6th - 8th Grades
Keep Moving Forward
World War II Research Project

TEACH WREATHS across AMERICA

Wreaths Across America
Lesson Plan

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 6-8	Lesson: Keep Moving Forward-World War II Research Project

OBJECTIVES: NCSSS; 10. CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES An understanding of civic ideals and practices is critical to full participation in society and is an essential component of education for citizenship. This theme enables students to learn about the rights and responsibilities of citizens of a democracy, and to appreciate the importance of active citizenship.	**STRATEGIES:** ☐ Writing ☐ Write/Pair/Share ☐ Collaboration ☐ Discussion Questions ☐ Small Groups ☐ Large Group

MATERIALS:	Computer/laptop; internet (with access to YouTube); Smart Board; copies of Write-Pair-Share Activity; copies WWII Hero: Biography Summary Project Guidelines; copies of the Grading Rubric: WWII Hero Summary Project; copies of the sample questions for Veterans or Home Front Workers(if students will be conducting a live interview);
Engage: Hook the students	Hand out the Write/Pair/Share Activity-Pair the students with a partner. Explain the W/P/S directions. The students will think of their answer, get with their partner, and share their answer.
Explore: Students make sense of a concept through observations.	Explain: Many of those who served in the armed forces during World War II are deceased, most of them died of natural causes-out of the 16.4 million who served in the military during WWII, 416,800 died due to wounds they sustained in combat, POW camps or other causes. Hand out the WWII Hero: Biography Summary Project Guidelines. Read the Guidelines out loud. Ask for questions. Handout copies of the Grading Rubric: WWII Hero Summary Project. Allow students to keep the rubric while they are developing their project to understand the point values. Students can turn in the rubric with their name on it with their project. If your students will conduct a "live" interview for the purposes of this assignment, hand out the sample questions. If students will conduct online research, these are good resources: https://www.archives.gov/research/military https://www.loc.gov In the search bars, select Personal Narratives in the drop down menu, and type World War II in the 2nd box.
Explain: Teacher introduces formal vocabulary and language to students.	draft, enlist, armed forces, World War II, rations, Victory Gardens, Rosie the Riveter, home front, Pearl Harbor, Prisoners of War
Elaborate: Students apply what they have learned.	Students will gain an understanding of civic ideals and practices as critical to full participation in society and is an essential component of education for citizenship. Students will learn about the rights and responsibilities of citizens of a democracy, and to appreciate the importance of active citizenship.
Evaluate: assessment.	Teachers will select which activities to use as formal/informal assessments.
Enrichment/Service-Learning Project	Students will brainstorm an activity to recognize and honor an ordinary person in their community or school that does extraordinary things. Students will create a certificate to award and make the presentation.

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Name_____

Write-Pair-Share

You will have **8 minutes** to read the following and answer the questions below.

- The population of the United States in 1940 was 132,164,569. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, over 16.4 million men and women from across the country were either drafted or enlisted in the Army, Navy, Merchant Marines and Marines during World War II. They fought bravely all over the world for our freedom.
- People did not have to join the Armed Forces to do their part to win the war. Everyone wanted to help our troops and end the war. Those who stayed behind worked hard, they built things, grew food, and helped with supplies.
- Everyone in the country worked hard, including young people, to end the war and bring our fighting men and women back home safely.

Questions:

Why is it important to Remember those who made contributions to the freedoms we enjoy every day?
How can you Honor those who made sacrifices for our country's freedoms?
How can you help Teach others the value of our freedoms?
At the end of 8 minutes, you will be paired with a partner, you will read your answers to your partner and they will read their response to you. Write on the back if necessary.

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WWII Hero: Biography Summary Project Guidelines

Assignment Goal

You are going to act as a historical researcher! You will select a World War II veteran or home front worker from your hometown and write a summary of their wartime experience and contributions. Your finished summary must be concise, well-structured, and no longer than **250 words**.

Part 1: Research and Source Collection

You may use any resources provided by your teacher (like letters or newspaper clippings) or conduct your own approved research (local historical society websites, the National Archives, or oral histories). If you know someone who is a Hero from World War II, you may interview them in person. If they have a living sibling or a child, you may interview them. The sample questions are just that, sample questions. Each person interviewed will have different experiences, and the questions are to help you have a better understanding of life during World War II.

As you research, focus on answering these five key questions:

1. **Who was this person?** (Name, hometown, year of birth/death, if deceased).
2. **Where did they serve or contribute?** (E.g., Army in Europe, Navy in the Pacific, working at the sardine factory in Eastport, or Civil Defense in Machias).
3. **What was their main role?** (E.g., Radio operator, medic, ship captain, or leader of the local scrap drive).
4. **What was one specific event or experience they had?** (A defining moment, a struggle, or a significant achievement).
5. **What impact did they have on the war or their community?** (Why is their story important?).

Part 2: Drafting Your Summary (The 250-Word Challenge)

A good historical summary has a clear beginning, middle, and end. Follow this structure to ensure you meet the word limit and include all necessary information.

Section	Focus / Goal	Word Count Target
Introduction	Introduce the person, their connection to your hometown, and their overall role in the war. **(Who)**	30-40 words
Wartime Experience	Detail the specific branch of service or home front duty, and where they were stationed. **(Where/What)**	80-100 words
Key Contribution	Describe the single most important event or contribution they made during the war. **(Specific Event)**	80-100 words
Conclusion	Briefly summarize their overall impact and what their story teaches us about your hometown during WWII. **(Impact)**	30-40 words

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Tips for Staying Under 250 Words:

- **Be direct:** Avoid flowery language. Use strong, active verbs.
    - *Instead of:* "He was a person who was working hard at his job..."
    - *Use:* "He worked tirelessly..."
- **Combine sentences:** Look for two short sentences that can be joined with commas or conjunctions (like *and, but, so*).
- **Count Every Word:** Use your word processing tool to check the count often!

Part 3: Submission Checklist

Before you turn in your project, ensure it meets all these requirements:

- **Title:** Clear title including the veteran's name (e.g., *The Service of [Veteran's Name]*).
- **Content:** Addresses the who, what, where, why, and impact of the person's service.
- **Source Citation:** List the main source(s) (e.g., Oral History Transcript, Local Newspaper, Family Letter).
- **Length: Maximum of 250 words.**
- **Tone:** Factual, respectful, and engaging.

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Grading Rubric: WWII Hero Summary

This rubric is based on the requirements and structure outlined in the assignment guide. Total points: 100.

I. Content & Research (Addresses the 5 Questions)	II. Structure & Organization (Part 2 Guide)	III. Source & Citation (Part 3 Checklist)	IV. Length & Conciseness	V. Mechanics & Presentation
20 Points: Clearly and accurately addresses all five research questions (Who, Where, What role, Specific Event, Impact). All details are relevant to Washington County WWII history.	**20 Points:** The summary is logically organized into a clear Introduction, Wartime Experience, Key Contribution, and Conclusion, making it easy to follow.	**20 Points:** The primary source(s) used for the summary are clearly listed and appropriate (e.g., *Oral History Transcript, Local Newspaper*).	**20 Points:** The summary is perfectly concise and meets the **250-word maximum**. Language is direct and uses strong, active verbs.	**20 Points:** Excellent use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The title is clear and appropriate. Tone is factual, respectful, and engaging.
15 Points: Addresses four of the five research questions accurately. Minor details may be vague or lack specificity.	**15 Points:** The summary is generally organized, but one section may blend into another or lack a distinct focus.	**15 Points:** A source is listed, but it is general (e.g., "The Internet") or only partially correct.	**15 Points:** The summary is slightly over the limit (251-275 words) but is mostly concise.	**15 Points:** Few minor mechanical errors (1-2 spelling/grammar mistakes). The tone is appropriate.
10 Points: Addresses only three of the five questions, or contains factual errors regarding the person's role or location.	**10 Points:** Organization is weak; key information is scattered, confusing the reader.	**10 Points:** Source information is vague or incomplete.	**10 Points:** The summary is significantly over the limit (276-300+ words), indicating a lack of editing and prioritization.	**10 Points:** Several mechanical errors (3-4 spelling/grammar mistakes) that occasionally disrupt readability.
5 Points: Addresses less than three questions or is heavily reliant on general WWII facts, lacking local connection.	**5 Points:** No discernible structure; the summary reads as a stream of facts.	**5 Points:** No source is listed.	**5 Points:** The summary is far too long or far too short, showing minimal effort to adhere to the limits.	**5 Points:** Numerous errors that make the summary difficult to read and understand.
Points Earned	**Points Earned**	**Points Earned**	**Points Earned**	**Points Earned**

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Sample Interview Questions for Veterans

Opening:

- Where were you born?
- Can you tell me a little bit about what life was like in your hometown before World War II started?
- How old were you when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor?
- How did your family find out about the bombing of Pearl Harbor?
- What do you remember about that day?
- How did it make you and others feel, to know the United States had been attacked?
- Is there another day when you felt the same way as you did when the US was under attack by the Japanese? When?
- What was the atmosphere like in your community as the United States prepared to enter World War II?
- Did you and/or any of your family members serve in the military during World War II?

Questions for Veterans

- Did you enlist in the military or were you drafted?
- What years did you serve?
- What branch of the military did you serve in?
- What was your Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) your job or role in the military?
- What kind of training did you receive for your job?
- Where did you serve?
- Do you have family members or friends who also served in the military?
- Tell me about your experience during the war.
- What was the most significant personal change or challenge you experienced because of the war?
- How did the experience of the war shape your generation or your outlook on life?
- Closing: Is there anything else about your experience during World War II that you'd like to share?

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Sample Interview Questions for Those Who Served on the Home Front

Opening:

- Where were you born?
- Can you tell me a little bit about what life was like in your hometown before World War II started?
- How old were you when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor?
- How did your family find out about the bombing of Pearl Harbor?
- What do you remember about that day?
- How did it make you and others feel, to know the United States had been attacked?
- Is there another day when you felt the same way as you did when the US was under attack by the Japanese? When?
- What was the atmosphere like in your community as the United States prepared to enter World War II?

Home Front Contributions & Changes:

- How did daily life change once the war began? (e.g., rationing, blackouts, air raid drills)
- What kinds of things did people in your community do to support the war effort? Were there specific drives or volunteer activities you participated in?
- Did you or anyone you knew work in industries that contributed to the war, like shipbuilding or fishing? How did those industries change?
- Were there many women who took on jobs traditionally held by men in your hometown during the war? Did you know any of them?
- What kinds of jobs did they do?
- How did families manage with rationing? Do you remember any particular struggles or creative solutions?
- Were victory gardens common?
- Did your family have one?
- What kind of things did your family grow in your Victory Garden?

Community & Social Impact:

- How did the war affect social life? Were there fewer dances, gatherings, or community events?
- Did you notice any changes in the types of people living in your hometown during the war? (e.g., military personnel, new workers)

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- How did the community support families of service members?
- Was there a strong sense of community spirit during the war? Can you share examples?
- Were there any specific posters you remember seeing, for example, the infamous Rosie the Riveter posters. Where would you see them posted?

Personal Impact & Memories:

- Did you have family members or friends who served in the military? What was it like waiting for news from them?
- What was the most significant personal change or challenge you experienced because of the war?
- Do you have any vivid or particularly poignant memories from that time that you'd be willing to share?
- How did you feel when the war finally ended?

Long-Term Effects:

- What was the most lasting impact of World War II on your hometown?
- How did the experience of the war shape your generation or your outlook on life?
- What lessons do you think we can learn from the home front experience during WWII?

Closing:

- Is there anything else about your experience during World War II that you'd like to share or that you think is important for young people today to know?