

LESSON PLAN

U.S. History Since 1900

Level: Literacy, Low Beginning

Suggested Length: 2 class periods

Civics Test Questions

- #78—Name one war fought by the United States in the 1900s.
- #79—Who was President during World War I?
- #80—Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?
- #81—Who did the United States fight in World War II?
- #82—Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in?
- #83—During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?
- #86—What major event happened on September 11, 2001, in the United States?
- #100—Name two national U.S. holidays.
- Related Test Item:
- #11—What is the economic system in the United States?

Reading Test Vocabulary

government, President, states
United States, U.S.
What, Who
have, was
a, for, in, of, the, to, we
many, people

Writing Test Vocabulary

President, states
United States
November
was
and, during, in, of, the, to, we
people

Objectives:

Students will:

- identify U.S. wars in the 1900s
- explain the roles of Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Dwight D. Eisenhower in U.S. history
- identify the countries that the United States fought against in World War II
- understand the historical significance of the Great Depression and the Cold War
- understand the effects of communism and terrorism on the United States
- understand the purpose of Veterans Day and identify it as a national U.S. holiday
- identify capitalism as the economic system in the United States

Materials:

Dimes, wall maps of the world and the United States, prepared sets of “war cards” and “President cards”

Handouts: **World War I**, **Franklin D. Roosevelt**, **World War II**, **America Fights Communism**, **Recent Military Conflicts**, **Review—U.S. History Since 1900**, and **Timeline of U.S. History Since 1900**

Optional handout (Literacy Level Writing Practice): **Veterans Day**

U.S. History Since 1900 Lesson Answer Key



Lesson Overview and Notes to Teacher:

This lesson covers the five U.S. wars fought in the 1900s and other recent historical events. We recommend teaching the lesson, U.S. Wars in the 1800s, prior to this one. Take time to emphasize the pronunciation difference between the terms **1800s (eighteen hundreds)** and **1900s (nineteen hundreds)** so that students can distinguish correctly between the two test items, **Name one war fought by the United States in the 1800s** and **Name one war fought by the United States in the 1900s**. Display wall maps of the world and the United States to help students understand the countries involved. In this lesson, World War II and Franklin D. Roosevelt are covered in some detail in order to highlight the Great Depression

and various test items related to World War II. When introducing background about the Cold War, the students will learn about capitalism and communism. Reassure your students that they do not need to recall exact dates of the wars for the Civics Test. While they need to name only one war from the 1900s, it is beneficial to understand the chronology of events. The use of a timeline helps reinforce this understanding. There is an extension activity at the end of the lesson to practice the names of the wars. The Literacy Level Writing Practice handout **Veterans Day** reinforces vocabulary from the naturalization test.

Introduction: Tell the class you will talk about U.S. history since 1900. Draw a timeline on the board, marking the far left point with the year 1900 and the far right with the current year. Tell the class **There were five**

U.S. wars in the 1900s. Ask the students if they can name any of those wars. Write the war names on the board as the students list them.

Guided Practice: Distribute the handout **World War I**. Review the paragraph, reading each sentence 2-3 times out loud for students to hear. Have the students repeat each line after you. Ask the students **When did World War I begin? (1914)** and **When did it end? (1918)**. Have a student come to the board and write World War I and the dates of the war on the timeline. Have the students practice Woodrow Wilson's name and point out that **Who was President during World War I?** is an item on the Civics Test. Explain the background to the Veterans Day holiday: President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed this holiday, originally called Armistice Day, at the 11th hour

on the 11th day of the 11th month (November) in 1919 to commemorate the signing of the Armistice which officially ended the fighting in World War I. Now this national U.S. holiday is called Veterans Day and honors all U.S. veterans. Traditionally, a Veterans Day National Ceremony is held on November 11th at Arlington National Cemetery at 11:00 a.m. with a wreath-laying at the Tomb of the Unknowns. The ceremony honors and thanks all who have served in the United States Armed Forces. Point out that **Name two national U.S. holidays** is an item on the Civics Test.

Continued Practice: Have the students take out some dimes or distribute some coins that you have brought to class. Ask the students **How much is this coin worth? (10 cents), What is the name of this coin? (dime), Whose face is on a dime? (Franklin D. Roosevelt)**. Distribute the handout **Franklin D. Roosevelt**. Have the students compare the picture on the handout with his image on a dime. Review the sentences, repeating each 2-3 times for the students to hear. Help the students understand the concept of the Great Depression and write the years on the timeline, from 1929 to 1941. Distribute the handout **World War II**. Ask the students **When was World War II? (1939-1945)** and have a student write the dates and label the war on the timeline. Ask the students if their home country was involved in World War II. Review the

sentences as previously described. Use the world map to help the students identify the countries that the United States and her allies fought against during this war. Point out to the class that these three questions are on the Civics Test: **Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?, Who did the United States fight in World War II?, and Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in?** Go over the questions and answers out loud with the class.

Distribute the handout **America Fights Communism**. Tell the students that you are going to talk about the Cold War. Explain that the Cold War was not a traditional war, but rather the tension between the United States and the former Soviet Union. Use the world map to show

where the Soviet Union was located. Help the students understand the basic difference between communist and capitalist economies by asking, **What kind of economic system does the United States have? (capitalist or market economy)**. Explain that in a capitalist economy, individual people (and not the government) own most businesses and property. In contrast, in communist countries like the former Soviet Union, the government controls businesses and owns property. This difference contributed to the tension between the two countries after World War II. The Cold War ended in 1991 with the breakup of the former Soviet Union. Review the sentences together. Have a student come to the board to mark the period of the Cold War (**1945-1991**) on the timeline. Point out that **During the Cold War, what was**

the main concern of the United States? is an item on the Civics Test. Continue with the sentences about the Korean and Vietnam Wars (both conflicts with communist governments during the Cold War period). Have a student mark the dates of the Korean and Vietnam wars on the timeline on the board.

Distribute the handout **Recent Military Conflicts**. Go over the sentences, using the map to help reinforce the information. Explain that the Gulf War was the last official war in the 1900s. Have a student write the name and dates on the timeline. Point out that **What major event happened on September 11, 2001, in the United States?** is one of the Civics Test items.

Evaluation: On the handout **Review—U.S. History Since 1900**, have the students fill in vocabulary from the Word Bank to complete the sentences. On the handout **Timeline of U.S. History Since 1900**, point out the timeline and

have the students label the historical events for the dates indicated. Stress to the students that they do not need to remember these dates for the Civics Test.

Extension Activity: This activity uses prepared index cards to review the wars of the 1800s and 1900s. Create a set of “war cards.” On each card, write the name of one war: **War of 1812, Mexican-American War, Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, and Gulf War**. Create a second set of “President cards” for: **Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Dwight D. Eisenhower**. Hand out one “war card” to nine individual students and ask them to stand up and form a timeline in chronological order. Once they have assembled, say **Everyone with a war from the 1800s, please raise your hand**. Prompt each student to read off their “war card” by reviewing the Civics Test item, **Name one war fought by the United States in the 1800s**. Then say **Everyone with a war from the 1900s, please raise your hand** and have those students read off their cards

in answer to the Civics Test item **Name one war fought by the United States in the 1900s**. After reviewing all the war names, handout the “Abraham Lincoln card” to a seated student, and say **Abraham Lincoln, he was president during which war? (Civil War)** and have the student go up and stand next to the person with the Civil War card. Continue with the rest of the “President cards” until all have been placed in the timeline next to the appropriate war. Ask the relevant Civics Test items to reinforce the information.

If your class enjoys competition, prepare two sets of cards and divide the class into teams. Distribute one set of war cards and president cards to each team. Have the teams quickly form the timeline with the wars and the presidents to see who finishes first.

Additional Writing Practice for Literacy/Low Beginning Students: The handout **Veterans Day** is

included for optional copy work. Students can practice writing vocabulary words from the Civics Test.