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Leland Linman's War: A Look at Soldiers' Daily Lives in World War I

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Grade Level:

9 – 12

Objectives:

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

- Compare the average day in Leland Linman’s life to what they have previously learned about trench warfare
- Identify the myriad responsibilities a soldier had to fulfill during World War I
- Analyze Linman’s first-hand account and summarize the hardships that he encountered as a soldier
- Develop their writing skills by completing their paragraph and editing their peer’s paragraph
- Synthesize the Linman experience by writing a letter from his point of view that includes information from his diary (this objective applies if using the corresponding extension)

Guiding Question:

Given the usual descriptions of trench warfare (going over the top, hunkering down in trenches), does the average life of a soldier match up to that description? Or are there parts of the war that are always present and we never think about?

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

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

Documents Used:**Primary Sources:**

Leland O. Linman diary, September 19–October 7, 1918

www.theworldwar.com/lessons

Leland Linman was an American soldier describing his experience at the front in his diary. He performed a multitude of different tasks, some of which students always think about (fighting as an artilleryman, seeking shelter) but also a number of everyday, mundane war tasks that made the duty more miserable.

Experiencing War: Stories from the Veterans' History Project, Library of Congress

World War I: In the Trenches

<http://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/wwi-trenches.html>

This site can be used with one of the extensions, comparing Linman's story to other soldiers. It contains firsthand accounts of several soldiers from World War I.

Lesson Description:

Overview: The goal for today is to compare what a normal soldier's life looks like compared to the standard description of trench warfare. Leland Linman's diary covers the parts of war that often get left out: miles of marching, hours of moving artillery shells from one place to another, and lousy food. In this lesson, the goal is to point out that a tremendous amount of movement happens in war – even trench war – that should be included to complete the whole picture.

Time: about 60 minutes

Materials:

- A Soldier at War handout
- Precise Paragraph Rubric
- Linman Diary entries
- Computer with Excel capability (if using extension)

Lesson Preparation:

- Distribute one copy of Linman Diary entries per student. If you have a class set of laptops or tablets, it would be easier to post this. It is his actual diary, and the color of some entries is a little bit lighter.
- Distribute one A Soldier at War handout per student
- Distribute one Precise Paragraph Rubric per student

Procedure:

- **Anticipatory Set** – This lesson works best if you have already discussed the idea of trench warfare with students, or if you discuss that during the first part of a longer 90-minute block and use this as the second, student-centered part of the lesson.

- Ask students for key traits of trench warfare as an anticipatory set. Once you have established the important points, explain to them that today we will talk about an artilleryman's experience to see if it matches up with what we think we know about trench warfare.
- **Teacher Directed Learning** – Give students a copy of the Linman Diary entries and the A Soldier at War chart.
- Instruct students to read the Linman Diary entries. It covers a few weeks at war for one American soldier. Explain that the chart is to help them keep track of what he did on a daily basis at war, and also what sorts of things he thought about while at war.
- Use the chart to keep track of what Linman mentioned each day, so that by the end of the lesson, we will have an idea of what an average day looked like. The “totals” box should be the total number of days that he either mentioned or experienced each topic. Have the students read and complete the chart.
- **Transition** – Students now have an idea of what an average day for this artilleryman looked like from September to October 1918. They should now produce two paragraphs.
 - The first paragraph should explain Linman's average day. What sorts of things did he do frequently? What did he only do sparingly? What made him happy? What upset him? This paragraph should give us a snapshot of what we could expect if we were to swap places with him. Students should use at least four references to the diary and the frequency of events, and should use two direct quotes from the diary to prove their point.
 - The second paragraph should be a personal reflection. Is this what you expected to read? If so, what parts did you anticipate hearing about? If not, what did you anticipate seeing more of? Less of?
- **Transition** – After students complete writing their paragraphs, the teacher will distribute the Precise Paragraph Rubric. Explain to the students that they will exchange papers with a neighbor. We will be peer evaluating the first paragraph, the informational one.
 - Using the rubric, students should put an X in the box each time they see the appropriate information. They should then total up the number of points that their peers get, out of a possible 10.
 - When they are finished, they should get their paragraph and grading rubric back, and from there, correct their paragraph.

- Once students complete this activity, they should exchange papers to get their original paragraph back. They should make the corrections indicated in the rubric. (For instance, if missing a quote or reference to the diary, insert material to correct the issue. If they had a grammar error, they should correct it.)
- When the group has finished all paragraphs, they should put them together as if they were the body paragraphs of the essay.
- **Writing a Group Essay** – Together the group should write an introduction and solid thesis statement to answer the following prompt: “What new developments were armies forced to make during World War I both on and off the battlefield, and why did they make them?”
 - Following the construction of an introductory paragraph, they will then add transitions between their paragraphs and complete a conclusion. Together, they will have written an essay as a group, which you can then collect and use to measure comprehension of the subject material.
 - For technology purposes, I would also recommend (if the hardware is available) typing on Google docs. That way the students’ paragraphs appear all at once, and the full essay is more or less typed after they have written their individual paragraphs. They can quickly and efficiently peer edit. If using a computer, students could also pull selected pictures into the Word document in order to make it appear more like a magazine layout.

Assessment Materials:

- Using the attached rubric, teachers can evaluate the product to determine whether or not students understood the ideas presented in the writing. Further, they can collect student rubrics to ensure that they comprehend the content and they are demonstrating writing skills.

Methods for Extension:

- Teachers can take the documents in a number of different directions. They can predict the next day’s diary entry would be, based on what seems to be the average behavior. Further, they can defend why they chose those events for the diary entry, based on the frequency with which those events have occurred so far in his writing.
- To summarize the documents, the students could write a letter home from Linman. They should explain what has been going on, covering all aspects of war that he has seen or experienced.

- For a technology angle, students could use Excel features for making charts or graphs to explain what percentage of time was spent on marching, loading/moving guns, actually fighting, etc. It gives visual learners a chance to see just how often Linman was fighting, as opposed to moving in a logistic capacity.
- Students could also look into what Linman did not experience that they know was common at the front. Ask students what experiences have you talked or read about that are not in his diary that you would expect? Why do you think he did not have these experiences?
- Go to <http://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/wwi-trenches.html>, part of the Experiencing War series from the Library of Congress. Assign students to read a selection from the diary of one of the many soldiers featured there and have them compare and contrast the experience of that soldier to Linman's experience.
- Students can also comment on what his best days/worst days looked like in an additional paragraph. Did Linman write only a sentence or two on some days? If so, what happened on those days? Why could he only manage that little bit of writing?

Adaptations:

- The A Soldier at War Organizer is meant to help students at all levels organize their thoughts.
- The same is true for the Precise Paragraph Rubric. Students are forced to deconstruct the writing sample of a peer and then edit their own. This will serve to help higher level students, who sometimes get away from really looking at the skeleton of their work in the fast pace of higher-level classes. It will also help students who struggle with basic writing skills. The metacognitive benefits will hopefully pay dividends on not just this assignment, but any writing assignment moving forward.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Linman, Leland. "Diary Entries, September 19 to October 7, 1918 (2004.93.6)," Artifact from the National World War I Museum, Kansas City, Missouri. Accessed February 13, 2014. www.theworldwar.org/NHD.

"World War I: The Great War" Experiencing War: Stories from the Veterans' History Project, Library of Congress. Accessed February 3, 2014. <http://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/wwi-trenches.html>

Precise Paragraph

Use this checklist to score your neighbor's paragraph. Put an X in each box that applies to their paragraph. Add up the total number of points they have earned and put it in the "total" box.

Topic sentence that addresses the prompt?	<i>Topic Sentence (1 point)</i>			
Four pieces of supporting evidence?	<i>Piece 1 (1 Point)</i>	<i>Piece 2 (1 point)</i>	<i>Piece 3 (1 point)</i>	<i>Piece 4 (1 point)</i>
Two direct quotes?	<i>Quote 1 (1 point)</i>	<i>Quote 2 (1 point)</i>		
Perfect spelling and grammar?	<i>2 or more mistakes (0 Points)</i>	<i>1 mistake (1 point)</i>	<i>No mistakes (2 points)</i>	

TOTAL: _____/ 10 points

SEPTEMBER-19
ARRIVED IN THE WOODS AFTER A 10 HR. HIKE IN THE RAIN. STAYED UP ALL DAY TO DOING A LITTLE OF WORK BUT FEELING WOULD LIVE EVERYTHING I HAVE GOT FOR ONE YEAR.

SEPTEMBER-20
ARRIVED IN SOME MORE WOODS AFTER A ALL NIGHT HIKE. HAD TO GET UP IN THE P.M. AND CLEAN THE GUNS. AGOED THE SLEEP TO. STILL RAINING.

SEPTEMBER-21
SOME MORE WOODS AFTER A ALL NIGHT HIKE. GOT OUT OF BED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY AND POLICED A AN. 2 P.M. MADE MESSIAH STAY NATHIN.

SEPTEMBER-22
SLEPT ALL DAY AFTER A NOTHER NIGHT HIKE THAT I AM DURE MADE ME SURE MOVE UP TO THE FRONT TONIGHT.

SEPTEMBER-23-
STARTED UP AT 5 P.M. LAST NIGHT. WADED IN MUD UP TO OUR KNEES AND HAD TO PUSH THE GUNS HORSES COULDN'T PULL THEM. OH SUNNY FRANCE WHAT A WORK. SLEPT A LITTLE. COOTIES AMFULL DAD.

SEPTEMBER-24
PUT GUNS IN POSITION. CARRIED AMUNITION ALL DAY. ON GUARD AT NIGHT. HAD A FAIR SUPPER FOR A CHANGE.

SEPTEMBER-24
PAY DAY - CARRIED MORE AMUNITION IN THE A.M. RECEIVED OUR MAIL FIRST TIME IN THREE WEEKS. CARRIED AMM. ALL NIGHT. HUNTS BEEN SHELLING US PRETTY HEAVY.

SEPTEMBER-25
STARTED UP THE GIP DRIC AT 10 P.M. NOISE. WERE A SOME NOISE. WE ARE FORING SHELLS INTO THEM FROM THREE P.M. WE CARRIED UP TO THREE P.M. AND THEN ADVANCED ACROSS NO MARS. SAW MANY DEAD AND WOUNDS.

SEPTEMBER-26
ARRIVED AT 10 P.M. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE.

SEPTEMBER-27
MOVED UP FURTHER IN THE MORNING. HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE.

SEPTEMBER-28
ARRIVED AT 10 P.M. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE.

SEPTEMBER-29
ARRIVED AT 10 P.M. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE.

OCTOBER-1
ARRIVED AT 10 P.M. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE.

SEPTEMBER-30
ARRIVED AT 10 P.M. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE.

OCTOBER-2
ARRIVED AT 10 P.M. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE.

OCTOBER-3
ARRIVED AT 10 P.M. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE. WE HAD A FAIR SUPPER AND SLEPT A LITTLE.