



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2012 Volume I: Understanding History and Society through Visual Art, 1776 to 1914

Interpreting the Imagery of War

Guide for Curriculum Unit 12.01.09
by Leszek Ward

This unit aims to explore the various contradictions expressed in the poetry and painting of war. It also aims to help students substantiate interpretive claims using evidence and analysis from a variety of texts. It begins with the analysis of mystery cartoons, a strategy suggested by George Hillocks Jr. in his book, *Teaching Argument Writing*. After students have learned to make claims of fact and substantiate them with evidence from the cartoons, they begin to study paintings of war and to make interpretive claims about their meaning. The unit concludes with a study of three poems, by which point students should be able to analyze and argue independently. The paintings and poems selected for this unit express a variety of conflicting perspectives regarding the experience and meaning of war in order to help students understand that the unique experience of war allows for many seemingly contradictory ideas to coexist.

(Recommended for English, grades 9-12)

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