

Life on the Front During World War I Lesson Plan



Lesson Essential Question

How did soldiers react and adapt to living on the front lines during World War I?

Background	
Grade Level	9-12
Time Required	1 class period (45-60 minutes)
Standards (based on the National Standards for History)	<p><u>Historical Thinking Standards</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Historical Comprehension3. Historical Analysis and Interpretation <p><u>United States History Standards</u></p> <p>Era 7: The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. The changing role of the United States in world affairs through World War I <p><u>World History Standards</u></p> <p>Era 8: A Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement, 1900-1945</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. The causes and global consequences of World War I.
Introduction	<p>Many factors are responsible for shaping a soldier's experience while off at war. Students often oversimplify the experiences of a soldier down to only combat experiences and subsequently disregard how time is spent while not engaged in fighting. This lesson is intended to help students comprehend a soldier's experience in war beyond the battles and what they relied on to keep life as "normal" as possible. In this lesson, students will interact with both photographs from World War I and two surveys completed by veterans who served on the Western Front to shape their understanding of life on the front during the war.</p> <p>This lesson is best taught as a part of a unit on World War I. It will be beneficial if students have prior knowledge about the causes of the war and the reasons for American involvement. The purpose of this lesson is to have students learn about and understand the totality of what defines a soldier's experience on the front lines.</p>

Key Learnings	
Students will KNOW	The conditions of life for soldiers during World War I.
Students will DO	<p>Compare and contrast the experiences of two different soldiers in regards to their living conditions and ability to adapt to their surroundings.</p> <p>Formulate a fictional experience of a soldier in order to demonstrate their understanding.</p>
Students will UNDERSTAND	<p>There are many factors that dictate how a soldier defines their living and fighting experiences on the front lines.</p> <p>Soldiers often rely on good leadership, positive morale, and discipline to maintain a sense of normalcy in their lives.</p>

Materials	
Teacher or student materials	Pencils, projector and/or SMART Board to display photographs, laptops for the documents or printed out copies
Supplementary materials provided by the USAHEC	Veteran Survey Analysis Sheet
Materials from the collection of the USAHEC	<p>Photographs for the activator: Images attached to Lesson Plan</p> <p>World War I Veteran's Surveys: Attached to Lesson Plan</p>

Lesson Plan	
Activating Strategy	Students will look at the photos of landscapes and fighting from the war and discuss the following questions in a think-pair-share format:

	<p>How would you describe the surroundings and the soldiers? Support your description with evidence from specific photographs.</p> <p>If you were placed into this situation, what might you rely on in order to deal with your new living conditions?</p>
Teaching Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assign students to work in pairs. One partner will be given Donald Kyler’s survey and an analysis sheet and the other will be given Vernon Mossman’s survey and an analysis sheet. Students should be given about 15-20 minutes to read through their survey and fill out the analysis sheet. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Be sure to monitor student progress as they work on this part. Assist students who could benefit from finding the necessary information for their analysis sheet. b. Try to make relevant connections with individual students as they absorb this information on a personal level. 2. Students should share their findings with their partner after completing the analysis sheet. 3. Ask for students to take note of similarities and differences between the two experiences, especially in regards to their thoughts on the living conditions and how soldiers adjusted to life overseas. Allow at least 5 minutes for this discussion and collaborative analysis. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Perhaps distribute highlighters to students and have them highlight the similarities and/or differences in different colors so they are better able to visualize how the two soldier’s experiences compare. 4. Ask pairs to come back and share at least one important idea they learned about living conditions or how soldiers adjusted to life abroad. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The teacher should assist students in making connections and distinctions between the two soldiers as students share their thoughts.
Summarizing Strategy	<p>Ask students to summarize their learning by writing a two-paragraph fictional journal entry.</p> <p><u>Paragraph 1</u> - students will describe their reaction to life overseas in a combat zone. Ask them to include their thoughts on three of the following things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supplies (weapons, clothing, rations) ● People they encounter (either fellow Americans, other allied soldiers, or civilians) ● Combat ● Any extremely positive or negative experiences <p><u>Paragraph 2</u> - students will describe how they or their fellow soldiers have dealt with life on the front lines. Ask them to include their thoughts on the following things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How was discipline maintained?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Who could you look up to as a model of conduct? (if anyone)● How did soldiers try to maintain morale?● Did soldiers use unhealthy behaviors to “escape” from their circumstances? <p>Information used by students in their fictional journal entries should all be based on the facts they have gathered from the veterans surveys.</p>
Extended Learning	<p>Student research could extend into an essay that compares the experiences of soldiers from other nations during World War I. Teachers could ask their students to compare three facets of war experiences, such as discipline, soldier morale, and their thoughts on supplies, to further their understanding of the shared or contrasting human experiences that are brought about by war.</p>