

Propaganda & Patriotism in World War I

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Lesson #2: The Role of Media in Wartime

Abstract:

In this lesson we look at the second phase of coerced patriotism and that concerns the media's role in emphasizing government policy. Students should be challenged to consider the role the media plays in government policy and why they play that role. Additional questions to consider are: what is the media's main responsibility? Why do they report on the things they do and not on the things they don't?

Essential Questions:

1. What role does the media play in furthering the governments agenda?
2. Should the media and government be connected or disconnected?

Assessment:

1. Students will complete a newspaper article analysis.
2. For the same article, students will be writing a letter to the editor regarding one of the newspaper articles they read. Students work will be assessed based on their demonstrated ability to critically reflect on the article they read. The letters should be between 1-2 paragraphs and use proper grammar. They should read the different articles and pick one to write a reply to, either supporting the position of the newspaper or arguing against and providing reasons for their choice, referencing the article specifically.

Setting the purpose:

In the first lesson of this mini-unit student looked at different government agencies advocating for certain displays of patriotism. Today, students will be examining how the media then gets involved in pushing that government agenda into the minds of the people. Students will have to consider what is media, what responsibilities does the media have and who holds the media responsible when they abdicate that role. It would be helpful to start the lesson going over what sedition is if your students are not yet familiar with the vocabulary.

Analysis of local primary sources:

1. Students will read at least two of the four articles found from the Chicago Tribune. They will complete an article analysis sheet and write a letter to the editor in response regarding one of the four articles.

Ties to national primary source or sources:

1. Read government position on sedition with class. Use of popsicle stick method is recommended. Before copying for students, strike paragraphs you deem unnecessary for your purpose so as to not lost students in what can be a tough document to read. When finished, see analysis of local source.

Annotated list of materials and resources for the lesson or series of lessons:

1. News Article Analysis – Students fill this out after reading the different articles. They only need to fill out for one article.
2. Loyalty1a-d.jpg – 4 page document offers up government position on what is to be considered sedition and what should happen to those people that are guilty of sedition.
3. Artist1a-b.jpg - Newspaper article calling on artists to help create propaganda to further along the war effort. The article details incentives given to artists for submitting their work to competitions as well as talking about some of the famous artists who were already creating propaganda.
4. Artist3.jpg - Editorial printed in the Chicago Tribune calling for increased patriotism in America as a means of fighting the war.
5. Artist4.jpg - Editorial printed in the Chicago Tribune explaining that the civilian plays just as important part in the war effort as does the soldier fighting overseas.
6. Artist6.jpg - Newspaper article about the reported atrocities committed by the Germans during WWI and how they were much worse than anything the Americans has truly read about.