

Museum Curator: World War I Posters

Adventure Description:

In this adventure, students will think like a museum curator and use World War I posters to make an art exhibit and teach others about how the government uses posters to gain support of citizens.

Activity

Step 1: Background on Posters from World War I (10 minutes)

- Show [Video: World War I Documents](#).
- As a class, discuss how posters from WWI were used to get the support of American citizens.
- Ask students why they think governments wanted to convince people to support the war. Discuss how having supporters was important because governments need a lot of resources to fight in a war. For example, they need soldiers and people working in factories. These posters encouraged men to join the military. Discuss what other resources were needed during a war (e.g., money, volunteer efforts, nursing, food).
- Provide students with [Handout: World War I Posters](#). As a class, look at each poster.
- Then, discuss similarities and differences between the posters.
- Example similarities: Most used American symbols for freedom and liberty; they were colorful.
- Example differences: Some posters target men and others women; some focused on becoming soldiers, others focused on what people could do at home.
- Ask students why they think posters are a good way to get people to support a cause.

Step 2: Activity Set Up (5 minutes)

- Explain to students that they will imagine they are museum curators who are creating a new exhibit about posters from World War I. The problem is that the museum they work for only has 4 posters in storage that relate to World War I. On top of that, the posters are all on the same topics or target the same audience! For example, all of the posters talk about saving food during World War I. There aren't any posters in storage that talk about how women should support the war.
- Discuss why a museum curator would want to have different types of posters in an exhibit. Explain that a museum curator would want to show that different posters targeted different groups of people. And, a museum curator would want people to know all the ways the U.S. government got people to support the war.
- Divide students into pairs or small groups. Provide each group with their group's posters from [Handout: World War I Posters](#). Explain that each group has pages with different posters on it. These are the posters that are in storage at the museum they work at.
 - There are 4 different groups of posters. Multiple groups can have the same posters if needed.
- Give each group [Handout: Steps to Create a Museum Exhibit](#). Read through the steps as a class. Explain that students will have to loan posters from other groups so that they can create an exhibit that shows posters that target different audiences and focus on different topics.

Please contact Allison Bischoff, Director of Customer Service, at allison@rozzylearningcompany.com or 314-272-2560 with questions.

Step 3: Planning the Exhibit (15 minutes)

- Once students are in their groups, have them complete Steps 1-3 of the handout.
- Remind students that they must include 4 posters in their art exhibit, but each poster must be for a different audience. This means groups will have to loan out posters to each other.
 - There are 4 different groupings of posters. And, each group has 4 posters.
 - Have students cut out the 3 loan agreements on [Handout: Loan Agreement](#). Students must decide who they will loan posters from and why they want that poster. Allow students 10 minutes for the loaning process.
- As students decide which posters they want to use, ask them the following questions:
 - Do you have posters that target different audiences? Which ones?
 - What are they posters trying to get American citizens to believe?
 - Do your posters show different ways the U.S. government used posters to convince people to support the war?

Step 4: Designing and Building the Exhibit (20 minutes)

- Students can now move on to Step 4-5 on the handout. Students will need to plan how their museum exhibit will look and then build it.
 - Provide students with an assortment of art and building supplies.
 - Teacher Note: These steps can be completed on a different day or at home if you run out of time.
- After students complete their exhibits, have a concluding discussion on the following:
 - How can the government use posters to change how citizens feel about something?
 - Do you think it is ok for the government to convince people to support a war or events going on in a country?
 - What can we learn about the U.S. and World War I from these posters?

Materials List

Provided online:

- Video: World War I Documents
- Handout: World War I Posters
- Handout: Steps to Create a Museum Exhibit

Not Provided Online:

- Assortment of art and building supplies

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