

Lesson Title:

Opinions of War

Subjects:

U.S. History, World History

Suggested time:

One 50-minute class period (this may need to be longer, depending on how in-depth students will examine this topic)

Grade Levels:

11-12

Essential Questions:

- When is war ever justifiable?
- Why do nations fight wars?

Learning Target:

After examining the many comments and opinions about war, students will develop their opinions about international conflict/war.

Overview:

This module is focused on fourteen quotations about war that are posted at The Flying Heritage & Combat Armor Museum's (FHCAM) "Why War: The Causes of Conflict" exhibit. These quotations de-glorify war, but also provide a range of opinions that will challenge students' assumptions about conflict. Although a visit to the exhibit will be a great follow-up to this lesson so students are able to see the context in which the quotations are presented, it is not necessary. In addition, teachers may want to add other quotations about war to this list (and or remove some from the list) to help meet their learning target.

Students will engage in two general thinking processes: The first will be to group the list of quotations together. They will have to think about the different comments, and look for similarities. This requires acquiring an understanding of what each quotation means, and challenges them to read for understanding. The second thinking process will be to select a quotation, and then investigate more about the context and reasons behind it. For example, one of the quotations is from Martin Luther King, Jr.:

"A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual doom."

If a student selects this quotation, they would find out why Martin Luther King Jr. was making a comment about war, when and where he made this statement, and other details that provide a context for this quotation. As an aside, King said this during a speech at the Riverside Church (New York, NY) on April 4th 1967 in opposition to the Vietnam War. The speech was titled "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence."

Materials:

Students will use one document for this: "Opinions of War: Handout of Quotations." This document can be added to, or edited to fit the specific needs of a class, teacher, or student. Other materials and references are included within each step below.

Procedures:

Warm up: Thinking about Quotations

Provide the students with the following famous quotation about history by George Santayana: **"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."** (from *The Life of Reason*, 1905).

Ask students to write in their notebooks (or a piece of paper) what Santayana meant by this statement. Also, have them decide if this comment is: true, false, mostly true, or mostly false. It is often helpful to tell students they will have 5 minutes for this free write, and that they should write for the entire time. This encourages students to think in more depth about the quotation, and not simply provide their initial reaction. A prompt such as this can be put on the board to guide the students:

Please write for five minutes everything that comes to mind about this quotation, including what you think it means, and if you think it is true/mostly true/mostly false/false. Please write the entire time so you think quite a bit about these words.

After the students have written, have them share with a partner what they wrote.

Step 1: Grouping the quotations about war

Place students in groups of three, and provide each group with the handout of quotations and a pair of scissors. Have the students read over all the statements, and begin to address this prompt:

Group these quotations so they are with others that express a similar idea. For each group, complete this sentence: "The quotations in the group are similar because..."

Having students think about the following questions might help them organize the quotations:

- 1) Does the speaker have a strong opinion about war? If so, what is that opinion?
- 2) Is the speaker suggesting that war is justifiable? Why?
- 3) Is the speaker suggesting that war is inevitable? Why?
- 4) What is your initial reaction to this quotation? How do you think soldiers would respond? How would non-military people respond? How would your parents respond?
- 5) Is this a controversial statement? Why/Why not?
- 6) Could this be a policy to help decide if the USA goes to war? Why?

It is important to give students freedom to group these statements. Pre-existing categories or groups do not exist. It is the students' thinking and rationales that will justify how they put the different quotations together.

After each group has completed their grouping, have them report to the class the categories and a sample quotation or two that best exemplifies each category (Note: the number of quotations in

each category does not need to be the same, and a category may be comprised of just one quotation).

As a class determine if the categories that emerged for each group are similar across the students/groups.

Step 2: Finding out who said what and why

Now that the students have thought about each quotation, have them work alone to determine one quotation that they want to examine in depth. Students might make a selection because they like what it says, but they could also select a quotation because it doesn't make sense, seems interesting, was written by someone they know about, etc. You might want to ensure that all of the quotations are selected (with 14 quotations, about two students will be assigned to each), or you could simply let the students select the quotation of their choice.

After assisting students in this selection process, have them start to dig deeper into the statement by finding the context of when it was said/written, and the reasons it was said/written. These questions could guide the students' examinations:

- 1) Why did this person make a comment about war?
- 2) When was this comment made?
- 3) Where was this comment made? Who was the audience? Was it well-received or challenged?
- 4) What interesting details did you find that will help us understand more about this quotation?

Extension Activity:

If students visit The Flying Heritage & Combat Armor Museum's (FHCAM) "Why War: The Causes of Conflict" exhibit, they will be able to see the wall of quotations. These were not displayed randomly, but placed in the exhibit for specific reasons. If students were to post these quotations in a museum, which ones would be placed at the top? They bottom? Why? With a partner, have students propose a display of these quotations that helps get a message across to museum patrons. Have them explain their reasons.

Language Support:

To aid those with limited English proficiency or others who need help with academic language, place them in groups with at least one student who speaks English as a first language. The handout on risk factors can also be given to ELLs the day before this activity, and ELLs should be told which risk factor they will examine.

Standards:

Washington Standards (EALRs/GLEs)

8th Grade Social Studies

EALR GLE GLE Description

- History 4.3.1 Analyzes and interprets historical materials from a variety of perspectives in U.S. history (1776—1900).
- 4.3.2 Analyzes multiple causal factors to create positions on major events in U.S. history (1776 – 1900).

9th and 10th Grade Social Studies

EALR GLE GLE Description

- Civics 1.3.1 Analyzes the relationships and tensions between national interests and international issues in the world in the past or present.
- History 4.2.1 Analyzes how individuals and movements have shaped world history (1450—present).
- 4.2.3 Analyzes and evaluates how technology and ideas have shaped world history (1450—present).
- 4.3.2 Analyzes the multiple causal factors of conflicts in world history (1450 – present).
- 4.4.1 Analyzes how an understanding of world history can help us prevent problems today.

11th Grade Social Studies

EALR GLE GLE Description

- History 4.2.3 Analyzes and evaluates how technology and ideas have shaped U.S. history (1890— present).
- 4.3.1 Analyzes differing interpretations of events in U.S. history (1890—present).
- 4.3.2 Analyzes multiple causes of events in U.S. history, distinguishing between proximate and long-term causal factors (1890—present).
- 4.4.1 Analyzes how an understanding of United States history can help us prevent problems today.
- Skills 5.1.1 Analyzes the underlying assumptions of positions on an issue or event.

12 Grade Social Studies

EALR GLE GLE Description

- History 4.2.1 Evaluates how individuals and movements have shaped contemporary world issues.
- 4.2.2 Analyzes how cultural identity can promote unity and division.

Common Core State Standards:

Build Social Studies Literacy through Reading and Writing Common Core State Standard for ELA & Literacy in Social Studies Grades 9-10

<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/9-10/>

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

Build Social Studies Literacy through Reading and Writing Common Core State Standard for ELA & Literacy in Social Studies Grades 11-12

<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/>

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5

Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

NCSS C3 Framework (College, Career, and Civic Life)

Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries

Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools

Dimension 3: Argument Writing

Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action