

# World War II Posters Lesson



## Background -

Posters and war time artwork were very important during World War II and are extensively featured throughout the *In This Great Struggle* exhibit. They would inspire the average citizen to do all that they could in order to help their country achieve victory. Whether encouraging men to enlist and go fight for their country or motivating women to do their part while working on the home front, these posters and tools of propaganda were effective in getting their point across. Every person had an important role to play, everyone had a job to do and it was only through this collective effort that we could all pull together to defeat evil and achieve success.

## Overview -

Students will design their own war time posters and artwork to serve as motivation for the common people. They should be modern interpretations of historic events or motivational designs. This can include reimagining of classic designs or new takes on old ideas, but should all be WWII related and based on the theme of teaching the average person what they can do to help ensure victory for their country. Creativity and insight are very important here and students with less artistic ability can still find success if they put in an effort and explain their work well. Group discussion will follow regarding public perception of mass media and how large scale projects such as this can be effective in getting everyone to play their part in a greater cause.

### I.) Introduction to assignment and brief WWII background.

- Briefly discuss WWII history touching on motivation and collective effort on all fronts.

### II.) WWII Posters and Propaganda Background Discussion

- Discuss examples of WWII motivational posters (Show pictures, but be careful with some of the examples).
- Touch on design aspects, use of color and patriotic symbols to illustrate pride in nation.
- Discuss what this artwork was trying to accomplish (strength, unity, bravery, freedom, etc.)

### III.) Worksheet

- Students should use the space provided to design their own WWII themed poster.
- Designs should be modern interpretations of historic events or ideas (WWII related).
- Prompt them by asking them to consider which historic posters made them think the most, and what design elements would be most likely to capture their attention and inspire these same thoughts and feelings today.
- What would catch their eye? What would inspire them to join the fight? How could these same ideas be presented in a new and modern way to inspire today's generation?

- Once again, artist quality is nice but is not the most important aspect here. Students who put thought into their work and fully explain the meaning behind it will find the most success.

#### IV.) Presentation

- Allow each student to stand and present their poster to the class.
- This does not have to be a formal presentation, however it should be taken seriously and fully explain the background of their design.
- Who is the intended audience? Where would it be placed for maximum effect? What feelings should it inspire? What should people be thinking after they view it?

#### V.) Group Discussion

- After each student has presented their work lead the class in a group discussion about the public perception of mass media and how large scale projects such as this can be effective in getting everyone to play their part in a greater cause.
- How can we connect these images to the present? How would they look different today? How do we use visual media differently today as opposed to WWII era? How would the internet and social media advance this concept and the spread of its message? How were these images used to motivate and inspire people? What might have been different in the war if they were not used at all?

#### **Common Core Standards -**

Middle School - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

High School - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

#### **IL Standards -**

Middle School - SS.H.1.6-8.MC: Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant

SS.H.4.6-8.LC: Explain multiple causes and effects of historical events.

High School - SS.H.5.9-12: Analyze the factors and historical context that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras

SS.H.9.9-12: Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them.

# World War II Posters Worksheet

Use the space provided to design your own WWII poster in order to inspire and motivate the common person to do their part in the war effort. Be prepared to present your design to the class and discuss its meaning afterward.



Explain your design here. Who is the intended audience? How would it be distributed to the public? What message is it trying to inspire? What should people want to do after viewing it? (Use back of page if necessary)

