Goldie at Home: World War II Propaganda and Posters

Activity Overview: The United States entered World War II on December 8, 1941, following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. To help sustain support of the war effort, the U.S. government created and distributed propaganda posters promoting everything from victory gardens to buying war bonds. This Goldie at Home activity allows you to investigate a historic poster from the museum collection and then create your own poster to support a cause you care about.

Connection to Iowa History

During World War II, 226,638 men and women from Iowa served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Fort Des Moines also served as an important training area for the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC). The State Historical Museum of Iowa is now home to many historic objects from the war, including uniforms, medals and weapons. The museum also has over 1,000 WWII posters. The posters cover a large variety of topics, including children helping with victory gardens and canning, rationing and war bonds.



Instructions

1. **Observe.** Using the **World War II Poster Analysis Guide**, take 60 seconds to quickly view the **propaganda poster** and jot down your initial thoughts on the attached worksheet.

2. **Investigate.** Following your initial observation, investigate the image closer and answer the additional questions.

3. **Create.** Using the worksheet, develop and create your own propaganda poster.

4. **Questions to Spark Learning**
   - What other types of media do you think could be used to promote the war effort between 1941 and 1945? Which do you think would be the most powerful and influential? Why?
   - Why do you think promotional materials, such as posters, were needed during World War II?
   - The posters typically promoted things people on the homefront could do to help the war. What would you do to help the war effort during WWII?
   - In what ways are posters used today? Why do you think posters are still used in activism and as propaganda tools?

5. **Additional Resources**
   Explore these resources below to learn more about the involvement of Iowans in World War II.
   - **World War II: America's Motivation and Impact Primary Source Set**
   - **World War II: Homefront Primary Source Set**
   - **Iowa PBS: Iowa's World War II Stories**

Materials

- **World War II Poster Analysis Guide**
- Printer
- Pencil or pen
- Colored pencils, markers or crayons

Instructions continued on next page

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Instructions continued

6 More Background Information about the World War II Poster

Disclaimer: Use this information for reflection after completing the analysis worksheet.

This poster, "Starve the Squander Bug," was produced by the U.S. Government Printing Office in 1943. The design was drawn by Theodor Seuss Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss, during World War II.

Americans could purchase war bonds, which were essentially loans to the U.S. government to support the war efforts. The bonds would be cashed-in at a later date, generally 10 years after the purchase, and people would receive a little bit more money than the original amount. More than 80 million Americans purchased war bonds and brought in over $180 billion in revenue.

World War II Poster Analysis Guide



Initial Observations: Use this space to write what you first see when viewing the poster.

Is there any writing or text on the poster? If so, what does it say and what do you think it means?

Look at the images included within the poster. Why do you think the poster chose to have these specific images? What do you think those images mean?

What are the colors in the image? Does the color of the poster have any meaning? Why or why not?

Where do you think these posters would have appeared?

What is the purpose of this piece?

World War II Poster Analysis Guide

Create Your Own Poster Activity

Posters produced by the Office of War Intelligence (O.W.I.) were typically created to promote patriotism, hard work and support of the war effort. Posters covered numerous topics including:

- Planting a "Victory Garden"
- Salvaging copper, aluminum and scrap iron
- Conserving energy
- Rationing materials such as gasoline, rubber, clothing and food
- Buying war bonds
- Joining the military

Which topic would you like your poster to promote?

_____

What images will you use to help promote your cause? Use the space below to draw your poster

_____

_____

Use the space below to draw your poster