



THE NATIONAL  
WWI MUSEUM  
AND MEMORIAL

Local Board for the County of  
Dallas, State of Iowa  
ADEL, IOWA  
Date 1-9-18

LOCAL BOARD FOR \_\_\_\_\_

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that Arthur Charles Standing  
Order No. 1362, Serial No. 62, has been found to be exempt  
from combatant service and is eligible only to such military service as may be  
declared noncombatant by the President of the United States.

W. V. Mc Griff  
Member of Local Board.

Form 1008—P. M. G. O.  
(See Sec. 80, S. S. R.)

3—5123

A card stating that an individual has been found exempt from combatant service, January 9, 1918  
Online Collections Database, 2017.64.8, [www.theworldwar.org/research/database](http://www.theworldwar.org/research/database). National WWI Museum and Memorial.  
Online.

## Debating Objections to the War

Recommended Grade Levels: 6-8

Course/Content Area(s): U.S. History; Civics; Language Arts; Speech

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<b>LESSON OVERVIEW:</b>	Through research, students will learn about conscientious objection and its role in World War I. After exploring the background of specific conscientious objectors, students will build an evidence-based argument. Finally, they will have an educated debate over the statement, Conscientious Objectors should be allowed to decline military participation in the Great War, despite the draft.
<b>OBJECTIVES:</b>	<i>Students will:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● identify what a conscientious objector is and how they influenced World War I</li> <li>● write from different perspectives</li> <li>● design and debate an evidence-based argument</li> </ul>
<b>STANDARDS ALIGNMENT:</b>	<p><b>National Council for Social Studies State Standards (C3)</b></p> <p><b>D2.Civ.10.6-8.</b> Explain the relevance of personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civil society.</p> <p><b>D2.Civ.13.6-8.</b> Analyze the purposes, implementation, and consequences of public policies in multiple settings.</p> <p><b>D2.His.4.6-8.</b> Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.</p> <p><b>D2.His.16.6-8.</b> Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.</p> <p><b>D4.1.6-8.</b> Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments.</p>
<b>TIME NEEDED:</b>	Three 50-minute class periods
<b>INTERDISCIPLINARY:</b>	Social Studies, Language Arts, Speech/Public Speaking
<b>PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students will need to be aware of the United States' reasons for entering WWI and why a draft was established.</li> <li>● Resources for background knowledge about conscientious objectors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Conscientious Objectors Podcast</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Remembering Muted Voices Series</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Conscientious Objection to WWI</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>MATERIALS NEEDED:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Investigating History Worksheet</a></li> <li>● Debate Format (Appendix A)</li> </ul>

## LESSON

### INTRODUCTION:

Ask students and discuss:

- What are some reasons people might be opposed to their nation going to war?
- Why might people have been opposed to the United States joining WWI?

Show the following video: [How WWI Changed America: Citizenship and WWI](#)

- Of the ideas you brainstormed, which were included in the video?
- Which were surprising or new ideas?

### DIRECTIONS:

#### Day One:

1. Assign each student a specific conscientious objector
2. Task students with exploring the background information provided in the [“Biographical Notes”](#) tab from the Conscientious Objection and the Great War website.
  - a. Feel free to assign these at random or even to let students choose from among them.
  - b. Note: There are over 60 individuals provided on the website, but some of them will not be suitable due to having very little information.
3. Students will research the person’s religious and societal affiliations and record their answers to the following questions on the Investigating History Worksheet:
  - Why did this individual object to being drafted to fight?
  - If it was job related, do you believe their job was important enough that they were more useful as a civilian worker than in the military? Why or why not?
  - If it was not job related, did they belong to any special groups that influence their thinking? Explain the beliefs of this group that would lead to application as a conscientious objector.
4. After researching, task students with writing a two-paragraph diary entry from the point of view of their conscientious objector.
  - a. Diary entries will need to explain, in detail, WHY this person was a conscientious objector.
  - b. Students should include details about what happened to this person because of their stance, particularly how they were treated (imprisoned, drafted anyway, etc.).

#### Day Two:

- As students arrive to class, assign them an identity, **either a Conscientious Objector or an Enlisted Soldier**.
- This will determine the stance of their assigned group in a debate over this statement: *Conscientious Objectors should be allowed to decline military participation in the Great War, despite the draft.*
  - The debate should take place as if it is 1918 and the draft is active.

- Students should pay attention to:
  - Pro and anti-war reasoning
  - The role of both objectors and soldiers
  - The feelings of both sides towards one another.
- The class period will be spent researching with a partner
  - Each pair is required to have at least eight pieces of supporting evidence to bring to the debate for their assigned argument.
  - Students should use the Investigating History Worksheet to take notes.
  - Students should work together to prepare a Position Presentation statement.
  - The Further Resources and Bibliography sections of this lesson plan provide websites for online research.

### **Day Three:**

- Divide the classroom into two sides when students arrive.
- Explain the debate rules prior to the debate.
- The teacher will act as debate facilitator and ask questions/redirect students as necessary.
- Refer to Appendix A for a debate structure option.

### **POST-ASSESSMENT:**

After the debate, students will write an individual reflection essay about the debate, which side they believe won and the side with which they personally agree. Students should include specific evidence to support their side and clarify their reasonings.

### **MODIFICATIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS:**

For struggling readers, choose and assign specific objectors' stories.

## Appendix A: Debate Format

**Resolution:** Conscientious Objectors should be allowed to decline military participation in the Great War, despite the draft.

6 minute Position Presentation-Pro (Conscientious Objectors)

6 minute Position Presentation-Con (Enlisted Soldiers)

5 minute Work Period

4 minute Rebuttal – Pro

4 minute Rebuttal – Con

3 minute Work Period

2 minute Response – Pro

2 minute Response – Con

1 minute Work Period

2 minute Position Summary – Pro

2 minute Position Summary - Con

## Further Resources:

Littlejohn, Jeffrey L. "The Debate Over Entering World War I."  
[http://studythepast.com/vbprojects/debate\\_world\\_war\\_1.htm](http://studythepast.com/vbprojects/debate_world_war_1.htm). Accessed August 11, 2023.

National WWI Museum and Memorial. "How WWI Changed America: Citizenship and WWI."  
<https://youtu.be/UqZOQK731hQ>. Accessed August 11, 2023.

National WWI Museum and Memorial. "Unrestricted U-Boat Warfare."  
<https://theworldwar.org/learn/about-wwi/unrestricted-u-boat-warfare>. Accessed August 11, 2023.

National WWI Museum and Memorial. "U.S. Enters the War."  
<https://theworldwar.org/learn/about-wwi/us-enters-war>. Accessed August 11, 2023.

National WWI Museum and Memorial. "The Volunteers: Americans Join WWI." Online Museum Exhibit. <http://exhibitions.theworldwar.org/volunteers/index.html#!/>. Accessed August 11, 2023.

National WWI Museum and Memorial. "Zimmerman Telegram."  
<https://theworldwar.org/learn/about-wwi/zimmermann-telegram>. Accessed August 11, 2023.

Online Collections Database, "Conscientious Objector",  
[https://collections.theworldwar.org/argus/final/Portal/Default.aspx?lang=en-US&g\\_AAAK=final+%7cObject+%7cPortalAggr+%3d+%27conscientious+objector%27&p\\_AAFG=+%5c%7cSubjectL+%3d%3d+%271d84e700-5459-485a-93ee-5533e852412a%27&d=d](https://collections.theworldwar.org/argus/final/Portal/Default.aspx?lang=en-US&g_AAAK=final+%7cObject+%7cPortalAggr+%3d+%27conscientious+objector%27&p_AAFG=+%5c%7cSubjectL+%3d%3d+%271d84e700-5459-485a-93ee-5533e852412a%27&d=d). National WWI Museum and Memorial. Online. Accessed August 11, 2023.

Swarthmore College Peace Collection. "Conscientious Objection & the Great War: 1914-1920." <https://cosandgreatwar.swarthmore.edu/>. Accessed August 11, 2023

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- Kazin, Michael. "If the U.S. Had Not Entered World War I, Would There Have Been a World War II?" The New Republic. July 6, 2014.  
<https://newrepublic.com/article/118435/world-war-i-debate-should-us-have-entered>.
- Krehbiel, Nicholas. "World War I: The CO Problem." Mennonite Central Committee. 2015.  
<http://civilianpublicservice.org/storybegins/krehbiel/world-war-1>.
- Swarthmore College Peace Collection. "Conscientious Objection & the Great War: 1914-1920." <https://cosandgreatwar.swarthmore.edu/>. Accessed August 11, 2023
- Wallis, Holly. "WW1: The conscientious objectors who refused to fight." BBC News. May 15, 2014. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-27404266>.
- Yoder, Anne. "World War I Conscientious Objection." Swarthmore College Peace Collection. September 13, 2013.  
<http://www.swarthmore.edu/Library/peace/conscientiousobjection/WWI.CO.coverpage.htm>.