pilcher's? Why do you think Wright was left behind in France after the war? What was the ultimate outcome of his remaining in France? Why do you think there was an influenza epidemic?

Sutherland: Why do you think Sutherland joined the Navy? What did she do while in service? Is this typical of women at the time? What do you think would be a major result after the war of such a strong woman workforce in the US? Why is Mary Sutherland's story unique?

Grupp: What might be some reasons he was not sent abroad (anti-German sentiments, maybe he will defect or fears that maybe he is a spy)? Why is it beneficial to keep him state-side? Why not change family name but still choose to serve? Do we think he obtained citizenship afterwards?

Nasso: Why is it not surprising he ended up in New York? Why would he have come over from Italy at the time he did? Why do you think he might have served in a non-combat role? Is that similar to Grupp? Why do you think that is? Did he get citizenship?

Roberts: How was his experience different than other immigrants? Why? Do you think his service in WWI helped with his status in WWII? Why are Mexican Americans at this time not treated with such disdain as other immigrants?

White: How did White's experience as an African American shape his decision to join the military? What aspects of southern life and society may have informed this?

Jones: Based on what you know from Willie's biography, what was military service like for African Americans? Why might it have been this way?

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- a. Have students jot down notes / answers to these questions in the “notes” portion of the graphic organizer.

(20 minutes)

2. Using a Learning Management System such as Canvas or Google Classroom, have students complete a discussion where they compare the similarities and differences of the different groups of Americans who served in WWI. This can be collected as a formative assessment if needed. An example discussion prompt is provided below, and can be modified as needed:

After hearing about the experiences of several Florida veterans in WWI, what similarities and differences do you notice? Were there any surprising facts you learned from our discussion? Anything that wasn't so surprising? When looking at your critical thinking questions on your worksheet, were any of those answered in our discussion? Which ones? What questions do you still have about the veterans and their service? (2 paragraphs in length).

- a. This can also be completed in a traditional paper/pencil style if a Learning Management System is not part of the school's protocol.

(20 minutes)

3. Read student responses as a group discussion. (10 minutes)

Day 3: Application

1. Have students access a website such as Snappa or Canva. Instruct students that they will be creating an infographic that compares the similarities and differences of the different groups of Americans using this software.

- a. To save time, it may be helpful to have students sign up for an account on the desired website as a homework activity the night before

- b. Teacher discretion can be used as to the requirements of student's infographics. (i.e., number of pictures, length of text, etc.) An example infographic that can be shown to students can be found [here](#).

(30-40 Minutes)

2. Have a few students share or present their infographic to the class (10-20 minutes).

Day 4: Extension

1. Start the class with a discussion on what they noticed about their veterans after the war (it may be beneficial to bring out the graphic organizers again and take note of the “post-service” box). Some

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probing questions can include: Which of our veterans died in service? What were some of the differences in their post-service lives? Were there any similarities? What happened in particular to the Immigrant Americans? Did any of them serve in conflicts beyond WWI? What difficulties do you think these veterans would have returning back to civilian life after the war? What services could/should/do you predict will be available to these veterans as they return from service?

(10 minutes)

2. Engage students in a mini-lecture of what services were available to Americans returning from WWI. A great example of information can be found in this [PowerPoint](#) from Windham Schools. Slides can be modified to best fit the teacher's needs. Be sure to also include information about the GI Bill and how that could assist struggling Veterans.

(15 minutes)

3. Instruct students to retrieve a piece of copy paper and some colored pencils. Explain to students that they will be creating an advertisement for assistance for our veterans that we analyzed the past few days. Instruct them to consider the stories & biographies, and create an ad that would appeal to one of the veterans specifically (can be the one that was assigned to them or one of the others) (25 minutes)

- a. Teacher discretion can be used as to the requirements for the advertisement
- b. It may be helpful to show examples of advertisements from the Post-WWI era.

4. Collect student pieces and use as a Formative Assessment for the unit

Day 5: Reflection & Assessment

1. Cover any misconceptions that you notice from analysis of the formative assessments from the previous day (10 minutes)

2. Have students reflect on the material covered in class the past 4 days by writing a journal entry as one of the veterans from the analysis. Have students write from the perspective of one of the soldiers as they are experiencing the war. Journal entries can be completed on an LMS discussion page, or on paper as a traditional journal entry. Encourage students to write about a different veteran than they completed the advertisement for. Encourage students to include things like how the person might be feeling, what they might be seeing/experiencing, etc.

- a. Teacher discretion can be used as to the specific criteria for the journal entry

(20-25 minutes)

2. Complete a short, focused summative assessment that best suits the needs of the class/course



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

National Cemetery
Administration



Department
of History

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(15-20 minutes)

Biography Graphic Organizer



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Veteran's Name:

Key Details/Demographics:	Early Life:
WWI Service:	Post-Service:

Additional Notes:

Critical Thinking:

1. What questions do you still have after learning about this Veteran?

What connections or comparisons from this person's bio can be made to other important moments/events