

Lesson A

Primary and Secondary Sources

Delaware Social Studies Benchmarks

History Two 9-12b: Students will examine and analyze primary and secondary sources in order to differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations. **Essential for Grade 11**

Documents

1. *Lesson A, Delaware Public Archives, World War I Diary, RG 9200*
2. Textbook excerpt about the end of World War I
3. Online resources:
<http://firstworldwar.com/features/armistice.htm>
http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/chapters/ch3_collapse.html

Instructional Strategies

Strategy 1: Gathering Information

On the day before this lesson, instruct students to bring in personal artifacts, such as their driver's license, their report cards, and their favorite photographs, posters, magazines, videos, letters, emails, CDs, etc.

On the day of the lesson, guide students in brainstorming characteristics that might influence the way we perceive the world: Ethnicity, culture, nationality, race, political views, religious faith, gender, etc. Ask students to rate how important each of these characteristics are to them on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = very important; 5 = not important at all).

Have groups of four students combine their artifacts. Ask students to use a T-Chart to analyze the artifacts brought in by another student. On one side of the chart, students should list the **FACTS** that can be known about each artifact. On the other side of chart, students should note their **INTERPRETATIONS** about student life in the early 21st century that can be drawn from each artifact. Ask students to write a brief summary of their interpretations.

Have students share their interpretations with the whole class. Ask students to consider why and how the interpretations differed from one another. Return to the list of characteristics generated at the beginning of the strategy. To what extent did the characteristics influence student interpretations?

Strategy 2: Extending and Refining

Distribute *World War I Diary* document to students. Tell students that this is a diary kept by a Delaware soldier in France during World War I. Ask students to complete the **Document Analysis Worksheet**.

Distribute excerpt from a secondary source that addresses the end of WWI. Ask students to create a T-Chart and list the **FACTS** and **INTERPRETATIONS** included in this excerpt.

Strategy 3: Application

Ask students to use a Venn Diagram to compare the World War I Diary and the secondary source excerpt. Facts and interpretations that both sources share should be listed in the center section.

Ask students to discuss the following questions:

1. What information does the secondary source excerpt tell us that the soldier's diary does not?
2. What information does the soldier's diary tell us that the secondary source does not?

Check for Understanding

Why is it important to use both primary and secondary sources when studying the past? Use specific examples from this lesson to support your answer.

Transcription of Diary

y plane, but it was up in the clouds so far that it was impossible to trace
Had "short arm" inspection at 5 P.M.

Nov. 3. Have been very busy for the last week issuing winter clothing and equipment. "Pop" returned and reiterated all about his wondrous trip. He had some hair-breadth escapes and brought back as a memento 3 Boche helmets, dozens of buttons, and a few phennigs which he said he had procured from the enemy. Told all about the Metz front where he was compelled to seek shelter in a protected dug-out. Also visited Argonne Forests where the gas gongs sounded and all were compelled to resort to their old comrade the gas-mask. He said the firing was intense from the big guns. Also stated that if a man lived in front of them very long he would never again become civilized.

During the week we have had an air raid most every night, and the sky would be lighted up by the bursting shells from the anti-craft guns close by. We brought one down this P.M. at the R.R. Station. At this writing a report has been made that Turkey had signed peace terms and is demobilizing her Army, also that Austria is in a state of revolt and that the Italian Army is advancing through to the Boche border.

Another incident of this day is that our company moved from their billets among the horses and cattle and occupy the upper story of a chateau. Here we have wooden cots to sleep on, which is quite a relief from the damp, open stables.

I am now anticipating a very pleasant night's rest, so I can arise early in the morning and take in the summer underwear.

Nov. 15. The weather for the past 2 weeks has been very pleasant. Clear days generally, and cool, frosty nights.

We have been supplied with an extra uniform and various other equipment which has kept the Supply Dept. busy for the last two weeks. The men work all day and during the evening visit the "soda water" resorts, or gather around for a card party, or play a visit to the Y.M.C.A. hut to play a game of dominoes, write a letter, or listen to the beautiful strains of "Joan of Arc" played by the world famous 59th Pioneer Infantry Band.

All last week the evenings were very entertaining in the open air, as you could hear the buzz of machinery running smoothly in the air, then you would hear a "hit and miss" sound like a 4 cylinder auto running on 3 cylinders, and would recognize this to be a bombing 'plane, then the searchlights would locate the machine, and the sky would be lighted up with the bursting shells from the anti-aircraft guns.

One night last week a regiment of French Artillery arrived in town and parked their 4.75 field pieces nearby, occupying the stables under us for their animals. They only stayed 2 days, then left for Toul.

The next day a Division of American troops passed through town on their way to another section of the line and also for a breathing spell in the rear. Then another Division moved into our nearby towns making their supply headquarters at this place, at the present time they are busily engaged handling food for the men, as Uncle Sam believes that a fighting army is a well fed army.

The town was very much agitated upon the report that Germany demanded peace. The Frenchman would stand up to you and discuss things in his own language for an hour at a time, all you have to say is "Oui, Oui" or "Compre and guess at what he was saying. Finally, on Monday, Nov. 11, news was received that the enemy plenipotentiaries had met Marshall Foch and signed the "Terms of Armistice" 2 A.M.. Church bells tolled incessantly, guns were fired and flags which had not waved for over 4 years were seen flying from eve-house and public building, the French tricolor alongside the Stars and Stripes.

We have now received our little barrack stoves and life is more like living for, when you can sit beside the little friend and enjoy a few moments of warm comfort.

Background Information

This lesson plan will serve as an introduction to primary source documents for many students. The concept of primary sources versus secondary sources may take some time for a student to comprehend. People are creating primary sources every day of their lives. There are numerous primary sources that can be found in the classroom - the teacher's gradebook, student papers, the school menu, etc. One example that you may want to begin this lesson with is your drivers license or a modern birth, marriage, or death record. The students should understand that a primary source does not have to be "old."

Document Background

The document used in this lesson is part of the diary of Anthony Summers, a sergeant in the 59th Pioneer Infantry. It is located in the Summers Papers (Small Manuscript Collection, Record Group 9200). Anthony Summers lived in Harbeson near Milton, Delaware when he was drafted into the army in 1917.

Primary Document Analysis Chart

Title and Author:	Date:
Intended Audience:	Purpose:
Facts included in document:	Interpretations in document:
Summary of Document:	An Important Quote from the Document: