



Archivist: Artifacts and the end of World War I

Adventure Description:

In this adventure, students will think like archivists and create a digital archive about the end of World War I.

Activity

Teacher notes:

- This activity is long and can be completed across multiple days.
- Each student (or pairs of students) will need a computer for this activity.
- You will need to set up 2 free accounts on two different websites before class. You will also need to set up a shared folder in Google Drive for all students to access. See [Handout: Teacher Prep](#).

Step 1: Background on Archivists (5-10 minutes)

- Show [Video: Artifacts and the End of World War I](#).
- As a class, discuss how archivists work at museums and libraries where thousands of historical documents, like historical paintings or maps, are stored. They have a lot of different responsibilities, including organizing documents in archives. An archive is a location where documents and artifacts are stored under special conditions to make sure that the documents and artifacts are protected. Before the internet, documents were organized in archives located in libraries and state museums. The Library of Congress is one of our national archives. Now, in addition to physical archives, there are digital archives. A digital archive is a database that houses scanned images of artifacts, photographs and documents. Show [Handout: Examples of Archives](#).
- Ask students what would happen if archivists didn't organize documents and artifacts in digital or physical archives (e.g., documents would be disorganized and professionals wouldn't be able to use them to back up claims or make new claims about history; professionals might have an inaccurate understanding of a historical event because they didn't have access to important artifacts).
- Next, explain to students that physical and digital archives are typically created for professionals to use. For example, historians and political scientists can use the archives to find primary and secondary sources to use as part of research or to write a book. The problem is that students who are learning about artifacts have a hard time using the archives!
- Show [Handout: Using an Archive](#). Talk about why students might be frustrated or intimidated by using an archive that looks like this (e.g. not knowing what terms to search for, lack of images or photographs, difficult vocabulary, difficulty in accessing information). Ask students what they would change or add to the archive to make it more student friendly. Discuss the following: how can the design or wording be changed to make it easier for students to search for information?

Step 2: Activity Set Up (5+ minutes)

- Explain to students that they will create their own digital archive for students to use. Their digital archive will include artifacts and documents that relate to the end of World War I.
- Provide students with [Handout: Steps to Create a Student-Friendly Archive](#). As a class, read through the steps.

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- Next, have students go to this website: <http://bit.ly/wwiending>. Explain to students that they should reference this handout while creating their archive. Feel free to print the handout as well.
- Divide students into pairs or small groups.

Step 3: Brainstorming Ideas and Creating Entries (30+ minutes)

- Have students complete Steps 1-4 on their handout.
- As students are working, ask the following questions related to the design of their archive:
 - How will you create your archive in a way that is student friendly?
 - What features can you add to your archive to make it interesting for students to use? (e.g. bitmojis, hashtags, videos)
- Then, ask students the following questions about end of World War I:
 - What was the Treaty of Versailles?
 - Why was the issue of reparations a difficult one for Germany to accept?
 - Why would the official record of the U.S. Senate be an important document to view about the end of the war?
 - Why are the two telegrams important documents in understanding the end of World War I?
- Teacher note: you will need to email students the class Google Drive folder link so they can upload their QR code to the class folder. You can have students label the file with their names so you know which QR code belongs to which student.

Step 4: Presenting Archives (10+ minutes)

- Have students go into the class Google Drive folder and volunteer to share their QR code.
- Have a concluding discussion about why the ending of World War I was not just about a peace treaty. What other issues came up as a result of determining how peace was to be won? How does studying documents and artifacts that talk about the end of World War I allow professionals understand different viewpoints around achieving peace?

Materials List

Provided online:

- Video: Artifacts and the End of World War I
- Handout: Teacher Set Up
- Handout: Examples of Archives
- Handout: Using an Archive
- Handout: Steps to Create a Student-Friendly Archive

Not Provided Online:

- Each student or pair of students needs a computer

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