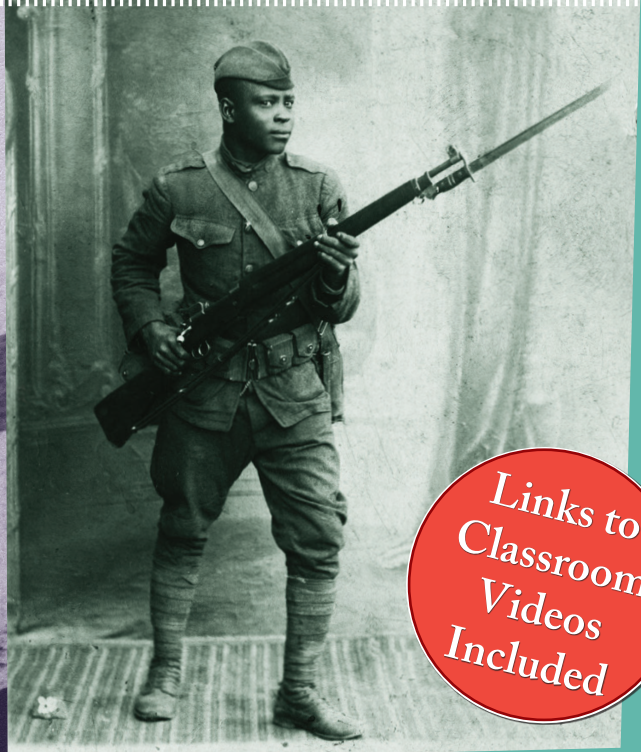
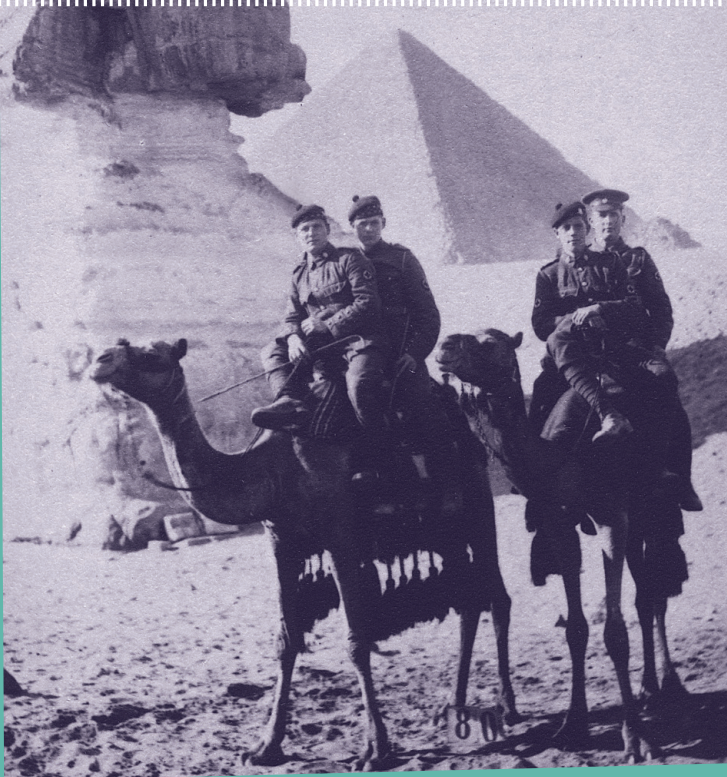




# THE GREAT WAR

*Research Skills and Critical Thinking With World War I*



Links to  
Classroom  
Videos  
Included

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# World War I

was one of the most transformative events of the 20th century, with consequences that have influenced almost every area of modern life today. The Great War classroom program, sponsored by the National WWI Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, is designed to help students in grades 5–8 understand the significance of the war, while practicing research skills and critical thinking. Use this collection of lessons, activities, and videos to teach global history and demonstrate to students the enduring impact of the war meant “to end all wars.”

## \*\* A TEACHER PRIMER \*\*

*Before you get started, a refresher on the Great War.*

### ITS CAUSES

► **There’s no one “cause” of World War I.**

The war erupted after decades of growing conflicts around the world. Major factors included a system of alliances that tied the countries of Europe together; an escalating arms race that amassed unprecedented military might; an age of imperialism that sparked the global expansion of empires; and the rise of nationalism in areas like the Balkans, where the 1914 assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand triggered the outbreak of war.

### ITS PLAYERS

► **Over 30 countries were involved in WWI.**

The primary Allies were Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, and the United States. The Allies faced the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria.

### ITS EFFECTS

► **The war was one of the most transformative events in human history.** In 1914, Europe was a continent of empires. But four years later, at war’s end, the monarchies of Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary had collapsed. The end of the Ottoman Empire gave birth to the modern Middle East, but laid the groundwork for the region’s violence that exists today. The Treaty of Versailles’s harsh treatment of Germany contributed to the outbreak of another world war 20 years later.

► **The first fully industrialized war, WWI created a legacy that remains internationally relevant.** Deadly weapons like tanks, machine guns, and flamethrowers were widely used; submarines and aircraft were first employed on a large scale; and the debate over chemical warfare continues today. When we wear a wristwatch, change clocks for Daylight Saving Time, eat canned food, or do Pilates, we’re utilizing items and ideas rooted in WWI.

► **WWI introduced new roles to those who were marginalized in their home countries.** In the United States, millions of women volunteered or worked outside the home for the first time. Their contributions helped secure a different victory: women’s right to vote. Hundreds of thousands of African Americans served, despite facing prejudice at home and abroad.

► **The war marked the true entry of the United States onto the global stage,** but the country did not join the League of Nations, greatly weakening it.

► **The U.S. commemoration of Veterans Day originated with WWI.** First called Armistice Day, November 11 was a day to remember those who served and died, including over 9 million military personnel and over 5 million civilians worldwide. A federal holiday since 1938, Armistice Day was renamed Veterans Day after WWII and the Korean War to reflect all who served.

## Key Resources

Visit [scholastic.com/thegreatwar](http://scholastic.com/thegreatwar) for:

- grade-level-appropriate classroom videos
- extension activities
- interactive quizzes
- links to an interactive timeline
- answer keys

## Student Reading

*The Grand Escape,*  
Neal Bascomb

*Hattie Big Sky,*  
Kirby Larson

*Private Peaceful,*  
Michael Morpurgo

*Truce,*  
Jim Murphy

*War Game,*  
Michael Foreman

*War Horse,*  
Michael Morpurgo

*The War to End All Wars: World War I,*  
Russell Freedman

**ON THE COVER**  
TOP: A French nurse with a North African French colonial patient.

BOTTOM LEFT: British soldiers (John Wallace, front left) in front of the Sphinx in Egypt.

BOTTOM RIGHT: An African American soldier posing with an M1917 rifle.

## LESSON 1

# World War I “Firsts”

**Scientific and technological advances usher in large-scale, industrial warfare to the world.**

**TIME** 50 minutes; additional time for research and activity

### MATERIALS

- Internet access
- Video: Section 1, “The Start of WWI”
- Activity Sheet: Test Your Smarts: WWI’s New Ways of War

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Share Section 1 of the video at [scholastic.com/thegreatwar](http://scholastic.com/thegreatwar) and discuss the start of WWI using the Teacher Primer as well as the following key points from the video: the tensions among the Great Powers, the fight over territories,

nationalism, and the archduke’s assassination. Ask students: *What were the main countries of the Allies and the Central Powers?*

For more background, visit:

- [history.com/topics/world-war-i](http://history.com/topics/world-war-i)
- [theworldwar.org/education](http://theworldwar.org/education)

2. Assign these research topics to students (one per student):

- **New uses of airplanes** for combat and reconnaissance, famous “ace” pilots, and the dangers of WWI flying.
- **The role of submarines**, how German U-boat warfare helped bring America into the war, and the dangers of life on submarines.

► **New types of weapons**, including flamethrowers, poison gas, and tanks. Provide these sites to support student research:

- [bit.ly/GreatWarSubmarines](http://bit.ly/GreatWarSubmarines)
- [bit.ly/GreatWarUboats](http://bit.ly/GreatWarUboats)
- [bit.ly/GreatWarAircraft](http://bit.ly/GreatWarAircraft)
- [bit.ly/GreatWarWeapons](http://bit.ly/GreatWarWeapons)

3. Hand out the Test Your Smarts: WWI’s New Ways of War activity sheet and group students so that every group has an “expert” on each topic. Have students use additional research as needed to complete the activity sheet.

4. Have students create a multimedia presentation or brochure, using research to describe the planes, seacraft, and weaponry of WWI. Their presentations should also explain how the war’s



**Horse wearing a gas mask in WWI.**

innovations relate to present-day technologies.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Video: Section 2, “Life in the Trenches”
- Online Activity Sheet: Life in the Trenches
- Poster: 7 Amazing Things About World War I
- Online Poster: World War I by the Numbers

## LESSON 2

# A Global War

**Participants of different backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences are brought into the conflict.**

**TIME** 50 minutes; additional time for research and activity

### MATERIALS

- Internet access
- Video: Section 3, “The Global Impact of WWI”
- Activity Sheet: Unsung American Heroes

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Share Section 3 of the video at [scholastic.com/thegreatwar](http://scholastic.com/thegreatwar) and discuss the effects of WWI outside Europe, specifically in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Have students research the WWI involvement of a region, country, or group in the video.

2. Explain that WWI also involved little-acknowledged groups in the United States. Hand out the Unsung American Heroes activity sheet and assign students to research the following:

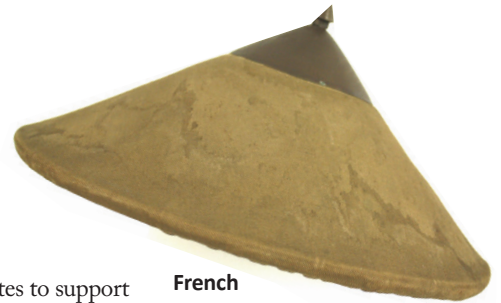
- **Women**, including female Navy Yeomen, nurses, and aides. Optional video: Section 6, “Women in WWI.”
- **African Americans**, including the Harlem Rattlers. Optional video: Section 5, “African Americans in WWI.”
- **Native Americans**, including the Choctaw Code Talkers from Oklahoma.

Provide these sites to support student research:

- [bit.ly/GreatWarWomen](http://bit.ly/GreatWarWomen)
- [bit.ly/GreatWarFemaleYeomen](http://bit.ly/GreatWarFemaleYeomen)
- [bit.ly/GreatWarAfricanAmericans](http://bit.ly/GreatWarAfricanAmericans)
- [bit.ly/GreatWarNativeAmericans](http://bit.ly/GreatWarNativeAmericans)
- [bit.ly/GreatWarOutsideEurope](http://bit.ly/GreatWarOutsideEurope)

3. After the research activities, spark a class discussion using the following prompts:

- *How did WWI impact countries outside Europe?*
- *How were the experiences of African Americans and Native Americans different from the experiences of other soldiers?*
- *In what ways did women contribute to the war?*



**French Indo-Chinese (Vietnam) field hat.**

4. Using information from the video and their research, ask students to create a timeline or slide show outlining one specific group’s participation in WWI. Presentations might include how the group got involved and how their lives were impacted.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

- Online Activity Sheet: Where Did They Fight?

## LESSON 3

# The American Home Front

**Propaganda and patriotic sentiment influence how Americans view the war, resulting in the persecution of German Americans.**

**TIME** 50 minutes; additional time for student activity and research

### MATERIALS

- Internet access
- Video: Section 4, “The U.S. Enters the War”
- Activity Sheet: German Americans in WWI

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Share Section 4 of the video at [scholastic.com/thegreatwar](http://scholastic.com/thegreatwar) and discuss why the U.S. moved from neutrality to joining the war on the side of the Allies. Discuss how propaganda and patriotic sentiment influenced attitudes in the United States. Describe propagandist art, such as

posters like “Uncle Sam,” as well as patriotic music, books, radio, and film. Also address the persecution of anti-war activists. Ask students: *What factors contributed to the U.S. joining the war? How was propaganda used to get people to support the war?*

2. Explain that students will research how patriotic sentiment impacted one specific group during WWI. Split your class and have each half work together to research one of the following topics.

► **German American life before WWI**, including immigration to the U.S., importance of social and

cultural institutions, pride in ethnic heritage, and economic success.

► **German Americans’ WWI experience**, including accusations of disloyalty, banning of German books and language, “liberty cabbage,” persecution and physical attacks, and placement in internment camps.

Provide these sites to support student research:

[bit.ly/GreatWarGermanAmerican1](http://bit.ly/GreatWarGermanAmerican1)

[bit.ly/GermanAmerican2](http://bit.ly/GermanAmerican2)

3. Hand out the German Americans in WWI activity sheet and allow students to pair up to complete it. Discuss in class: *Why were German Americans targeted during the war? Can you think of similar instances in U.S. history?*



**One form of propaganda was patriotic music, like the sheet music above.**

4. Challenge students to use their research to create a past and present propaganda profile. Ask: *Can you identify any uses of propaganda during WWI similar to propaganda today? What are the similarities and differences?* Ask students to write a comparative essay, with images and captions, to argue their case.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

- Online Activity Sheet: Propaganda: How America “Sold” WWI

## LESSON 4

# After the 11th Hour

**The war ends in Europe, and the world faces the challenge of how to honor the fallen.**

**TIME** 50 minutes; additional time for student activity

### MATERIALS

- Internet access
- Video: Section 8, “From Armistice Day to Veterans Day”
- Activity Sheet: Create a World War I Commemoration

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explain to students that the Great War in Europe ended at the 11th hour on the 11th day

of the 11th month of 1918. (The war continued in Africa for weeks and in the Middle East for years.) Germany was forced to sign the Treaty of Versailles, which harshly punished the country and



**The National WWI Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, MO.**

contributed to WWII starting 20 years later.

2. Share Section 8 of the video at [scholastic.com/thegreatwar](http://scholastic.com/thegreatwar) and discuss the U.S. commemoration of WWI and war veterans.

3. Tell students they will create their own WWI commemoration. Hand out the Create a World War I Commemoration activity sheet. Have students follow

the fact collection guide and commemorate someone they discovered in their research. Have students present their work in class.

4. If you haven't done previously, share the classroom poster 7 Amazing Things About World War I. (Optional: Watch Section 7 of the video “Innovations of WWI” at [scholastic.com/thegreatwar](http://scholastic.com/thegreatwar).) Discuss other legacies of WWI that live on to this day.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Online Activity Sheet: The Paris Peace Conference

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

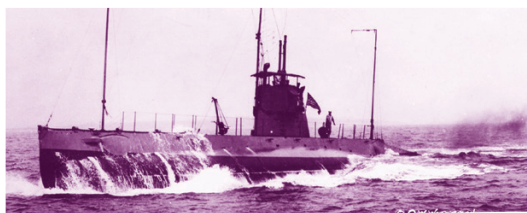
## Test Your Smarts: WWI's New Ways of War

**DIRECTIONS** Fill in the blanks below with facts you find in your research about WWI's innovations in warfare. Then, answer the questions at the bottom of the page on a separate sheet of paper.



### THE SKIES: AIRPLANES

1. Early in WWI, airplanes were mostly used for \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Some of the ways airplanes were used in WWI included \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Individual battles between planes were called \_\_\_\_\_. Pilots with many victories became known as \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The top ace in WWI was \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Not all aircraft were planes. Germany used rigid airships called \_\_\_\_\_. Along with planes, these aircraft carried out missions in England that killed almost 600 civilians.



### THE SEAS: SUBMARINES

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is the name for the German long-range submarine.
2. The term *U-boat* is derived from the German word \_\_\_\_\_, meaning "submarine boat."
3. U-boats were used to interrupt \_\_\_\_\_ ships out in the ocean.
4. The Allies used several anti-submarine weapons against U-boats. Two of them were \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. One of the most famous ships sunk by a U-boat was the \_\_\_\_\_.

### QUESTIONS

1. How did submarines and airplanes in WWI change how wars were fought? What dangers did pilots and sailors face?
2. How did these new technologies change the lives of soldiers?
3. How did advances in airplanes and submarines, as well as new weapons in WWI, influence the way that wars are fought today?

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## Unsung American Heroes

**DIRECTIONS** Research one of the WWI groups below. Then team up with other students to answer the questions for each group on a separate sheet of paper.



Choctaw Telephone Squad

### *Choctaw Telephone Squad*

More than 12,000 Native Americans served in World War I. Soldiers from the Choctaw tribe used their native language to create a military code to transmit intelligence information. Germany was unable to break the code during the war.

**Question 1:** What was life like for Native American soldiers during World War I?

**Question 2:** What were some of the achievements of Native American troops, including the Choctaw?

### *Female U.S. Navy Yeomen*

Despite the U.S. Armed Forces banning women from fighting in combat, 12,000 women served as non-commissioned officers in the U.S. Navy as Yeomen, opening the door for women to serve.

**Question 1:** What kind of work did female U.S. Navy Yeomen do during the war?

**Question 2:** What other roles did American servicewomen play?



An unidentified female Yeoman in a U.S. Navy uniform.



### *African Americans*

More than 350,000 African Americans served in World War I, and many hoped their service would lead to civil rights at home. One legendary unit was the Harlem Rattlers of the 369th Infantry Regiment.

**Question 1:** Where did African Americans serve during World War I, and what kind of racial prejudice did they face?

**Question 2:** What were some of the major achievements of the Harlem Rattlers?

Members of the 369th Infantry arriving in New York City.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## German Americans in WWI

**DIRECTIONS** Read the passage below. Then use what you learned in class plus your own research to answer the questions that follow on a separate sheet of paper.

When World War I began, there were more than 8 million German Americans living in the United States, making them the largest immigrant group in the country. While some had only recently arrived in the U.S., others had been there since before the American Revolution.

Like many immigrants, German Americans embraced both their adoptive and native heritage and culture. They built close-knit communities and often spoke German on a regular



basis. When the United States entered the war in 1917, however, German Americans were accused of disloyalty and persecuted due to their ethnic background.

Registration certificate of a German American who reported himself to local officials.

### QUESTIONS

1. What was life like for German Americans before World War I?
2. Why were German Americans considered disloyal to the United States during the war?
3. What were some of the ways German Americans were mistreated?
4. Do you think it was fair for German Americans to be mistrusted?
5. Can you think of similar types of prejudice in the United States today?

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## Create a World War I Commemoration

**DIRECTIONS** Create a commemoration for a person or persons who served during WWI. Use steps below to help develop your project.

### 1. Identify key facts

- ▶ Name (if known)
- ▶ Gender
- ▶ Country or origin
- ▶ Age
- ▶ Occupation
- ▶ Details about the person
- ▶ Details about their service
- ▶ Special achievements

### 2. Choose the type of commemoration

Decide how you would like to honor the person(s). You might create a poster, song, painting, or a digital presentation.

**3. Make it relevant.** Include interesting visuals and explain:

- ▶ What makes them important
- ▶ What people should know about them



TOP LEFT: Agnes Glaale Kelly in her U.S. Army nurse uniform. TOP RIGHT: General Roger M. Michaud, France, in uniform with Sam Browne belt and military decorations. BOTTOM: French colonial troops from Africa.

## From Armistice Day to Veterans Day

When the fighting ended on the 11th hour of the 11th day of November 1918, more than 9 million military personnel had died in WWI. More than 5 million civilians also lost their lives. These devastating losses left the world searching for ways to remember and honor these sacrifices.

Beginning in 1919, the United States commemorated Armistice Day every November 11 in remembrance of those who served in WWI. Following the example set by Great Britain and France, the United States dedicated the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington

National Cemetery in 1921.

Armistice Day became Veterans Day in 1954 when veterans of WWII and the Korean War called on Congress to change the day to honor veterans of all wars. The legislation passed, and President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed it into law.



# 7 Amazing Things About World War I

**1** Americans planted more than 5 million **war gardens** to help feed the war effort.



**3** Hundreds of thousands of underage men and boys served, some lying about their age. The youngest in Great Britain was 12 years old.



**2** Weapons like **hand grenades**, flamethrowers, and machine guns were used on an industrial scale for the first time.

**4** Many medical innovations—from **mobile ambulances** and blood banks to transfusions and plastic surgery—were pioneered during WWI.



**5** The words **camouflage**, **ace**, **dogfight**, **dud**, **souvenir**, and **shell shock** took on new meanings during WWI.



**6** Modern-day **wristwatches**, trench coats, passports, canned food, stainless steel, and even Pilates can be traced to WWI.



**7** More than 16 million animals—including **mules**, camels, dogs, and carrier pigeons—served.