

MacGowan & Lombardy's
THE GREAT WAR

Fast-playing card game

High School Lesson Plans and Teaching Resources

Created by

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Lombardy Studios 2021

Educational Standards:

The following material has been designed to support the California content standards for social studies at the high school (10th grade) level.

From the California Content Standards and Framework for Social Studies:

10. 5 Students analyze the causes and course of the First World War.

10.5.1. Analyze the arguments for entering into war presented by leaders from all sides of the Great War and the role of political and economic rivalries, ethnic and ideological conflicts, domestic discontent and disorder, and propaganda and nationalism in mobilizing the civilian population in support of “total war.”

10.5.2. Examine the principal theaters of battle, major turning points, and the importance of geographic factors in military decisions and outcomes (e.g., topography, waterways, distance, climate).

10.5.4. Understand the nature of the war and its human costs (military and civilian) on all sides of the conflict, including how colonial peoples contributed to the war effort.

Focus Questions from the Framework:

1. Why did the Great War become a World War?
2. How was World War I a total war?
3. What were the consequences of World War I for nations and people?

The Lesson Plan

Purpose: Students will learn about The Great War, exploring the causes of the war, the nature of modern warfare, the geography of the war, and major events of the war.

Objective: By the end of the unit, students should be able to identify the main causes of the Great War, identify major events/turning points of the war, explain the nature of the war and its impact on individuals, explain why it is considered to be a “world war,” and evaluate the influence of the industrialism on modern warfare.

Materials:

Multiple copies of *MaGowan and Lombardy's The Great War Card Game*, approximately one copy for each group of two to four students.

- The Student Handouts provided in this packet.
- A world history textbook
- Colored pencils, pens and paper
- The primary source/student handouts provided in this packet
- Access to the internet to view linked videos and learning extensions provided in this packet.
- Time Frame: 8 days, assuming 90 minute periods

Procedure:

Day 1: Lesson #1: Causes of the Great War and an introduction to the Great War Card Game

Day 2: First play of card game and debrief

Day 3: Lesson #2: The global nature of the Great War: a lesson in geography and chronology.

Day 4: Second play of card game and debrief

Day 5: Lesson #3: The first modern war: How the industrial revolution changed warfare

Day 6: Third play of card game and debrief

Day 7: Lesson #4 : Life in the trenches

Day 8: Assessment/Project Day

Notes regarding lesson plans and using the card game in class:

Our classes are on a “block schedule,” so these lessons are designed for 90 minute periods. Teachers should easily be able to modify these lessons or extend them over two class periods. If teachers feel the students could use more context before launching into these lessons, by all means give them an introductory reading or power point presentation.

All lessons are designed to work with limited or no access to the internet. Veteran teachers will recognize the student-centered approach used in these lessons as being heavily influenced by the

Teacher's Curriculum Institute. We've been big fans of this approach since it was introduced in the early 90's.

Dana's one-page introduction to game play will help students get directly into the game. The Kickstarter video also serves as an excellent introduction. We have created a chart for student to reflect upon game play and to provide feedback for instructors.

Learning Extensions:

Suggestions regarding essays:

Individual cards can serve as a springboard to short research papers or presentations on topics such as Pancho Villa and his role during the war or the role of animals (such as pigeons) in warfare.

The focus questions from the California framework provide excellent essay topics, especially "turning point" essays and "continuity and change over time" essays.

Another idea is having students do a comparative essay on how game play reflected the actual events of the war.

Students could write a review of the game. Look to boardgamegeek.com for sample reviews. <https://boardgamegeek.com/thread/59278/wanna-write-great-review>

Learning extensions:

From CBC Television: Canadian high school students demonstrate what it was like on the Western Front during WW1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HY8064npgls>

Imperial War Museum: Life in the Trenches: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9E7xYLv8N2E>

Online Simulation: The Canadian War Museum offers a free online simulation of a week on the Western Front: Over the Top. (<https://www.warmuseum.ca/overthetop/>) It can be a bit text-heavy, but there is a feature allowing for audio. This has been a big hit in my sophomore history class.

Sources for additional lesson plans:

The National World War 1 Museum and Memorial offers a range of excellent lesson plans and supporting videos:

<https://www.theworldwar.org/museum-lessons>

The Ohio State University History Teaching Institute offers a number of excellent lessons focused on the global nature of the war and even offers pre-made power point presentations for educators. <https://hti.osu.edu/world-war-one/main/lessonplans>

The Imperial War Museum has a variety of learning resources for educators, well worth exploring.: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/learning/resources>

Lesson #1: Causes of the War

Goal: To introduce or reinforce students' understanding of the four long-term causes of the Great War: Militarism, Alliances, Imperialism, and Nationalism.

Procedure:

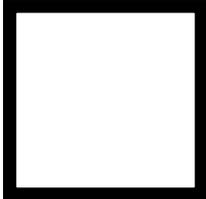
1. Quick-write or class discussion: Think back to a time when your academic performance failed to live up to its potential. What caused this? Was it a long-term cause (days or months leading up to the event) or a short term cause (something that happened the day of the event)?
2. Step 2: Explain the short term causes of the Great War: the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand and the failure of international diplomacy. This can be done with the presentation linked with this lesson or one of your own construction: <https://hti.osu.edu/world-war-one/main/lessonplans>
3. Divide students into groups of four and hand out the Causes of the Great War worksheet. Groups will then read each of the four definitions and create a simple symbol which reflects the definition.
4. Students will circulate the placards, identify how each reflects one or many of the four causes and record their findings.
5. Review their findings as a class.
6. Exit Tix: Rank the four main causes on order of importance. Explain the order listed.

Suggested answers for the placards:

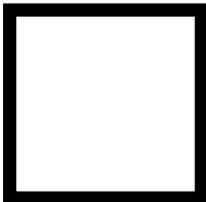
- A: Militarism, Imperialism
- B: Alliances
- C: Nationalism, Imperialism
- D: Alliances
- E: Alliances
- F: Militarism

Student Handout: Causes of the Great War

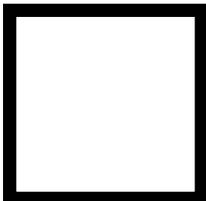
Read the definitions for each of the four terms (causes) and draw a simple symbol for that term (cause) in the box provided. Then examine each of the eight document placards. Determine which of the four causes (it may fit more than one) are represented by in the document.



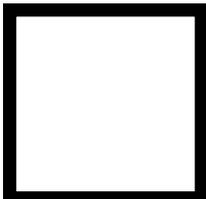
Militarism: The belief that the military provides solutions to problems. It is associated with the policy of aggressive military preparedness and a celebration and glorification of all things military. It often leads to competition between countries.



Alliances: A union between countries to promote common interests, often involving mutual defense agreements. These can be formally formed by treaties or by the less formal *entente*, or “understanding.”



Imperialism: The belief in the policy of seeking to extend one nation’s power over another.



Nationalism: The belief in placing one’s nation (or nationality) and its interests above all others. It is often associated with pride in one’s county and patriotism.

Examine the placards and indicate which of the “causes” are depicted in the documents. Use your symbols to indicate your choice(s) and explain why you think they apply.

Placard	Symbol(s)	Why do you think they fit?
Placard A		
Placard B		
Placard C		
Placard D		

Examine the placards and indicate which of the “causes” are depicted in the documents. Use your symbols to indicate your choice(s) and explain why you think they apply.

Placard	Symbols	Why do you think they fit?
Placard E		
Placard F		
Placard G		
Placard H		

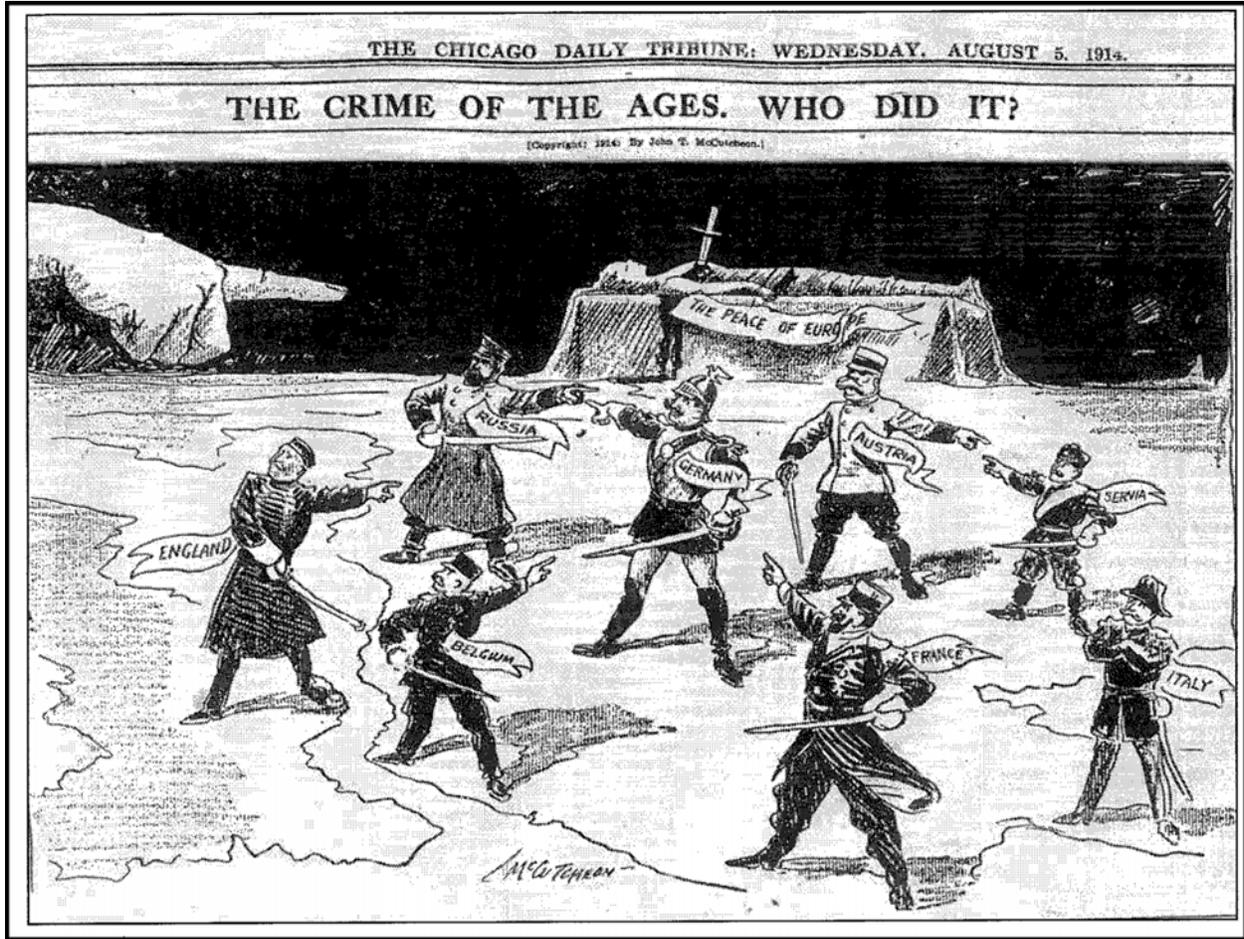
Placard A:

From the collection of the Imperial War Museum, UK



Placard B:

John McCutcheon, Chicago Daily Tribune



Placard C:

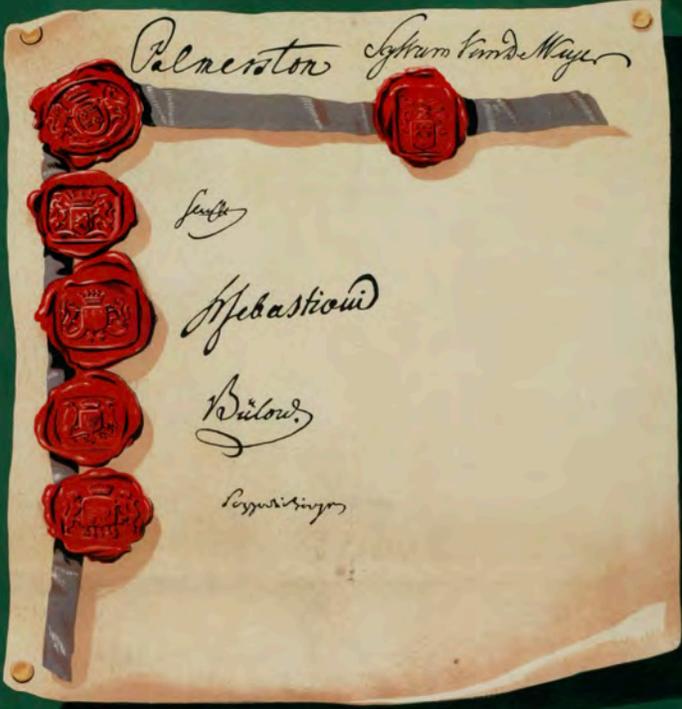
From the collection of the Imperial War Museum



Placard D:

From the collection of the Imperial War Museum, UK

THE "SCRAP OF PAPER"



These are the signatures and seals of the representatives of the Six Powers to the "Scrap of Paper"—the Treaty signed in 1839 guaranteeing the independence and neutrality of Belgium. "Palmerston" signed for Britain, "Bülow" for Prussia.

The Germans have broken their pledged word and devastated Belgium. Help to keep your Country's honour bright by restoring Belgium her liberty.

ENLIST TO-DAY

JENKINSON, HIGGLES & CO., LTD., LONDON, E.C.

PUBLISHED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY RECRUITING COMMITTEE, LONDON. (PAPER NO. 12, 1915). (1000-1214)

Placard E:

ARTICLE 1. Should, contrary to their hope, and against the loyal desire of the two High Contracting Parties, one of the two Empires be attacked by Russia, the High Contracting Parties are bound to come to the assistance one of the other with the whole war strength of their Empires, and accordingly only to conclude peace together and upon mutual agreement.

ARTICLE 2. Should one of the High Contracting Parties be attacked by another Power, the other High Contracting Party binds itself hereby, not only not to support the aggressor against its high Ally, but to observe at least a benevolent neutral attitude towards its fellow Contracting Party.

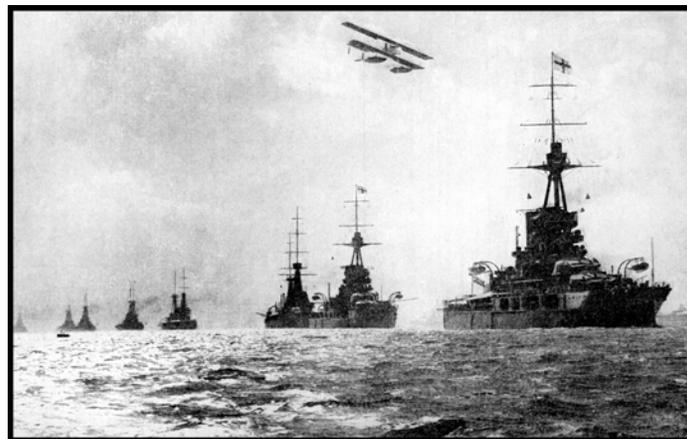
Placard F:

Courtesy of Lombardy Studio



Size of European Armies

	1906	1914
Germany	1,300,000	5,000,000
France	730,000	4,000,000
Russia	400,000	1,200,000
U.K.	390,000	1,500,000



Total Number of Dreadnaught Battleships

	1906	1914
Germany	0	17
France	0	7
Russia	0	4
U.K.	1	29

Placard G

Courtesy of Lombardy Studio



“Germany must have its place in the sun”

“The world belongs to the strong.”

Kaiser Wilhelm II

Placard H

Lyrics to Rule Britannia

Rule, Britannia! Britannia, rule the waves!
Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.

When Britain first, at heaven's command,
Arose from out the azure main,
This was the charter of the land,
And Guardian Angels sang this strain:

The nations not so blest as thee
Must, in their turn, to tyrants fall,
While thou shalt flourish great and free:
The dread and envy of them all.

Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful from each foreign stroke,
As the loud blast that tears the skies
Serves but to root thy native oak.

Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame;
All their attempts to bend thee down
Will but arouse thy generous flame,
But work their woe and thy renown.

To thee belongs the rural reign;
Thy cities shall with commerce shine;
All thine shall be the subject main,
And every shore it circles, thine.

The Muses, still with freedom found,
Shall to thy happy coasts repair.
Blest isle! with matchless beauty crowned,
And manly hearts to guard the fair.

Rule, Britannia! Britannia, rule the waves!
Britons never, never, never shall be slaves

Record of Game Play/Exit ticket:

Game #	
Did you try a specific strategy?	
Did this Strategy work?	
What part of the game play surprised you the most?	
As a result of playing this game, what did you learn about the Great War?	

Record of Game Play/Exit ticket:

Game #	
Did you try a specific strategy?	
Did this Strategy work?	
What part of the game play surprised you the most?	
As a result of playing this game, what did you learn about the Great War?	

The Geography of the Great War Lesson

Objective: Students will be able to identify the nations involved in the Great War and locate important events on a map of the world.

Time: approx. 60 mins.

Note: Each of the timeline/event cards have been segmented into the event descriptions, and the "why it's important" parts, so teachers can either physically cut and paste them onto 3x5 cards (front and back) for students, or electronically cut and paste them into quiz apps for students' phones.

One could easily break this assignment up into two periods with each short answer questions as an exit ticket for your students.

Procedure:

1. **Opener:** Ask the students (as a discussion or a quick-write response) Why do you think the Great War is referred to as a world war? What do we mean by the term "world war"? How might this have differed from previous wars? Were there any previous wars fought on a global scale?
2. Divide students into student teams (or "groups" if you will) of 2 or 4 students.
3. Hand out Student Handout #2 and a copy of the blank map of the world (handout #3).
4. Students will need to consult their textbook for a map of Europe/the world during the period of the Great War.
5. Once the student complete the geography activity they can move on to the "timeline activity." Using the 12 "event cards," locate and label these important events of the Great War. Find the appropriate place along the timeline (measured at two-month intervals) and mark the event with a 10 word summary.
6. **Assessment:** You may want to consider using this assessment as a "group assessment," allowing the teams to work through the short answer questions. This is highly recommended if this would be the first time you've introduced SAQ-type questions.

World War I Global Geo-Political Assessment:

Short Answer Questions for Lesson 2: The Global Nature of the Great War

Answer questions using the “Short Answer Question” format. Each part of the question will be answered thru the 3-step method of “A.C.E.”:

- Spend one sentence Answering the question
- One sentence Citing your evidence (giving a fact that supports your answer)
- One sentence Extending or explaining your response to order to confirm your understanding.

Every part of the “Q” will have a three-sentence response.

Reflecting upon the maps....

Q1: Answer (a), (b), and (c).

- Identify ONE reason historians would consider the Great War a global war.
- Identify ONE different reason historians would consider the Great War a global war.
- Briefly explain ONE argument as to why The Great War should **NOT** be considered a global war.

Reflecting upon the 12 events placed on the timeline...

Q2. Answer (a), (b), and (c).

- Identify ONE event you would consider to be an important turning point in the war.
- Identify ONE other event you would consider to be an important turning point in the war.
- Identify ONE event you do not consider an important turning point in the war. Which one might be considered “least important?”

World War I Global Geo-Political Assessment (Continued):

Evaluating Responses for Short Answer Questions:

Student responses might include.....

Short Answer Question 1

Q1 a & b: The war being fought in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia, the Allies included non-European countries, and the armies drew troops from their imperial holdings.

Qc: The war was largely fought in Europe with relatively minor clashes outside of Europe. The war was largely instigated and executed by European countries. Non-European Imperial troops fought for *and* at the direction of Europeans.

Short Answer Question 2

Q2 a & b: It's a safe bet that there's no single "turning point" of the Great War, so answers will have to be judged on argumentation. The Battle of the Marne, the Battle of Tannenburg, the Russian Revolution, and the failure of the Kaiserschlacht would all be good choices for a student response.

Qc: Again, argumentation will be an important aspect of a student's response. in terms of "least important" turning point, I would think the Battle of Gallipoli or the Battle of Qingdao could be acceptable choices with proper support. Remember, they are still important, just not as important.

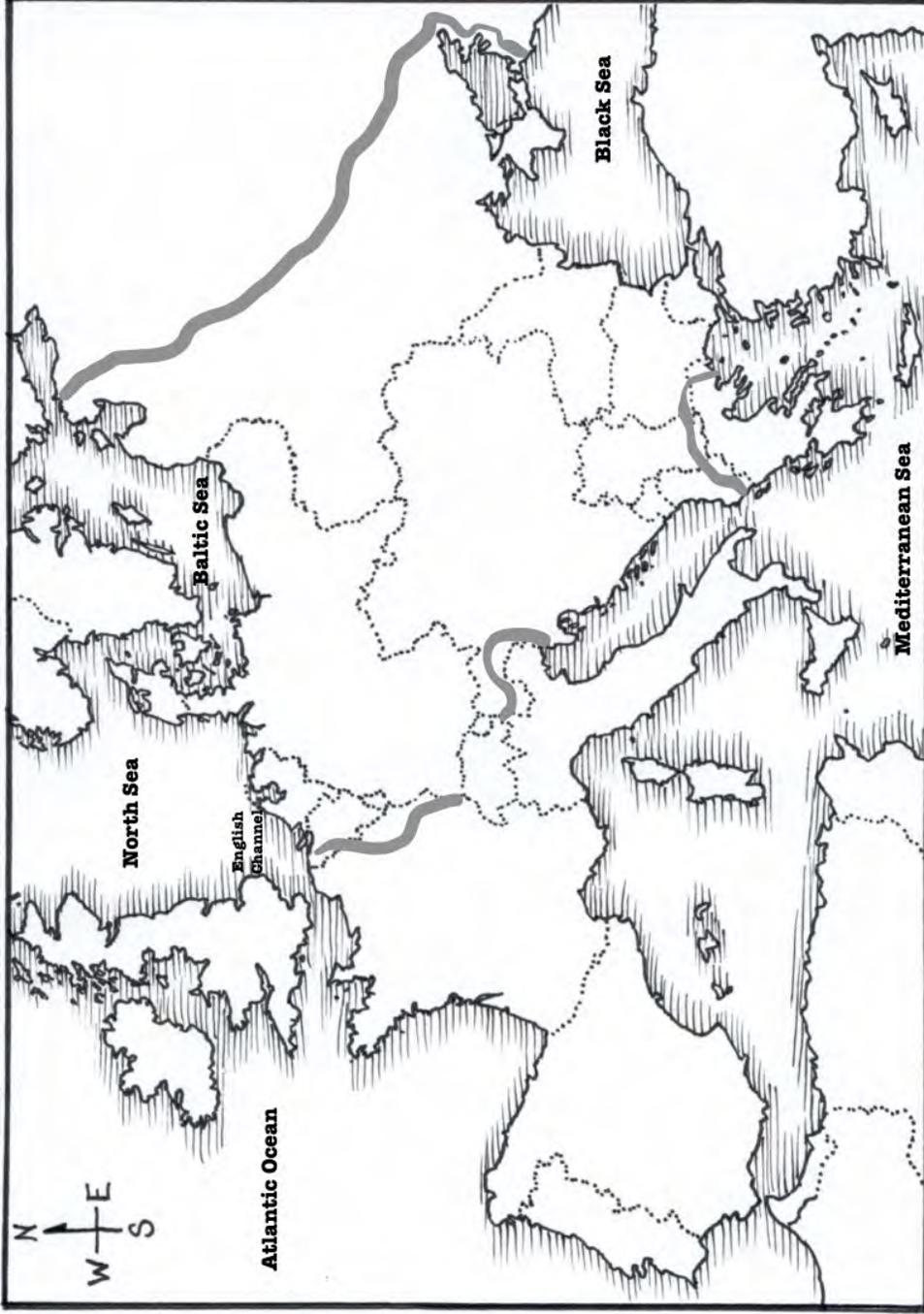
Idea for extension: Spectrum Assignment

- Have students draw a line on a piece of paper; label one end "least important event" and the other end "most important event."
- Have students place each of the 12 events along the spectrum, giving a one sentence explanation for their placement.

World War I Map Activity

Name _____

Period _____



Find and label the “Fronts”

- The Western Front
- The Eastern Front
- The Italian Front
- The Balkan Front

Locate, label and lightly color all Central Power countries. Fill in the correct box in the legend.

- * Germany
- * Austria-Hungary
- * Ottoman Empire
- * Bulgaria

Locate, label and lightly color the Allied countries. Fill in the correct box in the legend.

- * Great Britain
- * France
- * Italy
- * Russia
- * Portugal
- * Serbia
- * Greece
- * Belgium
- * Montenegro

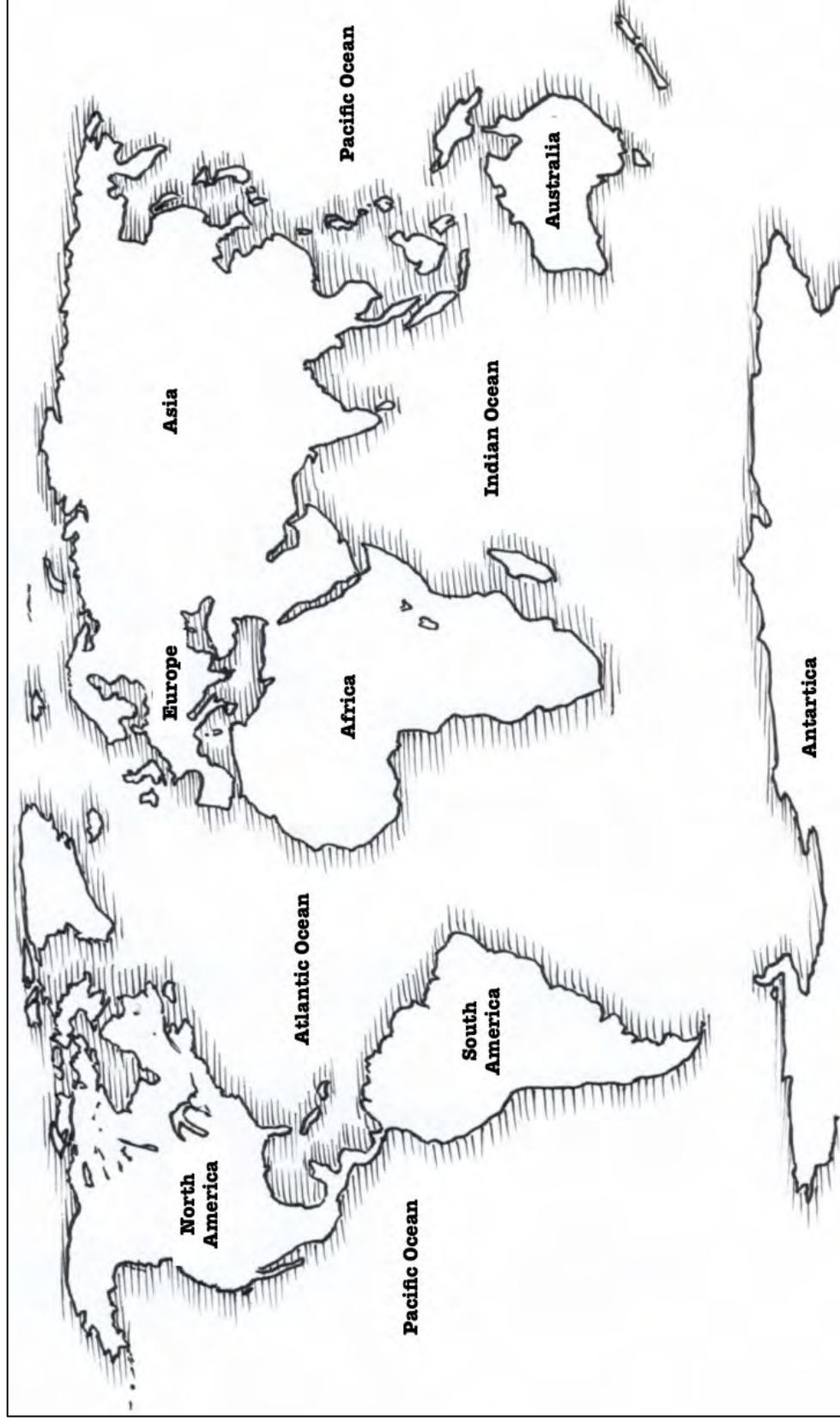
Locate, label and lightly color the Allied countries. Fill in the correct box in the legend.

* USA

* Japan

* Brazil

* China



Find, draw and label the “Fronts”

* East Africa (Kenya and Tanzania)

* West Africa (Benin and Cameroon)

* South West Africa (Namibia)

* Mesopotamia/Palestine

* The Russo-Ottoman Front (Caucasus Mountains)

* Arabian Peninsula

* United Kingdom, Empire and Commonwealth Nations (Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, India)

Timeline of World War I

Using the 12 “event cards,” locate and label these important events of the Great War. Find the appropriate place along the timeline and mark the event with a 10 word summary below.

June 1914

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Jan. 1915

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June 1915

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June 1918

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Nov. 1918

12 Battles and Events (TO BE MADE INTO SEPARATE “CARDS”)

The Battle of the Marne , Sept. 1914

What Happened? After battling through Belgium, the Germans began their flanking maneuver with, according to the Schieffen Plan, would envelope Paris and force France to surrender. The French rallied, and formed a new army to create an opening (with the aid of the British) in the German line, cutting off the German First Army at the Marne River.

The Battle of the Marne , Sept. 1914

And That’s Important Because? The sudden success of the Allied Powers surprised the Germans and halted their advance, keeping them from a decisive win on the Western Front and committing itself to a long war of attrition.

The Battle of Ypres, Nov. 1914

What Happened? Following the German defeat at the Marne, each side launched unsuccessful flanking attacks, forcing the line of battle to stretch almost 350 miles from Switzerland to the North Sea, the so-called “Race to the Sea.” The British (and Commonwealth) army prevented the Germans from capturing the important English Channel ports of Dunkirk and Nieuport.

The Battle of Ypres, Nov. 1914

And that’s important because? After the Battle of Ypres, Allied and German lines became entrenched and the front became virtually stationary, and the conflict became a stalemate.

12 Battles and Events (TO BE MADE INTO SEPARATE “CARDS”)

Battle of Tannenburg, Aug. 1914

What Happened? In the response to French pleas, the Russians invaded East Prussia, though the Russian army had not fully mobilized. The clumsy advance was met by the Germans and was surrounded.

Battle of Tannenburg, Aug. 1914

And that’s important because? The Russians lost 250,000 men and a vast amount of war material the under industrialized Russians were never able to replace. The Germans then pushed the Eastern front toward Russia. The Battle demonstrated Russian deficiencies in supplies, training and leadership.

The Battle of Verdun, Feb. 1915

What Happened? The German army attempted to take Verdun, knowing that the French would defend the city to the bitter end. The goal wasn’t to capture ground but to kill as many Frenchmen as possible. The goal was to “bleed the French army white” in a war of attrition.

The Battle of Verdun, Feb. 1915

And that’s important because? The German failure to take Verdun would foreshadow the nature of the war to come.... Not so much taking of ground as the taking of lives, waiting for the other to “give in”.

12 Battles and Events (TO BE MADE INTO SEPARATE “CARDS”)

The Battle of the Somme, Jul. 1916

What Happened? The British attacked the Germans alone at the Somme River Valley in this three-month-long battle. They started by shooting over a million artillery shells to “soften-up” the German lines, but they were well entrenched, and in the subsequent British infantry attack, they were slaughtered.

The Battle of the Somme, Jul. 1916

And that’s important because? Over 1.1 million casualties resulted from the battle, the most in history. It became clear that there would have to be revolutionary weapons, like the tank, to break the stalemate off the Western Front.

The Battle of Qingdao (Tsing-Tao), Oct. 1914

What Happened? A German colony in China was attacked and captured by elements of the British and Japanese armies, with heavy losses to the Japanese Imperial army. China requested to participate in the fight, but was refused. Japan did not want a rebuilt and re-equipped army. They had defeated China in a war two decades earlier.

The Battle of Qingdao (Tsing-Tao), Oct. 1914

And that’s important because? Japan was granted, to the objection of China, the Chinese province of Shandong at the Paris Peace Conference. The insult sparked the nationalist 4th of May Movement and led to, amongst other things, the emergence of the Chinese Communist Party.

12 Battles and Events (TO BE MADE INTO SEPARATE “CARDS”)

The Battle of Caporetto, Oct. 1917

What Happened? With the help of Germany, the Austro-Hungarians drove the Italian army to the Piave River, killing more than 300,000 Italian troops.

The Battle of Caporetto, Oct. 1917

And that’s important because? This defeat forced the Allies to create a Supreme War Council to provide for more centralized planning to coordinate the war effort on all fronts. The British and French also sent more troops to aid the Italians, and together successfully defeated the Austro-Hungarians.

The Bolshevik Revolution, Nov. 1917

What Happened? Led by Lenin and Trotsky, the Bolshevik faction of the Russian communist party led a successful coup against the provisional government led by Kerensky in Petrograd and Moscow.

The Bolshevik Revolution, Nov. 1917

And that’s important because? The new government sued for peace and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk ended Russia’s participation in the war, allowing Germany to transfer resources to the Western Front.

12 Battles and Events (TO BE MADE INTO SEPARATE “CARDS”)

The Brusilov Offensive, Jun. 1916

What Happened? The Russian army led by General Brusilov launched a successful attack on the Austro-Hungarians south of the Pripet Marshes causing a total collapse of the Central Power's line, destroying two Austrian armies.

The Bolshevik Revolution, Nov. 1917

And that's important because? Encouraged by the Russian success, Romania entered the war on the side of the Allies. Germany diverted troops to the Eastern front to stop the route and then launched attacks on the Russians, demoralizing the Russian army and bringing it to a breaking point.

Kaiserschlacht, Mar. 1918

What Happened? A four month series of offensives initiated by German in an attempt to win the war before America could give support to the Allies. The Germans lost 500,000 troops in the failed effort, and the Allies were refreshed by the incoming Americans, arriving at the rate of 300,000 per month.

Kaiserschlacht, Mar. 1918

And that's important because? The Germans had run out of manpower and materials to supply their troops. Successful Allied offenses pushed the German government to agree to an armistice on the 11/11/18. The war was over.

12 Battles and Events (TO BE MADE INTO SEPARATE “CARDS”)

Battle of Jutland, May-Jun. 1916.

What happened? The British Grand Fleet intercepted the German High Seas Fleet off of the coast of Denmark, in the first major challenge to British naval supremacy since the Napoleonic Wars. Although the results of the battle was inconclusive, the Germans retired their fleet for the remainder of the war.

Battle of Jutland, May-Jun. 1916.

And that’s important because? The Germans turned to unrestricted submarine warfare to challenge the Allied Power’s supply lines, which eventually drew the USA (who supplied the Allies) into the war.

Battle of Gallipoli, Apr. 1915

What Happened? When the Ottomans entered the war late in 1914, they cut off Russia’s supply route with their western allies. A largely British Imperial force attempted to reopen the Dardanelles to shipping by attacking at Gallipoli. After nine months and 250,000 casualties, they gave up and withdrew, but continued to fight the Ottomans in Palestine and Mesopotamia.

Battle of Gallipoli, Apr. 1915

And that’s important because? The Ottoman victory at Gallipoli ensured that Russia’s war water ports would remain isolated. Furthermore, the Ottomans control of that region enabled the Central Powers to defeat both the Serbians and the Romanians.

The Great War Technologies

Goals/objectives: The students will be able to identify emerging technologies and their impact on the nature of modern warfare.

Procedure:

1. Introduction: Imagine your life without a cell phone or internet or personal computers. How would that impact your life? What would have changed? (I enjoy showing clip from the 1970s movie “Paper Chase” where the character Hart is trying to locate information in the university’s library.)
2. Divide the students up into groups of four. Tell them that emerging technology changed the nature of warfare during the Great War.
3. Hand out the technology matrix and allow students to read through the list and fill in the first column. (How do you think changed the nature of warfare during the Great War?)
4. Students will then examine cards featuring different forms of technology This could be accomplished by passing the information placards between groups or by creating “learning stations” and allow student groups to move around the room. Students will fill in the second and third columns during this phase.
5. Assessment: Have students respond individually or as groups via the exit ticket questions. (optional: Have students rate each technology using a spectrum. (With one end being least impact the other most impact...) Have students write a one-sentence explanation for each placement.

All photos Courtesy of Lombardy Studio

EXIT TICKET CHART

<u>Technology</u>	Predict how this technology changed the nature of warfare	Add 2-3 different pieces of information from the card about how technology changed warfare	how ere these facts reflected your experiences with the Great War Card Game
<u>Artillery</u>			
<u>Machine Gun</u>			
<u>Chemical Weapons</u>			
<u>Flame-thrower</u>			
<u>Tanks</u>			

Exit Ticket Questions:

1. Which technology has the greatest impact on the nature of warfare during the Great War?
2. Which technology changed the nature of warfare during the Great War the least?
3. Which technology left the most lasting impact on the 20th century?

EXIT TICKET CHART

<u>Technology</u>	Predict how this technology changed the nature of warfare	Add 2-3 different pieces of information from the card about how technology changed warfare	how ere these facts reflected your experiences with the Great War Card Game
<u>Submarine</u>			
<u>Aircraft</u>			
<u>Battleships</u>			
<u>Radio</u>			
<u>Barbed Wire</u>			

Exit Ticket Questions:

4. Which technology has the greatest impact on the nature of warfare during the Great War?
5. Which technology changed the nature of warfare during the Great War the least?
6. Which technology left the most lasting impact on the 20th century?

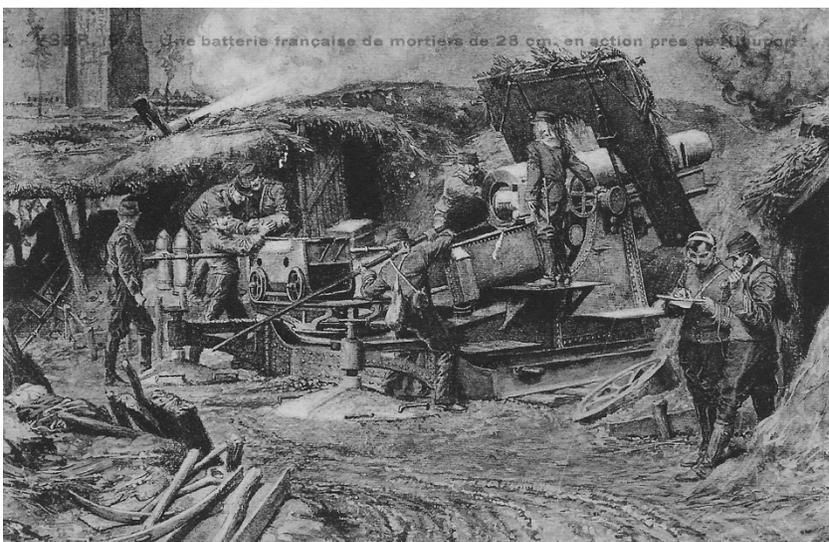
Technology of War Placards:

ARTILLERY

A traditional weapon of warfare, artillery was much improved by 1914 thanks to advancements of the Industrial Revolution. By the end of the 19th c., Britain, France, and Germany had refined explosives used in all forms of guns. The invention of Powder B and Cordite MD allowed countries to build more powerful guns. During the war it became the number one threat to life, killing an estimated 6 million soldiers and civilians. The French 520mm Schneider howitzer could fire a shell weighing



3,130 pounds, and the Germans developed the Paris Gun that could propel a 264-pound shell 80 miles. The wealth and industrial capacity of each nation allowed the production of weapons such as the British 18 Pounder and French 75mm in the thousands, and they supported them with a constant stream of explosives. At the Battle of the Somme, the British had prepared 2.9 million shells to be fired at the German trenches.



Artillery was typically used to “soften up” and demoralized the enemy before the advance of the infantry. High explosive artillery created holes in the enemy’s barbed wire to allow infantry to reach the opponent’s trenches. Artillery could more accurately deploy chemical weapons. For the most part, artillery was used on direct support, protecting the infantry during an attack.

Technology of War Placards:

Machine Gun

Developed in America during the Civil War, the machine gun was quickly improved and adopted by European countries as a weapon to suppressed colonial opposition. The advantage of the machine gun is that it is a machine. The British Vickers machine gun could 500 rounds a minute, 40 times faster than an infantryman with a rifle. Most of the early guns were heavy and needed to be position on a tripod or sled. The bullets are most commonly fed by a fabric belt. Most guns were water-cooled to avoid overheating. Historian Philip Haythornthwaite has estimated that its use increased the firepower of the infantry division

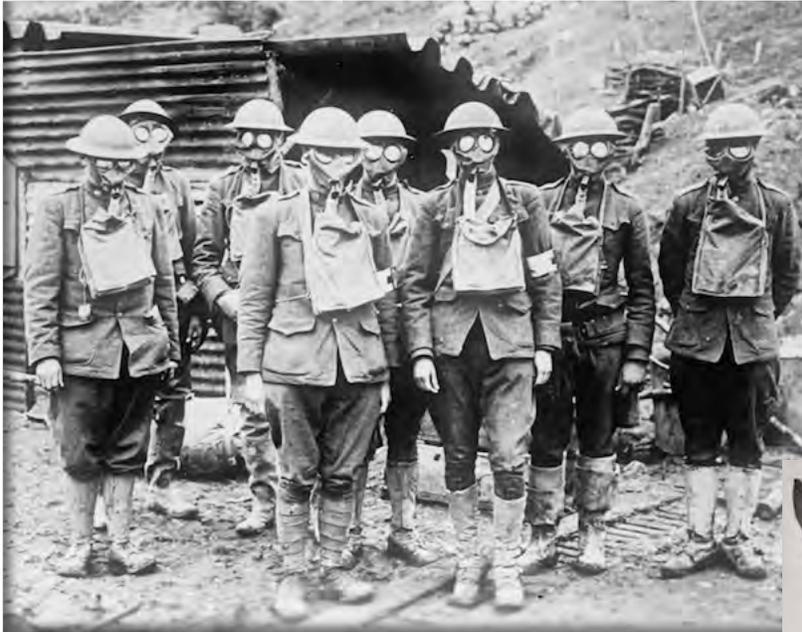


from the equivalent of 9,120 rifles in 1914 to 38,000 rifles in 1918. It is estimated that machine guns were responsible for 3 million deaths during the Great War.

At the start of the war, machine guns were primarily used for defensive fire. Machinegun sections were positioned to provide traversing fire, supporting each position, providing a sweeping fire into No Man's Land. Later, light machine guns like the British Lewis gun were developed to be integrated with the infantry and could move forward with the attack.

Technology of War Placards:

Chemical Weapons



The Hague Convention of 1899 restricted how gasses could be delivered but did nothing to limit the development of the gases. Gases fell into two categories: irritant (affecting eyes, skin, lungs, etc...) and lethal, and they could be found in either vapor or liquid forms. Gas was used in a very limited fashion early in the war. The first major attack was

orchestrated by the Germans in January of 1915, in Russia. Although most of the gas froze in the winter weather, it did manage to kill 1,000 Russians. A larger attack was made by the Germans against the French, Algerians, British, and Canadians at the Second Battle of Ypres in April-May of 1915, causing panic among the Allied troops and breaching the front line.

The Allied powers produced and used their gas weapons, and all sides developed masks and protective clothing to protect combatants. In 1917, the Germans introduced Mustard gas, which blistered lungs, eyes, and skin. It also was able to penetrate clothing and was highly lethal. Both sides used chemical weapons until the end of the war. Over 100,000 tons of chemical weapons were used, killing over a half-million soldiers and civilians.



Technology of War Placards:

Tanks

Machine guns, barbed wire and trenches all led to a stalemate on the fronts of the Great War. Tanks provided a solution by offering the ability to crush the wire barriers and protect troops while they advanced. The Mark I British tank was first used at the Somme in September 1917. Although the vehicles frequently broke down during the attack, the shock of seeing tanks demoralized the Germans. By November of 1917, the British were able to mount the largest tank attack to date (using 378 Mark IV tanks) at Cambrai. These tanks were designed to not just crush, but rip open barbed wire barriers allowing cavalry to penetrate the front lines.

The French and British continued to develop tank technology, providing lighter tanks like the British Whippet and the Renault RF-17. Both could move faster and exploit openings in the front lines. The Germans countered this technology by developing landmines and armored piecing ammunition rounds. Late in the war, the Germans develop their own tank with limited success.



Technology of War Placards:

Barbed Wire

Invented by American Joseph Gladden in the 19th c. to control livestock, barbed wire was adopted by both the British and American armies before 1900. It became an iconic feature of the Great War's battlefields. The industrial capacity of western countries guaranteed it's wide-spread use in all theaters. More than a million miles of wire was used just on the Western Front alone. Barbed wire was used as a defensive measure to slow attacks as infantry would have to find a hole to stop to cut their way through. Sometime deliberate openings to left to channel opposing troops into a "kill zone" for machine guns.

The British typically used knee-high wire, since they were usually on the attack and had to cross the barrier into no man's land. The Germans deployed wider (some up to 300 feet wide) and higher (up to six feet) barriers of wire since they were typically on the defense. The Germans also invented razor wire as a cost-cutting method to produce enough wire with their limited resources.

Various methods for removing wire were developed; initially it was removed by hand or by artillery fire. As the war went on, tanks were used to mow down the wire obstacles. Later in the war an explosive tube called a Bangalore Torpedo might be used to clear the way.



Technology of War Placards:

Flame Throwers

Germany had experimented with flame-throwers before the war and would be the primary users of this technology, though Allied powers developed their own devices. Early flame-throwers, like the German “Grof,” were large, fired from the protection of trenches and required a large crew to man them. Also, they consumed large quantities of fuel, which was composed of pressurized oil and petrol. Smaller versions like the “Kleif” used two-man crews but limited range (and fuel capacity) and made the users exposed to enemy fire.



The first successful German flame attacks occurred in Flanders during July of 1915. The attack shocked the British and causing them to panic and run. The retreating troops would then be exposed to German rifle fire. Through the end of the war, the Germans (and the French) used such weapons to “clear the trenches” during their offensives.

Technology of War Placards:

Radio

By 1914, the weight and fragility of *wireless* telecommunication limited it to ship-to-ship and ship to shore naval communication. Messages could only be transferred in code (Morse code) as the technology didn't support voice communication. Improved radio technology, including directional finders, did help the British listen to German communication and anticipate when the German fleet left port for the Battle of Jutland.

Radio communication on battlefields (such as the western Front) proved less reliable than wired telephones and telegraphs. Also, their antennas made for easy targets. Wired telegraphic communication had its problem; it was easily intercepted by the opposition. (The Americans came up with a novel solution: they used Cherokee and Choctaw soldiers to deliver messages in their native languages.) Because of this, many armies continued to rely upon "runners," homing pigeons and even dogs for conveying messages.

The Americans, in particular, channeled money into the development of radio. By the end of the war, the Americans had developed a smaller radio set (transported by 3 mules) which had a range of 20-30 miles, and a larger set (transported on a truck) which could transmit up to 250 miles. But radio capable of transmitting voice was not sufficiently developed until after the war.

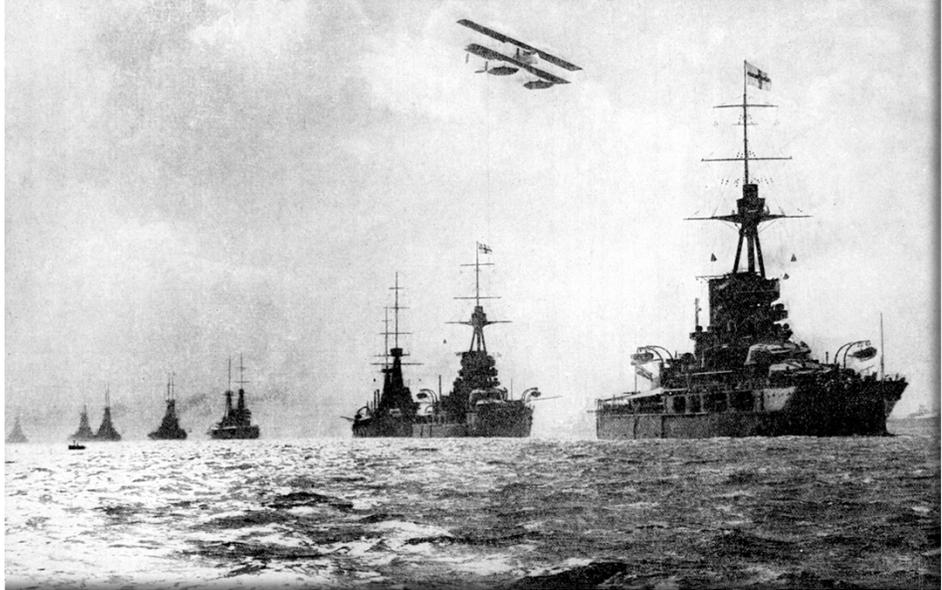


Technology of War Placards:

The Modern Battleship

The first of the modern battleships was developed, design and deployed in the form of the *HMS Dreadnaught*. When it was introduced to the world in 1906, it featured the most modern steam propulsion system, an all steel framed and an armored hull. Its ten large caliber naval guns (12 inch diameter shells) housed in five rotating armored gun turrets provided heavy firepower. British naval hegemony (superiority) spurred Germany into a tense arms race for control of the seas, with both sides spending vast amounts of money.

Because of the expense of these battleships, they were sparingly used during the war. The most



notable naval engagement of the war in which they played a significant role was the Battle of Jutland (May 31 – June 1 of 1916). After this inconclusive battle, the Germans retreated their fleet to port and concentrated on the development and use of submarines to engage with Allied shipping.

Dreadnaught would be the inspiration for successive generations of larger, more powerful, and faster battleship designs for the next four decades. It was also these innovations that would predicate the naval arms race between the great powers before World War I.

Technology of War Placards:

Submarines (U-Boats)

Truly one of the first stealth weapons, the first submarine was designed in the United States and eventually adopted by a number of the world's navies by the start of the Great War. It was Germany, however, that employed the submarine, or U-boat (the German abbreviation for unterseeboot), to great effect against Allied shipping in the North Atlantic and the western approaches to Great Britain.

With the ability to slip past Great Britain's naval blockades of the Baltic and North Seas, these slow-moving small vessels were able to infiltrate and disrupt Allied shipping and supply routes. By first abiding by the rules of "civilized" warfare, and then moving to the use of "unrestricted" submarine warfare tactics, this undersea threat claimed nearly 40% of Britain's merchant fleet. The sinking of the passenger ship *Lusitania* by a torpedo, as well as the sinking of other merchant ships, helped draw the United States into the war.

The Allies countered the U-Boat threat by forming merchant ships into single groups (a convoy) escorted by smaller naval vessels. The "Convoy System," as it was known, successfully defeated the German high seas threat. Allied ships also used "Dazzle Camouflage" to disrupt a submarine's ability to accurately target the vessels through their periscopes.

Germany's submarine war against Britain was a major disruption of its vital supplies and a serious threat to the British Empire's war effort and survival. The submarine's introduction during the Great War would change the dimension and dynamic of naval warfare, making it a primary naval weapon of Germany, and a strategic asset to naval warfare to this day.



Technology of War Placards:

Aircraft

Although not significantly impacting the ground war, air forces would stake their place in The Great War's history. They would later evolve to be a critical weapon in every country's military arsenal.

New to modern warfare, and used by both sides, were fighter aircraft. Usually crewed by one or two men and mounting machine guns, these lightweight and nimble airplanes were wood-framed and covered with fabric. The vast majority of these aircraft built by companies such as Fokker and

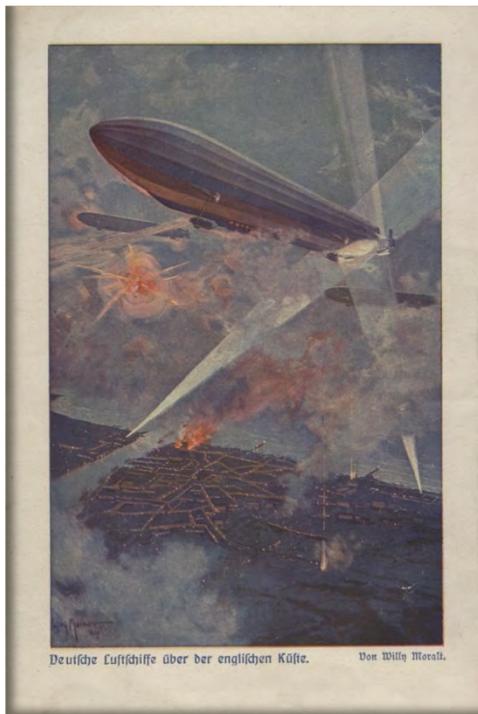


Sopwith used a double-wing (biplane), design for better structural stability and maneuverability in flight with average airspeeds 100 mph - 130 mph. The early war models were general scouting the enemy. Their role quickly evolved into light bombing and air-to-air combat.

The early designs were experimental and frequently dangerous. The life expectancy of new pilots was about three weeks. Skilled pilots recording many aerial "kills," like Germany's Baron von Richthofen (the Red Baron), became known as *aces*.

Bomber aircraft in World War I developed into multi-engined biplanes with a fuselage big enough for larger crews (including defensive gunners), and a cargo space large enough to carry a payload of bombs considered heavy for aircraft of the time. These aircraft were used as strategic bombers to target enemy supplies, ammunition, and transportation infrastructure.

The Zeppelin was a large, lighter-than-air, airships constructed on a metal skeleton and covered with fabric. Nested within the massive framework of the ship were the many gas cells fill with hydrogen to give it lighter-than-air flight capability. The slow-moving Zeppelins could fly great distances carrying bomb payloads to strike at the heart of British cities. Although the targets were usually British industrial complexes, the poor ability to hit exact targets on the ground far below resulted in widespread damage to cities, and effectively making them strategic terror weapons.



Postcards and Letters from the Western Front

The goal of this exercise is to allow the students to explore conditions on the Western Front. We have used various forms of this exercise for years. This approach relies heavily upon written and visual sources in a DBQ-like manner. The assessment aspect of the exercise, the letter from the front, can be reduced to a “postcard” for EL’s, or for a quick assessment assignment. Postcard images are provided and teachers are encouraged to print these out on 65 lbs. (or heavier) paper so as to cut out individual postcards for each student. More advanced students should be encouraged to write letters, allowing them to display more depth in their understanding.

An excellent source of Great War letters is Lyn MacDonald’s 1914-1918 Voices and Images of the Great War, should you need to search for examples.

Objective: Synthesize multiple sources in order to create an image of the ordinary soldier’s experience on the Western Front.

Procedure:

1. Opener: Have you ever received or sent a postcard? What does it look like? Where do you write your message and place the address? How might your message change between writing your parents and writing your best friend? Today we will imagine ourselves as soldiers on the Western Front and write a letter to a friend back home.

2. (optional) Show <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/life-in-a-trench-video>
Share the video with the class and debrief at the end.

3. Divided students into groups of two or four. They will need a copy of the documents and “postcards” (or paper for letters).

4. “Today you and your group will examine several images and passages written by soldiers on the Western Front. At the end of this lesson, you we will imagine ourselves as soldiers on the Western Front and write a letter to a friend back home.

“**Word List**”: just a sample of what might listed by a student:

- Mud
- Generals who didn’t care about suicidal attacks
- being wounded
- dugouts
- rats
- corpses/decomposed bodies
- lice
- rain
- stench
- cold
- barbed wire
- shell holes and destruction in no-man’s land
- artillery
- poison gas

Postcards and Letters from the Western Front

Use the following documents to describe conditions for soldiers on the Western Front during the Great War. For each document identify **one or two facts** which inform you about conditions (or attitudes of the soldiers) on the front lines. Make a list of these facts and use them as a “word bank” for your letter.

Document A:

Bert Chaney, British Army, near Ypres, 1917

“Over the top they went, out of the mud in the trench and into the mud on top. They managed to struggle about halfway across No Man’s Land, dragging one foot after the other until getting literally stuck in the mud, unable to move one way or the other. As they wallowed in the mud they were simply so much target practice for the Jerries (*Germans*). They were not even moving targets and the wounded as they fell just quietly drowned in the water-filled shell holes.

What a slaughter — and what a disgrace to the thinking of our General Staff... that they did not give a damn how many men went west (*died*) in their endeavor to gain a few yards of worthless, useless ground. It looked well in the papers, a report that our troops had advanced. They seldom said how many yards for how many men.”

(Source: Michael Moynihan, editor. People At War, 1914-1918. UK: Sunday Times Newspapers, 1973)

Facts about the front or attitudes of the soldiers:

- 1.
- 2.

Document B:

Wounded British soldiers



(Source: Lombardy Studios)

Facts about the front or attitudes of the soldiers:

- 1.
- 2.

Postcards and Letters from the Western Front

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Document C:
Robert Graves, British Army

Rats came up from the canal, fed on the plentiful corpses, and multiplied exceedingly. While I stayed here with the Welsh (*British unit*), a new officer joined the company and, in token of welcome, was given a dug-out containing a spring-bed. When he turned in that night he heard a scuffling, shone his torch on the bed, and found two rats on his blanket tussling for the possession of a severed hand.

(Source: Robert Graves. Good-bye to All That: An Autobiography. U.K.: Penguin Books Limited, 2014.)

Facts about the front or attitudes of the soldiers:

- 1.
- 2.

Document D:
Louis Barthas, French Army

We had six days of rest at Agnez-les-Duisans. With heavy rains each day forcing us to stay inside our billets, our primary occupation was hunting lice. Each of us carried thousands of them. They found a home in the smallest crease, along seams, in the linings of our clothing. There were white ones, black ones, gray ones with crosses on their backs like crusaders, tiny ones and others as big as a grain of wheat, and all this variety swarmed and multiplied to the detriment of our skins.

And these lice bore in as well on the tough skin of a rude peasant as on the soft skin of an effeminate Parisian. They made no distinction among levels of society. To get rid of them, some rubbed themselves all over with gasoline, every night; others carried sachets of camphor, or powdered themselves with insecticide; nothing did any good. You'd kill ten of them, and a hundred more would appear.

This all came from the repulsive filthiness of our bedding, which was hardly ever changed.

(Source: Edward Strauss editor. Poilu: The World War I Notebooks of Corporal Louis Barthas, Barrelmaker, 1914-1918. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.)

Facts about the front or attitudes of the soldiers:

- 1.
- 2.

Postcards and Letters from the Western Front

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Document E:

S. V. Britten, Canadian Army, Ypres, 22 April 1915

Left at 6.30 p.m. for reserve trenches and reached our reserve dugouts via St Julien. Just rat holes! One hell of accommodation! Got to the trenches as a fatigue party with stake & sandbags, and thought they were reserve trenches, they were so rotten. No trenches at all in parts, just isolated mounds. Found German's feet sticking up through the ground. The Gurkhas (*a unit from Nepal*) had actually used human bodies instead of sand bags. Right beside the stream where we were working were the bodies of two dead, since November last, one face downwards in full marching order, with his kit (*backpack*) on his back. He died game! Stench something awful and dead all round. Water rats had made a home of their decomposed bodies. Visited the barbed wire with Rae - ordinary wire strung across. Quit about 1 a.m., came back to our dugouts and found them on fire. Had to march out to St Julien, & put up in a roofless house - not a roof left on anything in the whole place. Found our sack of food had been stolen and we were famished. Certainly a most unlucky day, for I lost my cherished pipe in the evening also. Bed at 4 a.m.

(Source: Lyn Macdonald, editor. 1914-1918, *Voices and Images of the Great War*. London: Michael Joseph, 1988.)

Facts about the front or attitudes of the soldiers:

- 1.
- 2.

Document F:

Rev. John Stanhope Walker, British, Battle of the Somme, 1916

“...oh what an absolute scene of destruction, miles and miles of country battered beyond all possible recognition. German trenches pounded to a mass of earth and barbed wire. Huge mine craters made a miniature lake and mountain district. Here where bricks and mortar are freely mixed with mud is Fricourt (*name of a town*), there where gaunt bough-less trees stand splintered is Mametz (*name of a town*). So we wandered on, clambering over desolation, our nostrils assailed by smells which warned us of the unburied dead and our ears by the ceaseless roar of artillery, for this desolation literally belched flame from every corner, a vast area packed with artillery, lines and lines of guns, 12 inch howitzers and 9.2 naval guns roaring continuously on all sides, like huge tethered monsters straining at their chains, they leapt into the air as they recoiled, grimy gunners grinned as they rolled up their huge shells.”

(Source: Michael Moynihan, editor. People At War, 1914-1918. UK: Sunday Times Newspapers, 1973)

Facts about the front or attitudes of the soldiers:

- 1.
- 2.

Postcards and Letters from the Western Front

Use the following documents to describe conditions for soldiers on the Western Front during the Great War. For each document identify **one or two facts** which inform you about conditions (or attitudes of the soldiers) on the front lines. Make a list of these facts and use them as a “word bank” for your letter.

Document G: **Americans on the Front**



(Source: Lombardy Studios)

Facts about the front or attitudes of the soldiers:

- 1.
- 2.

Postcards and Letters from the Western Front

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Assessment:

Using your word bank and notes taken from the examination of the documents, write letter to a friend back on the “home front.” Cover at least four aspects of life on the Western Front and at least one “attitude” towards the war.

Sample Postcards courtesy of Lombardy Studios:
(French soldiers with captured German tank)



Postcards and Letters from the Western Front

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Sample Postcards courtesy of Lombardy Studios:
(English tanks and American infantry)

