Americans have gone to war to win their independence, expand their national boundaries, define their freedoms, and defend their interests around the globe. *The Price of Freedom: Americans at War*—a new permanent exhibition at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History, Behring Center—uses hundreds of original artifacts and graphic images, multimedia presentations, and hands-on interactives to examine how wars have shaped the nation’s history and transformed American society. It highlights the service and sacrifice of generations of American men and women.

This manual provides you with a variety of creative and engaging strategies to help students think about how wars have been defining moments in both the history of the nation and the lives of individual Americans. On the web at [http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory](http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory) you will find our virtual exhibit, plus additional resources and activities for studying the history of Americans at war.

The National Museum of American History has a longstanding interest in helping teachers find the information and tools they need for teaching American history. Please keep in touch with us, either through the web or by writing to the Department of Education and Public Programs, MRC 603, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, P.O. Box 37012, Washington, D.C. 20013-7012, and let us know how you are using this manual in your classroom.

*The Price of Freedom: Americans at War* is made possible by the generous financial support of Kenneth E. Behring

Additional support is provided by our media partner, The History Channel
Table of Contents

Section I: War of Independence
1. Lexington and Concord—Historical Interpretation Middle School
2. Who’s in Camp? Elementary School
3. General George Washington, Military Leader Elementary School

Section II: Wars of Expansion
4. Conflicting Voices of the Mexican War High School
5. Two Perspectives on the Battle of Little Bighorn/Greasy Grass Middle School

Section III: Civil War
6. John Brown’s Legacy High School
7. Women’s Role in the War Effort Elementary/Middle School
8. Comparing Confederate and Union Soldiers Middle School

Section IV: World War II
9. Mobilizing Children Middle School
10. Changing Gender Roles on the Home Front Middle/High School
11. Battle of the Bulge—Americans Respond to a German Surprise High School

Section V: Cold War/Vietnam
12. Cuban Missile Crisis Advanced High School
13. POWs Middle/High School
14. The Soldier’s Experience—Vietnam versus World War I Middle/High School

Section VI: September 11 and Its Aftermath
15. Students’ Response to 9/11—A Documentary Report Middle/High School

Bibliography

*The Price of Freedom: Americans at War* DVD
DVD includes film footage and first-person accounts

[http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory](http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory)
Images and worksheets related to these lessons are available for download on
*The Price of Freedom* website: [http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory](http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory)
# Americans at War

| War of Independence  1775–1783 | Service members: 217,000  
Deaths in service: 4,435 |
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americans went to war to win their independence from Great Britain.</td>
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| Wars of Expansion  1812–1902 | Service members: 491,478  
Deaths in service: 16,729 |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americans fought in North America and overseas to expand the nation’s territory.</td>
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| Civil War  1861–1865 | Service members: 3,263,363  
Deaths in service: 529,332 |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americans battled each other over preserving their Union and ending slavery.</td>
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| World War I  1917–1918 | Service members: 4,734,991  
Deaths in service: 116,516 |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americans reluctantly entered Europe’s “Great War” and tipped the balance to Allied victory.</td>
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</table>

| World War II  1941–1945 | Service members: 16,112,566  
Deaths in service: 405,399 |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americans joined the Allies to defeat Axis militarism and nationalist expansion.</td>
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</table>

| Cold War  1945–1989 | Service members (worldwide): 5,720,000  
Deaths in service: 36,576 |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americans led Western efforts to contain Communism during the Korean War and nuclear arms race.</td>
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</table>

| Vietnam War  1956–1975 | Service members (in theater): 3,403,000  
Deaths in service: 58,200 |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americans fought a protracted and divisive war against Communist expansion in Southeast Asia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Americans fought to defend their interests against threats at home as well as abroad.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Section I: War of Independence

Title: Lexington and Concord—Historical Interpretation

Grade Level: Middle School

Objectives: Analyze historical images depicting Lexington and Concord. Interpret the events of Lexington and Concord.

National History Standards:
- Standard 1: Chronological Thinking
- Standard 2: Historical Comprehension
- Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation
- Era 3:1: The causes of the War of Independence, the ideas and interests involved in forging the revolutionary movement, and the reasons for the American victory.

Time: 45 minutes

Background:
By 1775, Britain had been imposing laws and taxes on its colonies in America without deference to local governments or popular consent for more than ten years—and colonists’ protests had become increasingly vehement. Hoping to avert an armed rebellion, British troops in Boston, Massachusetts, marched under the cover of darkness toward nearby Concord to seize the local militia’s cache of arms and gunpowder. Patriots from Boston alerted the countryside, and at dawn on April 19, a militia unit gathered on the green in Lexington. They were neighbors, fathers and sons, cousins; at least one was a slave; some were old men, some were teens.

During the standoff between the Americans and British troops, a shot was fired. Nobody on the green in Lexington could tell where the shot came from; nobody would ever know. In the ensuing melee, the redcoats fired a musket volley, fixed their bayonets, and charged. All was confusion; one of the witnesses, Paul Revere, could discern only “a continual roar of musketry.” In fifteen minutes it was over. Eight colonists lay dead and ten were wounded.

From Lexington, British troops marched to Concord, where they destroyed the few supplies the militia had not hidden. After a fierce skirmish with militia, they started back to Boston. Hundreds of militiamen joined the counterattack, forcing the British to make a desperate retreat through a gauntlet of musket fire. Exhausted and panicked, British soldiers lashed out, killing civilians, ransacking and looting houses, and setting fires.

News of the fighting at Lexington and Concord rallied “ Friends of American Liberty” in all the colonies. Some colonists recoiled from the notion of taking up arms. Others joined the fight resolved to save themselves and their children from lives of “perpetual slavery” under British rule.
“In Lexington the enemy set fire to Deacon Joseph Loring’s house and barn, Mrs. Mullikin’s house and shop, and Mr. Joshua Bond’s house and shop, which were all consumed. They pillaged almost every house they passed by, breaking and destroying doors, windows, [looking] glasses, etc., and carrying off clothing and other valuable effects.”

—Salem Gazette, April 25, 1775
Materials:  
- Illustrated map of Lexington  
- *The Battle of Lexington*, engraving by Amos Doolittle, 1775  
- *A View of the South Part of Lexington*, engraving by Amos Doolittle, 1775  
(Doolittle visited Lexington a few weeks after the battle and based his engravings on sketches taken on the spot and on interviews with participants.)  
- Construction paper and drawing materials (colored pencils, markers, crayons)  
- Lexington and Concord Student Analysis Chart from *The Price of Freedom* website http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory  

Lesson:  
Explain the events leading up to the battles at Lexington and Concord. Then pass out copies of the map of Lexington and Amos Doolittle’s engravings. Have the students answer the following questions about each engraving: What event does the picture show? Who do you think was the intended audience? Is the image a positive portrayal or a negative portrayal? Which side of the conflict do you think the artist was on? Why do you think the artist was on that particular side? Where is the battle taking place? How are the troops on each side organized? (You may want to print and distribute the Student Analysis Chart which will allow students to easily compare and contrast their answers related to each primary source.)  

After students analyze the pictures and discuss what they show, have them consider how to best portray Lexington and Concord. You may want to have some students consider this from the American perspective and others from the British. Suggestions include biography, interview, letter, personal journal, artwork, poem/song, newspaper article, or presentation. The chosen method must include specific dates, references to the two battles, and other surrounding events. Students may incorporate extra research in the library or outside of class. Also, they may work individually, with partners, or in small groups, depending on the activity they wish to pursue and on how they want to distribute tasks.
“The best Patriot [will be the one] who contributes most to this glorious work, whatever his Station or from whatever part of the Continent he may come.”

—George Washington, 1776

Title: Who’s in Camp?
Grade Level: Elementary School
Objectives: Understand who fought the War of Independence and how their lives and the lives of their families were affected by the war.

National History Standards:
Standard 2: Student comprehends historical sources; Standard 5: Student engages in historical issues—analysis and decision-making; Era 3: Revolution and the new nation (1754–1820s), Standard 1C: Compare and explain the people’s different roles and perspectives in the war.

Time: 45 minutes

Background:
In June of 1775, the Continental Congress united the troops of the several colonies into a single Continental army “for the Defense of American Liberty” under the command of General George Washington. The men of Washington’s army were young and mostly poor farmers, fishermen, and artisans; some were Africans. All were volunteers (although many joined for a cash award). They gathered in camps, joined by local militia units and civilians in every imaginable capacity.

Soldiers rose early each day—and went to bed early each night: Washington ordered that “all lights must be put out at 9 o’clock in the evening, and every man to his tent.” Each day they drilled in the “manual exercise,” the precise sequence of steps involved in loading and firing their muskets. They marched and maneuvered in long linear formations, learning to move and fight as one. Each day, they were supposed to receive rations and supplies: a pound of beef or pork, peas and beans, a pound of flour, a quart of cider, milk, a half-cup of rum; every week they were supposed to receive a pound of salted fish, two cups of vinegar (to prevent scurvy), candles, soap, fresh straw for their beds. But rations were often spoiled and supplies inadequate; many foraged for food in local fields and orchards. Thousands—malnourished and exhausted—died when diseases like “putrid diarrhea” ravaged the camps. In fact, more soldiers died from disease than were killed by musket fire, rolling and bouncing cannonballs, or bayonet charges.
Who carried a spontoon?
*Hint:* They told recruits to “mind the music and the step.”

Who wore their own hats?
*Hint:* They were not part of the regular army.

Who played with toys?
*Hint:* They received a half-ration of food.

Who used lots of lye soap?
*Hint:* They did piles of laundry.

Who carried a camp pot?
*Hint:* They ate together.

Who kept bloodsucking leeches in a jar?
*Hint:* They used them to treat illnesses.
who’s in camp?

**Militiamen** were citizen soldiers who wore regular clothes and carried their own equipment. They were local white men, and sometimes free black men, between the ages of sixteen and sixty. They were called out only as needed, elected their own officers, and decided where and when to fight.

**Women**—usually the wives or relatives of soldiers—followed the army wherever it went. Most washed and mended clothes; some cooked or took care of the sick and wounded.

**Officers** carried spontoons, pole arms that signaled their rank. Each day they drilled their men in the sequence of steps involved in loading and firing their muskets. They practiced their troops in marching and maneuvering in long, shoulder-to-shoulder lines. Because officers carried no firearms, the spontoon’s sharpened iron blade was their only weapon.

**Children** lived in camp with their fathers and mothers. Although they were an accepted presence in camp, George Washington once complained that “the multitude of women in particular, especially those who are pregnant, or have children, are a clog upon every movement.”

**Soldiers** in the army were divided into groups of six to eight men, called a mess. Each group was issued a camp pot and did its own cooking. They carried the heavy iron pot wherever they went. Because the meat they received as rations was often of poor quality—even infested with maggots—they had to boil it.

**Doctors** believed that many illnesses were caused by an imbalance in the body’s fluids, known as “humors.” They used leeches to remove “excess” blood in an effort to restore the balance of bodily fluids. In reality, bleeding resulted in lowered blood pressure, dehydration, infection—and often death.

*Image courtesy of National Library of Medicine*
Materials:
- Six sets of the six object cards
- *The Fighting Ground* by Avi
- *The American Revolution: A History in Their Own Words* by Milton Meltzer
- *The Way of Duty: A Woman and Her Family in Revolutionary America* by R. Buel
- *Black Heroes of the American Revolution* by Burke Davis
- *If You Were There in 1776* by Barbara Brenner
- *The Minute Men: The First Fight-Myths and Realities of the American Revolution* by John Galvin

Lesson:
As pre-lesson homework, have students read one of the six books about life during the War of Independence.

In class, divide the students into six groups and give each group a set of object cards. Have them analyze the object on the image side of the card and write answers to the following questions: Can you identify this object? What is its function? Who might have needed such an object in a soldiers’ encampment? Have them assign a type of person who might have used the artifact for each object they have. Then ask the students to turn the cards over to learn the identity of the person.

Finally, ask each student to choose one of the six people. In the voice of the character, have students write a letter home about their experiences during the war. This will allow them to use their research from the reading assignment and their investigation of the object cards.
Section I: War of Independence

Title: General George Washington, Military Leader

Grade Level: Elementary School

Objectives: Identify qualities of leadership, analyze how General Washington’s officers described their leader—and compare and contrast the two.

National History Standards:
Standard 2: Student comprehends historical sources; Standard 3: Student engages in historical analysis and interpretation; Era 3: Revolution and the new nation (1754–1820s); Standard 1C: George Washington’s role as military leader.

Time: 45 minutes

Background:
George Washington was appointed general and commander in chief of the Continental army on June 15, 1775. He stood tall when he accepted his commission—more than six feet, in fact. And he cut an impressive figure in his uniform: “His frame is padded with well-developed muscles, indicating great strength,” wrote a friend in 1760. He has “rather long arms and legs,” large hands and feet, a head that is “well-shaped, though not large” with “blue gray penetrating eyes,” and “dark brown hair which he wears in a que [braid].” His “movements and gestures are graceful, his walk majestic, and he is a splendid horseman.”

Delegates to the Continental Congress who appointed Washington were impressed by his commanding presence, military experience, and political savvy. So were the officers and troops he led during the war. Washington won their confidence and admiration by combining “affability & Courtesie, without Arrogancy” with “the strictest discipline” and “the strictest justice” (he did not hesitate to whip, drum out of the army, or even execute those who failed to obey orders). He believed that maintaining the respect of his men was necessary “to support a proper command.” He did not fraternize with his men, but he asked nothing of them that he was not willing to do himself and often joined them in battle.

Washington also took special care to outfit himself in a fashion suitable to a commanding general. He wore a fine uniform with epaulets on the shoulders, and sometimes a blue ribbon across his waistcoat to distinguish himself. And he outfitted himself with accoutrements suitable to a general: tents, a collapsible bed, folding tables, camp stools, and bags and trunks filled with equipment and staples, including a set of silver camp cups engraved with the Washington family crest.
“[Washington] has a dignity that forbids familiarity, mixed with an easy affability that creates love and reverence.”

—Abigail Adams

Battle of Princeton, by William Mercer, 1786
Courtesy of Atwater Kent Museum, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Collection

Materials:

- George Washington’s camp chest, sword, uniform, epaulets, and camp cup
- DVD—Lydia Post first-person account
- Battle of Princeton, by William Mercer, 1786
- Dictionary

Lesson:

Set the stage for this lesson by watching Lydia Post’s account of the war on the DVD. Explain to the class how George Washington became the general and commander in chief of the Continental army. Then introduce students to Washington using some of his military possessions—his camp chest, uniform, sword and camp cup. Lead a class discussion by asking the following questions:
1. Who were the members of the army? (farmers, citizens, some veterans of the French and Indian War, etc.)
2. How much experience did these men have? (most had almost none)
3. What did the soldiers think fighting a war against the British would be like?
4. What kind of leader did these men need?

Divide the class into teams of three to four students. Ask each group to make a list of the qualities they believe a good military leader needs. Have each group join with one other group, compare their lists, and then come up with one complete list. Get back together as a class and have the groups report out. Make one master list on the board of the qualities of a good military leader.

Print out several copies of the letter received by George Washington from his officers upon his retirement. Highlight and number the letter’s paragraphs—or even the sentences, depending on the level of your class—so that each group has to focus on only a small section of the letter. Have the students rejoin their groups and, with the help of a dictionary, analyze a small section of the letter. Ask them to make notes about what the officers say are Washington’s leadership qualities.

Come back together as a class to make a second list on the board (next to the first) of George Washington’s leadership qualities according to his officers. Finally, compare the two lists and discuss the differences.
George Washington’s uniform, epaulets, camp cup, sword
National Museum of American History
Title: Conflicting Voices of the Mexican War

Grade Level: High School

Objectives: Research conflicting perspectives of the Mexican War.
Conduct “fictional” interviews of key individuals in that war.

National History Standards:
Standard 2: Historical Comprehension; Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation; Standard 4: Historical Research Capabilities; Standard 5: Historical Issues—Analysis and Decision-Making; Era 4:1: United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans.

Time: 90–180 minutes with a pre-assigned research project

Background:
President James K. Polk came into office in 1845 determined to acquire territory from Mexico. He believed that obtaining the sparsely populated Mexican land that stretched from Texas to California was critical to the future of the United States. The president hoped to purchase—not conquer—the land, but when Mexico rebuffed his advances, Polk ordered American troops under Zachary Taylor to march to the Rio Grande River, across land Mexico claimed. Violence erupted, and Polk asked Congress to declare war. Many Americans, including Illinois congressman Abraham Lincoln, opposed the war. Polk, however, prevailed.

President Polk planned a complex campaign. He sent one army under Stephen Kearny to capture New Mexico and then march on to California. Commodore John D. Sloat assaulted California from the sea. Zachary Taylor attacked the main Mexican force from the north with a second army. Battles were hard and marches long.

Despite losses in New Mexico, California, and on its northern front, Mexico refused to surrender. To finish the war, President Polk followed the advice of his general in chief, Winfield Scott, and sent an army to capture Mexico City. He chose Scott himself to make an amphibious landing at Veracruz and then follow the path Hernando Cortés took centuries earlier when he defeated the Aztecs. Scott planned and executed a brilliant campaign, in which he consistently defeated larger forces through superior tactics and bold maneuvers. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 ended the war.
“Now Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States ... and shed American blood upon the American soil. She has proclaimed that ... the two nations are now at war.”

—President James K. Polk, 1846

“People of the United States! Your Rulers are precipitating you into a fathomless abyss of crime and calamity! Awake and arrest the work of butchery ere it shall be too late to preserve your souls from the guilt of wholesale slaughter!

—Horace Greeley, prominent war opponent and editor of the New York Tribune, 1846
Materials:
- DVD—first-person accounts from:
  José María Tornel y Mendívil, Mexican secretary of war, 1837
  George Ballentine, English volunteer for the United States, 1853
  Juan Bautista Vigil y Alarid, acting governor of New Mexico, 1846
  Ulysses S. Grant, American soldier, 1885
- Access to library for extra research

Lesson:
Play the first-person accounts from the Mexican War on the enclosed DVD to introduce the class to different perspectives on the war. Have the students discuss those perspectives and consider how various groups felt about the war. Then ask them to split up into pairs and choose one perspective of the Mexican War to research.

For their research project, students choose either an individual or a group of people impacted by the conflict. Individuals could include those from the DVD, as well as the following: President James Polk, General Zachary Taylor, General Winfield Scott, President Antonio López de Santa Anna, Mexican general Mariano Arista, or Robert E. Lee (like Grant, then a rising young officer in the U.S. Army). Another possibility is Ramon Alcaraz, a Mexican writer who reflected on the war after its conclusion. Henry David Thoreau and William Tecumseh Sherman both provide American perspectives on the war. Groups include American politicians, Mexican leaders, Mexicans in the conquered territories (especially New Mexico), American soldiers, and Mexican soldiers.

Students will search through library reference materials and biographies for information about their chosen individual or group. Students will then create five to ten specific questions about the war to ask their individual or group; and they will research the most likely answers to those questions. Taking on the role of interviewer and interviewee, the student pairs will perform their interviews before the class, which will thereby develop a deeper understanding of different sides of the Mexican War.

Broadside for recruiting volunteer fighters
National Museum of American History
Map of the United States (detail), 1839 Courtesy of Library of Congress
Title: Two Perspectives on the Battle of Little Bighorn/Greasy Grass
Grade Level: Middle School
Objectives: Understand different perspectives of the Battle of Little Bighorn/Greasy Grass. Consider the evidence available to determine which account most accurately describes the battle.

National History Standards:
Standard 2: Student comprehends a variety of historical sources;
Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation; Era 6:4: The student understands various perspectives on federal Indian policy, westward expansion, and the resulting struggles.

Time: 45 minutes

Background:
In 1868, the United States made a treaty with the Sioux nation—a loose confederacy that included the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota peoples—that confined them to a reservation. The Treaty of Fort Laramie promised that the Black Hills, which the Sioux considered sacred, would forever be part of their reservation and closed to white settlement. In 1874, however, Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer led an expedition that verified rumors of rich gold deposits there. Prospectors quickly began to trespass on Indian land and stake illegal claims—then demand that the army protect them from Indian attacks.

In the summer of 1876, the U.S. Army deployed troops to the Black Hills to trap a group of roaming Sioux and force them back to their reservation. Custer’s Seventh Cavalry and his Crow Indian allies were supposed to coordinate operations with other units of the expedition. But on the morning of June 25, Custer found an Indian village and decided to attack on his own. In the ensuing battle, the Seventh Cavalry was overwhelmed: more than 200 troops, including Custer, were killed. The loss so outraged the U.S. government—and the public at large—that the army mounted a new offensive, crushing armed Sioux resistance.
“Look at me and look at the earth. It was our father’s and should be our children’s after us.... If the white men take my country, where can I go? I have nowhere to go. I cannot spare it, and I love it very much. Let us alone.”

—Sitting Bull, Lakota Sioux chief, 1877

“I am inclined to think that the occupation of this region of the country is not necessary to the happiness and prosperity of the Indians, and as it is supposed to be rich in minerals and lumber it is deemed important to have it freed as early as possible from Indian occupancy.”

—Columbus Delano, secretary of the interior, 1872
Materials:  
- *Custer’s Last Stand* painting  
- Little Bighorn pictograph  
- Custer’s buckskin jacket and a Lakota ceremonial shirt  
- *Harper’s Weekly* articles available from *The Price of Freedom* website  
  http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory

Lesson:  
Begin with a brief discussion of what students know about Custer and Little Bighorn/Greasy Grass. Then divide the class into five groups: U.S. government officials, leaders of the Sioux nation, U.S. Army soldiers, Sioux fighters, and historians of today. Distribute to the students the documents and images that pertain to their particular group; give the historians all of the documents and images to review. The government officials will review the news articles; Sioux leaders and Sioux fighters the pictograph of the battle and the Sioux shirt; and the U.S. soldiers the painting of Custer, Custer’s coat, and the *Harper’s Weekly* news articles. Students will need to use their textbooks and other sources to help with their analysis. Refer to the bibliography in the back of this guide; you may want to have some of the suggested books already in the classroom for this activity.

Each group should use the primary sources to articulate its perspective on the Battle of Little Bighorn/Greasy Grass—and to answer questions such as: Whose point of view of the battle does this source represent? Why does the source show the battle the way it does? Who do you think the intended audience was?

The historians should develop questions to ask the other groups about their perspective on the Battle of Little Bighorn and the role their group played in the event. These should include: Was the battle necessary? Should it be called a massacre? Did Custer make the right decision to approach the village to fight the Indians? Should the U.S. Army be fighting the Sioux? Why or why not?

Have the class come back together for a discussion of the battle. In the order above, each of the four groups will explain its position in two minutes or less, using the primary sources as evidence. Then the historians will ask their prepared questions, as well as any that occurred to them during the opening statements. After the question-and-answer session, have the historians decide how to tell the story of the Battle of Little Bighorn. They should share this version—this *history*—with the class.

Follow-up Activity:  
If time allows, discuss with the students what they now know—but did not previously know—about the Battle of Little Bighorn/Greasy Grass. Alternatively, have them write on a sheet of paper three things they learned about the battle. Students could also carry out further research into other major events in the western Indian Wars, such as the incident at Wounded Knee, and plot them on a timeline.
Section III: Civil War

Title: John Brown’s Legacy
Grade Level: High School
Objectives:
- Analyze images and documents relating to the abolitionist John Brown.
- Understand how primary images relate to the abolitionist movement.
- Use a creative medium to highlight Brown’s individual contribution to history.

National History Standards:
- Standard 2: Historical Comprehension; Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation; Era 4:4: The sources and character of cultural, religious, and social reform movements in the antebellum period;

Time: 90 minutes

Background:
On October 16, 1859, radical abolitionist John Brown and a small group of militants seized the federal armory at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, hoping to ignite a slave rebellion. They waited in vain for the uprising they hoped would follow. The next day, U.S. Army officers Robert E. Lee and J. E. B. Stuart brought in a company of marines and stormed the armory’s fire-engine house where Brown had taken cover. They captured him and his band, and killed two of his sons. Brown was hanged, along with six other conspirators. In death he became a martyr for abolitionists. “I am worth inconceivably more to hang,” he said, “than for any other purpose.”

Brown’s execution further polarized a nation already divided over the question of slavery. In the North, it galvanized abolitionists—a small but vocal minority, comprised of Christian reformers, women, free blacks, and fugitive slaves. Appalled that the “land of the free” was the world’s largest slave-holding nation, they advocated federal intervention to rid the nation of a moral evil. Brown’s execution also energized “Free-Soilers,” Northerners who were willing to leave slavery alone in the South but opposed its spread to new territories in the West.

In the South, Brown’s martyrdom further alienated whites. Southerners felt a strong allegiance to their states and region and a shared fear that they were in danger of being dominated by Northern interests. Of the total Southern white population of eight million in 1860, only 384,000 owned slaves, and over 80 percent of these had fewer than twenty. Still, the slave system made the South’s agricultural economy viable and shaped the region’s cultural identity. Southern planters and small farmers alike were committed to keeping the region’s 3.5 million African Americans enslaved.
“I am worth inconceivably more to hang, than for any other purpose.”

— John Brown
Materials:  
- Portrait of John Brown  
- Slave family, about 1862  
- John Brown going to his death  
- John Brown’s rifle and Harpers Ferry pike  
- Article from Leslie’s newspaper and the John Brown Student Analysis Chart from The Price of Freedom website  
http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory  
- Materials for student artwork—poster paper, markers, colored pencils

Lesson:  
Have students recall some of the major decisions concerning slavery made by the federal government before the Civil War. Consider the implications of these decisions for slavery and anti-slavery factions and list these for the class to see. Distribute to the class images, documents, and objects listed above and have students analyze the primary sources. Then have them answer the following questions (available in the Analysis Chart on The Price of Freedom website).

Who or what is depicted? How is the source related to the slavery issue? What does the source have to do with Harpers Ferry? What can you learn from the source? Next, have the class discuss the images—how they relate to the slavery issue and how John Brown impacted that issue and prefigured the beginning of the Civil War.
Follow-up Activity:

Have students show John Brown’s legacy and his contribution to history through a creative medium such as: biography, interview, letter, personal journal, performance with script, artwork, poem/song, newspaper article, or presentation. The project must include specific dates, mention of Harpers Ferry and other events leading up to the Civil War, and at least three references to the images and documents analyzed in class. Also, students must gauge Brown’s impact on the abolitionist movement. Extra research in the library or outside class could be incorporated into this assignment. Also, students could work individually, with partners, or in small groups, depending on the activity they wish to pursue and the ease of assigning particular tasks.
Section III: Civil War

Title: Women’s Role in the War Effort
Grade Level: Elementary/Middle School
Objectives: Understand the role women played in the Civil War. Appreciate the ways in which museums use objects to study how people in the past did their jobs.

National History Standards:
Standard 2: Student comprehends historical sources; Standard 3: Student engages in historical analysis and interpretation; Era 5: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850–1877); Standard 2B: Compare women’s home-front and battlefront roles in the Union and Confederacy.

Time: 45 minutes

Background:
Nurses, including men and several thousand women, worked in Union and Confederate military hospitals, caring for and comforting the wounded. Some were commissioned, many volunteered. Others were relatives of the wounded or members of private aid societies. They worked far behind the lines, struggling to keep patients washed and fed—with lemon juice, beef-tea, and milk porridge. They changed dressings and packed deep wounds with cotton lint. Often they could do little more than comfort the dying.

Confederate spies were often passionate amateurs. Many were women. Most had little trouble slipping in and out of Northern cities and Union strongholds. Sometimes they beguiled government or military officials to obtain information; other times they simply listened in on conversations in hotel lobbies—or bought the latest edition of the newspaper. Some were notorious, but most were never detected. Even those revealed to be spies were simply sent on their way; few were imprisoned.

Vivandières (pronounced vee-vahn-DYAIRS) were women—often officers’ daughters or wives—who accompanied and provided support to Union and Confederate regiments. They sold the troops tobacco, coffee, identification tags, oil lamps, hams—and whiskey. Vivandières did laundry and sewing, as well as cooking. They were quasi-military, often wearing skirted uniforms and sometimes drawing a salary from the regimental paymaster. The name and role of the vivandière originated with the French Army during the Napoleonic Wars; one woman was assigned to each regiment in order to reduce the numbers of women following the army.

Dresses and uniform National Museum of American History
Women’s Role

Vivandière uniform of jacket, skirt, and pants

Brocaded silk dress, made in Paris about 1860

Printed cotton dress, heavily mended, about 1860
Vivandières (pronounced vee-vahn-DAIRS) were women—often officers’ daughters or wives—who accompanied and provided support to Union and Confederate regiments. They sold the troops tobacco, coffee, identification tags, oil, lamps, hams, and whiskey. Vivandières did laundry and cooking as well as drawing a salary from the regimental paymaster. The name and role of the vivandière originated with the French Army during the Napoleonic Wars; one woman was assigned to each regiment in order to reduce the numbers of women following the army.

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Nurses, including men and several thousand women, worked in Union and Confederate military hospitals. Some were commissioned, and some were volunteer nurses. They cared for and comforting the wounded. Some were commissioned, and some were volunteer nurses. They changed dressings and packed deep wounds with cotton lint. Often they could do little more than comfort the dying.
“I was there to work, not to wonder or weep; so I corked up my feelings, and returned to the path of duty...”

—Louisa May Alcott, army nurse

Materials:
- Six copies of the object cards; two copies of each type of card
- DVD—Eugenia Phillips, spy for the South in Washington, D.C.
- Samples of the types of fabric dresses are made from (brocaded silk, cotton, wool which can be purchased at a local fabric store)

Lesson:

Warm-up:
Have the students list the ways they believe women were involved in the Civil War. List these on the board. Have a class discussion: Are each of the roles listed on the board accurate? Why? Why not? Introduce the three types of women you will examine in the lesson. Play Eugenia Phillips’s first-person account on the DVD and ask the class which category she falls into (nurse, spy, vivandière). Have the students present evidence from her story to support their conclusions.

Activity:
Divide the class into six groups. Assign each of the groups a “character”: nurses in two groups, spies in two, viandières in two. Distribute to the class the artifact cards with descriptions on the back, as well as the fabric samples. Have students “get to know” their character and carefully examine the clothes that each used to do her job. Have them make a list of the qualities of the clothing, why it’s important to their person’s role, and why it is important that the Museum collected them. Then have the groups that have the same kind of person compare notes and come up with a final list of characteristics and reasons. Then each of the now three groups should elect a group leader to make a report to the rest of the class on their person’s role, the clothing she wore to perform her job, and why it was important for the Museum to collect and display these clothes.
Section III: Civil War

Title: Comparing Confederate and Union Soldiers

Grade Level: Middle School

Objectives: Understand the different experiences of Union and Confederate soldiers.

National History Standards:
Standard 3: Student engages in historical analysis and interpretation; Era 5: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850–1877); 2A: Compare the human resources of the Union and the Confederacy; 2B: Explore the motives for fighting and the daily life experiences of Confederate soldiers with those of white and African American Union soldiers.

Time: 90 minutes

Background:
Soldiers on both sides were young and inexperienced; most were in their teens or early twenties. In the North, they were farmers and factory workers and newly arrived Irish immigrants; some were African Americans—both escaped slaves and, after 1862, free blacks who were recruited for the United States Colored Troops. In the South, they were farmers, mechanics, and students. Most were volunteers who joined for the cash bounty or the monthly salary ($13 for privates in the Union army; $11 in the Confederate army). Many were draftees unable to pay a substitute to go in their stead. Many died in their first months from illness or wounds. Those who survived learned to be soldiers in the daily drills and discomforts of camp life, the exhaustion of miles-long marches, and the dry-mouth terror of battle.

Union troops were well-outfitted, even overburdened, with army-issued supplies and equipment. They wore regulation uniforms of heavy wool—in just two sizes—with leather-billed caps and stiff shoes. Atop knapsacks stuffed with extra clothes, a weekly change of underwear, and personal “truck,” they carried rolled-up wool and rubber blankets and half a tent. They filled haversacks with salt pork, hardtack, coffee, sugar, dried peas, pressed sheets of desiccated vegetables, and perhaps a pickle. They slung canteens and cartridge boxes over their shoulders and carried muskets.

Confederate soldiers often were forced to outfit themselves. They wore various uniforms, although gray jackets became common, often with felt slouch hats. Many had no knapsacks; instead they looped their bedrolls across their chests when they marched. Tents were scarce. Men kept tobacco and pipes, a bit of soap, maybe foraged apples in their haversacks. Many immediately cooked and ate their three-day ration of fatback and cornbread, rather than packing it. They filled their canteens with buttermilk or cider, and kept a cup to dip water from streams. They carried their muskets, but most had no cartridge boxes, so they stuffed ammunition into their pockets.
“It has rained for a week and the roads are muddy. After marching for twenty miles it is not pleasant to lie down at night in the wet without any cover. I am tired—in fact I never was so tired in my life. But Hurrah! ‘It is all for the Union.’”

—Elisha Hunt Rhodes, Second Rhode Island Volunteer Infantry

“Instead of growling and deserting, they laughed at their own bare feet [and] ragged clothes.... Weak, hungry, cold, wet, worried with vermin and itch, dirty, with no hope of reward or rest, [they] marched cheerfully to meet the well fed and warmly clad hosts of the enemy.”

—Carlton McCarthy, Army of Northern Virginia
Materials:  
- DVD—Union soldiers Louis Myers and William G. Christie  
- Union and Confederate recruiting posters  
- Union and Confederate uniforms  
- Fiddle carried by Solomon Conn of the Eighty-seventh Indiana Volunteers; he carved into it the place names of his unit’s encampments and engagements  
- Silk 35-star battle flag of the Louisiana Eighty-fourth Infantry Regiment

Lesson:

Working in pairs, have students design and create a chart to allow them to compare and contrast the Union and Confederate soldiers’ experiences. They should develop a list of questions they’d like to explore about Civil War soldiers. Students should consider the different perspectives of Confederate and Union soldiers. The Confederate soldier was in a defensive position, believing he was defending his home from external attack. How might this have affected how Union and Confederate soldiers felt about their roles?

As homework, have students read about the experiences of Union and Confederate soldiers. Textbooks, library research, the internet, and the books suggested in the bibliography of this manual should be assigned. They should use their chart to guide their reading and research and fill it in as they go. The next day, as a class, compare the experiences of Union and Confederate soldiers.

Examine the recruiting posters and uniforms. Have students list the similarities and differences. Discuss why such similarities and differences exist and how those support what they learned in their research.
Follow-up Activity:

Have a class discussion about African American participation in the Union army. Then play the first-person account of a Minnesota soldier talking about how black soldiers were treated. As a class, make a list of the reasons why African Americans would want to fight for the Union army.

Using their battle flag, introduce the Louisiana Eighty-fourth Infantry. They were a unit of free black men. The regiment fought in the western campaigns and is credited with keeping Mexico out of Texas at the end of the Civil War.

Have students examine the regiment’s battle flag and ask them what they can learn from the flag alone. On the stripes are printed the names and dates of battles. Why would the Eighty-fourth want to record this information? Why use the American flag as a symbol on which to record this information? What other symbol might they have selected?

Have students compare the flag to Solomon Conn’s fiddle, used for a similar purpose.

Finally, students can add a column to their comparison chart and do research to address the same questions for African American soldiers.
Section IV: World War II

Title: Mobilizing Children
Grade Level: Middle School
Objectives: Analyze objects and images to determine their effect on society during World War II.

National History Standards:
Standard 2: Historical Comprehension; Era 8:3: The causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs.

Time: 45 minutes

Background:
“We are all in it—all the way,” President Franklin D. Roosevelt told Americans during a radio broadcast on December 9, 1941. “Every single man, woman and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking of our American history.” The United States had just joined the Allies in a global war against Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and imperial Japan that had been raging for two years. Sixteen million Americans donned uniforms. The millions more who stayed home were a vast civilian army, mobilized by the government to finance the war effort, conserve natural resources, and produce a continuous flow of war matériel.

The war permeated nearly all aspects of everyday life in America. As natural resources—even agricultural output—were diverted to support war production and the troops, Americans endured shortages and rationing. Newspapers, radio broadcasts, and newsreels tracked the war’s progress. Movie theaters were filled with patriotism-building, morale-boosting movies that pitted heroic Americans against villainous Nazis and fanatical Japanese, and depicted a home front united for victory. And thousands of government-produced posters directed a massive effort to transform the nation into an efficient war machine.

Even for children, the reality of a nation at war could not be avoided. Many of their favorite characters from the funny pages and comic books went off to fight. Superman—classified 4-F when his X-ray vision skewed a preinduction eye test—encouraged them to use their pennies for victory bonds. Toys and games enabled them to play make-believe combat, albeit with wooden guns and paper soldiers—all metal was needed for war production. And government campaigns encouraged them to assist in scrap drives or to help in their family’s victory gardens.
“Every single man, woman and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking of our American history.”

—President Franklin Roosevelt

Victory garden poster National Museum of American History
Materials:
- DVD—World War II Cartoons
- Child in Junior Bombardier uniform
- Superman Junior Defense League of America application
- America at War trading cards
- Victory garden poster

Lesson:
Introduce the lesson using the quote from President Roosevelt, “We are all in it—all the way. Every single man, woman and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking of our American history.” Have a class discussion about what Roosevelt meant by this. Discuss how and why, during World War II, the government launched a campaign to unite Americans behind the war effort. Play the DVD of Disney war cartoons, and ask the students what the intention of these cartoons could have been.

Next, pass out the images accompanying this lesson. Have students—on their own or in groups—answer the following questions about the images: What does this image show? What was its purpose? Who was the intended audience? What effect might it have had on American society during World War II? Do you think this image is a form of propaganda? Why?

Bring the class together for a discussion of the objects and images they examined. What were some characteristics of this social mobilization campaign? Many underage boys ran away to join the military and lied about their age. Might this have been partly a result of the materials targeted at kids? Finally, have students share with the rest of the class the results of their image analysis.

Follow-up Activity:
Give students images from 1991’s Operation Desert Storm, which can be located at http://www.topps.com/Entertainment/Flashback/DesertStorm/desertstorm.html. Point out the similarities and differences between the wartime images in World War II and those from this more recent conflict. For homework, have the students answer the same questions about the Desert Storm images. Also, ask them to write a paper comparing the propaganda aimed at children during World War II to the trading cards during Desert Storm. What were the similarities? What were the differences? What about today? Ask students to consider their own reactions to America’s current military actions.
Superman Junior Defense League of America application
National Museum of American History

Leland Jackson, about 1945, dressed as a junior bombardier
National Museum of American History
Title: Changing Gender Roles on the Home Front
Grade Level: Middle/High School
Objectives: Conduct historical research using the Museum’s collections of Rosie the Riveter artifacts and images. Analyze how World War II changed gender roles in U.S. society. Determine the societal impact of females holding industrial jobs during the war (numbers involved, effect on other relationships in society).

National History Standards:
Standards 4: Student Research Capabilities; Era 8:3: The causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs.

Time: 45 minutes to introduce the project, plus in-class work time and any additional lessons on conducting historical research

Background:
By the time the United States entered World War II in 1941, American defense industries were already churning out large numbers of planes and ships, trucks and tanks, guns and shells, supplies and equipment. Tons of war materials were being shipped to Britain and other nations battling the Axis. As America joined the fight, and battlefronts multiplied around the globe, demands on war production skyrocketed. Civilian industries re-tooled, manufacturing tanks instead of cars, parachutes instead of stockings, machine guns instead of Kleenex. And as men went off to war, six million women took their places on factory floors and assembly lines.

American industry and American workers produced most of the war matériel the United States and some forty other nations used to fight the war:

324,000 aircraft, 88,000 tanks, 8,800 warships, 5,600 merchant ships, 224,000 pieces of artillery, 2,382,000 trucks, 79,000 landing craft, 2,600,000 machine guns, 15,000,000 guns.
I worked the graveyard shift 12:00–8:00 a.m, in the shipyard. I had leather gloves, leather pants, big hood, goggles, and a leather jacket. They said you weld like you crochet.”

—Katie Grant
Materials:
- DVD—World War II Overview: North Atlantic and North Africa
- Woman war worker coveralls
- Maidenform ad: “Brassieres ... A Vital Necessity to Women at Work”
- Welding mask used by ship welder Augusta Clawson
- African American woman welding
- Women riveting

Lesson:
This lesson should give students a different perspective on the effects of World War II. It provides an excellent topic for a class-wide, semi-guided research project that teaches students how to do in-depth historical research. This will prepare them for the types of projects they will have to conduct in college.

First, set the stage by showing the students the World War II overview of the North Atlantic and North African theaters on the DVD. Then have them write down the steps they would take to research a topic on the impact on U.S. society of the Rosie the Riveter campaign. (Steps should include: establishing a thesis, developing a process to prove the thesis, reviewing secondary sources, analyzing primary sources, and testing the accuracy of the thesis.)

Make sure students use a variety of sources, both primary and secondary. Have them analyze images and artifacts in the manual from the National Museum of American History collections, as well as review library primary accounts about female workers. Students should supplement this analysis with statistical data from the U.S. census; ask them to find out the numbers of female workers and compare this to totals before the war. Also, have the students compare their findings to the theses of other historians. Encourage them to be critical of what others have concluded in the past.

Follow-up Activity:
Students may know of women in their local community who recall life in America during World War II. Some of these women may be willing to say how they feel about the changes in society that occurred during their youth. This would introduce students to the skill of interviewing in addition to providing an eyewitness perspective to their current research project.

Students could research the impact of the need for workers on African Americans or American immigrants, particularly the Hispanic population. How did the new opportunities to work affect their lives?
Brassieres...

A VITAL NECESSITY TO WOMEN AT WORK

Work in the war industries — for the most part — is much heavier than that to which a woman has hitherto been accustomed. Working with her hands and arms — pulling, lifting, stretching — means a continual strain on the important muscles of the breasts. Though the ill-effects may not be immediately apparent, they will take their toll over a period of time — unless the worker wears a brassiere scientifically constructed to give her bosom proper support and protection. That is one of the reasons why — in this wartime era — Maiden Form is glad to be able to reassure the women of America that today, as always, they can obtain correct support with Maiden Form’s scientifically designed brassieres.

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For Every Type of Figure!"

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Section IV: World War II

Title: Battle of the Bulge—Americans Respond to a German Surprise
Grade Level: High School
Objectives: Describe strategic moments during the Battle of the Bulge. Understand how weather challenged the soldiers who fought on both sides during the battle.

National History Standards:
Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation; Era 8:3: The causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs.

Time: 45 minutes

Background:
On D day—June 6, 1944—the Allies launched a massive attack on Hitler’s “Fortress Europe,” battling their way onto the beaches of Normandy in northwest France. Allied troops and armored divisions under the overall command of U.S. general Dwight D. Eisenhower spread inland. In bitter fighting, they fought their way through fields and along country lanes, into villages and from door to door, while Allied bombing and strafing battered German defenses. In August, amphibious landings from the Mediterranean poured troops and supplies diverted from Italy into southern France. Meanwhile, Allied forces crossed the Seine River and liberated Paris. By mid-September, the Allies were in control of Belgium and stood ready to strike Germany.

On December 16, 1944, massed Allied troops were poised on the border of Germany—along a 200-mile front—when the Nazis mounted a surprise offensive in the forests of Belgium. The Allied line bulged, but it did not break. Allies quickly mobilized, pouring troops and matériel into the breech. A month of bitter fighting in winter cold and deep snow cost the Allies nearly 100,000 casualties; 20,000 Americans died. The Battle of the Bulge further depleted Germany’s disappearing fighting forces; already, its army was deploying boys, many of them younger than sixteen. As German resolve hardened, the stage was set for a bloody battle for the Nazi homeland and capital of Berlin.
“Both the enemy and the weather could kill you, and the two of them together was a pretty deadly combination.”

—Bart Hagerman, private, Seventeenth Airborne
Materials:
- DVD—European Theater during WWII
- M-4 Sherman tank covered in snow
- Soldiers settled down in the snow
- Pair of mittens with trigger fingers, M-1 rifle, GI helmet

Lesson:
Show the European Theater DVD to the class. Then have a class discussion about the strategy of fighting employed by the Allies and Axis powers in Europe. If necessary, supplement the DVD with a more detailed account of the battle.

Hand out the images from the above materials list; these images and objects illustrate certain aspects of the Battle of the Bulge. Have the students analyze the images with the help of guidance sheets. Then discuss with the class the timeline of the battle and the impact of the cold weather on the fighting. You might even have students hold one hand in a bucket of ice to learn how hard it is to use your fingers when they’re very cold.

Next, have each student pretend to be either an American or a German soldier and write a letter home describing the battle and their feelings about it. Students should choose a particular stage in the battle—during the initial German offensive that caught the American forces by surprise or during the American counteroffensive that drove the Germans back. The letters ought to contain detail about the following:

1. a description of the success/failure of the battle at the time the letter was written;
2. a description of the weather conditions and how they affected the troop and supply movements, as well as troop morale.

Extra Resources:
- http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/wwii/7-8/7-8_CONT.HTM
American infantrymen during the Battle of the Bulge Courtesy of National Archives

M-1 rifle, GI helmet, pair of mittens with trigger fingers
National Museum of American History
Title: Cuban Missile Crisis
Grade Level: Advanced High School
Objectives: Understand the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962. Understand how the United States and the Soviet Union came to the brink of nuclear war.

National History Standards:
Standard 1: Chronological Thinking; Standard 2: Historical Comprehension; Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation; Era 9.1B: Explain the causes and international and local consequences of major cold war crises like the Cuban missile crisis.

Time: 90 minutes

Background:
Following World War II, an ideological, economic, and military rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union led to a global competition known as the cold war. In 1949, the cold war became a nuclear arms race when the Soviets detonated an atomic bomb. No longer was the United States the only nation in possession of nuclear weapons. In an understatement, a secret report prepared by the Pentagon noted: “The United States has lost its capability of making an effective atomic attack upon the war-making potential of the USSR without danger of retaliation in kind.”

In 1952, the United States exploded its first hydrogen bomb—a device 1,000 times more powerful than the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima; the Soviets followed in 1953. By the late 1950s, both the Soviet Union and the United States had targeted each other’s capitals and other major cities for nuclear attack. And both sides had developed rocket-launched nuclear warheads (ballistic missiles) that could not be intercepted and destroyed. As the two rivals raced to outmatch each other, their nuclear arsenals grew.

In October of 1962, President John F. Kennedy learned that the Soviet Union was deploying nuclear missiles in Cuba, threatening the United States. He demanded that the missiles be withdrawn and indicated his willingness to risk nuclear war if they were not. U.S. ships blockaded Cuba. B-52 bombers loaded with nuclear weapons flew in holding patterns just beyond Soviet airspace, ready to attack. The United States and the Soviet Union stood on the brink of nuclear war. The crisis abated only when the Soviets agreed to remove the missiles and the United States quietly removed similar medium-range missiles from Turkey. The faceoff was a turning point in the cold war: the superpowers continued to develop nuclear weapons, but began to seek ways to avoid a nuclear exchange.
“Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation on that imprisoned island.”

—President John F. Kennedy, address to the nation, October 22, 1962
Materials:
- Surveillance photographs of Cuban missile sites
- Map prepared for President Kennedy showing the range of the ballistic missiles in Cuba
- President John F. Kennedy’s October 22, 1962, address to the nation (available on the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum website at www.jfklibrary.org/speeches)

Lesson:

Warm-up: Discuss with students the background material above and use the map provided to help them understand the threat and impact of a nuclear attack.

Activity: Tell the class that today they are taking on the role of Central Intelligence Agency analysts in 1962. Hand out copies of the surveillance images along with the key to interpreting them. Give the class a few minutes to analyze the aerial reconnaissance photos of Cuban missile installations and make notes about what they think they see. Ask the students to consider the following questions: What are the origins and purposes of these images? What is the value of the pictures? Do they represent an immediate threat to the United States?

Then pose the important question: Does the evidence you see warrant notifying the president? This should lead to an in-depth discussion of the consequences that would result from notifying the president.

Finally, have the students analyze President John F. Kennedy’s October 22, 1962, radio/television address to the nation making the case for military action against Cuba.

Students should consider the following questions as they analyze the speech: What audiences does the president address? What country/countries posed a threat, according to Kennedy? How does Kennedy characterize/describe the degree of danger facing the United States? Cite specifics. How does he make the case for the proposed action to be taken by the United States? What specific evidence is presented? How does Kennedy outline America’s responsibility for reacting to these dangers? Reference the speech as appropriate. How does Kennedy involve the world community? How does he discuss liberty/freedom? Cite specific examples. Are there references to past dangers that faced America? Which ones? Why does the president use these examples in his speech?

Follow-up Activity:
Have students research similar situations in American history and analyze how other presidents have presented their cases for military action to the nation. For example: James Polk and the Mexican War, Harry Truman and the Korean War, Lyndon Johnson and the Vietnam War, George H. W. Bush and the Gulf War, George W. Bush and the Iraq War.
Missile site in Cuba Courtesy of U.S. Air Force Museum

Range of ballistic missiles in Cuba Courtesy of John F. Kennedy Library
Title: POWs
Grade Level: Middle/High School
Objectives: Analyze news sources from the Vietnam War era to describe how POWs and their families were represented in the media. Write letters from the perspective of a POW relative that describe the concerns of POW families and that propose a possible solution to the POW dilemma in Vietnam.

National History Standards:
Standard 2: Historical Comprehension; Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation; Standard 5: Historical Issues—Analysis and Decision-making; Era 9:2: How the cold war and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam influenced domestic and international politics.

Time: 45 minutes

Background:
From 1961 to 1973, the North Vietnamese and Vietcong held hundreds of Americans captive—in North Vietnam, but also in Cambodia, China, Laos, and South Vietnam. In North Vietnam alone, more than a dozen prisons were scattered in and around the capital city of Hanoi. American POWs gave them nicknames: Alcatraz, Briarpatch, Dirty Bird, the Hanoi Hilton, the Zoo. Conditions were appalling. Prisoners were variously isolated, starved, beaten, and tortured. They endured pain and psychological deprivation, often for years on end. But they resolutely resisted their captors. They exercised as best they could. Some played mind games to keep themselves sane, making mental lists or building imaginary houses, one nail at a time. They drew strength from one another, secretly communicating via subtle hand gestures or code tapped out on their cell walls.

During the Vietnam War, American prisoners were a focus of public attention as never before. Over 4,000 Americans were captured during World War I; more than 130,000 were taken prisoner during World War II; 7,000-plus were held in Korea. The American public knew little of their plight. But Americans were painfully aware of the 726 who were prisoners of war in Vietnam. The North Vietnamese paraded them in a sophisticated propaganda campaign to erode public support for the war. POW families launched awareness campaigns. Thousands of Americans donned simple bracelets engraved with the names, ranks, and dates of loss of U.S. soldiers who were prisoners of war or missing in action in Vietnam. And the media gave the POW situation extensive coverage.
“It’s easy to die but hard to live, and we’ll show you just how hard it is to live.”

—North Vietnamese prison guard to an American POW

American POWs in the “Hanoi Hilton” prior to their release National Museum of American History
Materials:

- New York Times articles:
  - “U.S. Fears Hanoi Is Brainwashing American POWs,” April 3, 1967
  - “Dear President Nixon,” October 3, 1971
  - “U.S. Bars Pullout until All POWs Have Been Freed,” March 26, 1973
- POW pajamas and POW bracelet
- Photograph of American POWs in the “Hanoi Hilton” prior to their release

Lesson:

The acronym POW has become common in our culture following Vietnam. It appears frequently in titles of popular arcade/video games and is often mentioned in the media. Begin by asking your students to write down what POW stands for. (You may want to ask them what MIA stands for, as well.) Once all students understand the meaning of POW, use the background information included to explain what prisoners of war are and what happened to them in Vietnam, how they fought back, and how they lived. This should take 10–15 minutes.

Next, have the students read the Vietnam-era New York Times articles, then answer the following questions: What is the topic of the story? How does the story describe POWs? How does the story describe the families of POWs? How does the story describe the North Vietnamese? How does the story describe the U.S. administration? Does the story support continued fighting, negotiation with the North Vietnamese, or a different option?

After the students have finished analyzing the stories, discuss with them the news portrayals of Vietnam. Emphasize how North Vietnamese treatment of POWs and their use as propaganda tools spread national concern for the POWs—even though there were far fewer prisoners in Vietnam than in previous wars. As a result, POW families began campaigns to raise public awareness and to pressure the U.S. administration into doing something to bring these men home. Later in the war, governmental and nonprofit groups took over these campaigns to express outrage at the behavior of the North Vietnamese. In the discussion, students should explain why the POWs in Vietnam have attracted so much more attention than POWs in past wars.

Finally, have students pretend to be a relative of a Vietnam POW and write letters directed to the administration. They should describe the concerns of the POW families, as well as proposing possible solutions to the conflict.
Section V: Cold War/Vietnam

Title: The Soldier’s Experience—Vietnam versus World War I
Grade Level: Middle/High School
Objectives: Compare and contrast the daily lives of soldiers in World War I and Vietnam.
National History Standards:
  Standard 3: Historical analysis and interpretation; Standard 4: Historical Research; Standard 5: Engage in historical issues—analysis;
  Era 8:2: Causes and global consequences of World War I; Era 9:2: Search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world.
Time: 90 minutes

Background:
In Vietnam, ground troops were equipped with M16A1 automatic rifles, ammunition, anti-personnel devices, flak jackets, helmets, and two-way radios. Helicopters airlifted them into widely dispersed locations to engage the enemy, then extracted and redeployed them. This tactic of ground warfare (referred to as airmobility) was devised for a war with no front lines. Helicopters also retrieved the dead and evacuated the wounded—most were on a surgeon’s table in a hospital within an hour.

Because extreme heat, humidity, and frequent rains wreaked havoc with standard-issue equipment, many infantrymen modified or even abandoned their gear. Some adopted captured enemy equipment (Ho Chi Minh–style sandals, for example). They prized their flop hats, extra socks, ponchos, and multiple canteens. These things made the going a bit easier as they worried about enemy ground fire and air attacks—and the constant threat of booby traps: trip-wired crossbows, concealed nail-studded boards, even excrement-coated bamboo punji sticks that could pierce a boot.

During World War I, opposing armies dug in and faced each other in trenches that ran nearly 500 miles across northern France—the notorious western front. Automatic rifles, machine guns, flamethrowers, improved grenades and trench mortars, and poison gas killed or disabled tens of thousands on both sides; thousands more died under the rain of artillery shells fired from highly accurate, long-range “big guns.” For the first time in a war, airplanes buzzed overhead: pilots conducted reconnaissance missions, dueled with each other, and also tossed bombs from their cockpits. On the ground, internal-combustion engines powered trucks and ambulances as well as armored tanks, first deployed in 1916. Miles of telephone line strung in the field allowed instant communication, but the lines proved vulnerable; the army often relied on traditional means to relay messages—human runners and carrier pigeons.
“We commuted to and from the war.”
—Marine commenting on the use of the Huey helicopter

“It rained continuously—the mud was 2" to 6" deep—there was no place to sleep—no fires—no water to drink—and very little warm food.”
—Major J. N. Douglas, Quartermaster Corps, 1918
Materials:
- DVD first-person accounts of the war from veterans; World War I Overview; Vietnam documentary footage of the Huey
- Websites with first-person accounts of World War I conditions (for example, http://members.aol.com/TeacherNet/WWI.html#Personal)
- Vietnam objects: rifle and helmet
- Vietnam photograph of soldiers with Huey in background
- Vietnam photograph of soldier with rifle
- World War I objects: entrenching shovel, gas mask, machine gun
- Drawing of World War I doughboy with full pack

Lesson:

Break students into two groups. Each group’s goal is to write and produce a newscast that investigates the conditions of the everyday soldier on the ground. (One team’s newscast should be about the soldier’s experience in Vietnam, the other team’s about soldiers in World War I.)

Groups should assign each member a particular role to research and perform, such as news anchor, reporter on the scene, soldier, camera operator, producer, or director. The newscasts should be developed and presented using modern technology, even though set in the actual time periods of World War I (1914–1918) and Vietnam (1960s–1970s).

Those playing the role of soldiers should be able to answer questions such as:

1. What are your living conditions?
2. What do you eat? Where do you eat?
3. What kind of gear do you have?
4. What happens if you get wounded?
5. How do you learn about what is happening “back home”?
6. How do you communicate during battle?
7. What tactics do you use? (For example, search and destroy, take a hill, guard a perimeter, go “over the top” of the trench, move the front line forward.)
8. Why did you fight?

When ready, the teams will present their newscasts to the class—either acted out live or, if time and resources permit, shown as a video. After the presentations, hold a class discussion about the extent to which conditions for the soldier changed in the half century between World War I and Vietnam. What were the contributing factors for the change?
Soldier with rifle in Vietnam  
*Courtesy of National Archives*

Vietnam GI helmet and rifle  
*National Museum of American History*

World War I entrenching shovel, machine gun, uniform including gas mask  
*National Museum of American History*
Title: Students’ Response to 9/11—A Documentary Report
Grade Level: Middle/High School
Objectives: Document their classmates’ reactions to 9/11 to gain a perspective on the variety of responses people had to the tragedy. Research the national reaction to 9/11 by examining polls and government actions.

National History Standards:
Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation; Standard 4: Historical Research Capabilities; Standard 5: Historical Issues—Analysis and Decision-making; Era 10:1: Recent developments in foreign policy and domestic politics; Era 10:2: Economic, social, and cultural developments in contemporary United States.

Time: 90 minutes

Background:
September 11 was a modern-day tragedy of immense proportions. The devastating attacks by al Qaeda terrorists inside the United States killed some 3,000 people and sparked an American-led war on terrorism. The repercussions of that day will impact domestic and international political decisions for many years to come.

At 8:46 a.m. on September 11, 2001, a passenger jet flew into the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York. Fire and rescue crews rushed to the scene. As live TV coverage began, horrified viewers watched as a second plane slammed into the south tower at 9:03 a.m. Thirty-five minutes later a third airliner crashed into the Pentagon. Another jet bound for Washington, D.C., crashed in Pennsylvania after its passengers challenged the hijackers. The nation reeled. But Americans resolved to fight back, inspired by the words of a passenger who helped foil the last attack: “Are you guys ready? Let’s roll.”

South tower of the World Trade Center (left) after being hit by hijacked United Airlines Flight 175. Courtesy of Getty Images
“Our school is near the World Trade Center. I had paused in front of my section when a shudder shook the building.”

—William Frankenstein, student, New York City
Materials:
- Link to comment cards from Smithsonian September 11 exhibition: http://www.911digitalarchive.org/smithsoniancards

Lesson:
Working with partners or in small groups, students will document the American public’s changing feelings toward 9/11. They will also research young people’s reaction to the attacks. The bibliography at the end of the manual recommends some helpful sources.

First, ask the students to review the data from the post-9/11 polls, paying particular attention to statistics on how the nation felt about the following: going to war, terrorism, the way President Bush was doing his job, concerns for their own safety. Next, have them browse the exhibit cards of under-18 teens in the collection on the Smithsonian’s September 11 website. They can do this by clicking on “advanced search” and limiting the search to include only teens’ answers to the question, “How has your life changed?”

Groups or partners should randomly select for analysis ten cards from this collection. Have them write a script for a documentary illustrating how the feelings of Americans have changed or remained the same—and how the feelings of teens a year after 9/11 were similar or different to the feelings adult Americans had when answering the polls.
Follow-up activity:

Have students create a documentary film with their scripts. They can also tape classmate interviews to indicate how their peers now feel about 9/11. The purpose of this documentary is to determine how a random group of high school teens felt about 9/11; to compare this age group’s feelings to the adult national polls; to gauge how feelings about the event have changed over time and in the wake of the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Students could also interview adults who were alive during the attack on Pearl Harbor and compare and analyze the similarities and differences in the situations and reactions.
Bibliography

General

Section I: War of Independence

Section II: Wars of Expansion
Herb, Angela M. Beyond the Mississippi: Early Westward Expansion of the United States. Lodestar, 1996.

Section III: Civil War

Section IV: World War II

Section V: Cold War/Vietnam

Section VI: September 11 and Its Aftermath
The Price of Freedom: Americans at War
Teacher’s Manual DVD Menu

Americans at War, produced by The History Channel
An introduction to the themes of the exhibition

War of Independence
First-Person Accounts, produced by Pyramid Studios:
- Lydia Minturn Post, Long Island housewife, 1776
- James Collins, teenage soldier, no date
- Doonyontat, Wyandot chief, 1779
- Elijah Churchill, recipient of the first Purple Heart, 1783

Mexican War
First-Person Accounts, produced by Pyramid Studios:
- José María Tornel y Mendivil, Mexican secretary of war, 1837
- George Ballentine, English volunteer for the United States, 1853
- Juan Bautista Vigil y Alarid, acting governor of New Mexico, 1846
- Ulysses S. Grant, American soldier, 1885

Civil War
First-Person Accounts, produced by Pyramid Studios:
- Louis Myers, Third West Virginia Infantry, 1862
- William G. Christie, Minnesota soldier, 1863
- Eugenia Phillips, spy for the South in Washington D.C., 1861
- Spottswood Rice, African American Union soldier, 1864

World War I
World War I Overview, produced by The History Channel

World War II
World War II Cartoons, produced by The History Channel
World War II Overviews in the Newsreel format,
produced by The History Channel
- From World War I to World War II
- The North Atlantic and North African Theater
- The European Theater
- The Pacific Theater

The USO in World War II, produced by The History Channel
First-Person Accounts, produced by Pyramid Studios:
- George Hynes, U.S. Army, a last letter home, 1942
- Robert Morris, U.S. Coast Guard, fighting in Italy, 1943
- Robert Sherrod, journalist, the beach at Tarawa, 1943
- Ann Darr, Women Airforce Service Pilots, 1997
- Daniel Inouye, Medal of Honor recipient, 2000

Vietnam
Excerpt from Huey Helicopter—Air Armada, The History Channel documentary, 2002
First-Person Accounts, produced by Arrowhead Film & Video:
- Hal Moore, commander of a Seventh Cavalry Regiment battalion, 2003
- Fred Castleberry, veteran of the Twenty-fifth Infantry Division, 2002
- Clarence Sasser, recipient of the Medal of Honor, 2004,
  (produced by Pyramid Studios)