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## **Reporting on World War I**

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**Grade Level:**

9 – 12

**Objectives:**

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

- Analyze a primary source related to an event that took place during World War I
- Compare and contrast a primary and secondary source in order to determine similarities and differences in the account
- Create an alternative version of events based on primary and secondary source research

**Guiding Question:**

How does the secondary account of an event in a textbook differ from primary sources reporting of the event in newspaper articles?

**Connections to Common Core:**

**CCSS.ELA–Literacy.RH.11–12.1** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

**CCSS.ELA–Literacy.RH.11–12.2** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

**CCSS.ELA–Literacy.RH.11–12.3** Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

**CCSS.ELA–Literacy.RH.11–12.8** Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

**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.

**Connections to C3 Framework:**

**D2.His.2.9–12** Analyze change and continuity in historical era.

**D2.His.9.9–12** Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them.

**D2.His.10.9–12** Detect possible limitations in various kinds of historical evidence and differing secondary interpretations.

**D2.His.17.9–12** Critique the central arguments in secondary works of history on related topics in multiple media in terms of their historical accuracy.

**D4.1.0–12** Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weakness.

## Documents Used:

### Primary Sources:

"Heir to the Austrian Throne Assassinated," *New-York Tribune*, June 29, 1914

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1914-06-29/ed-1/seq-1/>

With startling detail the article describes not only the successful attack by Gavrilo Princip on Franz Ferdinand, the archduke of Austria-Hungry, and his wife but also two unsuccessful bombing attempts on their lives.

"Germany Declares War on France," *The Seattle Star*, August 4, 1914

[http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1914-08-04/ed-1/seq-1](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1914-08-04/ed-1/seq-1/)

Germany's declaration of war claims that France and Belgium were the aggressors; England is forced to declare war on Germany to defend its allies.

"Soldiers Take Day off From Killing and Swap Christmas Gifts with their Enemies," *The Seattle Star*, December 25, 1914

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1914-12-25/ed-1/seq-1/>

Due to the close proximity of trenches, the soldiers held an unofficial day of peace in North France to celebrate Christmas.

"Liner Lusitania Sunk by a German Submarine," *Evening Public Ledger*, May 7, 1915

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045211/1915-05-07/ed-1/seq-1/>

Article expresses the initial confusion over what caused the *Lusitania* to sink; some reports blame a German submarine while others claim mechanical problems.

"Allies Gained in Furious Fighting on Somme Front," *Daily Capital Journal*, September 5, 1916

[http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn99063957/1916-09-05/ed-1/seq-1](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn99063957/1916-09-05/ed-1/seq-1/)

Article reports of the high hopes of victory for Britain and France toward the beginning of the Battle of Somme.

"Disaster for Allies, Russia Out of the Fighting," *The Tacoma Times*, November 2, 1917

[http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88085187/1917-11-02/ed-1/seq-1](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88085187/1917-11-02/ed-1/seq-1/)

Article claims that Russia's withdrawal from war was a temporary measure due to the instability brought on by the Russian Revolution.

"Mexican Treachery Expose to Hasten War," *The Seattle Star*, April 5, 1917

[http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1917-04-05/ed-1/seq-1](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1917-04-05/ed-1/seq-1/)

The Zimmermann Note was used by pro-war supporters to strengthen their position by claiming that Americans were in danger of being attacked on their home soil.

"U.S. Officially at War," *The Daily Missourian*, April 6, 1917

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn89066314/1917-04-06/ed-1/seq-1/>

In a celebratory tone, war against Germany is announced with only a brief mention of the 50 Representatives who voted against the bill.

"Germany Has Surrendered; World War Ended at 6 A.M.," *New-York Tribune*, November 11, 1918

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1918-11-11/ed-1/seq-1/>

The armistice went into effect on November 11, 1918, at 11 am, despite uncertainty about the terms of the agreement.

"Peace Treaty Signed," *The Sun*, June 29, 1919

[http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030431/1919-06-29/ed-1/seq-1](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030431/1919-06-29/ed-1/seq-1/)

World War I came to an end at the Palace of Versailles with the German representatives reluctantly signing the treaty.

### **Lesson Description:**

**Overview:** History textbooks have limitations on the information that can be included on each event. This lesson compares newspaper accounts of an event to the textbook entry in order for the students to see the differences in the way the information is presented. It is important for students to learn to question sources, especially their textbook.

**Time:** One and one half 90 minute classes or three 45 minute classes

### **Materials:**

- access to newspaper articles (print out or provide hyperlinks)
- student textbook
- poster board
- Timeline Summary
- Alternative Textbook Summary Rubric

### **Lesson Preparation:**

- Before class, the teacher needs to assign students to groups of three and determine the roles each student will perform. Depending on the number of students in the class, the teacher might decide not to assign all ten provided newspaper articles.
- The teacher needs to decide if the students will have access to computers or a print out of their assigned article for each student in the group. If students have access to computers, the teacher could have them write their alternative textbook summary on a PowerPoint slide instead of a poster board.

- The teacher will also need to make copies of the Timeline Summary for each student and alternative textbook rubric for each group.

### **Procedure:**

- Students will be placed in groups of three and assigned one of the following roles:
  - **Leader:** leads discussion by posing questions about the article and textbook passage.
  - **Summarizer:** summarizes key ideas from article and textbook into an alternative passage.
  - **Presenter:** presents alternative passage to class.
- Each group will be given a newspaper article covering a major event related to World War I.
- After the students individually read the article and the passage in their textbook about the event, the students will work together to clarify any confusing words or phrases.
  - Then the **leader** will pose several questions to the group that compares and contrasts the information given by both sources. If the sources contradict each other, then the students will need to ask themselves why and then decide which sources to trust.
  - The **summarizer** will write down on a poster/PowerPoint slide an alternative passage for their textbook based on the additional evidence from their primary source.
  - Finally, the **presenter** will share the alternative passage with the class. Their classmates will record the information in a timeline summary of the major events in World War I (handout 1).
- The teacher will lead a class discussion on comparing primary and secondary sources. Suggested questions:
  - Why would information in a newspaper article be different from the textbook?
  - What are some limitations of both sources?
  - Which source is more trustworthy? Why?

### **Assessment Materials:**

- The Alternative Textbook Passage Rubric will be used to assess students' work and understanding of the material. The students will be graded on both the summary paragraph and presentation.

- Students will create a human timeline of major events of World War I. Randomly pass out cards with the name of major events to different students. Then students will place themselves in order with the help of the classmates still in their seats. Students have to explain the event on their card as they go down the line.

**Methods for Extension:**

- Provide the students with several primary sources related to a World War I event or topic. Have the students brainstorm possible questions related to each primary source. Then ask the students to rank the questions based on which questions hold the most promise for further research and why?
- Using information from the newspaper article and textbook summary, students should write a descriptive essay from the point of view of someone who witnessed the event.

**Adaptations:**

- Teachers may choose to add guiding questions to the newspaper articles and/or textbook entries to help students with reading comprehension.
- More advanced students can find additional articles on their World War I event by using the Chronicling American database, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>. Then the students can compare the accounts and determine which sources are more trustworthy.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

*Daily Capital Journal*. "Allies Gained in Furious Fighting on Somme Front," September 5, 1916. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn99063957/1916-09-05/ed-1/seq-1>.

*Daily Missourian*. "U.S. Officially at War," April 6, 1917. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn89066314/1917-04-06/ed-1/seq-1/>.

*Evening Public Ledger*. "Liner Lusitania Sunk by a German Submarine," May 7, 1915. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045211/1915-05-07/ed-1/seq-1/>.

*New-York Tribune*. "Germany Has Surrendered; World War Ended at 6 A.M.," November 11, 1918. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1918-11-11/ed-1/seq-1/>.

----- "Heir to the Austrian Throne Assassinated," June 29, 1914. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1914-06-29/ed-1/seq-1/>.

*Seattle Star*. "Germany Declares War on France," August 4, 1914. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1914-08-04/ed-1/seq-1>.

----- "Mexican Treachery Expose to Hasten War," April 5, 1917. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1917-04-05/ed-1/seq-1>.

----- "Soldiers Take Day off From Killing and Swap Christmas Gifts with their Enemies," December 25, 1914. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1914-12-25/ed-1/seq-1/>.

*The Sun*. "Peace Treaty Signed," June 29, 1919. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030431/1919-06-29/ed-1/seq-1>.

*Tacoma Times*. "Disaster For Allies, Russia Out of the Fighting," November 2, 1917. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88085187/1917-11-02/ed-1/seq-1>.

# World War I Timeline

Event	When?	Why is this important?
Assassination of Archduke		
Germany invades Belgium		
Christmas Truce		
Sinking of <i>Lusitania</i>		
Battle of the Somme		
Russian Withdrawal		

<b>Zimmermann Note</b>		
<b>US Enters War</b>		
<b>Germany Surrenders</b>		
<b>Treaty of Versailles</b>		

## Alternative Textbook Passage Rubric

	<b>Exemplary 4</b>	<b>Accomplished 3</b>	<b>Developing 2</b>	<b>Beginning 1</b>
<b>Content</b>	Passage adequately address the 5 W's (who, what, when, where and how).	Passage adequately address 4 of the 5 W's (who, what, when, where and how).	Passage adequately address 3 of the 5 W's (who, what, when, where and how).	Passage adequately address less than 3 of the 5 W's (who, what, when, where and how).
<b>Supporting Examples/details</b>	All details and/or examples presented in the passage are accurate and fully explained.	Almost all details/examples are accurate and fully explained.	Most facts presented are accurate (70%) and fully explained.	There are several factual errors in the passage and/or the examples are not fully explained.
<b>Organization</b>	Information is very organized with a well-constructed paragraph.	Information is organized with a well-constructed paragraph.	Information is organized, but the paragraph is not well-constructed.	The information appears to be disorganized.
<b>Trustworthy Sources</b>	Paragraph compares and contrasts the information given by sources and correctly determines the more trustworthy source.	Paragraph compares and contrasts the information given by sources and determines the more trustworthy source.	Paragraph compares and contrasts the information given by sources.	Paragraph shows no evidence of comparing or contrasting information given by sources.
<b>Significance</b>	Passage explains the significance of the event to world history.	Passage explains the significance of the event to World War I.	Passage attempts to explain the significance of the event.	Passage does not explain the significance of the event.
<b>Mechanics</b>	No grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. The summary is written in 3 <sup>rd</sup> person.	Almost no grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. The summary is written in 3 <sup>rd</sup> person.	A few grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. The summary uses 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> person.	Many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.

<b>Answering questions</b>	Students are able to accurately answer almost all questions posed by classmates/teacher about the topic.	Students are able to accurately answer most questions posed by classmates/teacher about the topic.	Students are able to accurately answer a few questions posed by classmates/teacher about the topic.	Students are unable to accurately answer questions posed by classmates/teacher about the topic.
<b>Speaks Clearly</b>	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100–95%) the time, and mispronounces no words.	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100–95%) the time, but mispronounces one word.	Speaks clearly and distinctly most of the time. Mispronounces no more than 1 word.	Often mumbles or cannot be understood OR mispronounces more than one word.
<b>Eye Contact/Body Language</b>	Stands up straight, looks relaxed and confident. Establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.	Stands up straight and establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.	Sometimes stands up straight and establishes eye contact.	Slouches and/or does not look at people during the presentation.
<b>Listens to other groups' presentations</b>	Listens (100%) of the time and asks questions.	Listens (99–80%) of the time and asks questions.	Listens but does not ask questions.	Does not listen or ask questions.