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Special Thanks to:
The HCA Foundation on behalf of HCA and the TriStar Family of Hospitals

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DEAR TEACHERS,

Letters Home is a moving experience, bringing to life actual letters written between soldiers serving in the Middle East and their families. Bill Massolia, artistic director of Griffin Theatre, says “In theaters now, everybody says, this is a metaphor about the war, but it’s not really about the war. Well, this really is about the war, the words of the soldiers themselves talking about their experiences.”

Audience members will be looking into a window of someone else’s world, reflecting the daily struggles and lives of our soldiers. Part of that world includes powerful language, expressing all the emotions and fears of those in it.

We encourage you to take time for discussion and reflection with your students about this important and emotional experience.

TPAC Education

Note: Letters Home is presented in soldiers’ own words with real images. This performance contains graphic depictions of war and strong language.

Table of Contents

About the company and show description...............................................1
Theater Conventions and Characters......................................................2
Lesson – A Soldier’s Story.................................................................3
Script Excerpts.......................................................................................4
Lesson – War Is.....................................................................................5
Lesson – To Tell a War Story: A Socratic Seminar.................................6
Lesson – Fact or Opinion? Bias in the Media..........................................8
Lesson – Recruiting a Few Good Citizens..............................................11
More Ideas............................................................................................12
Web Resources.......................................................................................13

Guidebook written and compiled by Cassie LaFevor.
Edited by Susan Sanders and Kristin Dare-Horsley.

A note from our Sponsor ~ Regions Bank

For over 125 years Regions has been proud to be a part of the Middle Tennessee community, growing and thriving as our area has. From the opening of our doors on September 1, 1883, we have committed to this community and our customers.

One area that we are strongly committed to is the education of our students. We are proud to support TPAC’s Humanities Outreach in Tennessee Program. What an important sponsorship this is – reaching over 25,000 students and teachers – some students would never see a performing arts production without this program. Regions continues to reinforce its commitment to the communities it serves and in addition to supporting programs such as HOT, we have close to 200 associates teaching financial literacy in classrooms this year.

Thank you, teachers, for giving your students this wonderful opportunity. They will certainly enjoy the experience. You are creating memories of a lifetime, and Regions is proud to be able to help make this opportunity possible.

Jim Schmitz
Executive Vice President
Area Executive
Middle Tennessee Area
Established in 1988, the Griffin Theatre Company is a not-for-profit, professional theatre company located in Chicago. Headed by Artistic Directors Richard A. Barletta and William J. Massolia, the mission of the Griffin Theatre Company is to create extraordinary and meaningful theatrical experiences for both children and adults by building bridges of understanding between generations that instill in its audience an appreciation of the performing arts.

Through artistic collaboration, the Griffin Theatre Company produces literary adaptations, original work and classic plays that challenge and inspire with wit, style and compassion for the audience. Griffin Theatre Company is supported by an ensemble of Artists in Residence with a range of disciplines include acting, designing, directing and production.

Since it began, the Griffin Theatre Company has provided a wide range of work including premieres of acclaimed scripts, critically lauded productions of Shakespeare and original adaptations of novels. Thirteen of the Griffin’s 70 plus productions have appeared on Chicago area critics “Best of the Year” lists.

SHOW DESCRIPTION

*Letters Home* puts the current war in Iraq front and center by bringing to life actual letters written by soldiers serving in the Middle East and their families. Without politicizing, the play gives audiences a powerful portrait of the soldier experience in the ongoing war. These letters were written under the most difficult of circumstances; the rigors of training, uncertainty of deployment, separation from family and loved ones and combat, and occupation duties in Afghanistan and Iraq. One theme seems to unite their diverse voices - the belief that the person standing beside you is more important than you are. They also help define patriotism for the audience, and what it means to serve our country today, through acts of bravery, compassion, social responsibility, sense of community and brotherhood. Collectively the production gives a voice to a generation that went to war against terror and are still fighting and dying in those wards today. More importantly, the play reveals the humanity that lies within the war as seen through the eyes of the men and women fighting it.

The production uses minimal props and set pieces to dramatize the letters, and employs the use of images and video projected behind the actors as they perform the letters as dramatic monologues. The photos and video used in the production are taken directly from actual soldiers’ blogs and websites. *Letters Home* is inspired by the New York Time Op-Ed Article, *The Things They Wrote* and the subsequent HBO documentary, *Last Letters Home* and additionally uses letters and correspondences from Frank Schaeffer’s books, *Voices From the Front, Letters Home From America’s Military Family, Faith of Our Sons, and Keeping Faith.*
THEATER CONVENTIONS

The production of *Letters Home* is performed in a presentational format using dramatic monologues, minimal props and set pieces, and projecting images and video taken directly from actual soldier’s blogs and websites. This style of theater may be challenging to audience members who are only familiar with other formats, as it is a non-realistic style that shows the theatrical aspects of the production. To prepare your students for this production, we recommend that you discuss the following theater conventions with your class, prior to attending this performance.

**Direct Address**
Actors tell their thoughts, feelings, actions and/or motives directly to the audience. This is a way in which we can hear what an actor is thinking. In *Letters Home*, the actors present each letter in the form of a dramatic monologue that directly addresses the audience.

**Doubling**
In many performances, actors often play more than one role. They use costumes, posture and changes in their voices to make themselves into different characters. In *Letters Home*, a total of 10 actors portray all the characters in this performance.

**Freezing**
Certain characters become motionless during a scene. They are not part of the action, even though the audience can still see them. In this production, each actor takes turns performing one dramatic monologue at a time, while the other actors remain motionless.

**Dramatic Monologue**
A dramatic monologue is a literary composition in which a speaker reveals his or her character, often in relation to a critical situation or event. Dramatic monologues offer insight into the feelings of the speaker and is usually directed toward a silent audience. (Not to be confused with a soliloquy in which the character speaks to themselves.)

*Excerpts from the Overture Center for the Arts “Onstage” Resource Guide*

CHARACTERS

The script of *Letters Home* was created using letters and blogs from real people. You and your students may wish to look up some of these “characters” and see what you can learn about the real people and their lives. Below is the list of characters from the script of *Letters Home*.

**LCpl. Matthew W. Webster** – USMC, 19 years old, Alpha Company 1/5 2nd Platoon  
**Cpl. John Schaeffer** - USMC  
**2nd Lt. Leonard Cowherd III** - US Army, Age 22  
**Sergeant Sharon D. Allen** - US Army  
**Sgt, Jeremy Lussi** - 10th Mtn. Div/Army  
**SSgt. Aaron White** - USMC  
**LCpl. William B. Porter** – USMC, 18 years old.  
**Spc. Michelle Witmer** - US Army, 20 years old.  
**Spc. Clint Turnbull** - Iowa Army National Guard  
**LCpl. Clayton D. Coleman** – USMC, 19 years old  
**Sergeant Sharon D. Allen** - US Army  
**Cpl. Matthew Mertz** - USMC  
**Cpl. John Schaeffer** - USMC  
**Nancy M. Dickinson** – Civilian  

**LCpl. Joshua Davey**  
**Myrna E. Bein**  
**Cpl. Joshua Mandel** - USMC  
**Sergeant Sharon D. Allen** - US Army  
**Mark Daily**  
**1st Lt. Jane (Vizzi) Blair** - USMC  
**Sgt. Cory R. Mracek** - 82nd Airborne Division, US Army, 26 years old  
**Mrs. Mracek** – Civilian, Cory’s mother  
**Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Parker** - Commander, 2nd Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division  
**CPT Matt Hardman** - 82D Airborne Division  
**Linda Chapman** - Civilian  
**Staff Sergeant Parker Gyokeres** - Air Force, 30 yr.

Photo by Michael Brosilow.
Politicians and generals have always been given a public voice during wartime, but rarely individual soldiers. Drawing from visual images and written narratives, this lesson will address the ways participants prepare, take part in, and remember war.

Grade Level: 8-12

Standards addressed: English standards 2, 3, 4, 7 - Communication, Writing, Research, and Media
Social Studies standards 4.0, 6.0 - Governance and Civics; Individuals, Groups and Interactions
Theatre standards 1.0, 2.0, 5.0 - Script Writing, Character Acting, Research
Visual Art standards 3.0, 6.0 - Evaluation, Interdisciplinary Connections

Objectives: The student will imagine and develop a character using a photograph.
The student will create and dramatize a narrative from the point of view of a fictional or real-life wartime participant.
The student will consider current soldier expression and write ‘A Day in the Life’ of a soldier.

Classroom Materials: Photocopied photographs of soldiers, internet access, paper, script excerpts

Instructional Procedures:
Set – Open the website http://films.nfb.ca/front-lines/capsules.php and choose “The Life of a Soldier.” Play only the sound of the first minute of this video for students with their eyes closed. Then, without speaking, students should write what they think and feel from this. What did they notice? What do they wonder about? What did they connect to? Ask students to share some of their answers.

Discuss: In war, the voices of those who fight are often isolated and distant from those at home, sheltered from the traumatic and life-changing events. How have participants in wartime events told their stories and how have they represented the events that surround them?

Many soldiers writing home often alter their stories, wishing to protect their families from what they are truly going through. Read the excerpts on the following page from Letters Home. Do you think there is more to the stories they tell? Why or why not?

Allow students to select an image from various copied photograph options. Images should include people during a range of wars throughout history and in current news - soldiers, military personnel, government officials, medics, journalists, etc.

Once they have selected their image, students should consider a “character” from the photograph and answer the following about them – Name, Age, Occupation, Family, What is the conflict? How does the character feel about the conflict?

Students will then write a letter as their character to a loved one. The letter should be about the conflict and how the character feels about it. Instruct the letter writers to strike a balance between being unrealistically upbeat and disclosing feelings and experiences that might be too upsetting for the recipient to handle. Allow students about 10 minutes to write their letters.

Discuss the theater conventions used in the production of Letters Home and how they benefit the content. Students should consider these ideas as they prepare for their monologues. Allow students rehearsal time to prepare for their performances.

Finally, students will perform their letters as dramatic monologues to the class.

Closure - Ask students whether doing these activities gave them any new insights into what it means to be a soldier? What are those insights? Reflect on the writing process and the choices they made for performance.

Assessment: Students will turn in their letters for assessment. Dramatic monologues can also be assessed.

Extensions: Allow students to search online for soldier blogs and read some of their posts. Have students write a journal/blog entry from the point-of-view of the person in the image they chose. Create a ‘Day in the Life’ based on the photograph describing the events that happened before, during, and after the photograph was taken, and reflect the emotional and physical state of their person.

LEONARD COWHERD III – Mom, I know this will be very late but I hope that late is better than never. I send my heartfelt love to you from across the ocean. I think of Mother’s Day from years past – all those wonderful memories of you, the family home, come rushing into my head and fill me with emotion. So many wonderful experiences – so many things to be thankful for – these thoughts and images sustain me from day to day and week to week. The happy idea of home and family keeps us all going. I look around me and the people that I have spent the last five months with, lived, slept, ate, fought with, they don’t know my whole story about my loving family and wife and I don’t know their complete story either. Everyone knows, however, that each one of us have a story and a home and a mother. And for that reason, we share an unspoken kinship that carries us together through each day. I patiently await the day when we return home and I can see you and the family again. The day that I can read Paul’s letter to Timothy with good faith and a proud conscience. I have fought the good fight. I have stayed the course. I have kept the faith. Love Leonard. Lights fade on soldier.


MICHELLE WITMER – I love you so much and you can’t imagine how often I think of you. I hope you have lots of fun today and that the weather is lovely. We had a briefing telling us to prepare ourselves as best as possible for what lies ahead. Things like children running out in front of the vehicles to try and get them to stop. We have to prepare ourselves to hit people because stopping is not an option. I guess every convoy that’s gone up north so far has taken fire or been ambushed. The question of whether we will or not is not even really a question, more like as a guess as to when....These things, as you can imagine, are a lot to take in....I’m doing my best, I’ve been a little depressed lately but I’m trying to keep my chin up. I really miss home. Tomorrow will be exactly 3 months since I got deployed. Wow—time does not fly. Geez, this letter wasn’t supposed to be so down. Sorry. Back to point! Happy Father’s Day! I love you. Lights fade.

Lights fade up on another soldier. The projection reads Spc. Clint Turnbull, Iowa Army National Guard.

CLINT TURNBULL – Sitting on our “patio” made on one end of our tent. We have shade with camo netting and ponchos and laid cement squares on the ground. Also have folding chairs and a make-shift table. Sitting in shade with my back drenched in sweat! I want to inform you, without worrying you, if that’s possible. Early this morning, we had the biggest mortar attack since we’ve been here. It woke me up about 4 am and lasted for about 20 minutes. I said a prayer right away to protect us all. The good Lord has been watching over me – us. I have the day off because it’s my birthday. Not much to do on a day off though, so this morning we filled and stacked sandbags around our tent again...Oh, received the sweet corn seed today. Yesterday, I dug some trial irrigation ditches. Already identified some improvements and planning out how to water my crops. It’s going to be quite a large garden. Lights fade on the soldier.

The projection reads LCpl. William B. Porter USMC. Eighteen years old.

WILLIAM PORTER - I hate this country! I hate the people, the landscape, the annoying dude who prays over a loudspeaker at 3 in the morning, the heat, the mosquitoes—I think it’s safe to say I hate everything here. I haven’t taken a shower since the beginning of March. Everyone’s so dirty we can’t even smell ourselves. That’s sad. I’ve slept on the ground since February or in my humvee and the worst thing is, there’s no one left to shoot! Lights fade on soldier.

Lights up on another soldier. The projection reads, Sgt, Jeremy Lussi, 10th Mtn. Div/Army.

JEREMY LUSSI – I’m here at the fire base now.....It looks and reminds me of the Alamo. However, there’s not much I can tell you about how it is or what I do. They watch and listen to everything. They also weren’t lying when they said this was a “hot spot.” It’s kinda weird knowing someone tried to kill you, and if their timing had been better they might have succeeded. It’s amazing how much of this country looks like Wyoming. That brings me to something amazing. The chopper ride over was one of the awesomest things my eyes have ever seen. We had to sling-load pallets so I sat right over the hole in the chopper so I could see out.....So far this tour has not been much different than Afghanistan. We’ll be doing lots and lots of missions—some good, some horrible. Keep praying and I miss you guys. Lights fade on soldier.
What does war mean to you? Students will consider this question and write a poem in response.

Grade Level: 7-12
Standards addressed: English standards 3, 8 – Writing and Literature

Objectives: The student will analyze the term war.
The student will examine, compare and contrast two poems about war.
The student will produce an original poem expressing their feelings about the term war.

Materials needed: copies of poems, paper

Instructional Procedures:
Set – Write the definition of war on the board before students enter. Examine the definition with the class.

**WAR:** a. open armed conflict as between nations; b. the period of such conflict; c. The techniques and procedures of war; military science; d. a condition of active hostility or struggle (as in a war of words or a price war); e. a campaign to combat or put an end to something considered injurious, as in the war against acid rain.

▶ Does it seem a reasonable definition of the term? Would students add to this definition? Would they delete something?

▶ Compare the two poems “War is Kind” by Stephen Crane and “War Is” by Harold Hills. Although one states that war is kind, and the other that it is cruel, do both poems really give the same message? Explain.

▶ Ask students to finish the statement “War is ________.” Then write a poem describing their statement. The poem can be rhyming or free verse.

Closure – Ask students to share their poems with someone seated next to them before turning them in.

Assessment: Student poems will be turned in for assessment.

---

**War Is Kind**  
Stephen Crane (1899)

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind,  
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky  
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,  
Do not weep.

War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,  
Little souls who thirst for fight,  
These men were born to drill and die.

The unexplained glory flies above them.  
Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom—  
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.  
Because your father tumbles in the yellow trenches,  
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,  
Do not weep.

War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,  
Eagle with crest of red and gold,  
These men were born to drill and die.

Point for them the virtue of slaughter,  
Make plain to them the excellence of killing  
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button  
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,  
Do not weep.  
War is kind!

---

**War Is**  
By Harold Hills

War is an act of nature  
Like causing death will make you strong  
War can be so immature  
Happening when an accident goes wrong

War is so useless  
Nothing follows in its tracks  
War is a remembrance  
The battles all placed on a map

War is full of tears  
Tears that will cry  
War is like a warning so insecure  
One mistake you'll surely die

War is a resolution  
To the people who have shaped iron clad fists  
War is a part of everything cruel  
Cruel is what war is
TO TELL A WAR STORY:
A SOCRTATIC SEMINAR

Grade Level: 10-12
Standards addressed: English standards 2, 5, 8 – Communication, Logic, and Literature
Social Studies standard 6.0 – Individuals, Groups and Interactions

Objectives: The student will examine the assigned text.
The student will contribute to a Socratic Seminar discussion.
The student will assess the value of material for a purpose.

Materials needed: Tim O’Brien’s How to Tell a War Story excerpts (print copies of handout provided on Page 7)

Instructional Procedures:
Set - Ask students to write War Story at the top of a page. Under this label, brainstorm a list of things, concrete or abstract, that they think of when they hear the phrase War Story. Discuss their lists.

- Read the provided excerpts from How to Tell a War Story by Tim O’Brien, or use the full text if you wish (For the entire text, visit http://us.history.wisc.edu/hist102/pdocs/obrien_story.pdf) By trying to characterize what constitutes a true war story, O’Brien introduces several themes, including memory, imagination, and truth. Would students make any changes to their lists?

- Explain the idea of Socratic Seminar to your students.

- Before beginning, students should re-read the assigned text and write one question in each of the following categories:
  - World Connection (connecting the text to the real world)
  - Close-Ended (Question with a “correct” answer, allows everyone to come to an agreement about events or characters in the text.)
  - Open-Ended (will require proof and group discussion to discover or explore the answer)
  - Universal Theme/Core (encourages group discussion about universality and a theme of the text)
  - Literary Analysis (dealing with how an author chose to compose a literary piece, such as how the author manipulates point of view, characterization)

- A few question ideas to guide the seminar:
  - ‘A true war story is never about war,‘ – What does this statement mean to you? What do you think a war story is about?
  - How do war and stories of war affect your life?
  - Based on Tim O’Brien’s statements, do you think it is possible to write a true war story?

Assessment: The teacher will monitor participation during the seminar.

A few notes about Socratic Seminar:
The Socratic method of teaching is based on Socrates’ theory that it is more important to enable students to think for themselves than to fill their heads with “right” answers.

A Socratic seminar is not used for the purpose of debate, persuasion, or personal reflection. Through a process of listening, making meaning, and finding common ground, students work toward shared understanding rather than proving an argument.

A Socratic seminar begins with a discussion leader (student or teacher) asking an open-ended question. A typical opening prompt is: What do you think this text means? Silence is fine. It may take a few minutes for students to warm-up. Socratic seminars should be given at least fifteen minutes, but can last longer.

For more information on Socratic Seminar, visit http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instructio n/ela/SocraticSeminars/overview.htm
A true war story is never moral. It does not instruct, nor encourage virtue, nor suggest models of proper human behavior, nor restrain men from doing the things they have always done...

If at the end of a war story you feel uplifted, or if you feel that some small bit of rectitude has been salvaged from the larger waste, then you have been made the victim of a very old and terrible lie. There is no rectitude whatsoever. There is no virtue...

You can tell a true war story if it embarrasses you. If you don’t care for obscenity, you don’t care for the truth...

You can tell a true war story by the way it never seems to end. Not then, not ever...

War is mystery and terror and adventure and courage and discovery and holiness and pity and despair and longing and love. War is nasty; war is fun. War is thrilling; war is drudgery. War makes you a man; war makes you dead. The truths are contradictory.

It can be argued, for instance, that war is grotesque. But in truth war is also beauty...you can’t help but gape at the awful majesty of combat...You crouch in ambush as a cool, impassive moon rises over the nighttime...You admire the fluid symmetries of troops on the move, the great sheets of metal-fire streaming down from a gunship, the illumination rounds, the white phosphorus, the purply orange glow of napalm, the rocket’s red glare...It’s astonishing. It fills the eye...

In war you lose your sense of the definite, hence your sense of truth itself, and therefore it’s safe to say that in a true war story nothing is absolutely true...

In the end, a true war story is never about war. It’s about the special way that dawn spreads out on a river when you know you must cross the river and march into the mountains and do things you are afraid to do. It’s about love and memory. It’s about sorrow. It’s about sisters who never write back and people who never listen.
FACT OR OPINION?
BIAS IN THE MEDIA

Letters Home is built on soldiers’ personal experiences and how they give voice to those experiences, filtered only by the soldiers’ emotions and willingness to share. This viewpoint is often very different from the “reported” daily news of the war’s successes and failures which are usually filtered by political positions and big media demands. As a class, discuss the general role and perceptions of the news media in war reporting.

Grade Level: 9 -12
Standards addressed: English 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 – Communication, Writing, Logic, Informational Text, Media
Social Studies standard 4.0 – Governance and Civics

Objectives: The student will distinguish between fact and opinion, identifying the slant of various news headlines. The student will examine news articles for evidence of bias and balance, suggest synonyms for controversial words, and rewrite sentences to alter the meaning.

Materials needed: printout of headline examples (handout on page 10), newspapers (varied sources, one for each student), paper

Instructional Procedures:

Set – Ask students to fold a piece of paper in half, labeling the left side Facts and the right side Opinions. Students should define each word and list three examples of each about a neutral topic, such as “Football is the best American sport.” Give them a few minutes and then discuss the following questions: What is the difference between fact and opinion? Are all facts true for everyone? Can opinions also be true? Why is it important to know the difference between fact and opinion?

Discussion
Consider the impact of fact and opinion in media coverage of the war in Iraq.

• Does the average person read a newspaper critically? Do they consider if an article is accurate, objective or fair?
• Is there a “point of view” in the news? Are news stories objective or biased? In what ways?
• What effect does the news media have on the public’s opinion about the war?

Step One
► Pass out copies of the headlines handout to students found on page 10) which includes headlines from various sources, including news stories and opinion articles, or choose your own current headlines if you prefer.

► Students should analyze and rank each headline from most biased to least biased, and circle the words that they feel most strongly reflect a biased point of view.

Step Two
► Take a vote to determine the headline the majority of students rate as most biased, and discuss which words they circled. Can they change these words to alter the meaning of the headline, making it unbiased?

► Ask for synonyms and write the new headline on the board. How does word choice affect the meaning?

Step Three
► Pass out varied newspapers to each student, asking them to find an article about the war. Students should analyze the article by answering the following questions:
• Identify one statement that reflects the reporter’s position on this issue. Is the statement supported?
• Is information provided to create some balance in the reporting? How so?
Step Four
► Ask students to rewrite at least three sentences in the article using synonyms for words that would alter the meaning of the emphasis of the statements, creating a balanced and unbiased statement.

► Discuss students' answers as a class and ask for volunteers to share the original and altered statements.

Closure – Discuss the lesson and ask students to share their thoughts. Have they ever considered the source they receive news from? Will they look at the media differently now?

Assessment: All written work from the lesson will be turned in for assessment. After the play compare and contrast how opinions of the war are formed by listening to the soldier’s stories and listening to news media.

Extensions:
► Many times in history the media has not just reported the events of a war. It has also influenced those events. The writers of the First Amendment knew it was essential that the press have the right to write about news, even if it was controversial or against the government or the church. With that right and freedom comes the responsibility to report honestly and fairly. Reporters must do research to gather the facts, spell names correctly, give accurate background information, and provide equal time to both sides of an issue. Each student will write a script for an editorial news piece examining his or her views about the roles and responsibilities of the media as it relates to war. These scripts may be used to act out a news show in another class period, or turned in as a written script or article.

► Assign students the role of reporters covering Iraq. Students should make a list of questions they intend to ask, what stories they will seek, what pictures they intend to take and why they chose these options. Will they use graphic images to show the horror of war or attract views/readers, or withhold such images to preserve support for soldiers or privacy of victims? What do Americans need to know about the soldiers and civilians, the economy and culture, or the politics that surround this conflict? Do they need to know about the events surrounding combat and details of specific battles?

► Prepare a persuasive speech explaining how a television news network should cover newsworthy events. What directives should network executives ask of their news team to avoid bias? Describe why bias should be avoided, why balanced reporting is necessary, and suggest measures news managers can apply to guarantee impartial coverage.

► Is it really news? It has been said that the majority of information in a newspaper is advertisements. To investigate this, distribute copies of the local newspaper to students. The class will agree on a definition of “news” and titles for headings to categorize the contents of a newspaper (sports, entertainment, ads, etc.). Using transparent grid sheets as overlays, students estimate the total area of a newspaper page and determine the area of each category on their page. Students then express the area of the articles to the area of the page as a fraction and decimal. The total area of each category is computed, and these totals are compared to the total number of pages. On the basis of this data, students decide how much of the newspaper is really news.

FACT OR OPINION?
BIAS IN THE MEDIA HANDOUT

Recent Headlines

‘Four Lessons Learned Help U.S. Military In Afghanistan’ (Fox News, February 18, 2010)

‘In Iraq, Americans Struggle to Relinquish Control’ (Wall Street Journal, March 1, 2010)

‘A Courageous Voice Silenced In the Middle East’ (Fox News, March 11, 2010)

‘Before Another U.S. Soldier Dies...’ (Fox News, May 12, 2010)

‘Iraqis take charge of last prison in US control amid concerns government isn't ready’ (Fox News, July 15, 2010)

‘Will We Again Abandon Afghan Women?’ (New York Times, July 15, 2010)

‘Will Afghan women’s rights be bargained away?’ (CNN, July 16, 2010)


‘13 killed, 26 injured in bombing at Iraqi market’ (CNN, July 21, 2010)


Students learn about past and current recruiting methods and create recruiting campaigns.

Grade Level: 6-12
Standards addressed: English standards 2, 5, and 7 – Communication, Logic, and Media
Social Studies standards 4.0, 5.0, 6.0 – Governance and Civics, History, Individuals, Groups and Interactions
Visual Art standards 6.0 - Interdisciplinary Connections

Objectives: The student will compare and contrast current recruiting methods with historical methods.
The student will employ presentation skills to give a speech and critique ideas presented orally by others.
The student will create a recruiting poster and persuasive speech that appeals to the audience and is appropriate for its purpose.
The student will participate productively in self-directed work teams.

Materials needed: blank paper or poster board, pencils, markers, large copies of historical recruiting posters, recruiting commercials

Instructional Procedures:
Set – Print large copies of historical recruiting posters and hang them up before class. Begin class by viewing a couple of modern recruiting commercials.
Suggested: Search YouTube for USMC Recruiting Video (The clip is about 3 min. long), and U.S. Army Recruiting (1 min. commercial with 2 boys playing video games).

Compare and contrast the commercials with each other. What do each of the commercials use to convince their audience to enlist? What is powerful and/or persuasive about the commercials?

Discuss: In past wars, recruiting posters (point out those on the walls) were commonly plastered throughout towns and cities and local generals and commanders in the war would give persuasive speeches that appealed to the emotions. These actions resulted in large numbers of men volunteering to serve. How is this similar to the commercials? (Both use images and persuasion to appeal to emotions)

Divide students into small groups to design and prepare a recruiting poster and persuasive speech to recruit soldiers to their military “company.” Students can use military recruiting as their topic, or since the lesson is about the method of persuading and not the topic, you can assign them a neutral topic such as chocolate vs. vanilla or hamburgers vs. pizza.

Once groups have finished with their posters and speeches, combine all “companies” with others until you have 3 groups - 2 opposing “regiments” are formed, while the remainder of the class becomes volunteers waiting to be recruited.

Students then assemble in a line of battle and fight using “Paper, Rock, Scissors.” Each student will have a partner from the opposing side. The winner of each round will continue in battle while the loser is “buried” in the death corner.

Now the two regiments will recruit from the volunteers that have not yet participated in battle to evenly replenish the ranks for another battle. (If the class is small, you may choose to cycle those that are “buried” back into the game as new recruits as well.) Use the persuasive speech written by the companies to convince the others to join their cause. Continue until all have participated in a battle.

Closure – Critique ideas and information presented orally by others. What arguments were the strongest? What made students choose a certain side?

Assessment: Persuasive speeches and posters will be assessed.

Adapted from the Stones River National Battlefield lesson “Recruiting a Few Good Citizens.”
MORE IDEAS

Send care packages or letters to soldiers! Whether you believe in war or not, U.S. service men and women need inspiration, hope and courage to do their job on behalf of America. In the words of Spc. Michelle Witmer, US Army, “please send letters. I need encouragement.” There are many websites that offer help with sending letters and packages, including the Post Office! Check out the following sites, and send some love to a soldier!

- Forgotten Soldiers Outreach Inc. - http://www.forgottensoldiers.org/write-a-soldier/
- Soldiers’ Angels - http://soldiersangels.org/join-or-adopt.html
- Any Soldier - http://www.anysoldier.com/
- Post Office instructions and help - http://www.usps.com/supportingourtroops/ (The US Post Office gives FREE boxes, labels and tape to send care packages to soldiers overseas. Go to their website or call 1-800-610-8734 to request CAREKIT04. While these supplies are free, postage must be attached.)

Explore responses to war through visual art. As a class, critique and discuss Picasso’s Guernica. Then, have students research the artwork of other artists who depict the experiences of war. Some examples are Sig Bang Schmidt (http://www.greatwar.nl/frames/default-sigbang.html), Chris Van Wierst (http://www.4xchris.nl/warstorie/index.html), Michael Fay (http://mdfay1.blogspot.com/). Ask students to choose an artist and create a work in the same style that presents their personal point of view of the current war. IMPORTANT NOTE: Always preview websites before allowing students access to be sure they are age appropriate.

Show students the website http://www.virtualwall.org and demonstrate how to look up information on a specific soldier from the Vietnam War casualties. Assign students a soldier name from the current war that can be found on either http://www.fallenheroesmemorial.com/ or http://www.gulfwarmemorial.com/. Students will go to the computer lab do research on their soldier, by first locating the name of their soldier in the list. Select the soldier’s name when it appears on the screen and use this information for background research. The students will then use this information to compose the letters to loved ones from or about their soldier.

Bring in several newspapers, magazines, or provide access to the internet. Students should search news sites for articles about the current war. Ask them to choose a character from it, and answer the Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why of the story. They should then imagine the rest of the story to go with it, and write the story about that person.

Choose an editorial cartoon and write a commentary about it. What event or issue is the cartoonist covering? What is the cartoonist’s point of view? Do you agree or disagree with this perspective? Is the cartoon funny? Why or why not? Create your own editorial cartoon on a topic of your choice.

Stones River National Battlefield offers many programs for teachers and students including lesson ideas, guided tours, field trip opportunities, and more. One of the most interesting offerings at the battlefield may be their presentation of Hallowed Ground: A Lantern Tour of Stones River National Cemetery. Hallowed Ground is a program which tells the stories of soldiers, and their loved ones, who are buried in Stones River National Cemetery. At dusk, a ranger will lead the group on a lantern lit walk through the cemetery and stop at several gravesites where volunteers portraying soldiers and civilians will share stories from letters and diaries of the period. If this doesn’t fit into your timing, consider the daytime program of A Soldier’s Story, where visitors join a ranger as they tell the story of a soldier who fought in the Battle of Stones River.
A Soldier’s Child – Honors the memory of parents by giving a meaningful gift on the birthday of their child.
http://www.asoldierschild.org/

War art and information
http://www.facesofthefallen.org/

The Soldier Portraits Project -- photographs of soldiers of the United States Army
http://www.soldierportraits.com

“The true soldier's story” – YouTube video
(Note – preview before showing to your class. This video contains religious statements and graphic images of war.)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKFiNEM23d8

American Experience War Letters archive
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/warletters

Template for writing an article

Stones River National Battlefield website -- Field Trips, Lesson Ideas, Professional Development, and more!
http://www.nps.gov/stri/index.htm

Edsitement Unit on types of Letter Writing
http://edsitement.neh.gov/printable_lesson_plan.asp?id=294

National Priorities Project – Find the projected cost of the war since 2001 for any area in the US
http://costofwar.com/

FRONTLINE/World – Video visit to the streets of Baghdad to find out how journalists survive in a war in which they have become targets. Also, “Diary From Baghdad” - Wall Street Journal reporter Farnaz Fassihi first published this story, an account of daily life during her six weeks in Baghdad, in the Nov/Dec 2004 Columbia Journalism Review.
http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/iraq401/

PBS News Hour video interview with Tim O’Brien about war:

Write letters and send care packages to soldiers!
  o  Forgotten Soldiers Outreach Inc. - http://www.forgottensoldiers.org/write-a-soldier/
  o  Letters From Home – http://www.lettersfromhomeprogram.org/
  o  Soldiers' Angels - http://soldiersangels.org/join-or-adopt.html
  o  Any Soldier - http://www.ansoldier.com/
  o  Post Office instructions and help - http://www.usps.com/supportingourtroops/

TPAC Education:
http://www.tpac.org/education
On Facebook – search for TPAC Education on facebook and send us your comments!

Griffin Theatre Company websites:
Company website - http://www.griffintheatre.com/
Video of 250 Army soldiers after viewing Letters Home - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jauFYM9mfYs
Death of a Hero
By Steve Carlsen

Clothes soaked with blood, and blood on his boots
As he breaths he gurgles blood
He lays in the shadow cast by a wall of stone
A million miles from home
Eyes wide with fright. His brothers by his side.
He quietly prays as he slowly dies
As blood drains from his body, color leaves his face
His blood waters the flowers in this God forsaken place
They hold him so he doesn’t die alone.
They hold him until they have to bag him and send him home.
Tear leave streaks down a dirty face
Sorrow and emptiness now takes his place
With the utmost care they zip up the big black bag
and wrap his body in an American flag.
A hero is going home.