

Evaluating Wartime Posters: Were They Good Propaganda?

Grade 10: Canadian History Since World War I

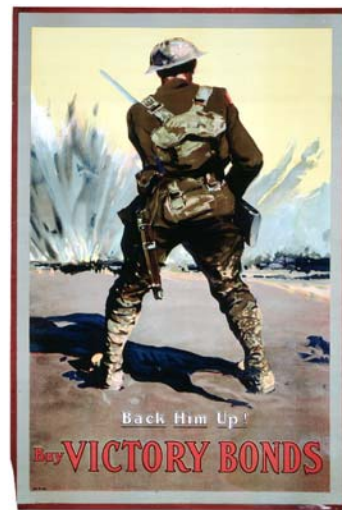
Overview

All of the Archives of Ontario lesson plans have two components:

- The first component introduces students to the concept of an archive and why the Archives of Ontario is an important resource for learning history
- The second component is content-based and focuses on the critical exploration of a historical topic that fits with the Ontario History and Social Studies Curriculum for grades 3 to 12. This plan is specifically designed to align with the Grade 10: Canadian History Since World War I curricula.

We have provided archival material and an activity for you to do in your classroom. You can do these lessons as outlined or modify them to suit your needs. Feedback or suggestions for other lesson plans are welcome.

In this plan, students will look at posters from World War I, develop criteria about what makes an effective piece of propaganda, and use these criteria to look critically at three posters of their choice. Students will be able to use their skills of inquiry, research, and communication in working through this lesson while also learning from.



Curriculum Connections

Overall Expectations – Academic (CHC2D)

Communities: Local, National, and Global

- explain how local, national, and global influences have helped shape Canadian identity;
- analyse the impact of external forces and events on Canada and its policies since 1914;

Methods of Historical Inquiry and Communication

- formulate questions on topics and issues in the history of Canada since 1914, and use appropriate methods of historical research to locate, gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from a variety of sources;
- interpret and analyse information gathered through research, employing concepts and approaches appropriate to historical inquiry;
- communicate the results of historical inquiries, using appropriate terms and concepts and a variety of forms of communication.

Overall Expectations – Applied (CHC2P)

Communities: Local, National, and Global

- describe some of the major local, national, and global forces and events that have influenced Canada's policies and Canadian identity since 1914;
- evaluate Canada's participation in war and contributions to peacekeeping and security.

Methods of Historical Inquiry and Communication

- formulate questions on topics and issues in the history of Canada since 1914, and use appropriate methods of historical research to locate, gather, evaluate, and organize relevant information from a variety of sources;
- interpret and analyse information gathered through research, employing concepts and approaches appropriate to historical inquiry;
- communicate the results of historical inquiries, using appropriate terms and concepts and a variety of forms of communication.

Getting Organized

To prepare for this lesson, you can:

- ✓ Make overheads or create a PowerPoint with the introductory information found on: **Overhead 1: FAQs - Propaganda in World War I**, **Overhead 2: Exploration Through the Archives**, and **Overhead 3: Evaluating Wartime Posters - Research Question**
- ✓ Select and print twenty **World War I: Primary Source Posters from our GLAM wiki**, preferably in colour. Put the posters around the classroom to make a poster 'gallery' where students can walk about and look at the posters on their own
- ✓ Print out **Student Worksheet: World War I Posters Notes** for each student and **Student Worksheet: World War 1 Poster Analysis** for each group of students.
- ✓ Determine how and if you want to extend the activity and prep students during class for what this extension would be

Lesson Plan

This lesson can be completed in one class or expanded and completed across a week:

- Begin by talking about propaganda: what it is, how it is/was used, and what students think are the elements of effective propaganda. Ask students if they can think of any propaganda examples of today or in the past. Use **Overhead 1: FAQs - Propaganda in World War I** to discuss the role of propaganda in World War I.
- Follow this discussion by introducing the concept of an archive and how it can help answer research questions related to history. See **Overhead 2: Exploration Through the Archives** to introduce this to your students and the following text to prepare yourself:

Over the course of a lifetime, most people accumulate a variety of records. It starts with a birth certificate and expands into awards, bank statements, receipts, letters, photographs – anything that documents important events and relationships in one's life. These records comprise an individual's personal archives. Governments, businesses, schools, associations and organizations of all types do the same, keeping records as evidence of their activities and accomplishments.

These documents provide a fascinating view into the past. Like a detective investigating a case, a researcher using these records can get a sense of what a place looked like, what people were thinking, what life was like, and what happened and why. Anyone with an interest in the past, whether it is delving into local history, tracing a family tree, or probing decisions and events, will find answers in archives.

Some examples are:

- letters, manuscripts, diaries often from famous people
- notes or recordings of interviews
- photographs, sketches and paintings
- birth, death and marriage records
- land registries, titles to property, and maps
- court records
- architectural plans and engineering drawings
- audio, video and film records

Archives are important resources for answering our questions about the past. Records may be used to settle legal claims, they may clarify family history, they are grist for historians, and they impart to filmmakers and authors a sense of the ways things were. Whatever the reason, archives have a story to tell.

The first step is to identify your research question and what you are hoping to find in the Archives to provide support to that question.

- Following this introduction, use **Overhead 3: Evaluating Wartime Posters - Research Question** to introduce the lesson's research question, the archival collection that the class will be using to answer this question, and the directions for the activity.

Find attached the primary sources, handouts, and rubric for facilitating this activity

- Allow students to explore the gallery of World War I posters you created. Ask students to take notes about elements about the posters they liked, didn't like, and that they found surprising and/or shocking on **Student Worksheet: World War I Posters Notes**.
- When students have completed the gallery walk, reconvene as a class and have a discussion about the different elements they noted on their worksheet. Use this discussion to create criteria about the effectiveness of propaganda and model the application of these criteria on one poster you selected before the discussion. Encourage the class to refine or expand the criteria to best suit the analysis.
- After modelling the application of criteria, organize students into small groups and ask them to apply these criteria to three posters of their choice. Encourage them to use **Student Worksheet: World War 1 Poster Analysis** for this activity. Twenty posters are provided so there could be up to six groups who all get three posters. Visit the Archives of Ontario's online exhibit **Canadian Posters from the First World War** if more examples are needed.

Extension/Accommodation

This activity can be extended in the next class by having a class discussion or debate comparing the top poster choices from all the groups.

Activity can also be expanded by asking students to create their own propaganda posters based on the successful elements they tracked on their **Poster Analysis** worksheet.

This activity can also lead into a discussion about the use of criteria for making judgements. If different criteria were used, would the students had different answers? What would influence how criteria is chosen and applied?

For more academic classes, this activity can also lead into a three paragraph essay on the most effective elements of a propaganda poster

Resources

<i>Overhead 1: FAQs - Propaganda in World War I.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Overhead 2: Exploration Through the Archives.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Overhead 3: Evaluating Wartime Posters - Research Question.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Student Worksheet: World War I Posters Notes</i>	<i>8</i>
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<i>Marking Rubric</i>	<i>10</i>

FAQs: Propaganda in World War I

★ What is Propaganda?

Propaganda is a specific type of message aimed at serving an agenda. In the case of WWI, the Canadian government used propaganda posters to spread particular ideas or points of view to citizens of Canada.

★ Why did the government use propaganda in World War I? What sort of messages did they hope to get across?

The government used propaganda to:

- Justify their involvement in the war to their population
- Recruit soldiers
- Raise money to fund the military campaign
- Encourage people to conserve resources on the homefront

★ Why did the government use posters as propaganda?

The government used posters as propaganda because:

- Television had not yet been invented
- Not everyone owned or had access to a radio
- Posters were the most effective means of getting a message across to a large audience

★ How many posters were produced?

Hundreds of thousands of propaganda posters were printed. These posters were posted on billboards, store windows, factory walls, and anywhere else where people gathered.



Exploration through the Archives

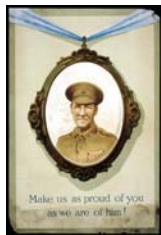
Over the course of a lifetime, most people accumulate a variety of records.

Taken together, these records can provide a fascinating view into someone's life and into the past.

Like a detective investigating a case, a researcher using these records can get a sense of what a place looked like, what people were thinking, what life was like, and what happened and why.



Some examples of records that a historian may look at are:



- ✓ birth, death, and marriage records
- ✓ letters or diaries
- ✓ photographs, sketches, and paintings
- ✓ court records
- ✓ audio, video and film records



An **archive** is a place where these records and historical documents are preserved. The **Archives of Ontario** collects and preserves records with relevance to the history of Ontario.

Using primary sources from the Archives of Ontario's collections, you too can be an investigator exploring the past and understanding the present.



Evaluating Wartime Posters

Research Question:

What made for an effective propaganda poster during World War I?

The Archives of Ontario have identified a record collection that includes records to help you answer that question:

The Archives of Ontario's War Poster Collection

There are approximately 500 posters in the Ontario Archives' collection. Many of them can be found in the Archives of Ontario poster collection (C 233).



Directions:

1. Look at World War I propaganda posters and take notes about your impressions
2. As a class, develop criteria for determining effectiveness for propaganda posters and apply these criteria to one poster
3. In small groups, apply these criteria to three other posters and determine the best, most effective piece of propaganda

Student Worksheet: World War I Posters Notes

Poster I liked the best: Because:	Poster that best appealed to my emotions: Because:	Poster I thought had the best use of colour: Because:
Poster that would not have caught my eye: Because:	Poster that would have discouraged me from supporting the war effort: Because:	Poster that best appealed to patriotism: Because:
Poster that would make me to give money: Because:	Poster I thought had the best text: Because:	Poster I liked the least: Because:

Other posters to mention:

Student Worksheet: World War 1 Poster Analysis

In your group, use this worksheet to apply evaluative criteria to three World War I propaganda posters.

What makes a good piece of propaganda?

What are three criteria to judge the effectiveness of a propaganda poster:

Poster Analysis:

Criteria	Poster	Analysis

Best Poster: _____

Because:

Marking Rubric

Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i> The student demonstrates understanding of how propaganda works.	Limited understanding of the source materials in terms of their effectiveness as propaganda	Some understanding of the source materials in terms of their effectiveness as propaganda	A good, reasonably comprehensive understanding of the source materials in terms of their effectiveness as propaganda	A clear, comprehensive, balanced and well integrated understanding of the source materials in terms of their effectiveness as propaganda
<i>Thinking/Inquiry</i> The student demonstrates the ability to analyze the effectiveness of posters presented in the exhibit.	Unclear perspective and limited analysis of the posters.	Somewhat effective organization and interpretation of the posters but with limited analysis of the posters	A clear and critical position that is evident in all aspects of the work, resulting in an effective analysis	A critical analysis presented with a high degree of ability and clarity resulting in a precise and persuasive analysis
<i>Communication</i> The student writes effectively for the purpose, using clear and persuasive language to present the analysis.	Imprecise and inconsistent use of language, with poorly organized ideas.	Somewhat effective use of language, with fairly clearly organized ideas.	Effective use of language, with clearly organized ideas	Precise, consistent and effective use of language, with clearly organized ideas.
<i>Application</i> The student makes personal imaginative connections with the material presented in the exhibit.	Little understanding of the principles of effective propaganda and difficulty in applying them creatively	Some understanding of the principles of effective propaganda and an ability to use at least some of them in a creative way	Good grasp of the principles of effective propaganda and a well developed ability to apply those principles creatively	Excellent grasp of the principles of effective propaganda and a highly evolved ability to apply those principles creatively.