



Using Children's Literature to Understand Working Women and Children During World War II

Guide for Curriculum Unit 97.02.04

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The purpose of this unit is to provide students with information about a period involving a war—the 1940s and World War II—by analyzing society's perspective on that war. Through the use of children's literature such as historical fiction, periodicals, picture books, folktales, and nonfiction text, students will learn the roles and struggles of women in the workplace as well as in the family during the war, and examine the effects of the war on the Home Front: children, families, schools, and communities. This unit is designed for students in grade one but could be taught in grades Kindergarten through six, and is thematically designed so that activities, texts, and learning experiences are interdisciplinary, integrating many content areas. Thus students can construct meaning from a variety of sources, including literature, films, periodicals, projects, and resource people. I plan to begin with *The Butter Battle Book* (picture book) to provide an introduction; The American Girls Collection: *Meet Molly*, *Molly Learns a Lesson*, *Molly's Surprise*, *Happy Birthday Molly*, *Molly Saves the Day*, and *Changes for Molly*, by Valerie Trip (historical fiction) and *Rosie the Riveter: Women Working on the Home Front in World War II*, by Penny Coleman (non-fiction) will be core books for the development of this unit. The unit will culminate with a selected tale in *Peace Tales* (folktales), by Margaret Read McDonald.

(Recommended for Social Studies, grades K-6)

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