



4511 Knox Road  
Suite 205  
College Park, MD 20740  
Voice (301) 314-9739  
Fax (301) 314-9767  
[www.nhd.org](http://www.nhd.org)

## Uncovering a World at War

Cheryl Caskey, Student Programs Coordinator, NHD in Kentucky,  
Kentucky Historical Society  
Naomi Peuse, Coordinator, Network for Gifted Education,  
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

**Research assistance provided by:**

Kathleen Barker, Assistant Director of Education,  
Massachusetts Historical Society

Cheryl Caskey, Student Programs Coordinator,  
NHD in Kentucky, Kentucky Historical Society

Stephen Cure, Director of Educational Services,  
Texas State Historical Association

Susan Dittus, National History Day in Idaho Coordinator

Sarah Fallon, National History Day in Wisconsin Coordinator

Laura Ketcham, National History Day in North Carolina  
Coordinator, N.C. Office of Archives and History

Lisa Oppenheim, Director, Chicago Metro History Fair

**Grade Level:**

6 – 8

**Objectives:**

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

- Read and analyze several newspaper articles to determine the point of view of the author
- Understand the reason behind why some Americans advocated involvement in the war, while others opposed U.S. involvement or maintained a neutral stance

**Guiding Questions:**

Why was America so divided about the prospect of entering World War I in 1917?

How did Americans react toward the events of the World War I in their hometown newspapers?

**Connections to Common Core:**

**CCSS.ELA–Literacy.RH.6–8.1** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

**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.

**CCSS.ELA–Literacy.RH.6–8.6** Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

**CCSS.ELA–Literacy.SL.8.3** Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

**CCSS.ELA–Literacy.SL.8.4** Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

**Connections to C3 Framework:**

**D 1.5.6–8.** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources.

**D2. His.13.6–8.** Evaluate the relevancy and utility of a historical source based on information such as maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

**D3.2.6–8.** Evaluate the credibility of a source by determining its relevance and intended use.

**D4.1.6–8.** Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments.

## Documents Used (all articles can be downloaded from this website):

### Articles that lean away from war / toward maintaining neutrality

"America in Peril of Being Drawn into War: That is the Reason Why Wilson Asks Discussion for Peace," *The Daily Northwestern*, December 21, 1916

"Another Christmas," *The Constitution*, 25 December 1916

"Jane Addams' Message to Her Sisters of America," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 22, 1915

"La Follette's Shots at Bigger Army and Navy," *The Wisconsin State Journal*, August 17, 1916.

"Pastors of Boise Churches Express Their Horror of War: See Only Remedy in Direct Appeal to the Prince of Peace From Mad Passions that Now Rule the Nations of Europe," *Daily Statesman*, August 17, 1914.

"Loaded Dice the Symbol of Game: Voters of United States Would Play," *The Hartford Herald*. November 1 1916.

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84037890/1916-11-01/ed-1/seq-1/>

"Neutrality, Not War," *Daybook*, May 17, 1915

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045487/1915-05-17/ed-1/seq-24/>

"The Fortune of War," *The Herald and News*, May 11, 1915

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86063758/1915-05-11/ed-1/seq-4/>

"This Thanksgiving Day," *The Constitution*, November 30, 1916

### Articles that lean towards War:

"A Warning: Possibility of Texas Becoming Another Belgium," *The Mexia Weekly Herald*, April 12, 1917

<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph302482/m1/1/?q=%20%22germany%22%20%221917%22>

"Bomb Threat to Gov. Walsh Hints at Death: Governor of Massachusetts, Boston Custom House, and Capitol Menaced," *The Washington Times*, July 14, 1915

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026749/1915-07-14/ed-1/seq-3/>

"Germany's Plan to Embroil U.S. and Slice Off 3 States Angers: Senate Discusses Sensation and Debates on Resolution Calling Upon Officials to Confirm New Reports; Full Details of Gernay's Intrigue to Overwhelm U.S. Revealed," *El Paso Herald*, March 1, 1917

<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht138574/m1/1/?q=%20%22germany%22%20%221917%22>

"Our 'Neutral' Youth," *Denni Hlasatel*, June 2, 1915

[http://flps.newberry.org/article/5418478\\_8\\_0568/](http://flps.newberry.org/article/5418478_8_0568/)

"Some Pacifists Uphold Colonel on Peace Stand: Margaret Dobyne and Mrs. Severin Call Roosevelt Letter 'Wise and Sane'," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 17, 1915

"War by Assassination," *The Intelligencer*, May 11, 1915.

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/2010218505/1915-05-11/ed-1/seq-4/>

### **Lesson Description:**

**Overview:** Between 1914 and 1917, the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the declaration of war in Europe, the invasion of Belgium, the establishment of trench warfare in France, the sinking of the liner *Lusitania*, and the publication of the Zimmermann telegram were all events that influenced public opinion. The articles touching on these incidents offered in this lesson reflect a variety of public opinion from newspapers from across America.

**Time:** 2 45-minute class periods

### **Materials:**

- Historical context narrative (parts I and II)
- Historic newspaper articles
- Article analysis chart
- Internet access to view newspapers (optional)
- Large Post-it chart paper or chalk/whiteboard

### **Lesson Preparation:**

- Copy one historical context narrative and one article analysis chart per student
- Give students access to newspaper articles (either post PDFs or print copies)

### **Day 1 Procedure:**

- **Introduction:** Provide students with a copy of the contextual narrative and any additional information you wish to include for review. As a class, discuss the circumstances that led to war and the issues that faced the United States as it navigated the complexities of neutrality.

- **Reading of articles:** Divide the class into small groups of two or three students each. Provide each small group two or three articles to read silently. Consider providing articles from conflicting positions.
  - Struggling readers may find the following articles more accessible as they are shorter and/or their argument is more plainly stated and concrete.
    - “War!” *Daybook*, Chicago, Illinois, April 17, 1914
    - “The Fortune of War.” *The Herald and News*, May 11, 1915
  - In small groups, have students discuss the articles. Using the article analysis chart as a guide, students should determine what the articles are trying to communicate.
    - Do they support sending American troops to war, are they opposed to participation, or do they present a different issue entirely?
    - What support is given for their position?
    - Who wrote the article or what group’s viewpoint is captured there?
    - Is their opinion important? Why or why not?
- **Classroom Discussion:** Combine the small groups into two larger groups (the class should be divided in half). Ask the groups to pretend they are President Wilson’s advisors in March 1917. Direct students to discuss their overall impressions based on what they learned from their articles (groups may wish to draft out a pros and cons list to gather all the different perspectives) and determine the U.S. position toward war: Should the United States remain neutral or should the nation join the fight?
- Using the large Post-it chart paper or your classroom chalk/white board, have the groups write down three to five reasons that justify their final position. Students should cite the articles they have used to come to this decision.
- Have each group present its final decision, including the conclusion for its argument, to the class.
  - **Homework:** Present students with the second section of the contextual narrative (“America Declares War”). Students should write a two-paragraph response that explains how closely their decision aligned with history, providing reasons for why it may have differed.

### Day 2 Procedure:

- **Local Perspective/Further use of Chronicling America:** Introduce students to the Chronicling America database. Explain its purpose and demonstrate how to use it.
- If desired, <http://edsitement.neh.gov/what-chronicling-america/using-chronicling-america> offers a short video tutorial to get students started.

- Divide students into three to five groups, depending on technology access. (If each student has access to a computer, this can be done individually).
- Have each group find two or three newspaper articles from your own state or region that discusses U.S. involvement in World War I from 1914 to 1916.
- Have students fill out the same article analysis chart they used for the pre-selected articles to determine the opinion of people from their own state/region compared to those in the original articles they read.
- As a summative assessment or exit ticket, ask students:
  - Would your final decision have been different given this new information? Explain why or why not.

### **Assessment Materials:**

- Analysis chart, exit ticket

### **Methods for Extension**

- As a class, discuss the kinds of information that can be learned through newspaper articles. Brainstorm other topics that can be well researched using newspapers/Chronicling America.
- Now that students are familiar with Chronicling America, have each group find two or three articles that discuss U.S. involvement in World War I from 1917–1918. How do the issues discussed in articles building up to war show up in subsequent press coverage?
- Now that students are familiar with the kind of information that can be located in newspaper articles, have them locate additional primary sources (letters, government documents, photographs, political cartoons, etc.) dated between 1914 and 1916. Places to try might include: a local archives, [www.ourdocuments.gov](http://www.ourdocuments.gov), The World War I Museum, the Library of Congress, or the National Archives. How are they similar or how do they differ from newspaper coverage?

### **Adaptations:**

- Learning for students with special needs or English language learners can be structured by allowing students to research together and differentiating the articles assigned to particular students.
- You may choose to assign a partially completed version of the chart to get students started to assist students with comprehension issues if needed (included in lesson materials)

## Bibliography:

### Primary Sources

"America in Peril of Being Drawn into War: That is the Reason Why Wilson Asks Discussion for Peace," *The Daily Northwestern*, December 21, 1916. US Newspaper Archive.

"Some Pacifists Uphold Colonel on Peace Stand: Margaret Dobyne and Mrs. Severin Call Roosevelt Letter 'Wise and Sane'." *Chicago Daily Tribune*. 17 April 1915. Proquest.

"Another Christmas," *The Constitution*, 25 December 1916. Fold3.

"Jane Addams' Message to Her Sisters of America," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 22, 1915. Proquest.

"La Follette's Shots at Bigger Army and Navy." *The Wisconsin State Journal*. 17 August 1916. US Newspaper Archive.

"Pastors of Boise Churches Express Their Horror of War: See Only Remedy in Direct Appeal to the Prince of Peace From Mad Passions that Now Rule the Nations of Europe." *Daily Statesman*. 17 August 1914. Idaho State Archives, Idaho Historical Society, Boise, Idaho.

"This Thanksgiving Day." *The Constitution*. 30 November 1916. Fold3.

"Bomb Threat to Gov. Walsh Hints at Death: Governor of Massachusetts, Boston Custom House, and Capitol Menaced." *The Washington Times*, (July 14, 1915). Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers.

"The Fortune of War." *The Herald and News*, (May 11, 1915). Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers.

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"Loaded Dice the Symbol of Game: Voters of United States Would Play." *The Hartford Herald*, (November 1, 1916). Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers.

"Neutrality, Not War." *Daybook*, (May 17, 1915). *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*.

"Our 'Neutral' Youth." *Denni Hlasatel*. (June 2, 1915). Foreign Language Press Survey, Newberry Library. Accessed January 3, 2014.

[http://flps.newberry.org/article/5418478\\_8\\_0568/](http://flps.newberry.org/article/5418478_8_0568/)

"War!" *Daybook*, (April 17, 1914). " *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*.

"War by Assassination." *The Intelligencer*, (May 11, 1915). *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*.

"A Warning: Possibility of Texas Becoming Another Belgium." *The Mexia Weekly Herald* (April 12, 1917). The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas. Accessed January 3, 2014.

<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph302482/m1/1/?q=%20%22germany%22%20%221917%22>

## **Bibliography for student handout:**

### **Primary Sources**

“President Wilson's Declaration of War Message to Congress, April 2, 1917.” National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed November 26, 2013.  
<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=61>.

“Zimmermann Telegram and Decoded Zimmermann Telegram, 1917.” National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed November 26, 2013.  
<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=60>.

### **Secondary Sources**

Danzer, Gerald A., J. Jorge Klor De Alva, Larry S. Krieger, Louis E. Wilson, Nancy Woloch. *The Americans: Reconstruction through the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. Evanston: McDougal Little Inc., 1999.

Duiker, Willam J., and Jackson J. Spielvogel. *World History*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Belmont: Wadsworth Thomson, 2004.

Hochschild, Adam. *To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914–1918*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011.

MacMillan, Margaret. *The War that Ended Peace: The Road to 1914*. New York: Random House, 2013.

Tuchman, Barbara W. *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World before the War, 1890–1914*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1994.

“World War I.” HISTORY Channel. Accessed November 26, 2013.  
[www.history.com/topics/world-war-i](http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i).

“WWI: Timeline.” PBS. Accessed November 26, 2013. [www.pbs.org/greatwar/timeline](http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/timeline).

# Historical Context on World War I

After the fall of Napoleon's Grand **Empire** in 1815, European nations worked to restore their boundaries and governments. **Nationalism** led to many conflicts. In 1870, the Prussian army, with support from Germany, went to war with France. France's humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War required they give up territory to Germany and left France eager for revenge.

Prior to 1914, European governments fought for power and wealth through imperialism, the act of

**Alliance:** A relationship between nations built to support common interests.

**Anarchy:** The belief that society is better off without government and/or established rules or laws.

**Belligerent Nations:** Nations that are actively engaged in war.

**Colonization:** Establishing political control over another country.

**Empire:** A group of countries controlled by one nation or leader.

acquiring land and natural resources through **colonization**. Disputes over boundaries and ownership encouraged European nations to develop **alliances**. Arguments turned into open hostilities when Austria's Archduke, Franz Ferdinand, and his wife were assassinated while traveling in Serbia. Alliances quickly tangled the European nations and their colonies into war. Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire formed the Central Powers while Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy and Japan formed the Allied Powers. On August 4, 1914, German troops entered Belgium, ignoring the country's **neutrality**, to launch its offensive against France. The Great War, later called World War I (WWI), had begun.

Utilizing the Schlieffen Plan, Germany successfully invaded Belgium and Northern France, but met more resistance than expected. Allied forces stopped the German advance just 20 miles outside of Paris. Both sides dug a network of deep trenches guarded with new inventions such as barbed wire and machine guns. Fighting tactics did not match this new defensive strategy, so shockingly deadly battles interrupted long stalemates. For example, the Battle of the Somme (July 1 - November 18, 1916) claimed 1,265,000 casualties, but only advanced the Allied line five

miles.

When Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, Russia mobilized its troops to aid the small nation. Russia's involvement forced Germany to fight a war on two fronts. The fighting on the eastern front did not degrade into trench warfare, but the death toll, as in the west, was staggering.

The United States took control of the Philippines after victory in the Spanish-American War in 1899. With goals of expanding its power, President Theodore Roosevelt pushed for the construction of a canal through Panama beginning in 1904 and used the opportunity to assert police power over Latin America. After his election in 1913, President Woodrow Wilson applied American morality to this control and refused to recognize non-democratic governments. Wilson sent troops into Mexico in 1914 to overthrow revolutionary leaders. U.S. troops remained until 1917. Mexico's outrage and anti-American feelings created hostility and fear along America's southern border.

As a nation isolated from Europe, the United States remained neutral at the onset of WWI. President Wilson played a balancing act of maintaining neutrality while participating in a trade-based economy with **belligerent** nations. In 1915, Germany set a submarine blockade around Great Britain and considered any ship a fair target. Prior to war, America conducted more trade with Great Britain and France than Germany. Americans also viewed Germany as the "bully of Europe" after their invasion of Belgium. As a result, the

U.S. continued its trade with the Allied nations, including an increase of munitions, a decision seen by many as a violation of strict neutrality. On May 7, 1915, German submarines sunk the *Lusitania*, a British ocean liner traveling from New York to Liverpool, England, killing 128 American citizens. American outrage forced Germany to end the blockade, but with the potential to starve Great Britain into defeat, Germany renewed unrestricted use of submarines in 1917. German submarines, called U-boats, sank thousands of passenger and merchant ships during WWI.

Prior to war, European nations and the U.S. experienced violent social unrest over rights and fair treatment. **Anarchy** and **socialism** gained interest and strength. Labor unions went on strike for better wages and safer working conditions with more successful outcomes. Liberal groups fighting for reform, justice, and equality across gender and class feared war would distract from these more important social aims. Some even claimed that the rich advocated for war as a means to end these societal movements.

In November 1916, Woodrow Wilson was re-elected under the campaign slogan: "He kept us out of the war," but debate over American involvement in WWI continued. On March 1, 1917 the U.S. learned about a German plot to recruit Mexican support by offering Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona in the final peace agreements. This Zimmermann Telegram, named after its sender, German Foreign Minister Arthur Zimmermann, stunned Americans who felt safe in physical isolation.

**Review the articles related to the Great War. Do they support sending American troops to war, are they opposed to participation, or do they present a different issue entirely? What support is given to their position? Who wrote the article or what group's viewpoint is captured there? Do you agree or disagree with these opinions? Use your article analysis chart to help define your ideas.**

# Historical Context on World War I: America Declares War

“But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts,—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own Governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free.” —President Woodrow Wilson, Declaration of War Message to Congress

On April 2, 1917, in his address to Congress, President Woodrow Wilson blamed U-boat attacks on all ships regardless of flag or cargo and its impact on American lives as the primary cause for war with Germany. He also cited anger over the Zimmermann Telegram and repeated offenses to America's status as a neutral nation. The U.S. declared war on Germany with a cry for freedom for the oppressed and an end to war.

With America's declaration of war, Germany knew they did not have much time to act before fresh reinforcements arrived. Russia's soldiers had long been struggling to continue their campaign against the Central Powers on the eastern front, but the battles had not yet ended. As a means to free up troops for fighting on the western front, Germany provided transportation for a revolutionary leader, Vladimir Lenin, out of exile and into Russian territory where he could further his aims to overthrow the government. The Russian Revolution resulted in armistice, or an end to war, on the eastern front in December 1917.

With additional troops moving from the eastern front to the west, Germany launched a final offensive to overthrow the Allied Powers in March of 1918 before large numbers of American troops reinforced war-weary soldiers. Their initial attack pushed the Allied line back, but ultimately failed. By the end of April, exhausted German advances stopped and in May enough American troops arrived in Europe to make decisive victories. With a rise of revolutionary ideals and the threat of a complete governmental collapse at home, Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated his throne to a new German Republic which signed an end to war on November 11, 1918. The Allied Powers met to negotiate peace agreements which resulted in the Treaty of Versailles, signed on June 28, 1919. Of the 8,500,000 soldiers killed from 1914–1918, America lost 114,000.

# Article Analysis Chart

Article Title, Newspaper	Article author or group represented	Is the article: pro-war, anti-war, or does it support another opinion?	List the main point(s) that support the author's opinion.	Do you agree with the article? Why or why not?

# Article Analysis Chart

Article Title, Newspaper	Article author or group represented	Is the article: pro-war, anti-war, or does it support another opinion?	List the main point(s) that support the author's opinion.	Do you agree with the article? Why or why not?

## Article Analysis Chart

Article Title, Newspaper	Article author or group represented	Is the article: pro-war, anti-war, or does it support another opinion?	List the main point(s) that support the author's opinion.	Do you agree with the article? Why or why not?
"If Germany Triumphs," <i>The Intelligencer</i>		Pro-War	The article references the sinking of the <i>Lusitania</i> and says that the United States can no longer remain a disinterested observer of the events happening in Europe.	
"The Fortune of War," <i>The Herald and News</i>	Concerned Citizen (editorial writer)	Pro-Neutrality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The article author states that "there is no such thing as civilized war"</li> <li>2. That the passengers of the <i>Lusitania</i> went knowingly on board a ship that Germany had warned they would target and the rest of the U.S should not be punished by entering into a war.</li> </ol>	
	Concerned Citizen (editorial writer)			Yes, because rather than advocate for entering into a war and ending peace, they propose to use the prosperity of the nation to support those engaged in the war through relief support to those affected. They suggest an alternative other than just staying out of the war.

# Article Analysis Chart

Article Title, Newspaper	Article author or group represented	Is the article: pro-war, anti-war, or does it support another opinion?	List the main point(s) that support the author's opinion.	Do you agree with the article? Why or why not?