Lesson Plan: United States Home Front during World War I

This lesson was developed by Maine Historical Society in partnership with a Teaching with Primary Sources grant from the Library of Congress.

Objectives:
- Students will be able to describe the lives, work, and contributions of Americans on the home front during World War I - the involvement of women in particular - using primary sources.
- Students will practice the skills involved in analyzing primary sources.
- Students will learn how to and practice using evidence from primary sources to support a point view.

Essential Questions: How did the United States respond to and mobilize for World War I?

How was life on the American home front affected by U.S. entry into World War I?

Materials:

primary source documents and questions – 1 set per student (see below)
primary source analysis tools (see links below)
computers with internet access for student use – will need to access Library of Congress (https://www.loc.gov/) and Maine Memory Network (www.mainememory.net).
writing paper
pen/pencil
timer (for debate)

Timeframe:

Will vary depending on length of class period, class size, etc.; 5-7 days/class periods recommended.
Procedure:

*Part 1 – Initial Analysis*

1. Ask students to consider the following questions and to brainstorm some answers; this can be done by students working as individuals, working with partners/small groups, or as a class.
   a. *Who is effected when a country goes to war?*
   b. *What does a country need when it goes to war?*

2. Ask students to share their answers; record and discuss their ideas as a class.

3. Explain that today students are going to take a closer look at some primary sources from World War I to try and answer the questions, *How did the United States respond to and mobilize for World War I?* and *How was life on the American home front affected by U.S. entry into World War I?*

4. Distribute Documents 1-8 and primary analysis tools to students. You can use the primary source analysis tools or graphic organizers from the Maine Memory Network lesson plan Using Primary Source Documents in the Classroom or the Library of Congress’ Primary Source Analysis Tools.

5. Students can work to analyze the documents in a number of ways;
   a. Analyze all documents individually.
   b. Analyze all documents working with a partner or small group.
   c. Randomly assign students to each analyze one of the documents and then instruct students to form jigsaw groups and share information on their assigned documents.
   *Regardless of how you assign the documents, make sure that each student has a copy of all the documents.*

6. If students do not complete their analysis before the completion of the class period, assign completion of the assignment for homework.
Part 2 – Digging Deeper

1. Begin by reviewing with students the questions and their answers from the start of the previous lesson.

2. Ask students to share their findings/ideas from their analysis of Documents 1-8. This can be done in jigsaw groups and/or as a class.

3. Once students have reviewed their primary findings and analysis, students should work to answer the questions for each individual document.

4. Review students’ answers to the document questions. This can be done in small groups and/or as a class.

5. Ask students to consider how these primary sources help answer the questions.

Part 3 – Debate Preparation

1. Instruct students that their next step in this unit will be to prepare and engage in a formal debate using primary sources. Students will work in teams; one team arguing the “pro” side of an issue/statement, the other team arguing the “con” side. Each student on each team will be responsible for a different part of the debate. See debate instructions below.

2. Students will be expected to cite/use at least two of Documents 1-8 as evidence in their debate. They will also need to locate at least one third primary source on the Library of Congress or Maine Memory Network to use as evidence.

3. Assign students to debate teams and distribute debate instructions/assignment. Within each team, pairs or small groups of students should be assigned to the different aspects of the debate: opening statement, evidence, rebuttal, closing statement (see debate instructions below). Whether you assign these pairs/groups or students do it themselves, make sure you have a record of who is responsible for each aspect of the debate for assessment purposes.

4. Allow students as much class time and time outside of class to research, prepare, and practice their debate as appropriate (at least two class periods and three days outside of class is recommended as a minimum). Factoring in this time, set a date for the debate and ensure that students understand they must be prepared to participate in the debate and turn in their written portion of the assignment.
Debate tips:

- You may want to assign certain topics, ideas, or documents for students to stick to in order to better ensure they debate the same points.
- Encourage the teams to talk to each other, especially those working on “evidence” and “rebuttal”. While they students won’t necessarily want to give away strategy, remind them that the debate will be smoother for everybody if each team knows the talking points or evidence that the other team is using, not unlike how lawyers must disclose evidence and supply lists of witnesses to each other before going to trial. Everyone should be working with the same information.
- Remind students that their assessment will not be based on who “wins”, but rather on connecting arguments to evidence.
- Rebuttal is typically the aspect of debate that students struggle with the most; preparing rebuttal means trying to predict the arguments the other side with use and how to poke holes in those arguments. Make sure the students assigned to rebuttal have the tools and support they need.
- For students working in pairs/small groups, make sure they determine before the actual debate who will do the speaking for their portion during the debate.
- Encourage (or even require) students to practice the debate; like any presentation, it will go smoother if you practice for an audience (even just one person) first.
- Students will understandably want to know who “won” the debate after it’s over; consider bringing in a guest audience or judges panel of other students or teachers to listen to the debate and determine a winner. Be sure that students understand that determining a “winner” is not the same as an assessment of the assignment.

Part 4 - Debate

1. On the day of the debate, remind students of debate rules:
   a. The debate will be presented in the following format:
      i. Pro Opening Statement, Con Opening Statement
      ii. Pro Evidence, Con Evidence
      (quick break)
      iii. Pro Rebuttal, Con Rebuttal
      iv. Pro Closing Statement, Con Closing Statement
   b. Each side is given a limited amount of time to speak (see assignment below).
c. The audience is to be respectful and quiet during the presentation. If you have a guest audience judging the debate, they should be taking notes.

d. After delivering his/her portion of the debate, each student must turn in a written/typed copy of his/her contribution.

2. After the debate, engage students in a whole class discussion on their personal feelings on the statement/idea that was being debated. What do they think the primary source evidence supports?

Alternatives/Extensions:

1. Instead of having students working in teams on the debate, assign them to work with a partner. In this format, a student is responsible for all aspects of one side in the debate (opening statement, evidence, etc.) as opposed to just one piece of one side. This may be easier to students to take on after having done one or two debates in teams.

2. The debate exercise can be easily modified into a persuasive essay format. Instead of having students debate in teams, have them take a stand on the statement/idea and compose a persuasive essay using the debate format.

3. Use the documents and instruct students to answer the essential questions as Document Based Questions (DBQs).

4. Have students create their own WWI propaganda piece (poster, film, etc.) calling for citizens to respond to and mobilize for war.
Women at the Portland Company inspect 8-inch howitzer shells (208 mm) for use in World War I. The Portland Company made the shells, which were then packed in pairs in wooden boxes for shipment to a central depot to be filled with an explosive compound.  
(Maine Memory Network link: https://www.mainememory.net/artifact/5763)
Document 2: 108 mm shell casing manufacture at the Portland Company

Shell casing manufacture was not the typical Portland Company product, but during World War I, that is just what the company did do, and with a better, faster record than any other shell casing manufacturer.

(Maine Memory Network link: https://www.mainememory.net/artifact/5773)
Document 3: Ordnance production at the Portland Company

The Portland Company on Portland's waterfront produced 108 mm shell casings for the United States Army during World War I.

(Maine Memory Network link: https://www.mainememory.net/artifact/5775)
Documents 1, 2, and 3: Portland Company photographs Questions

1.) What information do these photographs provide on industry on the American home front during WWI?
Charles Fusco, an Italian-American living in Connecticut, was interviewed in 1938 by the U.S. Work Projects Administration, Federal Writers’ Project. He discussed trying to get by during the Great Depression and his work during WWI.

(Library of Congress link: http://www.loc.gov/item/wpalh000232/)

...I learn to be a machinist working on die-heads, and assembling different parts of machines, reading blueprints too. Then I went to work making guns before they was over the other side. Then they started the war and I started to work on the Russian machine gun. This was in Marlin-Rockwell. Then America went in and we started to make the Brownie (Browning) machine gun. Oh Boy! when I used to go down stairs where they tested the gun I used to see before my eyes all those men dying and believe me I was glad I was not over there... The government told me that they wouldn't take me because I knew too much about guns to go. When they started to make these guns there was a man from Waltham Watch Co. from Massachusetts and he came down with new machines for experiment and he asked the boss if he had a handy man around machines, and the boss picked me. They put us in a special room with these new machinery and we started to make the guns. Then everything was set then the whole factory started in to make them. Everything had to be to the thousandth of an inch, not like now everything is production and cheap. I got 65 cents an hour and there was others that was making 50 to 60 dollars a week. Boys 17 and 18 years old. Which makes me remember that I used to kick to the supt. For more money and tell him I was going to get through and that lousy Englishman used to tell me that if you quit, Charlie, we're going to send you across. Finally I got mad one day just before the war stopped, I think 4 months, and I quit but got another job right away with George Griswold Machine Shop making guns for the government for 53 cents an hour. A lotta of people thought I was crazy working for less money -- well maybe I was, but wait till you hear this -- After the war everybody got laid off but I stayed working for over a year making lolly pops dies and funny things about the lolly pops was that when the war was on the lolly pop was small. The kids did not notice it because the old man made money, but after that the people did not have any money so the candy people had to make the pops bigger, so I made the dies bigger. Well, after a year doing that I left and went back to Marlin's. What a change! Everything they wanted in a rush, production work. The pays were cut and if a man made $20 a week he was lucky. To make things worse they had a bunch of young fools working who couldn't come anywhere near the old timers when it came to doing good work. The old men were a little slow but they put out good work. These young guys and the girls all they think about is stepping out nights and having a good time. When work got slow I left and got myself a job assembling locks. I am a jack of all trades when it comes to machine work.
Document 4: Italian Munitions Worker Questions

1. What type of work did Fusco perform during WWI?

2. How did Fusco’s boss keep him happy?

3. How does Fusco’s factory work experience after the war compare to his factory work experience during the war?
Document 5: Mobilizing Woman-Power (modified)

Harriet Stanton Blatch was the daughter of suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton and a suffragist and women’s rights activist in her own right. During World War I, she was the head of the Women’s Land Army, an organization that put women to work in the agricultural field. In 1918, she authored Mobilizing Woman Power about women’s role in the war effort and encouraging women to enter the workplace.

(Library of Congress link: http://lccn.loc.gov/18012004)

Scarcity of labor is not only certain to grow, but the demands upon the United States for service are increasing by leaps and bounds. America must throw man-power into the trenches, must feed herself, must contribute more and ever more food to the hungry populations of Europe, must meet the old industrial obligations, and respond to a whole range of new business requirements.…. When Europe went to war, the world had been suffering from depression a year and more. Immediately on the outbreak of hostilities whole lines of business shut down. Unemployment became serious. There were idle hands everywhere. Germany, of all the belligerents, rallied most quickly to meet war conditions. Unemployment gave place to a shortage of labor sooner there than elsewhere. Great Britain did not begin to get the pace until the middle of 1915.

The business situation in the United States upon its entrance into the war was the antithesis of this. For over a year, depression had been superseded by increased industry, high wages, and greater demand for labor. The country as measured by the ordinary financial signs, by its commerce, by its labor market, was more prosperous than it had been for years. Tremendous requisitions were being made upon us by Europe, and to the limit of available labor we were answering them. Then into our economic life, with industrial forces already working at high pressure, were injected the new demands arising from changing the United States from a people as unprepared for effective hostilities as a baby in its cradle, into a nation equipped for war. There was no unemployment, but on the contrary, shortage of labor.

The country calls for everything, and all at once, like the spoiled child on suddenly waking. It must have, and without delay, ships, coal, cars, cantonments, uniforms, rifles, and food, food, food. How can the needs be supplied and with a million and a half of men dropping work besides?...

The war may furnish the spark for the needed revolution. Man-power is not available, woman-power is at hand. A new labor force always brings ideas and ideals peculiar to itself. May not women as fresh recruits in a land army stamp their likes and dislikes on farm life? Their enthusiasm may put staleness to rout, and the group system of women land workers, already tested in the crucible of experience, may bring to the farm the needed antidote to isolation.…. Women in America must shoulder as nobly as have the women of Europe, this duty. They must answer their country's call. Let them see clearly that the desire of their men to shield them from possible injury exposes the nation and the world to actual danger.

Vocabulary:
- antithesis: opposite
- requisitions: requests
- crucible: ordeal
1. How does Blatch describe the economy/industry in the United States before World War I?

2. What does Blatch say the U. S. needs to win the war?

3. Whom does Blatch propose fill the labor shortage in the U.S.?

4. What does Blatch mean by “The war may furnish the spark for the needed revolution.”?
Document 6: Mrs. Fannie Hunt Denie, pioneer woman recruiting officer

Mrs. Fannie Hunt Denie with her aides, a petty officer and a Jacky, and prospect in front of tent used as a naval recruiting office at the entrance to Central Park, N.Y.

(Library of Congress link: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/89714045/)
Document 7: Pain's U.S. Government Signal Factory

Women wrapping rockets in 1919 during World War I.

(Library of Congress link: http://www.loc.gov/item/2005696163/)
Document 8: Red Cross nurses serving food to soldiers in hospital, during Christmas season

Photography of Red Cross nurses serving food to soldiers in a military hospital during the 1917 Christmas season.

(Library of Congress link: http://www.loc.gov/item/93505082/)
1.) Describe some of the ways in which American women were involved in the war effort during WWI.

2.) Do you think this work aided in the Allies victory? Why or why not?
World War I Debate

Objective: Describe the lives, work, and contributions of Americans on the home front during World War I.

Essential Question: How did the United States respond to and mobilize for war?

Assignment: Work with a partner/team to prepare a debate that addresses the statement “The real winners of U.S. entry into World War I were American women.” You and your partner or the opposing team will each take on a role in this debate; one will argue the pro position (Yes, the real winners of U.S. entry into World War I were American women), the other will argue the con position (No, American women were not the winners of World War I). Your debate must follow the outlined format. Your debate script must be typed and turned in after your debate is presented to the class.

Timeline: You will have _______ class periods to work both with your partner and independently to prepare your debate. You must also use your own time outside of class to prepare.

Due date: __________________

Debate format

Round 1

1. Opening Statement
   a. Explain background, why is topic important, think “big picture”, appeal to passion
      (1 paragraph, 5 minutes)

2. Evidence
   a. Present data, case studies, evidence for each argument, think “specific”, appeal to intellect
      (2 paragraphs, 6-8 minutes)

Round 2

1. Rebuttal
   a. Attack opposing side’s arguments, reiterate your side’s arguments, appeal to passion and intellect
   b. May ask questions of opponent
      (1 paragraph, 5-7 minutes)

2. Closing statement
   a. Summarize your position and evidence, take the moral high ground
      (1 paragraph, 5 minutes)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding of Topic</strong></td>
<td>The student clearly understood the topic in-depth and presented their information forcefully and convincingly.</td>
<td>The student clearly understood the topic in-depth and presented their information with ease.</td>
<td>The student seemed to understand the main points of the topic and presented those with ease.</td>
<td>The team did not show an adequate understanding of the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information</strong></td>
<td>All information presented in the debate was clear, accurate and thorough.</td>
<td>Most information presented in the debate was clear, accurate and thorough.</td>
<td>Most information presented in the debate was clear and accurate, but was not usually thorough.</td>
<td>Information had several inaccuracies OR was usually not clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Facts/Statistics and Primary Sources</strong></td>
<td>Every major point was well supported with several relevant facts, statistics and/or examples. Student used ample amount of primary source evidence.</td>
<td>Every major point was adequately supported with relevant facts, statistics and/or examples. Student used adequate amount of primary source evidence.</td>
<td>Every major point was supported with facts, statistics and/or examples, but the relevance of some was questionable. Student did not use adequate amount of primary source evidence.</td>
<td>Every point was not supported. There was little to no use of primary source evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Debate Format</strong></td>
<td>Debate format was followed consistently throughout the debate.</td>
<td>Debate format was mostly followed.</td>
<td>The debate format was only partly followed.</td>
<td>The debate format was rarely or not followed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Script Format</strong></td>
<td>Script format was followed; typed, double spaced, size 12 Times New Roman font.</td>
<td>Script format was mostly followed.</td>
<td>Script format was partially followed.</td>
<td>Script format was not followed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics and Grammar</strong></td>
<td>Few to no errors in mechanics and grammar.</td>
<td>Few errors in mechanics and grammar.</td>
<td>Several errors in mechanics and grammar.</td>
<td>Many errors in mechanics and grammar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maine Learning Results:
Grade Level: PreK-2; Content Area: Social Studies: HISTORY (A1a, A1b, A1c, A1d, A1e, A2, E1a, E1b, E1c, E2a, E2b)
Grade Level: 3-5; Content Area: Social Studies: HISTORY (A1a, A1c, A1d, A1e, A3, E1a, E1b, E1c, E2a, E2b)
Grade Level: 6-8; Content Area: Social Studies: HISTORY (A1a, A1b, A1c, A1d, A1e, A1f, A1g, A1h, A1k, A1l, A3, E1a, E1b, E1d, E2a, E2b)
Grade Level: 9-Diploma; Content Area: Social Studies: HISTORY (A1a, A1b, A1c, A1d, A1e, A1i, A1j, A3, E1a, E1b, E1d, E2a, E2b)

Common Core State Standards:
Anchor Standards: COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7); COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.6, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.7, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.8); COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5); COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR LANGUAGE (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.2)
Grade 2: WRITING (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.6, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.7); LANGUAGE (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.3)


