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Lesson Plan

The Great War was the First World War in which many countries were involved and the first time women had the opportunity to show they were equal to men. Traditionally, women were to stay in the home and cook, clean, and watch the children. Women had the chance to prove they were capable to work as well as fight. Mothers, wives, and girlfriends encouraged men to enlist which was a strange thing for women to want their men to go off and fight. World War One had new technology of weapons and tactics, which made for a brutal and gruesome war that had a major impact on the people as a whole. My lesson plan will explain and discuss many of these interesting topics and the students will go away with a better knowledge and an understanding.

It is important to explain how the war started and why. I will discuss the background information. It started with the assassination of Austria-Hungary’s Archduke Franz Ferdinand which they announced war on Serbia (complicated conflict that has been going on for a log time.) Due to treaties, other countries had to get involved. The allied powers included; France, the United Kingdom, Russia, and later the U.S. The centered powers included; Austro-Hungary and Germany. Therefore, it is called the First World War, which lasted from 1914 until 1919.

Propaganda was heavily used during this time. I plan on discussing how propaganda affected the men at this time as well as how women contributed to it. Social pressure made men enlist. Women for the first time wanted men to fight for their country and they were considered cowards if they didn’t enlist and not masculine. The White feather movement is important to discuss too. I will mention how “flappers” were the women who shamed men into enlisting by giving them a white feather, which symbolized coward-ness. Men hated this movement and in some cases got violent or angry with the flappers because they were in fact enlisted or had a valuable reason to not enlist.

The main topic for my lesson plan is women. Women changed tradition and fought for their rights. During this time period, it gave women the opportunity to work in “traditional manly jobs.” Women proved themselves by being perfectly capable of working in those non-traditional jobs. The working conditions were terrible and unsafe. Women had to work long, unreasonable and they were paid half the wage of what men were paid. Many lost their lives or were injured or became sick because of the possible explosives and being exposed to toxic. Women risked their lives by working in these factories just as men risked their lives at the front. Women took on even more dangerous jobs like being nurses at the front or being ambulance drivers. Many felt they deserved the right to vote because they showed they were equal to men.

The video in my PowerPoint explains the different jobs women experienced during the Great War and how it affected them and the overall experience. This is an important piece because students get a visual sense of what it was like and why it was so significant. I assigned a book Testament of Youth-Vera Brittain that I think will be a good look on a women’s outlook of the war and her personal experience’s during that time period. An open discussion and free flowing conversation between the students and I about the book and video is ideal.

The aftermath of the war is significant and I want the students to a full understanding. Soldiers were not only greatly injured but had “shell shock.” This made it hard for them to go back to their normal lives. Soldiers with dismantled faces were shunned from society basically and kids called them monsters. The government didn’t do much to help except send them to farms. Women were treated the way they were before the war although, women fought and fought for their rights. Eventually, some women had the right to vote and some were able to get better jobs. As a whole, I want my students leaving with an understanding of the gender roles before and after the war and how it affected them and how they experienced it.