Course Title: US History

Grade Level: 11th

Unit: The Great War

Abstract:

This unit introduces students to some of the central concepts that drive the United States to become an increasingly more active role on the world’s stage. They will discover that Nationalism and Militarism, combined with elements of old Imperialist sentiments, lead all of the great powers to become in-locked in the first major conflict of the century. By exploring the causes and the events that follow, students will identify the different courses of action that the United States had available; eventually leading to the declaration of war against the Central Powers. Finally, students will evaluate the outcome of the war, and how it affected the United States and its place in the world.

Focus Questions:

1) What were the pre-war conditions that made Europe prone to conflict? What was the spark that would set off the Great War?

2) What caused the shift in U.S. policy to make it go from neutrality (which had been the long standing tradition) to jumping in on the side of the Allied Powers?

3) What were the changes in technology, weaponry, and tactics that made this war drastically different than all previous conflicts?

4) What were the lasting consequences of World War One, and how did this change the world scene? Why was Europe once again prone to future conflict following the war?

Benchmarks:

Students will:

Investigate, interpret and analyze how changes in science and technology impacted individuals, groups, societies, nations, and the environment, past and present, in both positive and negative ways (NCSS Standards, p. 150).

Synthesize how location, resources, and cross-cultural diffusion cause tension, as well as lead to positive global connections (NCSS Standards p. 154)

Understand how we use knowledge of the past of evaluate the possible consequences of specific courses of action and make more informed decisions (NCSS Standards, p. 130)

Evaluate how citizens balance personal interests, needs, and talents with civic responsibility and working for the common good (NCSS Standards, p. 157)

Determine what the consequences of tension and cooperation among individuals, groups and institutions can be (NCSS Standards, p. 139).

Assessment Tasks:

1) Students will complete the weekly homework as follows:

-Week 1: Key terms and people (26 points)

-Week 2: Map work, and opinion-based questions that require students to write out their thoughts (20 points).

2) Students will complete a worksheet breaking down the latest weaponry of the era.

3) Students will be able to organize their own thoughts and debate whether the costs of the war were worth it or not.

4) Students will complete notes over the film *The Lost Battalion,* containing information that represents change in warfare as seen through the movie.

Key Concepts:

Nationalism

Militarism

Alliances

Isolationist

Interventionist

Internationalist

Additional Resources:

Films: *Michael Collins* and *The Lost Battalion*

PowerPoint slide packs for each lesson

Weaponry worksheet

Map of Europe (pre and post war)

Access to Internet/YouTube

Textbook

Catalog of Lessons:

Lesson 1: Origins of the War

Students learn and discuss the underlying causes of the First World War, as well as the spark that sets it off. Prior to introducing the causes, students play a group activity/simulation in which they make decisions as the leader of a fictional country. The must navigate through events of this fictional world that are very similar to the events that helped bring about the Great War. Through this game, students should gain a firm grasp of the importance of Militarism, as well as the importance of Alliances. They should also quickly see the drawbacks of entangling alliances. The remaining portion of the material is covered through a PowerPoint presentation that offers up further evidence of the origins of the war.

Lesson 2: The U.S. Shift from Neutrality to War

Students learn and discuss the causes that lead to the United States to change its course of action and eventually join in the fight on the Allied Powers side. Students will analyze American foreign policy and the long tradition of staying out of European conflict. Through a PowerPoint presentation students will see examples and evidence that will drive the U.S. into the war. Students will then look at how the United States must rapidly and drastically alter its economy to support the war effort. Finally students will discuss how this would affect their lives if something like this would occur today.

Lesson 3: Changes in Technology, Weaponry, and War

Through watching the film *The Lost Battalion,* students will see the drastic change in warfare at the beginning of the 20th century. While watching the movie, students will be required to analyze and describe these changes through keeping movie notes for each day of the film. Students should identify that advanced weapons were blending with old tactics to create an environment never before seen. Upon completion of the film, students will be able to complete a worksheet describing the changes in weapons and their effects on the battlefield and the larger conflict.

Lesson 4: Is Nationalism Acceptable for All?

At this point students have discussed and viewed examples of Nationalism expressed by all the major powers of the era. However, these nations were not the only ones portraying these sentiments. Colonial holding of many great powers used the ideals of Nationalism and Militarism as a basis for freedom and independence. However, since these groups were largely outnumbered and outgunned, their calls for change went largely unanswered. Through viewing clips of the film *Michael Collins*, as well as a short PowerPoint presentation, students will be able to determine the differences between the great powers, Nationalism from smaller nations through analysis of the Irish Cause.

Lesson 5: Post War and Beyond

Students will learn about the conclusion of World War One through a slide pack. Information covered will explain the final result, as well as the post war politics and how Europe was changed (or the lack thereof). Students will debate if the end result of the war was commensurate of its cost. Finally students will understand how the lack of real change at the end of the war will only prime Europe for continued conflict and the Second World War.