

Propaganda and the American Civil War

Lesson Summary:

Students will research in small groups various forms of propaganda, present their findings to the class and create their own piece of propaganda from the Civil War Era. This lesson can take from 2-5 class periods and works well in conjunction with concepts taught in Language Arts class.

Pre-Assessment:

Divide students into groups of three or four and ask students to define *propaganda* and how they feel propaganda could contribute to the war effort, first within their group and then have one person be the spokesperson for the group. Answers will vary and the teacher can correct any misguided answers as well as allow students to have discussion about the topic.

Instructional Procedures:

- Direct students to research propaganda during the Civil War, using the internet and other resources found in the schools library.
- Give examples such as recruiting posters, and campaign poster as ideas to look for while researching.
- Allow students to research for up to two class periods.
- Students will present various forms of propaganda to the class.
- Allow students to discuss how each poster, etc made them feel, ask students if they could easily determine what side Union or Confederate the item represented.
- Create a scrapbook of the student's findings.
- Have students in their small groups create their own pieces of Civil War Propaganda.
- Post Student work around the room and have each group chose one person to stay with their poster to act as curator during the museum tour of the student work as the class visits each student created piece. Students who act as their group curator may visit each group when finished so as not to miss out on the other posters.

Scoring Guidelines:

Each student will receive a scoring rubric for each member of their group with the following information, with one being the worst and five being the best
Participation 1 2 3 4 5

Collaboration 1 2 3 4 5

Willingness to share researched information 1 2 3 4 5

Each student is also observed by the teacher throughout both the research and poster activity and notes are taken to ensure fair evaluations from group members. Groups are also scored on appropriateness of the poster, spelling, and neatness with one to five points given for each for a total of 30 points possible.

Materials Needed: Markers, Large poster paper or poster board, rulers, construction paper, computer for research, printer, and tape for hanging student's generated posters.

Post Assessment:

In the form of a short quiz ask the students the following questions:

1. Name three ways that propaganda can be used during times of war.
2. Discuss and describe the best form of propaganda that you found in your research.
3. What emotions do recruitment posters appeal to?
4. Discuss the lasting effects of propaganda.