

Causes of WWI (An Introductory Lesson)

Summary

An introductory lesson that overviews the four main causes of World War I.

Lesson focuses mainly on Conflict, Imperialism, Militarism, Nationalism and System of Alliances.

Enduring Understanding:

Students will understand the causes and effects of WWI on our world today.

Essential Questions:

What causes conflict?

What were the major causes of WWI?

How do you resolve conflicts in your life?

Main Core Tie

Social Studies - 6th Grade

[Standard 4 Objective 1](#)

Time Frame

2 class periods of 45 minutes each

Group Size

Small Groups

Materials

- [WWI Causes Cluster](#)
highlighters
PowerPoint
copy of reading material for each group- found on the historyonthenet website
- [WWI Vocabulary](#)
- [WWI Vocab match](#)
- [WWI I Have, Who Has](#)
paper and markers
Social Studies notebook/Journal
paper and pencils for students

Background for Teachers

Refer to websites for summaries of each topic

Student Prior Knowledge

Pre-assess to see what the students already know

Write the question "What is conflict?" on the board and ask students to answer it in their journal.

Have students share their response with a partner, and form a new definition together.

Share definitions as a class to come up with a class definition of "conflict."

Write the question "What causes conflict?" on the board and ask students to answer it in their journal with as many examples as possible. Next, have students choose their top 3 examples for what causes conflict.

Have students share their top 3 examples with a partner and together create 3 generalizations of what causes conflict.

Share generalizations with the class and create a class generalization or list of causes for conflict.

Ask the students to think of a conflict in their life and write a few sentences in their journal describing the conflict and what caused it.

Discuss with students the differences between causes and triggers. A cause is an event or events that over time lead to a reaction. A trigger is an event that creates an immediate reaction. Compare these to a fight between friends. Before friends get in a fight, many small things may happen, such as them making fun of you or ignoring you. These are causes for the fight. For the friends to decide they are fighting or not friends anymore a trigger must happen such as:

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to understand the general causes of World War I.

Instructional Procedures

Vocabulary- copy the vocabulary in the attachment and give a copy to students to include in their journal.

Copy the vocabulary match on cardstock with enough copies for each student or small groups. Have students match the words and check their answers to see how many they got right.

Discuss vocabulary as a class and have students highlight one word per definition that will help them remember the meaning of the definition.

Use the PowerPoint to review what is happening in Europe at this point in time and create schema for students who may not have the background knowledge. This is meant to be a review or build background knowledge, so do not go into detail on each topic. Use the questions within the PowerPoint to discuss with the class.

Divide students into 4 groups and give them a topic: nationalism, alliances, militarism (arms race) or system of alliances. If you have a large class, divide into 8 groups and double up on topics.

Print off the page from the history on the net website (or have students visit the website).

Students will read their assigned topic and answer the question: What is this topic about and how does it lead to war? They can write their answers to the questions in their journals.

Students, in their groups will make a picture map (see attached example). Students will receive a piece of art paper and write the name of their topic in the middle. On the page, they must draw and color pictures that show what the event is and how it led to war. Because it is a picture map it may not use words (unless you as the teacher would like to allow a limited amount of words.

10 words or less works well) This can be done as a group, or each student can create their own. Each student in the group will write a 20 word or less description of part of the picture map. All students in the group will come up front and each will read/explain the picture map with 20 words or less per student. This makes it so each student has to share and one student is not doing all the work. After all the students have shared, the audience should understand the basics of the event as well as how it led to war. Students in the audience will have a WWI Causes Cluster in which they must add details about each main cause and how it led to war. (look at completed example for ideas).

Students will then turn in their WWI Causes Cluster for the teacher to grade.

The next day, or at a later time, the teacher can return the clusters to the students. As a class, discuss each topic to fill in any misunderstandings that may have occurred as students presented.

I have, Who has - optional- as a review of vocabulary, copy the Read Around Review page found in the attachments and copy it on cardstock. Five to seven copies is usually enough. Create small groups of 3-6 students and give each a copy of the Read Around Review. The

students divide the cards evenly among each group member. Next, the student with the first card begins (on the card it states: I have the first card.) It will follow with a question. The student with the answer must read their card. Continue until all the cards have been used.

Assessment Plan

Picture Maps, and WWI Causes Web.

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