



This variety of images shows many different experiences of life during WWI.

Online Collections Database, 1986.167.3a, 2006.33.2.28, 1980.105.6, 1983.85.3, www.theworldwar.org/research/database.
National WWI Museum and Memorial. Online.

OUR COMMUNITY AND WWI

Recommended Grade Levels: 4-8

Course/Content Area(s): ELA, History

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LESSON OVERVIEW:	During this lesson, students will research local and/or family histories to discover a story of WWI with a personal connection. After completing research, students will create a mini biography to share the story or stories discovered.
OBJECTIVES:	<i>Students will:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research historical information about WWI as it pertains to their personal history. ● Learn more about WWI through the context of their local area or family. ● Create a mini biography to share their learning.
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT:	<p>Common Core State Standards English Language Arts:</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.2 Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.9 Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.B Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.D Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</p>
TIME NEEDED:	90-120 minutes, across several days
INTERDISCIPLINARY:	English Language Arts, History, Community
PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students should have a basic understanding of the causes of WWI and why/how the United States became involved. ● Students should be introduced to biographies as a genre.
MATERIALS NEEDED:	My House Worksheet (Appendix A) My WWI Research Worksheet (Appendix B) Our Community and WWI Rubric (Appendix C)

LESSON

PRE-ASSESSMENT/INTRODUCTION/HOOK:

Begin the lesson with a photo of a locally significant landmark, ideally recognizable to students. Examples could include a [Spirit of the American Doughboy statue](#), the [81st Division monument in Raleigh, NC](#), the [San Francisco War Memorial Opera House](#) or the [New York State Women Veterans Memorial](#). They do not need to be WWI specific. Ask if they have seen it before, what they know about it, and what purpose it might serve. After discussion, explain the photo's content and inquire their thoughts on the importance of memorializing the past. Have students record their ideas for reference at the end of the project.

Conclude by explaining they will explore their own (personal or place) historical connections to WWI.

DIRECTIONS:

Preparation:

1. Before beginning this lesson, it would be helpful to contact a librarian (could be your school, city, county, or whomever seems most accessible) or local historian to see what local information is documented and available about your location and WWI.
2. The following are some links to help; the first 5 are to help with the context of the war, the last 3 are to help with local research.

Context - WWI

- a. [Interactive Timeline](#)
- b. [Global Interactive Map](#)
- c. [U.S. Enters the War](#)
- d. [America Goes to War \(Video\)](#)
- e. [June 28, 1914](#)

WWI Research Resources

- f. [Online World War I Service Databases](#)
- g. [The E. M. Viquesney Doughboy Database](#)
- h. [The World War I Memorial Inventory Project](#) (see extension)

Part 1: Interviews

1. Following discussions on the importance of remembering history, introduce students to the "Interviews" sheet (Appendix A) to take home and conduct interviews with individuals they live with, seeing what they know about their own histories.
 - a. Outcomes from student homes will vary as every family's history is different. Be sure to let students know that not having an answer is ok! What is important is finding out what they can while knowing that there are some things they may not find.

- b. Consider the number of days you would like to provide students to do this - you could consider using this as an introduction before teaching about WWI so that students have plenty of time to converse with the people in their homes.

Part 2*: Research

1. On returning their “Interview” sheet, have students share their discoveries with a partner. Allow time for some students to share briefly with the whole class.
2. Students should decide a direction for their community history research. It may be helpful to briefly conference with each student to see what they discovered before having them decide upon their next steps.
 - a. If students were able to find a familial connection to WWI through oral history interview, they could choose to complete a family history research.
 - b. If students were unable to find a familial connection to WWI, they should complete a history of their town or background.
3. Have students work through the “Our WWI Research” sheet (Appendix B) to create a mini biography to share with their classmates.
 - a. Provide students access to any resources that might be helpful to their research. Some options include:
 - i. [Online World War I Service Databases](#)
 - ii. [The E. M. Viquesney Doughboy Database](#)
 - iii. [The World War I Memorial Inventory Project](#)
 - b. Provide research support to students as needed.
 - c. If citing is important with your standards, consider adding a citation requirement.
4. ***Depending on the age and skills of your students, your time needed for research will vary.***

Part 3: Design and Writing

1. Once your students have completed their research, they will move into designing and creating their mini biography.
2. Consider providing options to your students for how to create their biography:
 - a. An illustrated biography - could include hand drawn images, collages, photos, scrapbooking, or digital design
 - b. A narrative biography - telling the story of the person or place through traditional narrative styles
 - c. Formal biography - telling the story of the person or place through informational writing
 - d. Timeline biography - this could include many different types of writing, but placed into the structure of a timeline
 - e. Podcast or Video - would include script writing and then using recording tools.
3. Biographies should include:
 - a. Primary sources
 - b. Imagery

- c. A detailed description of the person or place and its relationship with WWI
 - d. Context of what was happening in the world in relation to the person or place.
4. Consider adding a peer-review process for editing before your students finalize their biographies.

Part 4: Presentations

- 1. Students should present their biographies.
 - a. This can take many forms, so consider what option works best for your standards and students. Choose one method of presentation from below:
 - i. Whole class (one student presenting at a time)
 - ii. Small group (several students presenting to each other)
 - iii. Partner (two students presenting to each other)
 - iv. Gallery walk (students exploring each other’s work)

POST-ASSESSMENT:

After completing the research and reviewing their classmates’ biographies, students should revisit their initial thoughts on memorializing the past. Students should reflect on what they learned and consider whether their perspective changed. Have students record their updated thoughts and describe why they changed or remained the same drawing on their project experiences for support.

MODIFICATIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS

- There can be more or less voice and choice in this lesson, depending on what works well for your students.
- Consider how many resources you want to directly provide students, versus letting students look things up on their own. Factors such as available time, educational standards, and students’ current ability should guide the decision.
- Providing research tools can help accommodate struggling learners.
- Difficulty can be increased by modifying requirements of the biography.

EXTENSION

[The World War I Memorial Inventory Project](#) includes WWI memorials across the United States and U.S. Territories. This project (through the app or emailing info@wwi-inventory.org) allows anyone to add a memorial to the list. In this lesson, students can both use this resource for research and participate in documenting history by adding what they have found if not yet identified in the WWI memorial inventory.

Appendix A: Interviews

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. List the adults in your life that you interviewed using the questions that follow:
2. What are the earliest stories you could share about our family/community during wartimes in the 20th century?
3. Does our family or community have any members who actively served in the military?
4. Do we have any stories about a family member or our community during World War I? If so, who was involved and what did they do?
5. Is there anything else you would like to share about our family or community?

Appendix B: My WWI Research

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. This research will be about (circle your choice):

A family member during WWI	The place my family is from during WWI	Our town/city during WWI
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2. Describe more specifically who/what your research will be about:

3. What was this person/place's relationship to WWI?

a. What happened?

b. When did it happen?

c. Where did it happen?

d. How did it happen?

e. Why did it happen?

Appendix C: Our Community and WWI Rubric

	Beginning	Emergent	Proficient	Distinguished
Sources	Includes little to no content and learning from primary or secondary resources.	Includes content and learning from a few primary and secondary resources.	Includes content and learning from a variety of primary and secondary resources.	Includes content and learning from a wide variety of primary and secondary resources.
Originality and Organization	Content is organized in a logical, easy to understand way. Content is presented in an original manner that suits the topic.	Content is organized in a logical, easy to understand way. Content is presented in an original manner that suits the topic.	Content is organized in a logical, easy to understand way. Content is presented in an original manner that suits the topic.	Content is organized in a logical, easy to understand way. Content is presented in an original manner that suits the topic.
Content	Summary of the content learned is not detailed or does not include connections between the person or place and the larger U.S. context.	Includes a somewhat detailed summary of the content learned, including connections between the person or place and the larger U.S. context, using content directly from research on the topic.	Includes a detailed summary of the content learned, including connections between the person or place and the larger U.S. context, using content directly from research on the topic.	Includes a highly detailed summary of the content learned, including connections between the person or place and the larger U.S. context, using content directly from research on the topic.
Language and Grammar	Grammar and spelling have many errors. Language includes little to no vocabulary specific to researched learning.	Grammar and spelling have some errors. Language includes a few vocabulary specific to researched learning.	Grammar and spelling have few errors. Language includes vocabulary specific to researched learning.	Grammar and spelling have no errors. Language includes a variety of vocabulary specific to researched learning.