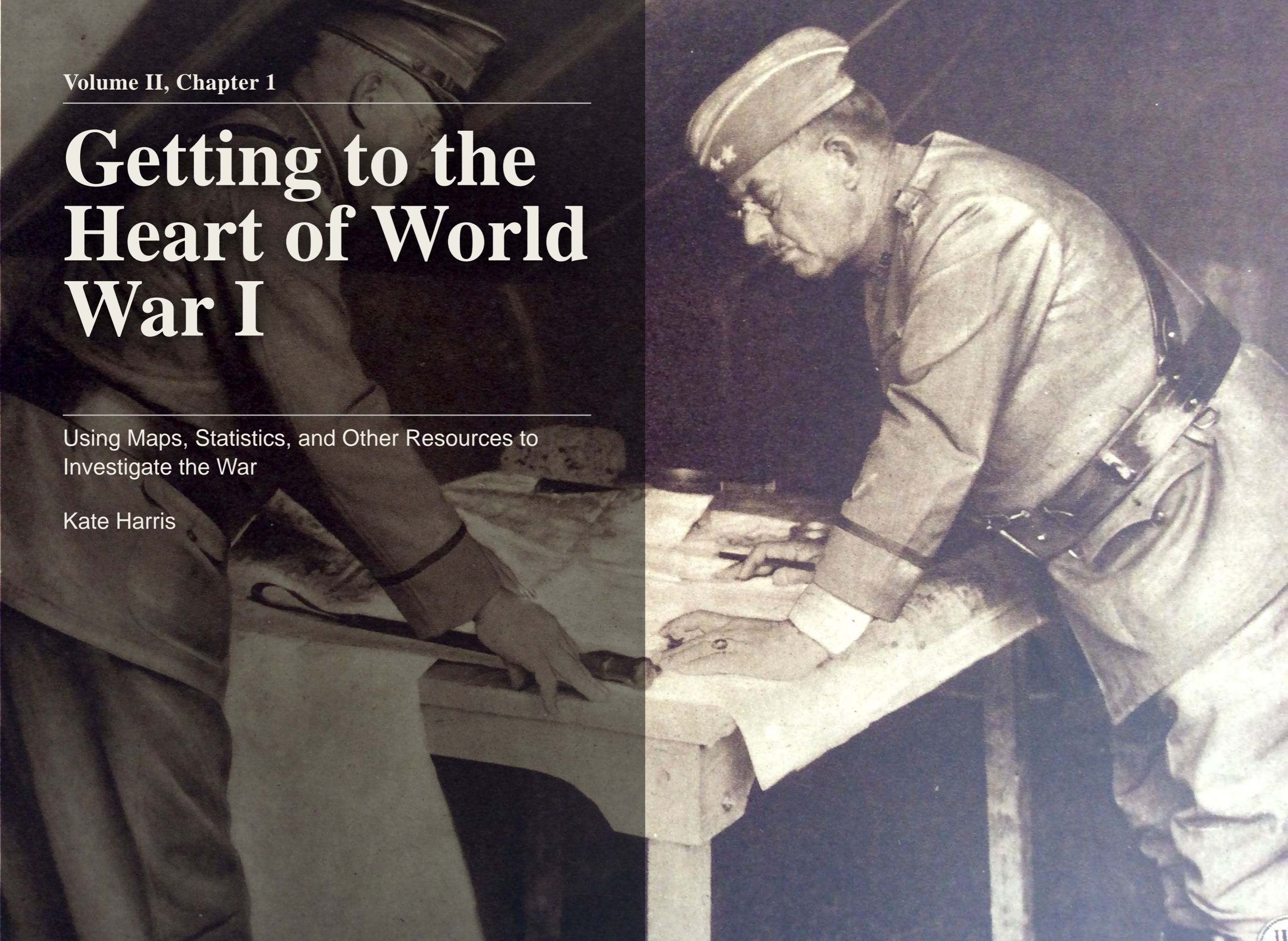


Volume II, Chapter 1

Getting to the Heart of World War I

Using Maps, Statistics, and Other Resources to Investigate the War

Kate Harris



This chapter illustrates a variety of ways to bring the scale of American involvement in World War I home to students through a resource easily accessible by classroom teachers, *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe*, also known as the Blue Book, by the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC). Using maps, statistics, and written sources referenced in the Blue Book and other ABMC materials, teachers can find windows into the large themes of the war and help students grasp the importance of this war not only to world history, but to American lives.

Emphasizing skills-based activities and the practice of historical thinking, many of the exercises in this chapter can be used as-is for fifteen to thirty minute exercises during a unit on World War I (primarily focused on U. S. contributions and the Meuse-Argonne campaign), or adapted for use with other historical content. The skills practiced include close reading of written secondary sources (identifying fact, opinion, and perspective), interpreting maps, interpreting statistics, and synthesizing multiple sources to build a historical argument.

Introduction

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. **How can students use the Blue Book to practice close reading of written sources and identifying fact, opinion, and perspective in order to develop a richer understanding of the United States' role in World War I?**
2. **How can students use maps and statistics from the Blue Book to describe and evaluate the United States' contribution to the Meuse-Argonne offensive and World War I?**
3. **How can students synthesize information from the written narrative, maps, and statistics of the Blue Book to build an argument about the United States' contribution to the outcome of World War I?**

I've never been the history teacher who regales my students with tales of brave soldiers or daring battle plans. As a United States History teacher, my traditional run-down of World War I, "that European war," focused on its impact on domestic and foreign politics, minimizing the battlefield experience of American soldiers. As I studied the Blue Book in preparation for this project, I struggled to find how I would incorporate the Meuse-Argonne offensive into my classroom. Moreover, how would I personally connect to battle or the war itself? While my head knew the relevance, my heart didn't really understand the impact of the war, the scope and size of the battles fought, and the losses incurred.

As I walked through the cemetery at Meuse-Argonne, it hit me that understanding this war meant more than studying effects like the Treaty of Versailles or the Office of Price Administration. The battle truly represented an American sacrifice and a commitment to intervention. Sharing this epiphany with students would take more than just listing the numbers of men fighting or miles gained, more than retelling the anecdotes of battle, and more than projecting the image of 14,240 brilliant white marble headstones. Each of these pieces, in isolation, brings up valid and ongoing questions about war: why make that sacrifice? How much of an impact can one soldier or battle make? Taken together, these "snapshots" of the Meuse-Argonne battle captured on my trip and in the Blue Book would allow my students to act like historians and wrestle with these and other questions.

Answering them would require more than a cursory look at the evidence; it would require a close reading of materials, an understanding of geographic and historical context, and an ability to evaluate each source's merits. Answering these questions would afford my students a deeper and richer understanding of the impact the United States had on this war, encouraging them to be better historians in the process. As my own understanding of American involvement in the Meuse-Argonne grew, through piecing together numbers, maps, words, and images, I realized my students' path would similarly have to draw from a variety of sources in order to develop a rich and authentic picture. This chapter reflects that, illustrating many ways to bring the scale of American involvement home to students through the Blue Book. Using maps, statistics, and primary and secondary sources referenced in the Blue Book and other ABMC materials, teachers can encourage students to act as historians, closely reading each source for insight into the importance of American soldiers' involvement in the Meuse-Argonne offensive and World War I as a whole.

Introduction to the Blue Book



Tim Nosal, ABMC Director of Public Affairs, introduces the Blue Book and its significance.

The Resource

What Is the Blue Book?

Published as *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe: A History Guide, and Reference Book* by ABMC in 1938, the Blue Book is a history, travel guide, and reference text all in one. Rich with maps, visuals, and narrative histories of the battles of World War I, the Blue Book is useful both as a secondary source describing the conflict and as a primary source indicating the concerns of the American Battle Monuments Commission, whose task it was to honor the fallen of the Great War.



American Battle Monuments Commission, American Armies and Battlefields in Europe: A History, Guide, and Reference Book. (United States Government Printing Office, 1938).

Historical Thinking Skills

Sam Wineburg, author of *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (2001), writes that historians “see themselves as detectives searching for evidence among primary sources to a mystery that can never be completely solved” (2010). His approach moves beyond having students memorize the details of history and instead engages them in

actively questioning the clues left behind by the past. He stresses explicitly teaching the thought processes necessary to source a document, contextualize it, read it closely both for what is and what is not there, and compare and synthesize findings with other sources (*Ibid.*). It also requires that students practice math, geography, and literacy skills from other disciplines in order to truly perform a close reading. The ABMC Blue Book, with its narratives, maps, and statistics, allows us to develop these skills while pursuing an understanding of America's role in this conflict.

The following historical skills can be practiced while working with this content:

- Close Reading of Written Sources: Identifying Fact, Opinion, & Perspective
- Interpreting Maps as Sources
- Interpreting Statistics as Sources
- Synthesizing Multiple Sources to Build an Argument

Each of the following sections of this chapter includes ideas for teaching the process of a particular skill. How can we help students learn the general skills of interpretation, analysis, and critical thinking when it comes to common historical sources? How can we leverage these skills to not only teach historical thinking, but the story of the Meuse-Argonne battle? These processes are combined with applications for the Blue Book, so that teachers can incorporate this skill-building into a unit on World War I and an

exploration of America's role in it. While the activities build in complexity, they are intended as a menu of activities that teachers can choose from to build or enhance a larger unit that meets the needs of their content and curriculum.

Written Sources: Identifying Fact, Opinion, and Perspective

Evaluating texts for facts, opinions, and determining factors that drive those opinions is a critical skill for history classrooms and life. Our students face an onslaught of media and information on a daily basis and need to be able to interpret the purposes of texts and evaluate the trustworthiness of the information they provide. The Blue Book includes a variety of types of texts that can be used to practice this skill. Before working with the World War I content material, make sure students know the difference between facts and opinions with these short introductory activities.

Linda Rhinehart Neas, in a set of 4 mini-lessons on the subject, suggests having students create mind-maps of the words “fact” and “opinion.” She notes that the key points found should be that facts are “based in truth, can be seen, observed, or found, and are known to exist” while opinions are “a belief, a personal opinion, not necessarily based in truth, or an assumption or judgment” (2012).

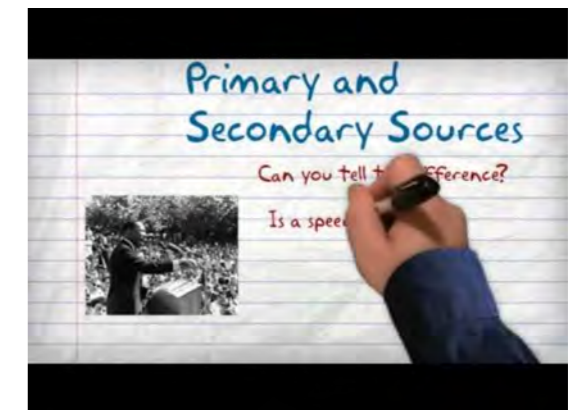
With older students, you might brainstorm words that help identify something as an opinion—words that impart value judgments, are emotionally loaded, or suggest that something is open to

interpretation. Words like *always* or *never* can also indicate that something is an opinion, as they suggest little understandings of the complexities of history and a tendency to make broad generalizations.

Another of Rhinehart's activities, reinforcing the ideas above, is to provide students with copies of a current, engaging newspaper article and two highlighters.

Ask students to read through the article and highlight facts and opinions, using a different color for each. As a group, review student choices and discuss any errors. This is a good time to add to the definitions and key words from the initial discussion of the topic (*Ibid.*).

Primary vs Secondary Sources



Is it a primary source or a secondary source? This video gives a brief overview of the two. Discuss with your students why The Blue Book could be considered both!



Soldiers reading the news from home in the trenches of World War I.

Lesson Plan: Battling for Your Interpretation - How the U.S. Portrays Key Battles

This ninety-minute lesson uses German propaganda referenced in the ABMC Blue Book and an article from *The Stars and Stripes*, the military newspaper, to review the skill of distinguishing fact and opinion. Students compare descriptions of America's role in the

war from the Blue Book and *The Stars and Stripes* to develop a fuller picture of the value of American contributions to the fight. Students practice close reading of primary sources while they learn more about American contributions to the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

Guiding Questions

1. How can students use the ABMC Blue Book to practice close reading of written sources and historical thinking skills such as identifying fact, opinion, and perspective in order to develop a richer understanding of the United States' role in World War I?
2. What was American morale like in World War I, and how did this impact the outcome of the Meuse-Argonne offensive?
3. How trustworthy are military-published descriptions of wartime events? Is an independent media necessary?
4. How important was American involvement in events like the St. Mihiel offensive, the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the battle for Montfaucon hill, and the armistice to the outcome of the war?

Learning Outcomes

The student will be able to:

1. identify fact, opinion, and perspective in two sources about United States soldiers' motives for fighting in World War I.
2. describe United States soldiers' motives for fighting in World War I.
3. compare two sources describing key battles and events from U.S. involvement in World War I.
4. evaluate the importance of U.S. involvement in the St. Mihiel offensive, the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the battle for Montfaucon Hill, Sgt. Alvin York's story, and the armistice.

Teacher Planning

Time Required

90 minutes

Materials Needed

"Why Fight" Worksheet

"Stars and Stripes" Worksheet

"Battling Interpretations"

Worksheet

Battling Interpretations



Tap or click the icon to view the document.

Readings for Groups:

St. Mihiel Offensive – **Stars and Stripes**; Blue Book p. 106, paragraph beginning with "The St. Mihiel salient..." to page 112.

Midway through the Meuse-Argonne Offensive – **Stars and Stripes**; Blue Book p. 232-235, beginning with "The Hindenburg line in this region..." to "The Army prepared..."

Battle for Montfaucon Hill - **Stars and Stripes**; Blue Book p. 205-209, beginning with "This hill, an extremely important feature..." and ending at Part II.

Sgt. Alvin York – **Stars and Stripes**; Blue Book p.228-230, beginning with "On the night of October 6th..." to "Medal of Honor."

The Armistice – **Stars and Stripes**; Blue Book p. 191-192, beginning with "Late on November 9,...", and p. 507-508 section on the German armistice

Pre-activities

1. Post or project the following quote for students to read and discuss, or respond in writing for a warm-up activity.

"The readers are mainly the men who have been honored by being the first contingent of Americans to fight on European soil for the honor of their country. . . . The paper, written by the men

in the service, should speak the thoughts of the new American Army and the American people from whom the Army has been drawn. It is your paper. Good luck to it” –General John Pershing (Library of Congress 2013)

2. Ask students to identify the purpose and audience for *The Stars and Stripes*. How do they think this will affect what they see written here? Teachers should explain that this activity will give the students some background into *The Stars and Stripes*, a newspaper written by soldiers for soldiers from February 1918 to June 1919. Digital copies of this newspaper are available via the Library of Congress and provide insight into the minds of the servicemen fighting in France during World War I. The paper was completely written and published by members of the American Expeditionary Force, in France (*Ibid.*).

Activities

1. Divide students into pairs and have them each read the two articles on the “Why Fight?” handout independently, reading one and then switching with their partners.
2. Ask students to work together to identify the facts and opinions in each text, using different colored highlighters if desired. To check for understanding, compare student answers to the key.

Why Fight Worksheet
Answers



Tap or click the icon to view the document.

3. In pairs, have students complete the worksheet “Stars and Stripes: American Propaganda?” for each article. To check for understanding, compare student answers to the key.
4. Discuss questions D, E, and F as a whole class. Emphasize the idea that although written as “news,” the report in *The Stars and Stripes* could have other motives. Connect this to ideas about American morale and the psychological boost that fresh American soldiers arriving had on the Allies.
5. Explain to students that they will now use articles from *The Stars and Stripes* together with the ABMC Blue Book, to work on comparing, synthesizing, and corroborating information. Students will research the experiences of soldiers at various points during the Meuse-Argonne offensive and compare the descriptions that they find in order to develop a more complete picture of the war. As a class, skim through the preface to the Blue Book and discuss the questions on the “Battling Interpretations” worksheet.
6. How does this compare to the purpose and audience of *The Stars and Stripes*? Discuss question #4 as a group. Teachers

should note that this text, written after the war, has less emotion coloring its descriptions and its authors had more access to information about what was happening at the time, as opposed to one soldier's or company's perspective.

7. Divide the class into five groups based on the chart in the materials section (St. Mihiel offensive, Meuse-Argonne offensive, battle for Montfaucon Hill, Sgt. Alvin York, and The Armistice). Give each group the appropriate readings and have them work to complete the Battling Interpretations worksheet.
8. Have one student from each group place their event on a large timeline on the board in front of the classroom. Have a representative from each group share what happened during the event and how it helps us answer the question: How did this event reflect the importance of Americans' involvement in the war? If time, ask students to rank the events based on America's role and based on the impact on the end of the war. Which events were we most involved in and which were we least involved in? Which had the greatest impact and which had the least impact?

Assessment

Assess students based on the worksheets, class discussion, and timeline.

Modifications Extensions

Ask students to consider how an article on one of the above topics might differ, depending on its audience. How would one written for the German newspapers look? For the American public? What would be added or left out?

Compare this written propaganda to **recruitment posters from the Committee for Public Information during World War I**. How does the audience for each differ? Does that change the approach or message of each work?

Create "super" groups that incorporate one student who looked at each article. Ask them to develop a "Style Guide" for each main text, The Blue Book and The Stars and Stripes. What kinds of advice would they give to authors who wanted to contribute? What should the topic and tone of articles be like? Who do they think is the main audience for each? Which source is better for studying the experience of soldiers? The impact of battles?

Searching Digital Archives



For aspiring military leaders?

Advanced students could work beyond the articles referenced here, searching the digital archives and the digitized Blue Book for more reports on the events mentioned.

Interpreting Maps as Sources



Officers review battle maps during World War I

“The skills needed to read and interpret maps are a part of visual literacy — a set of skills and habits of mind necessary to “read” images. Visual literacy means not just decoding an image but comprehending it — grasping the image’s intended meaning, evaluating it, and incorporating it into other knowledge.”

—David Walbert (2010)

The Blue Book has some of the more detailed World War I maps of American involvement available, which can be very useful for helping you and your students develop map reading skills while also learning about America’s role in the conflict. Because students have completely different levels of experience working with maps, and the world of mapping is changing rapidly, the paper maps available in the Blue Book may truly seem like relics to them! Although we would like students to consider these maps as artifacts from a time period, we also want them to recognize that the skills they learn working with these maps are relevant to today.

Map Conventions and Skills:

Here are some ways to review the skills and conventions necessary to closely read paper maps, in all of their various forms, and then use these skills to learn more about U.S. contributions to World War I. [National Geographic](#) has a good PDF resource on making maps and the types of map out there. In addition, teachers wanting some background on the skills and conventions of maps could use the [Annenberg Reading Maps Thinking Interactive](#), although it would be appropriate for students too. This interactive is helpful because it asks students to look at different styles of maps (birds-eye view, panorama, etc).

Students can wrestle with big ideas while reviewing the skills necessary to interpret maps. In terms of World War I, students need to consider why the contested land of the Meuse-Argonne was so important to the outcome of the war. Why did both Germany and France lay claim to it? How did the land impact the fighting? What geographic features became particularly important "turf"? Chris Bunin's "Turf Maps" activity focuses on the concept of contested territory, while forcing students to generate their own maps and show understanding of map conventions like legends/keys, scale, direction, and symbolism.

Turf Maps



Teacher Chris Bunin explains an activity in which students create their own "turf maps".

Lesson Plan: Reading Maps to Learn about the Meuse-Argonne Offensive

The maps in the Blue Book section on American Operations in the Meuse-Argonne region give students an opportunity to think about the nature of fighting in World War I and the successes enjoyed by the American Expeditionary Force. How great was the United States' contribution to the Meuse-Argonne offensive, and ultimately, the war? Why was this "turf" so significant?

Want ideas about questions to use with maps? Check out [this process guide](#) from LEARN NC.

Guiding Questions

1. How can students use maps from the ABMC Blue Book to describe and evaluate the United States' contribution to the Meuse-Argonne offensive and World War I?
2. What do various maps reveal about the nature of fighting by American units in World War I and the importance of the contested territory?

Learning Outcomes

The student will be able to:

1. use maps from the Blue Book to explain why American involvement in the Meuse-Argonne region was critical to the outcome of the war.
2. describe the nature of fighting in the Meuse-Argonne region.
3. assess the perspective and purpose of mapmakers.

Teacher Planning

Time Required

30 – 90 minutes, depending on activities chosen

Materials Needed

Reading Maps Gallery



Point out the bold red line to students. What is this line showing, according to the key? (The battle front as of March 1918).

Why is this area of France of key significance? (near German and Belgian borders, close to Paris, area historically contested between the two nations, rich farmland)

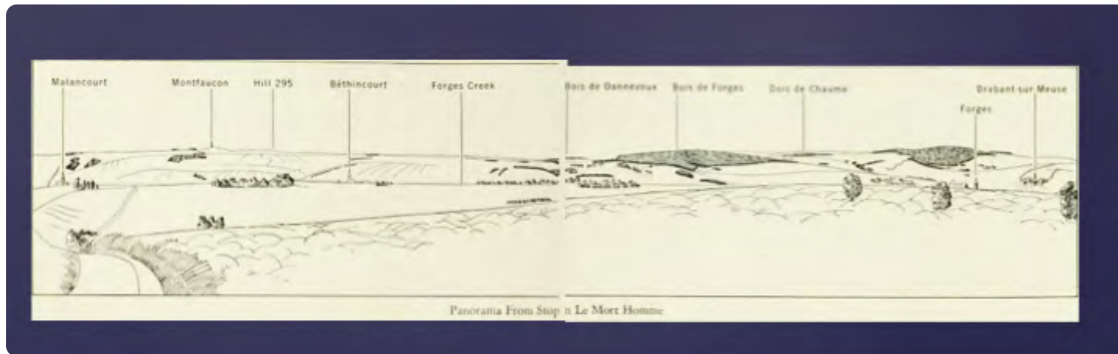


Reading Maps Handout



Tap or click the icon to view the document.

Maps as Artifacts Gallery



This panorama, found on pages 196-197 of the Blue Book, is intended to show tourists the scene of the fighting in September 1918. “This area at that time was a scene of indescribable desolation. Thousands of shells had churned up the surface of the ground and the autumn rains had made it a sea of mud, littered with battlefield wreckage. Innumerable bands of barbed wire zigzagged their way across the hills and valleys, while the few shattered trees that remained stood lonely sentinels over the bleak landscape. Nature has done much to heal this battle-scarred area but even now (1937) the marks of trenches and shell holes are plainly visible” (Blue Book 196).



Battle Map Newscast directions (last image in Maps as Artifacts gallery)

Smartboard projector and whiteboard combination

Pre-activities

1. Use the Reading Maps gallery to discuss the major geographic features of France based on the Blue Book map. Ask students to guess why certain areas are important. Emphasize the importance of the river, railroads, and progress of the war to that point. See the captions in the Gallery for more information.

Activities

1. Put students in groups of 2-3 to study the Reading Maps handout. You might have them color or draw a line between Belgium, France, and Germany on the map to help them visualize the nations clearly. Ask them to consider:
 - a. If you are a German commander, what would your next goal be? How would you explain your positions to the Kaiser?
 - b. If you were an Allied Commander and were able to direct the newly arriving Americans, what region would you end them to? Why?
 - c. Finally, does this map tell you everything you need to know as a commanding officer of the army? What else would you need to know, and where could you find it?

2. Discuss possible answers below:

- a. Importance of gaining the high ground, getting closer to Paris, maintaining controls of rivers and railroads for supplies and transportation
- b. The area surrounding the Meuse River to prevent Germans from getting closer to Paris, aim for control of rivers, railroads, and high ground. See above answer.
- c. No! What is the strength of the opposing armies, where are they receiving supplies from, where have trenches been dug? See other military maps for help.

4. In order to have students understand the importance of the region, they will need to closely study the geographic features of the area and the terrain gained by Allied soldiers. Page 191 illustrates ground gained in the war, and the map on 190 shows how German divisions moved to that area. Page 189 illustrates the Allied attacks in the same time period. Each of these maps gives different information about fighting in the Meuse-Argonne in early November. At this point, have students study the three maps on the handout and answer the quiz questions below:

- a. What appears to be the goal of American forces at this time? (to reach Sedan)
- b. Why would Sedan be an important point to reach? (Railroads and river)

- c. In what direction were Allied troops moving at this time? (East/Northeast)
- d. Did Germans move more troops toward the front line or away from it during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive? (Toward)
- e. About how many miles of ground did the First Army gain between November 1 and November 11? (about 20)
- f. Was the town of Sedan ever re-captured by the Allies? (No)
- g. Did Allied forces ever cross the Meuse River? (Yes)
- h. What was the terrain like during the final 10 days of fighting? (Mostly fields and farms)

After students complete the quiz, ask them how they would describe fighting during the last 10 days of the war, based on the maps.

5. Discuss:

- a. Why do they think American forces were able to cover so much ground during this time? (new troops brought energy and fervor against a tired enemy, gained the high ground quickly and had an advantage, much of the fighting was on open terrain).

- b. What does this indicate about the progress of the war once the Americans became involved? (The Americans helped bring the war to a close in a very quick manner).
6. Using the gallery of maps as artifacts of World War I, discuss with your students the following:
 - a. What does this image tell us that other images do not?
 - b. What is this map used for? Who would find it most helpful?
 - c. What else would you like to know if you were using this map?
7. Each of these maps deals with terrain contested during the war. Ask students:
 - a. What inferences can be made about the kind of fighting performed by Americans and their Allies?
 - b. How similar or different were their experiences?
 - c. What were the results of American involvement?
8. Use the last image of the Maps as Artifacts Gallery to guide students through a newscast activity. Students may present their newscasts live to the class or record them for later submission. The main goal of this activity is for students to analyze why it was so critical for American forces to attack in the Meuse-Argonne region.

Assessment

Assess students based on their worksheets, class discussion, and the newscast activity.

Modifications

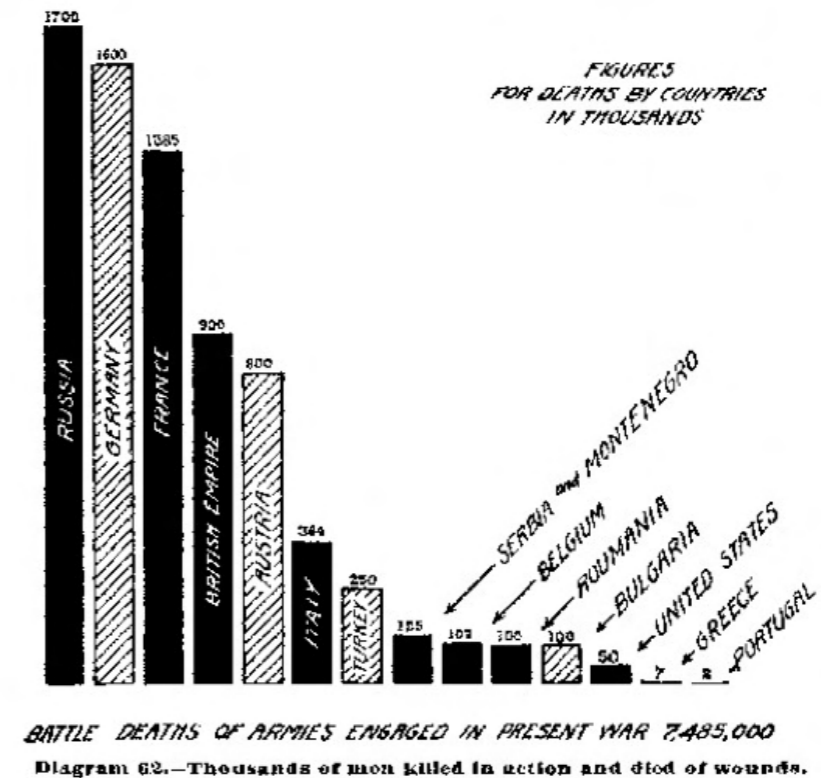
Teachers could eliminate the Battle Map Newscast and focus on the map-reading activities in order to shorten the lesson.

Interpreting Statistics as Sources

The Blue Book is jam-packed with statistics about American involvement in World War I. Statistics are incredibly useful for teaching, as are the visual charts and graphs created from them, because they distill a lot of information into a very small space. They are useful when trying to illustrate the size and scale of a topic, a general trend, or big idea. But, if not developed thoughtfully and read carefully, they can also disguise, distort, and misinform. This section will address how students can work meaningfully with the statistics in the Blue Book in order to assess America's impact on the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

This section will refer to lists of numerical information as tables, and meaningful visual transformations of these numbers as graphs. We start with charts of statistical information, and then we talk about ways that looking for trends and patterns can be made easier. One way is to convert the information into a visual—a line graph, bar graph, or pie graph. Students must understand that each of these graphs plays a different role.

Graphs



A bar graph is useful when we are comparing across categories. Ex: How many battle deaths were there from each nation during World War I?



Getting students comfortable with statistics can be a challenge at first; who finds these lists of numbers and text interesting? However, connecting these tables to striking visual images can have a huge impact on student engagement and understanding. There are two main goals for students when it comes to working with statistical data in tables. First, they should be able to read the data and convert it into meaningful visual graphs and the reverse—find specific data points from charts and graphs. Second, and more importantly, they should be able to find meaning in the data by identifying larger trends, pointing out anomalies, and learning to look for what is not there.

I do a couple of things to get students more comfortable with looking at charts of statistical data in my classroom. We begin with a process that works equally well for statistical tables as for data consolidated into line, bar, or pie graphs (Achieve 3000 2012):

1. Look at the title. What is the topic? What do we know already about this topic?
2. Look at the labels or headings. What is being measured?
3. Look for highs and lows. What can be learned from these?
4. Look for trends and patterns. Are certain variables consistently increasing or decreasing? Are there sudden shifts in the data at any point?

5. I may ask very specific questions that simply require them to read the numbers carefully and isolate meaningful points. Can students explain certain statistics?

The Yanks Are Coming



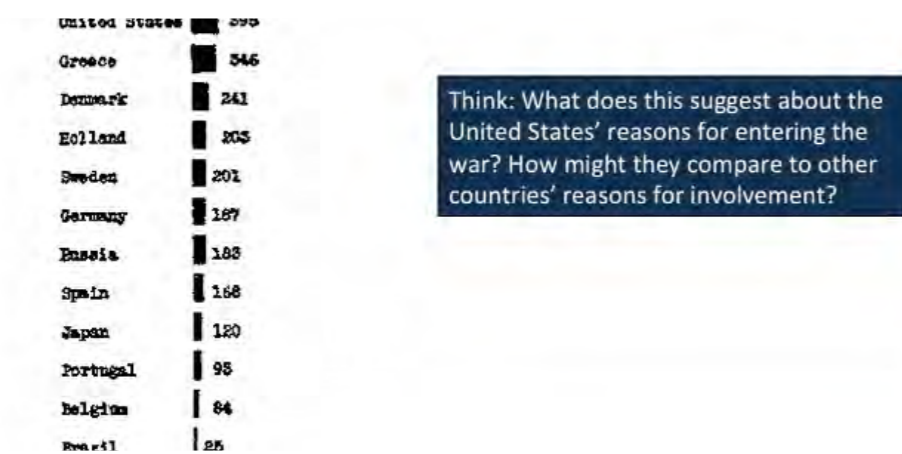
This figure illustrates this procedure and some examples of data-points that you might use to grab students' attention.

Another way to have students focus on the information in the numbers is to cover up the title. Can they guess what the topic of this chart or graph is based on the information available? Take this

further by eliminating one or more pieces of data from the chart; can students predict what kinds of numbers could come next?

Teachers can ask students to create a newspaper headline or editorial based on the information found in the table or chart. The aim is to evaluate whether students can correctly translate the numbers into other means of sharing the same ideas and themes (Davies and Davies 2012, 56, 92). This gallery shows how the above activities could look, while connecting each of the graphs to the larger theme of America's role in World War I.

Statistics Examples



Talk about what clues might have led students to guess that this chart was about shipping. They may have known that Britain had a large navy, and that Germany didn't really suffer from submarine losses.



Lesson Plan: Running the Numbers on America's Contribution to the Meuse-Argonne Offensive

An important lesson for students to learn is that by making the choice to distill information into statistics, or, even further, into a graph, they are leaving something else out. "What is missing?" is a powerful question for historians to ask. This activity will use statistics pulled from throughout the ABMC Blue Book to evaluate United States contributions to the Meuse-Argonne offensive and, ultimately, to World War I.

Guiding Questions

1. How can students use statistics from the ABMC Blue Book to describe and evaluate the United States' contribution to the Meuse-Argonne offensive and World War I?

Learning Outcomes

The student will be able to:

1. evaluate the effectiveness of statistics as a source of historical evidence.
2. interpret statistics from the ABMC Blue Book.
3. use statistics to describe the United States' contribution to the Meuse-Argonne offensive and World War I.
4. evaluate the United States' contributions relative to other nations.

Teacher Planning

Time Required

90 minutes

Materials Needed

Death Gallery

Grass

Carl Sandburg (1918)

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work—
I am the grass; I cover all.

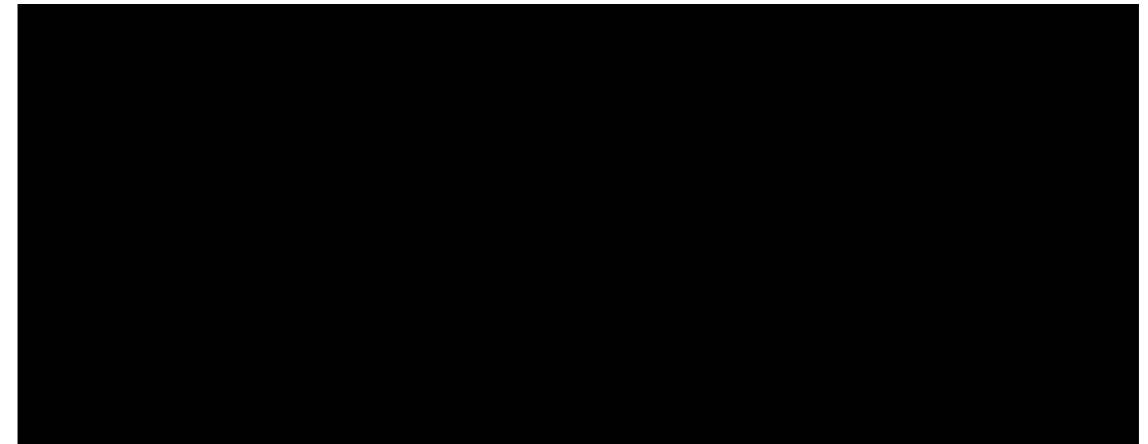
And pile them high at Gettysburg
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:
What place is this?
Where are we now?

I am the grass.
Let me work.

This poem, by American poet Carl Sandburg, illustrates the experience of American deaths in wartime. What emotions are evoked in this poem? What specifics can be learned about World War I (note that Ypres and Verdun were major battles of World War I)? How does it help us learn about World War I? What is missing?



Meuse-Argonne Moving Images



This is a video of the Meuse-Argonne cemetery, where Americans who lost their lives during the Meuse-Argonne offensive are buried. What does this visual suggest about America's contribution to the war? What does it suggest about our national feelings about the war?

Images of Death Worksheet



Tap or click the icon to view the document.

Running the Numbers Packet



Tap or click the icon to view the document.

Pre-activities

1. Share with students the gallery of ways to illustrate death in World War I and the Meuse-Argonne moving images video to help students understand what is gained and what is lost when looking at statistics. As you review the sources as a class, give each student the Images of Death handout to record the strengths and weaknesses of each. Teachers might note that beyond just a difference of scale and emotion, the statistics can also mask things that are not in the “official records” such as volunteers who were killed during the war, but would not show up on military casualty lists.

Activities

1. After reviewing how to use statistics effectively as a source, students are ready to build their understanding of the United States’ contribution to the war by closely studying the information in the Blue Book. In the Running the Numbers packet, there are several short exercises that can help students assess the U.S. role. Have students work through the packet individually or with small groups. To evaluate student understanding, use the Running the Numbers answer key.

Running the Numbers:
Answers



Tap or click the icon to view the document.

2. After students have completed the packet, ask them to consider what they have learned about America’s contribution to World War I. Have them write a sticky note with a headline or tweet about it on the way out. Check these for accuracy and review the best ones as a class.

Assessment

Assess student understanding using the Running the Numbers answer key.

Modifications

Extensions

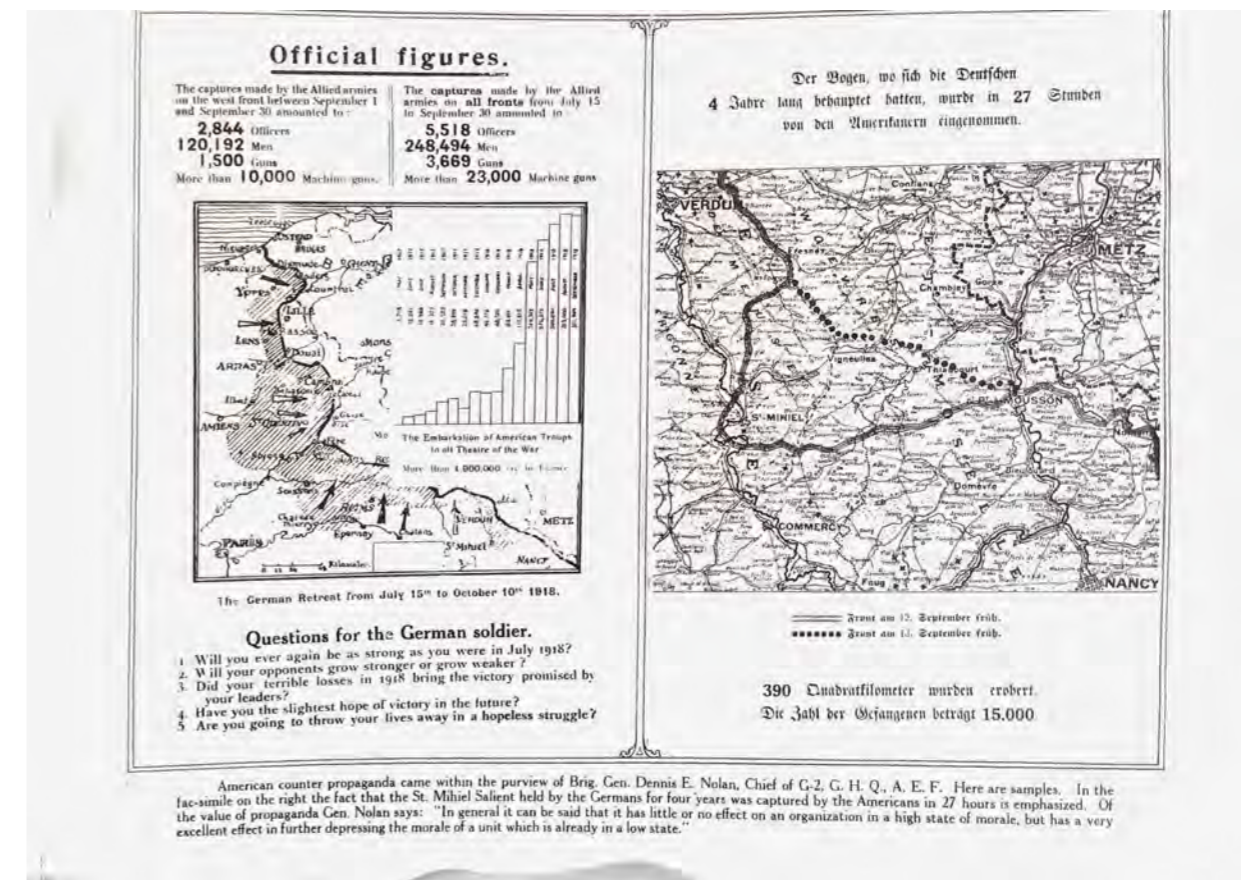
Teachers could have students create newscasts in a similar manner to the assignment used in the [Reading Maps lesson](#).

Synthesizing Multiple Sources to Build an Argument: Creating Infographics

What is an infographic? According to visual.ly, “We’re talking about any graphic that displays and explains information, whether that be data or words.” They also note that such graphics have a narrative flow, or tell a story (2014). This makes them appropriate means for students to convey a historical argument in a way that is appealing to visual learners, while working on technological skills that will help them in future careers. In the process, students make important editorial decisions about what to include that help them convey a complex argument through key statistics, and share the conclusions that they have found.

Historically, infographics have played a critical role in journalism. As newspapers wanted to conserve space and save room on the page for more print, they also needed to convey lots of information in a quick manner. *The Guardian* shares some of its early infographics on World War I on its website (Rogers 2013). Today, infographics are commonly used across the web as a means for journalists and marketers to quickly convey messages.

These historical infographics can be used with students to great effect—as combinations of statistics, maps, and text they build on all of the skills previously discussed in this chapter. An example is this piece of American propaganda, referenced in the Blue Book:



American Propaganda

Modern infographics can be ways to look at historical content and pack an argumentative punch into an appealing visual. The [visual.ly blog](#) provides helpful information for teachers thinking about using infographics in the classroom. Their advice applies not only to the use of infographics, but to any chart or graph that you share with students. Teachers must first choose the right infographic, thinking about the quality of the information, whether or not the visualization follows best practices (i.e. using scale effectively, not distorting information, using the appropriate types of graph), and the interest-level of the graphic. They then suggest having students analyze the graphic, asking them “What story can you pull from the information/data you are looking at?” and “What is the role of the narrator, or the person making the graphic? What is their perspective and what are they trying to tell us?” The rest of the suggestions for using infographics in class can be found on the visual.ly site. They emphasize putting student analysis first—allowing them to take risks and make guesses with the material, pulling a story from the data—and then using a class discussion and debrief. How can we connect this data to the larger goals of the lesson? (*Ibid.*)

Lesson Plan: Make Your Own Infographic

In this lesson, students first analyze a sample infographic and then build their own. The process includes developing an essential question about World War I and then answering it using maps and statistics from the Blue Book. Finally, students will use Piktochart to create an infographic explaining their answer to the question.

Guiding Questions

1. How can students synthesize information from the written narrative, maps, and statistics of the ABMC Blue Book to build an argument about the United States’ contribution to the outcome of World War I?

Learning Outcomes

The student will be able to:

1. synthesize information from the written narrative, maps, and statistics of the ABMC Blue Book to build an argument about the United States’ contribution to World War I.
2. create an infographic using the web application Piktochart.

Teacher Planning

Time Required

90 minutes plus additional time outside of class to complete the project

Materials Needed

Computers with internet access for each student

Planning Sheet and Project Rubric

Smartboard or projector and whiteboard combination

Infographic Planning Sheet Rubric



Tap or click the icon to view the document.

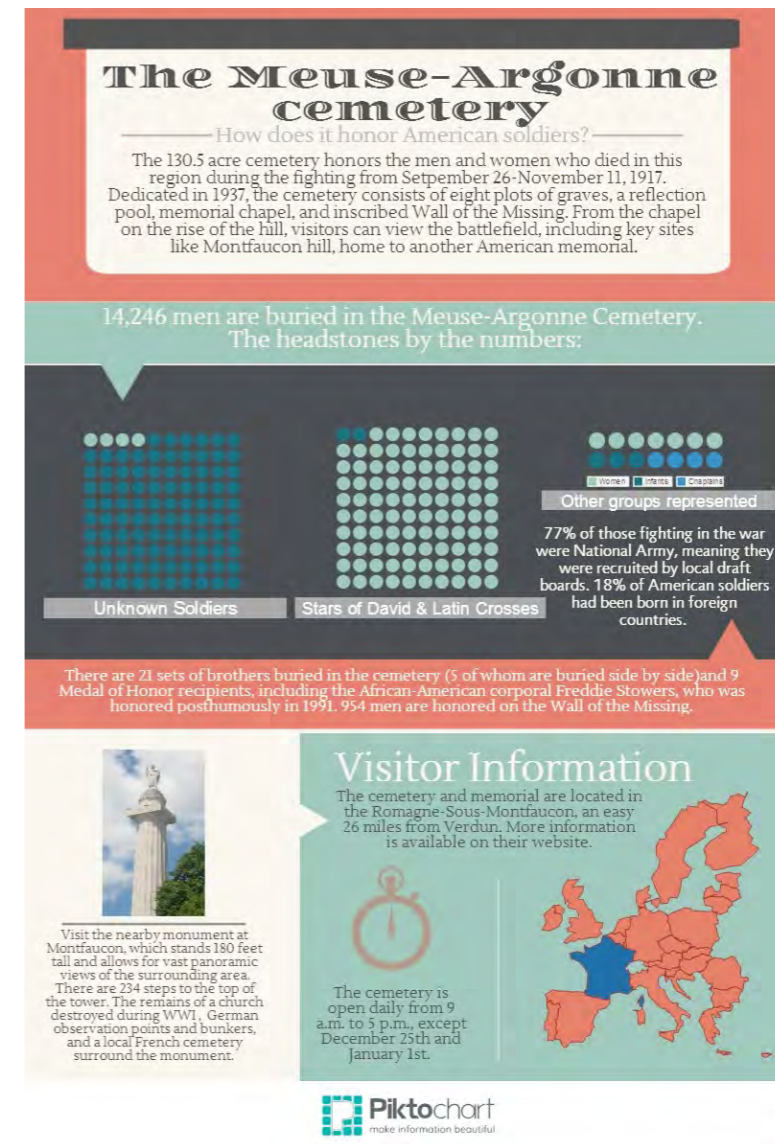
There are many charts of statistics throughout the Blue Book, most of them consolidated in Chapter XIV, “Interesting Facts and General Information.” In addition, at the end of each chapter, the authors share statistics about a particular offensive’s casualties, mileage gained, etc.

Pre-activities

1. Project **this example** of an infographic made using resources available in the Blue Book and elsewhere. Have students explore it with you and note how it poses and answers a question and incorporates statistics, visuals, and facts to support the answer. Also, note that graphics such as these often have more utility on the web than when printed. In this one, for example, pointing your mouse over certain graphics gives you additional information. Have students identify the question that it poses and the various pieces of evidence that are used to support it. Critique the infographic: What other information might be helpful? What does it do well?

Activities

1. Students should choose or develop an essential question about World War I. Some questions that might be good places to start, based on the resources available in the ABMC book, are:
 - a. How much did America contribute to the war in terms of military strength?
 - b. How quickly was America able to join the fight?



Meuse-Argonne Pikto

- c. How did the Meuse-Argonne offensive impact the outcome of the war?
- d. How much did America contribute to the war in terms of economic strength?

- Note that each of these questions connects to the main questions of this chapter—students should be well prepared to answer them if you have also used the other activities from the chapter.
- Students need to choose appropriate statistics from the Blue Book to incorporate into their infographic. They should aim for a combination of three graphs or statistics to share that will help readers answer the main question. Use the Infographic planning sheet to make sure students have what they need before they begin to work online.
- Students should develop a thesis, or answer, to their main question, based on the evidence they have found.
- Students should log in to Piktochart and create an account. They can choose a theme they feel is appropriate for their question and label their infographic with the question they would like to answer.
- If unfamiliar with the web application, students should watch the tutorial on how to create a Piktochart. This is a very thorough tutorial created by Secondary Solutions that explains how to use Piktochart in the classroom and how to make your own.
- Students should complete building their infographic, incorporating their question, statistics, and thesis. Images and maps could also be used to support their point.

- Have students share their infographics with each other via a course website, or use printed version to make a bulletin board.

Assessment

Assess students using the rubric and their planning sheet.

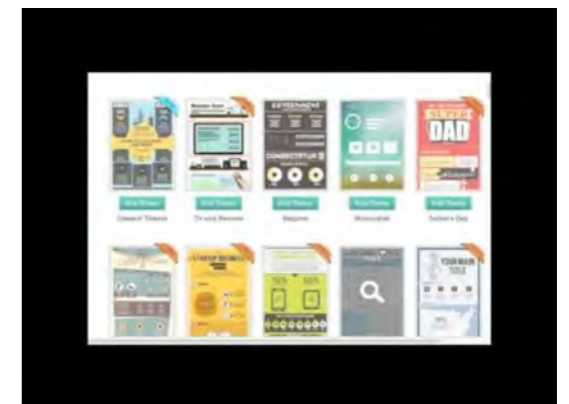
Modifications

Note that creating an infographic aimed at answering one of these essential questions practices similar skills required to create and/or decode the document-based-questions used on the **AP United States History exams**. Students must work closely with a variety of primary sources, determine context, and synthesize information into a cohesive and accurate argument. Rather than working online to create an infographic, teachers could ask their students to develop a DBQ that asks (and answers) one of the essential questions.

You might prepare students to create their own infographics by investigating some of the following:

The Great War 100 project has many examples of infographics related to the war. However, they do not tell a story or answer a question. Encourage students to think about what kinds of statistics they might want to

Youtube Infographic Tutorial



combine to convey more information about the war. You might also have them critique some of the infographics. What are they lacking? What more information could they use?

Visualizations shows visualization fails—areas where poor choices have led to confusing or misleading visuals. It would be interesting to show students some of these and have students pick out what is wrong with them!

Alternate pre-activity: **This is an example of an infographic focused on the timeline of the breakout and resolution of World War I.** Discuss with students: what does this graphic emphasize as the major cause of the war? Could they have designed it differently to show that something else (increased militarism, the influence of imperialism) had a greater effect? There are also some statistical errors in this graphic in the “Deaths” section. Can they guess what they are?

Conclusion

My experience teaching has taught me that not everyone is a natural history buff. Who knew? I've learned that to engage many students requires more than a compelling story; it means creating a puzzle and developing an environment where the students are the ones asking questions and testing out answers. In many ways, my experience with this project echoes that same pattern. A year ago, if you lectured me about the Meuse-Argonne Battle, I would have followed along politely but moved on quickly. After the experience of developing this chapter and working with colleagues on the book, however, I found myself far more involved with the content of this battle, these American efforts, and the Great War. Putting together these lesson and activity ideas was my puzzle: how would I use the Blue Book in a way that would get my students to care? As a result, I can tell you with conviction that this battle matters and that teaching about this war is a critical opportunity not just because it allows us to honor U.S. soldiers and to explore America's changing role in the world, but also because it provides so many chances for students to dig deeply into the artifacts of history, the maps, letters, and records left behind, and to find what it means to truly work with and learn from the past. I hope that the activities in this chapter translate

easily into your own classroom, and that your students, too, start wrestling with the postcards from the past provided by these ABMC resources.

Instructional Menu

How to use this chapter in 30 minutes

Brainstorm key words that indicate facts vs. opinions and have students analyze newspaper articles, identifying fact, opinion, and bias in each.

Use the Annenberg interactive to explore how maps can be viewed as artifacts and change according to when, how, and why they were made

Use images from the map gallery with the questions here to explore the variety of types of maps available and how mapping changed during World War I.

Have students role-play with maps of the battle on pages 169-170.

Have students complete the quiz questions with the maps from p. 189-191.

Review the graphs gallery with students. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each kind of map?

Review the statistics gallery with students and use the process described here for each of the statistics. Have students try to guess what is missing or come up with their own headlines based on the statistics.

Use any of the statistical charts mentioned in the chapter to have students focus in on a particular aspect of America's role in World War I.

Have students explore the American propaganda as an infographic. In what ways is it effective?

Divide students into small groups and have them analyze the World War I Basics infographic, the Meuse-Argonne infographic, the World War I by the Numbers infographic, and one or two of the visualizations fails of your choosing. This could function as preparation for designing their own or simply an exercise in critical analysis.

How to use this chapter in 60 minutes

Compare the German propaganda with an article from the *Stars and Stripes*. Work on identifying fact, opinion, bias, and text

analysis in each, using the questions available. See “Why We Fight” and “*Stars and Stripes*: American Propaganda?”

Compare *Stars and Stripes* articles to the descriptions in the Blue Book, using the lesson “Battling Interpretations.”

How to use this chapter in 90 minutes:

Complete any of the 90 minute lesson plans.

Other instructional extensions

See the four potential extension activities described in the Primary Source extension, which include:

- looking for more sources in the *Stars and Stripes* online repository,
- asking students to rewrite or consider how articles would change based on different audiences
- compare the written propaganda to visual propaganda (World War I posters created by the Committee on Public Information, and
- in groups, creating Style Guides for each of the texts studied—the Blue Book and the *Stars and Stripes*.

Have students create their own turf maps to test their understanding of map conventions and the idea of contested space

Use Poll Everywhere to review when a bar graph is useful. What information does it make easy to see? What information is obscured?

Have students search a current newspaper for an example of statistics informing the way news is reported. What questions do they have based on the statistics reported? Do they think the newspaper did an accurate job?

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Video Transcriptions

Introduction to the Blue Book

Hello, my name is Tim Nosal and I am the director of Public Affairs for the American Battle Monuments Commission. I've been asked to assist today on the brief introduction to what we term Bluebook here at ABMC. Now as you may be aware of ABMC was created in 1923 to commemorate the achievements and sacrifices of America's Arm Forces overseas, and specifically in World War I. But over time that mission expanded to include World War II, today Korea, and aspects of the Vietnam wars as well. But going back to the agencies origin in 1923 immediately the agency set to establish permanent cemeteries overseas and permanent memorials over in Europe and they needed to figure out what memorials needed to be created. Where would be the most appropriate place to construct a memorial? Where would be the most important, appropriate place to have a cemetery to commemorate America's Armed Forces in the First World War? And to do that, they really had to understand what happened in the First World War. What was of incredibly important, importance to the American Expeditionary Force, from 1917 through 1919. And so they went ahead and they started to compile all kinds of

information so they would have ideas as they started designing the cemeteries and memorials and they developed what we term today at the commemorative program, it's the idea that each individual cemetery and memorial has a commemorative theme, something specific of the war that will commemorate whether it's the Battle around Chateau Thierry or the first division and their engagement out at Cantigny or possibly Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery and our monument out at Montfaucon to commemorate the tremendous achievement that this magnificent campaign that the American Forces lead that ended the war and the achievement of capturing Montfaucon and pushing the German lines all the way back forcing them to the negotiations table to ultimately signing the Armistice. As they were compiling all this information they realized that in order to truly keep General Pershing's promise that time will not dim the glory of their deeds, people needed to understand what was going on. And So, ABMC started doing what today the Army Center of Military History does and that is they began compiling the official records of the war and pulling things together. They wrote what is known as the Divisional Summaries. Now these Divisional Summaries are basically small books that talk about the movements, the

advancements, the service of each of the infantry divisions, as well as the services of supply during World War I. And to compile this, they just didn't do so out in a field in France but they also contacted Veterans here in the States. In fact right here I have a copy of a letter that was sent to a Captain Fredrick Schmidt from Youngstown, OH asking him to review a summary of operations for the fifth division in a Muse Argon Campaign. And, Captain Schmidt served in a machine gun battalion. He commanded a company. What's really neat if you, when we go through this you will see a bunch of little annotations. And so for instance, right up front, October 11-12 division issued field order number 54 at 8:30 am October 11 and directed the 9th brigade to take over the front line. He literally wrote in here I was there. As veterans across the country were contacted by ABME they made annotations of documents like this and sent them back and these documents were then used to compile the divisional summaries. In 1927 the agency realized they needed to put together some type of overview of America's contribution to the first World War. And what they did is they developed what we know today as American Armies and Battlefields in Europe : The Bluebook. It was initially published in 1927 with a red cover and then it was reprinted in the 30s. This here is a first edition of I believe the 1930 version. Alright. And basically what it is, it is a guide that takes you all across Europe, all across the battlefields where the American Forces served. It explains our services, American people in the first World War with incredible detail and the maps are simply tremendous. You don't see much like this anymore today. I mean

the level of detail that they put into the compilations of this book. And the idea was if you weren't American and you were going over to Europe you can use this book to get to where Americans served from 1917-1919. The one exceptions of course would be where Americans served up in Russia during the Polar Bear Campaign. But, the book will take you to different locations and there are these vistas, you'll notice up at the top here literally the book contains maps that will take you to specific points and you can look out and hold the book up, sort of like augmented reality, they can kind of see what the ground looked like at the time. It is absolutely tremendous, there is a wealth of information in here. Quite a bit of statistics. Numbers of Americans that served overseas, numbers of Americans that were raised during war, how many rounds of ammunition did we fire> You kind of wonder, how accurate are some of these statistics? But, maybe the accuracy doesn't matter. Just the fact that they tried to compile such information. How many troops arrived in Europe at any one time May 1, 1917, we had 1,208 troops in Europe. September 30, 1917 we had 61,927 that came over and so forth. By November 11, 1918 2, 057, 675 in Europe . It is just simply amazing if you think about it that we go from 1300 to 2 million men in just over a year. Also, there's all the different Army and encore insignia, within the book to give you a really solid description of American forces and our service over there. You know, so if you look at the Bluebook and how it was compiled, it was compiled primarily by people who were there. Officers that were assigned to the American Battle Monument Commission reached out to the veterans to gather

information. They have looked at the historical information in Europe, they have walked the ground they begin to pull everything together. Here's an interesting trivia, young major Dwight Eisenhower was assigned to ABMC and this was one of his projects. He worked on a bluebook. He worked on divisional summaries when he was here. And then what is significant about it is that it gives us a look at Europe when the United States was there during the first World War. The, it is amazingly accurate, given with what they were dealing with at the time. Modes of communication, how do you match this feature of terrain with another feature of terrain and so it is just amazingly detailed. and the last thing that I was asked to talk about is the digitization. We are having Virginia Tech digitize the entire bluebook. So there's a digital version we can hang on our website. And it is going to be fully searchable and section 508 compliant. Meaning that folks with disabilities will be able to utilize the electronic version for their research and what not. But the beauty is that it will be fully searchable so you can search a keyword, like Pershing the first division, and find all of the references within the book, and you can go there. And so with that, I am going to stop talking and just let you know that the Bluebook, for us here at AMBE, is at the heart of our mission, we definitely believe in preserving the memory of those that we honor, honoring the service, achievements, and sacrifices of America's Armed Forces and one of the best ways to do that is to also tell the story to ensure that time will not dim the glory of their deeds and the bluebook represents ABMC's efforts to do so. I thank you for your attention.

Searching Digital Archives

Ok! I'm going to tell you quickly how you can search for things you might want to find in the Stars and Stripes Collections online. So you are going to start by going to this website, up here, it's also really easy to find if you just type in The Stars and Stripes Archives to Google. There are a number of ways that you can search if you just kind of want to browse through the issue you can go right here to the Date. All of the issues are listed if you click on this link but it's easiest, because there is so much covered in here to go ahead and do a keyword search. And so we will click right here for search. And then it's pretty simple. You can enter your search terms, I want to find out more about the Battle of Montfaucon, so I'm typing that in. And I just click Search. Uh, uh! I must have spelled something wrong. Click on Back. I forgot the "T". That is one thing you need to be careful about on this search form. Ok, doing the search again, I don't have too many results, just 19 so I don't want to refine them at all. And I know that I want to look at an article that happened close to the battle, so I am going to go ahead and click on this one for October 18, 1918. Once you get to the page, the search function zooms right in on the area of the page that has your search term and so you can see that it is highlighted here. You can also see over here there are more instances of the term highlighted. And in fact, I can click all the way up here, into that top corner, and it will show me the headline that it highlighted. Now I find that this initial setting can be a little difficult to read what the article is actually about and so an easy

thing to do is to change the view so that you can see a little bit more. SO I am going to do two things here. I am going to change my zoom level. And I am also going to go to this long column window size. And by doing that I am going to be able to read a little bit more. Now, all I have to do it go back up and click on the area that I want to see and it pops up in this box over here. Now from here you can do a couple of different things to use in your classroom. You can easily just right click and you have options like saving the image, or copying the image over to another application like Microsoft Word or a presentation application like Power Point or Keynote, but another thing you might want to do is to view this page in PDF form. And that is an option that you have right over here. You can do the page or the entire issue. Once you do that, it pops up in this big screen, you can see everything that's there. You can do anything that you might do with a regular PDF. SO I can save this to my desktop by coming down here, I can print it off, I can zoom in if I want to see something closer. SO you have a lot of options. SO that's basically how you search using the archives on the Library of Congress. Pretty easy. I'm going to go ahead and click back now and show you one last thing. Which is that if you scroll down here you can find out a little more information about the Stars and Stripes Collection in general. Especially this will be interesting to a lot of people. There are some notes here about the advertisements that they use, what the soldiers wrote, and who actually worked on the Stars and Stripes and also a timeline that can be helpful when you are looking for

specific events in the Stars and Stripes Editions. Thanks! I hope that was helpful! And Good Luck!

Turf Maps

Chris Bunin: I like to do with students to give them the concept of space and the power of place is biographical maps, we also call them turf maps because everybody has a turf. Your neighborhood, your city, your state. And if you think about it nearly every spot on this earth has been contested at one point or another that has been inhabited. And so by giving students an assignment to say, I want you to map a period in your life and draw certain areas that are, that have significance to you, whether it is an area of fear, an area of joy, an area of comfort, they start to see their own relationships with things and it really helps tie back to when you get to places of where, say its war, where, it why would this be a valuable place? Or if you get to a a location where you are talking about development, why would some people want this to be a park and some people want this to be a housing development, you can tie that back to their personal experiences and their own understanding of the five themes of geography: location, movement, place, region, and human interactions.

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AMERICAN BATTLE
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“Time will not dim the glory of their deeds.”

GENERAL OF THE ARMIES JOHN J. PERSHING

LEARN NC

