



Postcard photograph of five African American soldiers seated casually in wooded area with puppy on one soldiers lap and another animal in front center.

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

Four-Legged Heroes of World War I

Recommended Grade Levels: 4-6th grade

Course/Content Area(s): Social Studies/ELA

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LESSON OVERVIEW:	Students explore the important roles dogs played during World War I, such as messengers, medics, and morale boosters. Through reading, discussion, and a cause-and-effect graphic organizer, students analyze how dogs helped soldiers on the battlefield.
OBJECTIVES:	<i>Students will:</i>
	• Learn about the roles dogs played in WWI. • Analyze primary and secondary sources. • Write an informational response or creative story from the point of view of a WWI service dog. • Compare the use of animals in historical and modern contexts.
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT:	National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) C3 Framework Standards: D2.His.1.3-5. Create and use a chronological sequence of related events to compare developments. D2.His.2.3-5. Compare life in specific historical time periods to life today. D2.His.14.3-5. Explain how historical events can be organized into categories of cause and effect. Common Core State Standards English Language Arts: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
TIME NEEDED:	30-45 minutes (2 days if possible)
INTERDISCIPLINARY:	Social Studies, ELA, Reading
PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:	• Basic understanding of WWI as a global conflict • Familiarity with primary sources and basic document analysis • Prior lessons on traditional gender roles
MATERIALS NEEDED:	• Reading about Stubby the War Dog (see hook) • Images of WWI dogs in action (links in instructions) • Graphic organizer • Writing paper or digital device for creative writing

LESSON

INTRODUCTION/HOOK:

1. Begin with a class discussion:
 - a. *What kinds of jobs can dogs do today?*
 - b. *Do you think dogs were used during war times? Why or why not?*
2. Show a photo of **Sergeant Stubby**, (https://www.si.edu/object/nmah_439710) a decorated WWI dog, and share his story. Options include:
 - a. Smithsonian's article about Stubby: https://www.si.edu/object/nmah_439710
 - b. Host a read aloud of a book about Stubby (see Further Resources below)
3. Explain to students that today, they will be learning about the roles of dogs during WWI.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Share a brief passage or article (read aloud or independently) describing how dogs were used in WWI — messengers, medics, mascots, morale boosters, etc.
 - a. The National WWI Museum and Memorial
<https://www.theworldwar.org/learn/about-wwi/dogs-wwi>
 - b. U.S. Department of Defense: <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/Story/Article/3895789/war-dogs-how-wwi-led-to-the-military-working-dog-program/>
2. Provide students with a collection of images of dogs in service during WWI. Choose your favorite images to share from the following collection:
 - a. https://collections.theworldwar.org/argus/final/Portal/Default.aspx?lang=en-US&g_AAAK=final+%7cObject+%7cPortalAggr+%3d+%27dogs%27&g_AACD=D&p_AAAD=Dogs&p_AAAF=AAAT&d=d
3. Use the graphic organizer to record how dogs impacted soldier survival and morale.

POST-ASSESSMENT:

Option A: Informational Writing

- Students write an informative paragraph or short essay explaining how dogs helped in WWI, using evidence from the article or video.

Option B: Creative Writing

- Write from the **point of view of a WWI dog**. Prompt:
"You are a brave dog working on the front lines of WWI. Write a journal entry or letter home describing your experiences."

MODIFICATIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS/ENRICHMENT

- Include visual supports and image cues for English learners
- Research another WWI animal hero (pigeons, horses, etc.)
- Compare Stubby to modern military or police dogs
- Create a class display or virtual museum honoring wartime animals

Further Resources:

Books for Students:

Stubby: Inspired by the True Story of an American Hero of World War I
By Kathy Borrus, Illustrated by Julia Mills

Sergeant Stubby: How a Stray Dog and His Best Friend Helped Win World War I and Stole the Heart of a Nation By Ann Bausum

Stubby the Dog Soldier: World War I Hero By Blake Hoena, Illustrated by Olivia Ian Hurst

Stubby: A True Story of Friendship By Michael Foreman

Stubby the War Dog: The True Story of World War I's Bravest Dog By Ann Bausum

G.I. Dog: Sergeant Stubby Hero Pup of World War I By Laurie Calkhoven

Dog Diaries #7: Stubby By Kate Klimo, Illustrated by Tim Jessell