



★

**GREAT WAR, FLAWED PEACE,
AND THE LASTING LEGACY
OF WORLD WAR I**

★



THE UNITED STATES
WORLD WAR ONE
CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

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HISTORY DAY

BASEBALL: PATRIOTISM AND CIVIC DUTY



GUIDING QUESTION: How was baseball used to promote patriotism and civic duty in World War I and how did that continue in World War II?

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WHY?

Using sports themes and topics in traditional history courses can be a great way to connect with students. In this lesson students will analyze primary sources and practice historical thinking skills. Students will see how baseball promotes patriotism and civic duty.

OVERVIEW

Using newspapers, cartoons, and other primary sources, students will look at the importance of baseball in our society. During the lesson students will see how baseball images, terminology, and actual players were used to boost morale, sell war bonds, and remind citizens and soldiers of their civic duties and why they were fighting.

OBJECTIVES

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

- › Analyze and interpret primary sources;
- › Develop an argument using primary sources;
- › Defend an argument with historical evidence; and
- › Understand the importance that baseball holds in American culture

STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3 Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

DOCUMENTS USED

PRIMARY SOURCES

Advertisement, Thos. E. Wilson & Co., *Saturday Evening Post*, April 20, 1918

"Griff Has Bats and Ball on Way Again," *The Sporting News*, August 16, 1917

"Is Baseball Essential?" *Colorado Springs Gazette*, June 9, 1918
Genealogy Bank

Photograph, *In 1917 and early 1918, teams like the Cleveland Indians tried to show their support for soldiers in World War I by having players participate in pre-game "drill" sessions*
National Baseball Hall of Fame Library (BL-1942-77)
<https://baseballhall.org/discover-more/stories/short-stops/1918-world-war-i-baseball>

Poster, *Strike two! Help strike out military autocracy! Every Liberty Bond you buy helps win the war, 1917*
Library of Congress (00652362)
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/wwwipos/item/00652362/>

Poster, *Vojtěch Preissig, That arm - your country needs it, 1918*
Library of Congress (2002719428)
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2002719428/>

Sheet Music, Robert Dixon, "Uncle Sam will strike the Kaiser Out," 1918
Library of Congress (2013562645)
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2013562645/>

MATERIALS

- > Baseball in World War I Reading and Timeline
- > Wartime Baseball Document Based Question Packet

ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- > Make one copy (or share electronically) of the Baseball in World War I Reading and Timeline and Wartime Baseball Document Based Question Packet for each student.

PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY ONE: WARTIME BASEBALL (60 MINUTES)

- > Lead a brief discussion about civic duty and patriotism. Questions can include:
 - » *What are some of the ways we as a society encourage civic duty?*
 - » *What are some of the images or slogans we typically see in some of these images and posters that promote civic duty?*
- > Distribute the Wartime Baseball Document Based Question Packet. Ask students to begin reading and analyzing each document by answering the questions.
 - » **Teacher Tip:** Students can work independently or with a partner, at teacher discretion.
- > Transition to a whole-class discussion. Ask students:
 - » *What are the major messages of these primary sources?*
 - > **Teacher Tip:** Answers could include: recruiting soldiers, raising funds for the war effort, supporting soldiers, and keeping the morale of the troops and home front high.
 - » *In what ways was baseball vital to the war effort in World War I and World War II?*
 - » *How were these messages appealing to baseball fans and other Americans?*

ASSESSMENT

- > Ask the students to respond to the document based question, *Analyze the ways in which baseball was used to support the war effort in World War I.*
 - » **Teacher Tip:** Students can work independently or with a partner, at teacher discretion.

METHODS FOR EXTENSION

- > Students can research the role of baseball in World War II and compare and contrast that with World War I.
- > Students or teachers with more interest in the role of baseball in World War I or World War II can read the following books:
 - » Skip Desjardin, *September 1918: War, Plague, and the World Series* (2018)
 - » John Klima, *The Game Must Go on: Hank Greenberg, Pete Gray, and the Great Days of Baseball on the Homefront in WWII* (2015)
 - » Jim Leake, *From the Dugouts to the Trenches: Baseball during the Great War* (2017)
 - » Jeff Obermeyer and Michael Scott Neiberg, *Baseball and the Bottom Line in World War II: Gunning for Profits on the Home Front* (2013)
- >

BASEBALL IN WORLD WAR I READING AND TIMELINE

Baseball in the early twentieth century was an evolving game that in many ways mirrored American society. Professional baseball dates back to 1869, with the founding of the Cincinnati Red Stockings. The National League that we know today traces its roots back to 1876. By the second half of the nineteenth century the game of baseball was seen as America's "pastime."

Throughout its history, professional baseball has pitted its players against team owners for profits, revenue, and salaries. Both players and owners have striven for bigger shares of the increasing profits from professional baseball. Baseball in the early twentieth century was not the billion dollar industry it is today, and team owners relied on ticket sales and concessions to squeeze every dollar out of their investment. Teams played in the afternoons, and many cities prohibited Sunday games when crowds could be the largest. Players had very little say in their salaries. The reserve clause in players' contracts stated that once a player signed with a team, he lost his ability to become a free agent and see how much he could make on the open market. This struggle between labor and capital is still seen today.

As the United States moved even closer to World War I, a general war hysteria and preparedness movement swept through the country in the spring of 1917. Baseball was no different, as Yankees owner Tillinghast L'Hommedieu Huston hired Drill Sergeant Smith Gibson to train the players at spring training in military maneuvers, so that they would be ready when their country called. American League President Ban Johnson vowed that as in the Spanish American War, Major League Baseball would not close down. Johnson, however, liked the idea of preparedness and encouraged other American League clubs to join in and hire drill sergeants to work with teams on military maneuvers. Baseball continued unimpeded throughout the season, and teams supported the war effort by hosting bond drives and raising money through ticket sales for troops and the American Red Cross. Washington Senators coach Clark Griffith established a Bat and Ball Fund, which sent baseball equipment over to Europe for the soldiers serving at the front. The Fund supplied \$147,910.90 in baseball equipment to send to American servicemen.¹

Baseball was a popular form of exercise and leisure, and teams and games sprang up everywhere U.S. servicemembers were stationed, both domestically and abroad. It became so popular that games were reported back to the homefront. The 1919 Spalding Baseball Guide, which summarized the previous year's season and introduced the coming year, dedicated nearly 100 pages to service baseball. On July 4, 1918, 34,000 fans packed Stamford Bridge Stadium, home of the Chelsea Football Club, to watch a team of Army soldiers take on a team of Navy sailors.

The 1918 season did not go as well for professional baseball. In spring 1918 Provost Marshal General Enoch Crowder issued the "work or fight" order saying that all able-bodied men between the ages of 21 and 30, should be fighting or engaged in work deemed essential to the war effort. The date given for all men to report was September 1, 1918. Several players like Ty Cobb and Hank Gowdy joined the U.S. Army, but other players such as Shoeless Joe Jackson took a job in the shipbuilding industry to stay at home and support his wife. Many journalists at the time viewed this as Jackson "slacking" his civic duty as he continued playing baseball for his factory's baseball team. The owners pressed for and held the World Series after the September 1 deadline. That year, the Boston Red Sox defeated the Chicago Cubs in game six to capture the World Series Championship.

¹ Charles Henry Genslinger, Final report of Clark C. Griffith ball and bat fund. Library of Congress (19019863). <https://www.loc.gov/resource/dcmsiabooks.finalreportofcla00gens/?sp=16&r=-1.279,0.064,3.559,1.319,0>.

BASEBALL IN WORLD WAR I READING AND TIMELINE (CON'T)

After the war ended on November 11, 1918, many baseball players made their way back to the U.S. and returned to the baseball diamond.

April 6, 1917: U.S. enters World War I.

March 6, 1917: Yankees hold first drill session for players during spring training.

April 2, 1917: President Woodrow Wilson appears before a joint session of Congress to request a declaration of war against Germany.

April 20, 1917: Clark Griffith starts the Bat and Ball Fund to send baseball supplies to soldiers overseas.

May 18, 1917: The Selective Service Act passed, increasing the size of the military.

June 5, 1917: All men ages 21 to 31 required to register for the draft.

July 28, 1917: President Woodrow Wilson approves the playing of the World Series.

January 1918: In response to pressure, Major League Baseball owners reduce the schedule from 154 games to 140.

May 23, 1918: Work or Fight Order passed

June 1918: A Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) representative goes to Belleau Wood, France, to hand out baseball equipment to the U.S. Marines resting there between German attacks.

July 4, 1918: Chelsea Football Ground in England hosts baseball game between the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Army with the king and queen in attendance along with 18,000 spectators. Navy wins the game 2-1.

September 1, 1918: Date given when all players would have to "work or fight."

September 5, 1918: During the seventh inning stretch of Game One of the World Series, the military band played the "Star-Spangled Banner." Red Sox third baseman Fred Thomas, playing while on leave from the U.S. Navy, snapped to attention and saluted the flag. The rest of the players turned to face the flag with their hands on their hearts. Fans followed suit. This was the first time the song was played at a World Series Game.

September 11, 1918: The Boston Red Sox defeat the Chicago Cubs 2-1 in Game Six to win the World Series.

October 9, 1918: Captain Edward Grant of the 77th Infantry Division and former Major League Baseball player is killed in France during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. He is buried at Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery. Grant was a third baseman who played in nearly 1,000 games for the Cleveland Naps, Philadelphia Phillies, Cincinnati Reds, and New York Giants.



WARTIME BASEBALL DOCUMENT BASED QUESTION, DOCUMENT ONE
 ADVERTISEMENT, THOS. E. WILSON & CO., SATURDAY EVENING POST, APRIL 20, 1918

Prompt: Analyze the ways in which baseball was used to support the war effort in World War I.

136 THE SATURDAY EVENING POST April 20, 1918

Physical Fitness
 —as important at home as on the firing line

THE soldier is physically capable of withstanding the rigors of a long campaign. Uncle Sam sees to that. He knows how important it is that his fighting men be in condition—be physically capable of keeping up the fight. Athletic sports play as important a part at the many army camps as military work. Military authorities know that athletics develop the mind and eye as well as the body. They know that athletically trained men are alert, quick to think and quicker to act. It is just as important that you, who stay at home be physically right. Your work will be heavier, your duties more arduous. Be prepared for these tasks with a clear mind, an alert eye and a vigorous body.

ATHLETICS will do this for you. Every man and woman, every boy and girl, regardless of youth or age, should participate in some sort of sport. Pick out your favorite sport and see to it that you devote a certain amount of time each day to it. You'll find that it will make you feel better—that you will "pitch in" to your morning's work with increased vigor and a clearer mind. Too, you have an hour more of daylight each day. Devote this time to your game. Get out into the big outdoors every day and keep prepared—your fighting strength will help win the war.

Wilson Sporting and Athletic Equipment
 Is Favored for Every Game

WHETHER your game be golf, tennis, baseball or any of the other sports—whether you anticipate a fishing or camping trip this summer—you will find Wilson equipment both dependable and efficient. It is built to withstand rigorous and continuous use.

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LET us send you our new Sporting Goods Catalog for Spring and Summer or our Fishing Tackle Catalog. Look up the Wilson dealer in your vicinity; he is well worth knowing and we will gladly furnish you his name upon request.

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WARTIME BASEBALL DOCUMENT BASED QUESTION, DOCUMENT ONE
ADVERTISEMENT, THOS. E. WILSON & CO., *SATURDAY EVENING POST*, APRIL 20, 1918

What role does sport play in developing soldiers?

Why would the government have pushed its soldiers to participate in athletics?

Who developed this advertisement? Why might they have chosen to do so?

WARTIME BASEBALL DOCUMENT BASED QUESTION, DOCUMENT FOUR
 SHEET MUSIC, ROBERT DIXON, "UNCLE SAM WILL STRIKE THE KAISER OUT," 1918
 LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (2013562645)

2 **Uncle Sam Will Strike The Kaiser Out.**
 Words and Music by
 ROBT. DIXON.

Piano.

Marcia.

Tempo.

Chorus.

3

Uncle Sam-my's pitch-ing and the Kai-ser's at the bat You can bet your mon-ey
 that we will show him where he's at For Un-cle Sam means bus-i-ness, there's not the slight-est
 doubt He'll feel an aw-ful dis-zee-ees when the Yanks put him to rout The Hun ——— won't make a
 run ——— When bo-ry he'll hear us shout ——— And we'll put his team to shame For we've
 nev-er lost a game Un-cle Sam will strike the Kai-ser out.
 out.
 out.

Uncle Sam Will Strike The Kaiser Out. 3

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WARTIME BASEBALL DOCUMENT BASED QUESTION, DOCUMENT FOUR

SHEET MUSIC, ROBERT DIXON, "UNCLE SAM WILL STRIKE THE KAISER OUT," 1918
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (2013562645)

What are some of the baseball terms used in this song?

What does it say about American society that baseball terminology is being used in a pop song?

Are there any terms from the time period that are different from today?

WARTIME BASEBALL DOCUMENT BASED QUESTION, DOCUMENT FIVE

POSTER, *STRIKE TWO! HELP STRIKE OUT MILITARY AUTOCRACY! EVERY LIBERTY BOND YOU BUY HELPS WIN THE WAR*, 1917
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (00652362)



What is this poster encouraging people to do?

What is the relevance of using the colors and terminology?

What is the German Kaiser doing?

Why is the German Kaiser portrayed in this manner?

WARTIME BASEBALL DOCUMENT BASED QUESTION, DOCUMENT SIX

PHOTOGRAPH, IN 1917 AND EARLY 1918, TEAMS LIKE THE CLEVELAND INDIANS TRIED TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR SOLDIERS IN WORLD WAR I BY HAVING PLAYERS PARTICIPATE IN PRE-GAME "DRILL" SESSIONS
NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY (BL-1942-77)



WARTIME BASEBALL DOCUMENT BASED QUESTION, DOCUMENT SIX

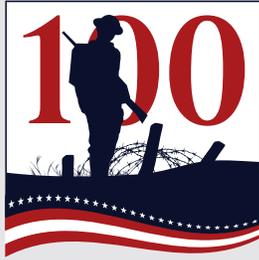
PHOTOGRAPH, IN 1917 AND EARLY 1918, TEAMS LIKE THE CLEVELAND INDIANS TRIED TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR SOLDIERS IN WORLD WAR I BY HAVING PLAYERS PARTICIPATE IN PRE-GAME "DRILL" SESSIONS
NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY (BL-1942-77)

Why are the players drilling?

How does this image aid the war effort?

Who is in the background?

Describe the facial expressions of the players.



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