



World War I Lesson Plan — Mobilization for War

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STANDARDS:

US History Content Standards

Era 7 - The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930)

- Standard 2A: The student understands how the American role in the world changed in the early 20th century.
- Standard 2B: The student understands the causes of World War I and why the United States intervened.
- Standard 2C: The student understands the impact at home and abroad of the United States involvement in World War I.

LESSON:

In this lesson, students will study how the United States mobilized its citizens for World War I and how different communities were affected by the war.

1. Break students into small groups. Each group will study how different parts of the country mobilized for World War I. Assign each group a location to study. Examples include:
 - a. Large cities: Washington D.C., New York City, Los Angeles
 - b. Cities in different areas of the country: New England, Midwest, South, West
 - c. Cities around your community: your town, your state capital
2. Students will use historical newspapers to see how the town they are studying mobilized for the war. Different topics to search in the papers include:
 - a. Community temperament before the United States entered the war.
 - b. Declaration of war by the United States
 - c. Recruitment of soldiers and the World War I draft
 - d. Industries in community that aided the war effort
 - e. Recruitment of workers to aid the war effort
 - f. Recruitment of doctors and nurses
3. Students will look at World War I draft cards from the location they are studying. Students will not be able to view all the draft cards for a particular locality, especially large cities, but they should get a sampling from different draft boards.
 - a. Look for common trends in the employment of draftees.
 - b. From the newspapers, try to determine which men were most likely to enlist in the military in that community.
4. Students will study World War I soldiers from the community they are researching. Resources for information include:
 - a. World War I Casualty Lists on Ancestry.com
 - b. World War I soldier lists from various states on Ancestry.com
 - c. U.S. World War I Mother's Pilgrimage records on Ancestry.com

Students should also look for additional information about the soldiers within historical newspapers. They should search for stories from when soldiers were killed or injured in the war. How did the community cope with the deaths? How did the community support the injured soldiers? How did the community support veterans after the war ended?

5. Each group will make a presentation about how the community they studied mobilized for World War I and was affected by the war.
6. As a class, compare the different ways that each community was affected by the war. Questions for discussion include:
 - a. How did different areas of the country react to the war?
 - b. How did different communities react to their men joining the military?
 - c. How was the World War I draft perceived by each community?
 - d. What technologies benefited from the war? Which communities were poised to help the war effort due to their industries?
 - e. How did different communities honor their dead and support their veterans?