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The First World War: How, When and Why?

Guide for Curriculum Unit 13.01.10
by Molly Seely

The First World War was an immense time of turmoil throughout the entire world and created a great deal of social and political changes that still affect us today. Many of the issues at the forefront of life during the First World War remain prominent issues today: class warfare, democracy versus other forms of government, the rights of women and minorities and the concept of patriotism.

Few pieces of literature illustrate the points I intend to make better than Erich Maria Remarque's seminal classic *All Quiet on the Western Front*. *All Quiet on the Western Front* follows a teenage boy, just out of high school, as he enlists to fight in the war and comes to question the reasons behind the war and his own motivations for entering the war. By pairing *All Quiet on the Western Front* with contemporary poetry, artwork (such as political cartoons, bond and recruitment posters, and traditional artwork), speeches (for and against the war, from different perspectives, including different countries and organizations) and articles (contemporary and modern), I will give my students a well rounded, broad *and* deep understanding of important facets of the war.

(Recommended for English Language Arts, grades 9-12)

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