



Postcard of a French Soldier sitting with a Young Woman

Online Collections Database, 1985.41.35, www.theworldwar.org/research/database. National WWI Museum and Memorial. Online.

In Flanders Fields

Recommended Grade Levels: 7-12

Course/Content Area(s): World History, U.S. History, ELA

Authored by: Casey Knight, National WWI Museum and Memorial Teacher Fellow

LESSON OVERVIEW:	Students will gain historical knowledge through the use of poetry written by soldiers and civilians during and after WWI. Students will read poems and connect the content to the realities of the Great War, create visuals to show their understanding of the poems and history, and share their learning with their classmates.
OBJECTIVES:	<i>Students will:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyze WWI poetry ● Synthesize information gained through reading poems ● Create a visual to show their analysis of poems ● Build peer understanding by sharing their findings
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT:	<p>Common Core State Standards English Language Arts:</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6 Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.</p> <p>National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) C3 Framework Standards:</p> <p>D2.His.11.9-12. Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.</p> <p>D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.</p>
TIME NEEDED:	One 90-minute block or two 50-minute periods.
INTERDISCIPLINARY:	Visual Arts
PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This lesson is most effective when students already have some general background knowledge about WWI. ● Many poets emerged during the First World War. A lot of these were so-called “trench poets”; soldiers who wrote directly about

	<p>their experiences, although some, like the famous Jessie Pope, wrote from the home front. These poems provide a useful glimpse into the mindsets of those who lived during this period.</p>
<p>MATERIALS NEEDED:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics and Corresponding Poems reference (Appendix A) • Poem Analysis Graphic Organizer • Poems and Primary Sources • Blank paper • Colored pencils or markers

LESSON

PRE-ASSESSMENT/INTRODUCTION/HOOK:

Host a discussion over the following questions:

- What are some reasons people might have for creating a piece of art?
- What are some reasons people might have for viewing, listening to, or reading a piece of art?
- What relationship might war and art have with one another?

DIRECTIONS:

1. Divide students into six groups.
2. Assign each group a topic and corresponding poem or poems. Refer to Appendix A for a breakdown of topics.
3. Students will read their assigned poem or poems.
4. Ask students to consider how the poems they were given meet their group's assigned topic. Poems can be assessed individually, but groups need to identify commonalities between the poems (with the exception of Group Two, as this group has one poem).
5. Groups will complete the appropriate section of their Poem Analysis Graphic Organizer.
6. Paying close attention to the portion of the chart that addresses imagery, students should consider the mental pictures they have while reading the poems. On a blank sheet of paper, students should draw an image or series of images that bring their poems to life. (Remind students that artistic skill is a bonus, not a requirement. Stick figures, done neatly, are fine.)
7. Groups will prepare a short presentation for the class.
8. Group representatives will read their assigned poems aloud. (If possible, these poems should be projected on a screen so the class can read along.)
9. Students will provide information so that the rest of the class can fill in their Poem Analysis Graphic Organizer.

EXTENSION:

- Poll students about which poem they found to be most representative of the WWI experience and why. Discuss the results.
- Discuss how soldiers in subsequent wars have shared their experiences. Consider the following methods of sharing information: letters, photographs, emails, videos, etc.

MODIFICATIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS

- Consider doing a practice analysis together as a class to build structure for the activity for students.

Appendix A:

Topics and Corresponding Poems

1. War Begins:

“The Call” – Jesse Pope

“V. The Soldier” – Rupert Brooke

2. The Horrors of War:

“Dulce Et Decorum Est” – Wilfred Owen

3. The Generation Gap:

“The Parable of the Old Men and the Young” – Wilfred Owen

“Base Details” – Siegfried Sassoon

4. The Soldier and Society:

“Glory of Women” – Siegfried Sassoon

“Suicide in the Trenches” – Siegfried Sassoon

5. War’s Casualties:

“The Veteran, May 1916” – Margaret Postgate Cole

“Does it Matter?” – Siegfried Sassoon

6. Remembrance:

“In Flanders Fields” – John McCrae

“Grass” – Carl Sandburg