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

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

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/wwipos/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:
  » Jim Leake, From the Dugouts to the Trenches: Baseball during the Great War (2017)
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. servicemen 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 abled-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.

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.
Prompt: Analyze the ways in which baseball was used to support the war effort in World War I.
What role does sport play in developing soldiers?

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

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

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WARTIME BASEBALL DOCUMENT BASED QUESTION, DOCUMENT TWO

"IS BASEBALL ESSENTIAL?" COLORADO SPRINGS GAZETTE, JUNE 9, 1918
GENEALOGY BANK

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

According to the author, what are some of the positive attributes of baseball?

- Shall we do away with organized baseball during the period of the war? Shall amusements be given up and social times forgotten until the war is over? Such are the queries that are being heard constantly. And it was with them in mind, that General Crowder issued his "work or fight" statement.

- Whether the new ruling will include in its list the ranks of organized baseball players is yet undecided. That baseball managers and club owners have taken a broad view of the possibility, is shown by their statement to the effect that any rule will be observed willingly and fully.

- Yet it is a question whether baseball is not a necessity. It is the one great American game. All over the country it is the most important and most generally understood of all out-door sports. It is recognized as the most democratic of American sporting institutions. And the fact is indisputable that there is need for some amusement along with the grim reality that characterizes life in wartime.

- Military experts report that the men at the front would be unable to bear the constant nerve strain of war were it not for the amusements and relaxations afforded by the organized sports back of the trenches. Likewise the civilian is better able to perform his wartime duties as a result of the relaxation gained thru exercise or wholesome amusement.

- The theater has been deemed essential by the authorities. The baseball game is, in our opinion, equally essential. We must not neglect our exercise, nor our amusement, for if we do, the gigantic horror of war will overpower us.

- Baseball players should be subject to the draft. Already many of the greatest men in the game have been called to the colors. This is as it should be. These men have no first claim to exemption. But in the case of professional baseball players who are married, or who have other legitimate exemption claims, the treatment should be the same as that accorded men in other branches of business.

- It is true that baseball is not absolutely essential. Neither is the theater; neither is the street car; neither are electric lights or other modern conveniences in the household. But just as these same conveniences tend to reduce the physical strain of the daily grind, so does baseball afford a mental relaxation and wholesome exercise for men and women who might otherwise be overwhelmed by the very awfulness of the war upon which we are engaged.

Does the author feel baseball is essential to the war effort? Use specific evidence to support your claim.
By using a baseball theme in this poster, what does this say about how baseball fits into American culture during the period?

What symbolism is evident in this poster?
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?

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________
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?

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How does this image aid the war effort?

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Who is in the background?

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Describe the facial expressions of the players.

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________________________________________________________________________
The Bat and Ball Fund was meant to raise money to purchase baseball equipment for soldiers going to Europe. Why would soldiers need baseball equipment?

What does this say about the importance of baseball in American society?

In what way does this support the war effort?
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