



“Beat Back the Hun Liberty Bonds poster, 1920.1.10.a” (Kansas City, MO: National WWI Museum and Memorial.)

DOCUMENT BASED QUESTION

German-Americans in World War I:

Facing challenges at home

Recommended Grade Levels: 9-12

Course/Content Area: U.S. History; AP U.S. History

Authored by: National World War I Museum and Memorial

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What challenges did German-Americans face after the United States entered World War I?
- How did the German-American community respond to these challenges?

SUMMARY: By 1914, millions of American citizens were German immigrants or descendants of recent German immigrants. Students will analyze documents to understand more about the challenges German-Americans faced and determine how the German-American community responded to those challenges.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT: See Standards Alignment Appendix B

TIME NEEDED: Two 55-minute class periods.

OBJECTIVES: Students will:

- Assess primary documents critically, determining the points of view of each author and whether each contains objective or subjective information.
- Apply interpretations of primary sources towards an essay which details arguments made by U.S. citizens supporting and opposing the nation's entry into World War I.
- Demonstrate skills required for formal writing, including citation of sources upon which arguments rely.

INTERDISCIPLINARY: Language Arts, Visual Art

THEMES & CONNECTIONS: This lesson can be included in a unit study of the First World War, but can also be used as stand-alone practice to assess documents and images and write formally using citations.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Computer or notebooks and pens.
- Documents and questions for each student.

LESSON

PRE-ASSESSMENT:

Ask the class what skills are required to critically assess a primary document. Ask the class how an image is best assessed. (It is useful to record answers on the board so they can be referred to by students as they work on their DBQ essays.)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Give each student a copy of the DBQ questions and documents (see Appendix A).
2. In the first class, ask students to read the prompt carefully and write down the key components they need to answer.
3. In groups, pairs, or individually, ask students to read and analyze documents, then synthesize an answer to the questions asked. They should take notes as they do so.
4. In the second class, give students time to craft their essay answering the writing prompt. Remind them to cite the documents given as evidence to support their response.

POST-ASSESSMENT:

Students may meet with teacher to discuss their answers and/or work in peer groups to workshop their responses. To workshop, they can discuss how each document helped them answer the questions. Hearing analysis from other students can be helpful for all students to build their depth of understanding.

MODIFICATIONS/ACCOMODATIONS

- For students who are approaching document based questions for the first time, it is beneficial to have them work in groups to analyze documents and take notes before drafting their essays.
- For classes preparing to take the AP United States History exam, make sure the full 55 minutes of the second class is given for writing the essay. This is the time of the DBQ section on the exam so this will serve as practice for the students.

APPENDIX A:

UNITED STATES HISTORY Document Based Question

Writing Prompt:

By 1914, millions of American citizens were German immigrants or descendants of recent German immigrants. What challenges did German-Americans face after the United States entered World War I? How did the German-American community respond to these challenges?

Document I

U.S. Liberty Bond poster, 1918.



Document 2

Excerpt of speech given by former President Theodore Roosevelt at Carnegie Hall, 1915.

There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americanism. When I refer to hyphenated Americans, I do not refer to naturalized Americans. Some of the very best Americans I have ever known were naturalized Americans, Americans born abroad. But a hyphenated American is not an American at all... The one absolutely certain way of bringing this nation to ruin, of preventing all possibility of its continuing to be a nation at all, would be to permit it to become a tangle of squabbling nationalities, an intricate knot of German-Americans, Irish-Americans, English-Americans, French-Americans, Scandinavian-Americans or Italian-Americans, each preserving its separate nationality, each at heart feeling more sympathy with Europeans of that nationality, than with the other citizens of the American Republic... There is no such thing as a hyphenated American who is a good American. The only man who is a good American is the man who is an American and nothing else.

Document 3

Clauses of the Sedition Act of 1918.

SECTION 3. Whoever, when the United States is at war, shall...incite insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty, in the military or naval forces of the United States, or shall willfully obstruct . . . the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States, or . . . shall willfully utter, print, write, or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government of the United States, or the Constitution of the United States, or the military or naval forces of the United States . . . or shall willfully display the flag of any foreign enemy, or shall willfully . . . urge, incite, or advocate any curtailment of production . . . or advocate, teach, defend, or suggest the doing of any of the acts or things in this section enumerated and whoever shall by word or act support or favor the cause of any country with which the United States is at war or by word or act oppose the cause of the United States therein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than twenty years, or both....

Document 4

Excerpt of the American Defense Society's petition to Congress to prohibit the use of spoken and printed German in the United States.

The appalling and complete moral breakdown of German 'Kultur' [culture] compels a sweeping revision of the attitude of civilized nations and individuals toward the German language, literature, and science. The close scrutiny of German thought induced by Hun frightfulness in this war has revealed abhorrent inherent qualities hitherto unknown, and to most people unsuspected. Hereafter, throughout every English-speaking country on the globe, the German language will be a dead language. Out with it forever!

Document 5

In a letter to the editor, Charles D. Stewart recounts how a large party of Milwaukeeans forced German-American farmers to purchase war bonds. From the *Atlantic Monthly*, 1919.

This phalanx, entirely lawless, moves down upon a farmer who is urging two horses along a cloddy furrow — doing his fall ploughing. They form a semi-circle about him; the speechmaker says, 'Let us salute the flag' (watching him to see that he does it promptly); and while his horses stand there the speechmaker delivers a speech. He must subscribe his 'assessed' amount — no excuses accepted. If he owes for the farm, and has just paid his interest, and has only fifteen dollars to go on with, it makes no difference. He must subscribe the amount of his 'assessment,' and 'sign there.' If not, what happens? [I]f he argues too much, he finds this. They have a large package of yellow placards reading, —'The Occupant of these premises has refused to take his just share of Liberty Bonds. DO NOT REMOVE.

And they put them all over his place. He probably signs.

Document 6

Excerpt of "The Call and the Reply" by A.J. Bucher, found in the propaganda pamphlet *American Loyalty: By Citizens of German Descent*, 1917.

The fact that the United States are about to enter war against the Central Powers of Europe is a cause of great sorrow and pain to us Americans of German descent. We find ourselves thrown into a conflict of feelings and also of duties such as we have never experienced before... The lines of duty are very clear for everyone that has sworn the oath of naturalization. Under all possible circumstances we have to stand faithfully by the Star-Spangled Banner... To America, which we, prompted by love and gratitude, have chosen as our new homeland, we owe everything which it may justly require from us as citizens. When conscience speaks, the heart must keep silent.

Document 7

“Illinoisan Lynched for Disloyalty”. Reported in the Chicago Daily Tribune on 5 April 1918.

Collinsville, Ill. - April 5, 2 a.m. - Robert P. Praeger, said to be of German parentage, was hanged to a tree one mile south of the city limits here after midnight by a mob of 350 persons. The mob dragged Praeger from the basement of city hall, here he had been hiding. Praeger was accused on making disloyal remarks in a speech he made recently to miners in Maryville, Ill. ...Praeger early in the night was taken in hand by members of the local loyalist committee and forced to parade barefooted through the streets kissing the American flag at intervals.

Document 8

“Nobody Would Eat Kraut,” Recollections of Lola Gamble Clyde, Latah County, Idaho.

I remember when they smashed out store windows at Uniontown that said Kraut on it. And Kraut on the window. Nobody would eat Kraut. Throw the Kraut out, they were Germans. You know. And all that was pretty vile, you know. I remember even the great Williamson store, he went in and gathered up everything that was made in Germany, and had a big bonfire out in the middle of the street, you know. Although he had many good German friends all over the county that had helped make him rich. And there was all that went on, you know. And some people changed their name. And if it was a German name—we’ll just change our name. We don’t want anything to do with it. And there was lots of that kind of hysteria going on.

APPENDIX B:

Standards Alignment

Common Core College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading for Students in grades 6–12:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Common Core English Language Arts Standards for History/Social Studies for students in grades 9–10:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3: Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.5: Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6: Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.8: Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9: Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.10: By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Common Core English Language Arts Standards for History/Social Studies for students in grades 11-12:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3: Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.5: Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6: Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8: Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9: Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.10: By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

National Standards for English Language Arts (Developed by the International Reading Association [IRA] and the National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE].)

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

The National Standards for History are presented by The National Center for History in the Schools

U.S. History:

NSS-USH.5-12.7 Era 7: The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930)

The student in grades 5-12:

Understands the changing role of the United States in world affairs through World War I.

World History:

NSS-WH.5-12.8 Era 8: A Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement, 1900-1945

The student in grades 5-12:

Understands the causes and global consequences of World War I.

National Standards for Social Studies Teachers prepared by National Council for the Social Studies

Thematic Standards:

I. Culture and Cultural Diversity

II. Time, Continuity, and Change

III. People, Places, and Environments

IV. Individual Development and Identity

VI. Power, Authority, and Governance

IX. Global Connections

X. Civic Ideals and Practices

National Visual Arts Standards part of the National Core Arts Standards

Responding Standards:

Students will:

7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.
8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

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