LOC TPS WH/US  WWI Propaganda - Recruitment Posters
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.

One to 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 American men to enlist in the armed forces to fight in World War One, and create their own poster.

Activity Goals: Learn more about the Committee of Public Information, examine the strategies used to increase recruitment, use their creativity to design a recruitment poster.

Focus Question: Why did Americans volunteer to serve in the US military in World War One?
Context: After studying the causes of World War One and the growth of governmental power.

Objectives:
Virginia SOLS

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;

Assessment: Students answer analysis questions and complete formative assessment tasks.

Activity Details
Primary Sources: see below
Procedure: Students should take the link to examine each source and review the bibliographic information then answer the analysis questions.

What you will need before implementing: This lesson would be most effective with computer access for all students. The documents, directions, and chart should 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.
Read background information
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/wwipos/background.html

For more information on the activities of the Committee on Public Information, you may want to explore
https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/063.html

I want you for the Navy promotion for anyone enlisting, apply any recruiting station or postmaster
Howard Chandler Christy
1917
https://www.loc.gov/item/92510150/

Explain the message of this poster.
Whom did it target and why?
First call - I need you in the Navy this minute! Our country will always be proudest of those who answered the first call
James Montgomery Flagg
1917
https://www.loc.gov/item/2002712332/

Describe the methods of persuasion used here. How effective do you think this was? Why?

America calls - enlist in the Navy
J.C. Leyendecker
1917
https://www.loc.gov/item/2002712075/

Describe the imagery in this poster.
Why might the artist have used the same treatment for the sailor’s uniform as Liberty’s toga? How effective do you think this poster was in encouraging enlistment? Explain your thinking.
U.S. Navy--"Here he is, sir"--We need him and you too! Navy Recruiting Station
Charles Dana Gibson.
[between 1914 and 1918]
https://www.loc.gov/item/93510429/

Explain the message of this poster.
Whom did it target and why?

For the safety of womanhood ... help ‘till it hurts
Ker
1918
https://www.loc.gov/item/00652884/

Explain the message in this recruitment poster.
Who is targeted audience?
How does it relate to the one above? How is its message different?
Formative Assessment tasks:
   1. Write a short essay that answers the following questions:
      What methods of persuasion were used in the US recruitment posters of WWI?
      Which types do you think may have been especially effective and why?

   2. Sketch your own recruitment poster.

Interested in investigating further? Check out articles and examples from the British Library
https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/themes/propaganda