



LOC TPS World History/US History WWI Propaganda
Hampton Roads Naval Museum Enrichment Activity
9-12 Grades

This activity is sponsored in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.

Two class periods of 45 – 60 minutes

Description of activity: Students will learn about the background of the propaganda campaigns in the US, investigate the methods and analyze the rhetoric used to persuade Americans to support the war effort in World War One, and create their own poster. Students will also see examples of local efforts to help the country.

Activity Goals: Learn more about the Committee of Public Information and examine the strategies used to increase citizen participation.

Focus Question: Why did Americans willing to sacrifice to support US involvement in World War One?

Context: After studying the causes of World War One and the growth of governmental power.

Objectives: Students will be able to explain the origins of government propaganda, describe the expansion of government's role in the US economy, analyze the effectiveness of propaganda rhetoric.

Assessment: Students will answer analysis questions and assess the symbolism and effectiveness of this propaganda.

Virginia Standards

WHII.1

WHII.10

VUS.1 The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis, including the ability to

1. identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents, records, and data, including artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, journals, newspapers, historical accounts, and art to increase understanding of events and life in the United States;
2. evaluate the authenticity, authority, and credibility of sources;
3. formulate historical questions and defend findings based on inquiry and interpretation;
4. develop perspectives of time and place, including the construction of maps and various time lines of events, periods, and personalities in American history;
5. communicate findings orally and in analytical essays and/or comprehensive papers;
6. develop skills in discussion, debate, and persuasive writing with respect to enduring issues and determine how divergent viewpoints have been addressed and reconciled;

8. interpret the significance of excerpts from famous speeches and other documents.

VUS.9 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the emerging role of the United States in world affairs and key domestic events after 1890 by

1. explaining the changing policies of the United States toward Latin America and Asia and the growing influence of the United States in foreign markets;
2. evaluating United States involvement in World War I, including Wilson's Fourteen Points, the Treaty of Versailles, and the national debate over treaty ratification and the League of Nations;

Activity Details: Students will read about the origins of World War One propaganda campaigns, assess their effectiveness, and examine some local efforts.

Primary Sources: links are provided

Procedure: For each document, students should take the link and carefully examine the source. They can zoom in as needed to see more detail. In addition, students should read the bibliographic information that accompanies each item.

What you will need before implementing: This lesson would be most effective with computer access for all students. The documents, directions, and chart should be shared digitally with all students (in Google Doc.s. or another format). This activity could be accomplished with paper copy of the materials for each student.



WWI Propaganda

Part 1

Read background information

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/wwipos/background.html>

For more information on the activities of the Committee on Public Information, go to

<https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/063.html>

How did twentieth century government propaganda campaigns begin?

Part 2



Wake up America! Civilization calls every man, woman and child!

James Montgomery Flagg.

1917

<https://www.loc.gov/item/91726511/>

What is the message of this poster?

Explain the symbolism.

What was going on at the time this was published that is relevant to its message?



Part 3

Examine this set of posters. What does each attempt to do?
What do they have in common?



Eat less, and let us be thankful that we have enough to share with those who fight for freedom
A. Hendee ; Edwards & Deutsch Litho. Co. Chicago.
1918.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2002711984/>



If you can't enlist, invest - Buy a Liberty Bond - Defend your country with your dollars
Winsor McCay
1918

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2002719760/>





Join a sheep club Twenty sheep to equip and clothe each soldier

Department of Agriculture funder/sponsor

1917

<https://www.loc.gov/item/00651569/>



Corn saved the Pilgrims and fed our pioneers--Corn will help us feed the world--Eat more corn

1917

<https://www.loc.gov/item/00653192/>



Part 4 Local events

Examine these photos. What do they indicate?

Why do you think these were recorded to be shared with the public?



Mr. L.E. Simpson's War Garden, 1917 - Portsmouth, VA
June 8, 1917

Warren Luther Wagner

<http://cdm15987.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15987coll9/id/8600/rec/46>





Portsmouth War Garden, Portsmouth, VA

[Photograph](#) showing J. F Dixon Construction Foreman and his War Garden
June 8, 1917

Warren Luther Wagner

<http://cdm15987.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15987coll9/id/8599/rec/66>

Read this article and consider its meaning and proper context.

It Happened Here in Norfolk: The World War I Great Potato Harvest – June 21, 1917

“More than 600 Boy Scouts from all over Virginia, including scouts from Norfolk, gathered at the ferries in Norfolk and Old Point (Hampton) to head to the Eastern Shore to answer the call to help save the potato crop and do their patriotic duty. The potato farmers on the Eastern Shore were desperate for help due to a lack of laborers to harvest the annual crops. The farmers appealed to the State for help because the Eastern Shore was the major supplier of potatoes for the eastern part of the United States. Their crop was extremely important to the country and the farmers would lose millions of dollars if the potato crop rotted away. Unfortunately, most of the scouts returned home by July 4th due to lack of supplies from the farmers and appalling living conditions, which consisted of sleeping on damp dirt floors and eating canned beans after working in the fields all day. The few scouts who were able to find better living conditions stayed on to harvest the potatoes.”

[Sargeant's Chronicles \(Vol. 1 - Issue 4\) Summer 2007](#)

<http://cdm15987.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15987coll1/id/5/rec/1>



What do these sources show you about the willingness of citizens to help the cause?

Part 5 Assessment

Write up a short essay response addressing the origins and nature of twentieth century US government propaganda. Tie this to the expansion of governmental powers during World War One. How and why did the government try to shape the behavior and attitudes of citizens? To what extent were these attempts effective?

