



HISTORIC
FORT SNELLING
Minnesota Historical Society

Fort Snelling during World War II Primary Source Analysis

Abstract

In this activity, students will be asked to explore an online exhibit called “Fort Snelling during World War II.” The exhibit is divided into five sections, each focusing on the WWII experience of a different group of people. Students will be assigned a section, and either individually or in groups, analyze different primary sources, and consider what each can teach us about the past. Students will use the **Primary Source Analysis Sheet** to guide them through the process.

Materials

- *Fort Snelling during WWII* online exhibit
- **Primary Source Analysis Sheet**

Activity Outline:

- Divide class into small work groups (ideally 3-4 students) or assign work individually
- Each group will be assigned one of the five topic sections from the online exhibit:
 - Military Intelligence Service Language School
 - Induction
 - Home Front
 - Medical Care at Fort Snelling
 - The Starvation Study
- Students complete the **Primary Source Analysis Sheet** for their assigned section.
- Groups will share with the class their findings with the class.

Extension Idea


Students can look at items from their daily lives that could be used as primary sources to describe life today. Have them select several items and analyze them as they did the items in the online exhibit.

Fort Snelling during WWII Primary Source Analysis Sheet

Directions:

As you explore the online exhibit look at the primary sources and think about what they can teach us about the past. Explore your assigned section of the online exhibit and, as a group, choose three primary sources which you feel are important. Answer the questions below for each primary source you chose. Next, work with the group across from you to select three sources that you would like to share with the rest of the class.

Each theme group will report their findings to the rest of the class.

<p>Describe the Source - What kind of source is it? (i.e. interview, diary, newspaper, image, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who created this source? - Who is its intended audience? - When was this source created? - What influences do you think acted on the creation of this source? <p>Example Poster - <i>Plant a Victory Garden</i></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown creator • Aimed at people on the home front (families) • Created during WWII • Need to have enough food for U.S. soldiers, rationing program 	<p>What can this teach us? What inferences can we make? (Bullet Points- no complete sentences)</p> <p>Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>People on the home front were encouraged to plant their own gardens</i> • <i>Gardens could supplement rationed food</i> • <i>Targeted people's patriotism ("Our Food Is Fighting") – fighting from the home front</i> • <i>Encouraged family sacrifice/hard work – image of family working together in the garden</i> 	<p>What question(s) does this raise?</p> <p>Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective were these posters? • What else did the U.S. government encourage people to do? • How do advertisements try to make us think or behave a certain way? 	<p>Why do you think this source is important?</p> <p>Example This poster shows how the U.S. government tried to encourage certain behavior towards supporting the war effort. Posters and advertisements appealed to people's emotions to encourage them to do certain things (growing victory gardens, making due with less).</p> <p>The poster also shows one way that people on the home front could contribute to the war effort. By growing victory gardens people would be saving food which could then be given to soldiers fighting overseas.</p>
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<u>Source 1</u>	What can this teach us? What inferences can we make?	What question(s) does this raise?	Why do you think this source is important?
<u>Source 2</u>	What can this teach us? What inferences can we make?	What question(s) does this raise?	Why do you think this source is important?
<u>Source 3</u>	What can this teach us? What inferences can we make?	What question(s) does this raise?	Why do you think this source is important?