

Topic: WWII: The Volunteer State on the Homefront

Lesson plans for primary sources at the Tennessee State Library & Archives

Author: Whitney Joyner

Grade Level: 5th Grade

Date Created: 2016

Visit <http://sos.tn.gov/tsla/education> for additional lesson plans.

Visit www.tn.gov/tsla/educationoutreach for additional curriculum materials.



Introduction: On December 7, 1941, the nation was stunned when the Japanese attacked at Pearl Harbor. More than 300,000 men and women from Tennessee would go on to serve in the armed forces, and Tennessee would become home to many military training facilities, prisoner of war camps, and manufacturing plants for war-time materials and production. In addition to the support provided by Tennessee to our nations armed forces, the Volunteer State also lived up to its name in its action on the Homefront . From scrap drives and war bonds to rationing and victory gardens, Tennesseans sacrificed, saved, and served. The activities that follow will walk participants through daily life on the Homefront during WWII, in the hopes of providing them with varying perspectives, as well as a greater understanding of the sacrifices made by the greatest generation.

Guiding Question(s):

- What changes occurred on the Homefront in Tennessee following the attack on Pearl Harbor?
- What sacrifices were citizens in Tennessee and other states forced to make during the war?
- How did life change for women across Tennessee and the nation during the war?
- What role did propaganda play on the Homefront during the war?

Learning Objectives: The goal of this series of activities and lessons is to provide students with varying perspectives of what life was like on the Homefront in Tennessee during WWII. Over the course of these activities, students will learn about the changes that occurred because of the war and the sacrifices Tennessean's made for the good of their country and troops, all while exploring, interpreting, and analyzing primary and secondary sources.

Time Needed: 8, 45 minute class periods.

Curriculum Standards:

Social Studies Content Standards:

5.56- With supporting facts and details, provide reasons for rationing, victory gardens, the design of The Rosie the Riveter ideal (Avco jobs for Tennessee women) and the Women Airforce Service Pilots-Cornelia Fort. (C,E,H,TN)

Tennessee State English Standards for Informational Text:

Key Ideas and Details

1. Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
2. Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.
3. Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.
6. Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.
9. Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Materials Needed:

- ["World War II", Written By: Patricia Brake](#), The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture
- ["Cornelia Fort", Written By: Rob Simbeck](#), The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture
- ["Women in World War II", Written By: Dr. Kristine M. McCusker](#), Humanities Tennessee
- [Roosevelt's Fireside Chat 21: On Sacrifice \(April 28, 1942\)](#) Recording and Transcript
- [Sample Ration Book](#)
- Set of Propaganda Posters (Laminated, Color Prints)
- *Lily's Victory Garden (Tales of Young Americans)* Written By: Helen L. Wilbur
- Vocabulary Handouts
- Propaganda Gallery Walk Handouts
- [Victory Garden Handout](#)
- Essay submitted by Katherine R. Barnes (Mrs. Melville) regarding her experiences on the home front in Tennessee during World War II (Excerpts of this will be used throughout these lessons and activities to give the Tennessee perspective.)
- Markers
- Construction Paper
- Rulers

Background:

["World War II", Written By: Patricia Brake](#), The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture

Lesson Activities:

Day 1: Building Background

Introduction/Hook: Complete a KWL chart on Life in Tennessee or on the Homefront across the United States during WWII

K- What do students know?

W- What do students want to know?

L- What have students learned? (This section to be completed following the series of lessons/ activities)

Close Read of “World War II”

Text: “World War II” , Written By: Patricia Brake, The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture

As a whole group, read the informational text from the Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture titled, “World War II.” This piece would make for an excellent close read and should help to provide background information for the lessons to come. Through the reading, seek to answer the following:

- What roles did Tennessean’s play in the war effort during WWII?
- How did Tennessee change from the time prior to the war to the time following the war?
- What information can we already add to the “L” in our KWL chart?

Day 2: Vocabulary

Introduce Vocabulary Handout to Students. Students will complete this handout as they rotate through their stations and activities each day. It is recommended that they complete this as a closure to each day’s activities. The teacher can model one term covered in day one and have students locate another term covered in day one that they can complete on the handout.

Day 3- Propaganda on the Homefront

Propaganda Posters Activity - Propaganda Posters/Handouts Needed Printed in Color

Assuming a detective role, students will analyze and interpret propaganda posters directed toward the Homefront during WWII. Students will work with a small group to rotate through a gallery walk activity (spending about 5 minutes per poster), giving each group the opportunity to analyze each propaganda poster and discuss it with their group. Each group will need a clipboard with the Propaganda Analysis Graphic Organizer and a pencil. Following their gallery walk, students will be asked to individually write on the following prompt:

Prompt: In a brief essay, explain the importance of propaganda during the war and its effect on the outcome of the war. Be sure to reference and cite examples from our gallery walk in your response.

Day 4: Understanding Sacrifice

Analysis of Speech - Roosevelt's Fireside Chat 21: On Sacrifice

In this activity, students will analyze President Roosevelt's Fireside Chat #21.

Analyze the following speech: <http://millercenter.org/president/fdroosevelt/speeches/speech-3327>

The speech recording can be found on the provided web link. Start Time on Recording: 23 min and 24 seconds Stop Time on Recording: 12 min and 30 seconds

While listening to the speech, students will consider the following questions and write their thoughts and answers to the questions on the following page.

Transcript of Speech

(Highlight key words or phrases that stand out to you while listening to and reading this excerpt of President Roosevelt's Fireside Chat #21)

"Although the treacherous attack on Pearl Harbor was the immediate cause of our entry into the war, that event found the American people spiritually prepared for war on a world-wide scale. We went into this war fighting. We know what we are fighting for. We realize that the war has become what Hitler originally proclaimed it to be -- a total war.

Not all of us can have the privilege of fighting our enemies in distant parts of the world.

Not all of us can have the privilege of working in a munitions factory or a shipyard, or on the farms or in oil fields or mines, producing the weapons or the raw materials (which) that are needed by our armed forces. But there is one front and one battle where everyone in the United States -- every man, woman, and child -- is in action, and will be privileged to remain in action throughout this war. That front is right here at home, in our daily lives, (and) in our daily tasks. Here at home everyone will have the privilege of making whatever self-denial is necessary, not only to supply our fighting men, but to keep the economic structure of our country fortified and secure during the war and after the war.

This will require, of course, the abandonment not only of luxuries but of many other creature comforts.

Every loyal American is aware of his individual responsibility. Whenever I hear anyone saying "The American people are complacent -- they need to be aroused," I feel like asking him to come to Washington (and) to read the mail that floods into the White House and into all departments of this Government. The one question that recurs through all these thousands of letters and messages is "What more can I do to help my country in winning this war"?

To build the factories, (and) to buy the materials, (and) to pay the labor, (and) to provide the transportation, (and) to equip and feed and house the soldiers, sailors and marines, (and) to do all the thousands of things necessary in a war -- all cost a lot of money, more money than has ever been spent by any nation at any time in the long history of the world.

We are now spending, solely for war purposes, the sum of about one hundred million dollars every day in the week. But, before this year is over, that almost unbelievable rate of expenditure will be doubled.

All of this money has to be spent -- and spent quickly -- if we are to produce within the time now available the enormous quantities of weapons of war which we need.

1. What kinds of sacrifices did Roosevelt ask Americans to make? (Make a list)

2. What is the President's tone in this speech?

available dollar should go to the war effort, I do not think that any American citizen should have a net income in excess of \$25,000 per year after payment of taxes.

Are you a retailer or a wholesaler or a manufacturer or a farmer or a landlord? Ceilings are being placed on the prices at which you can sell your goods or rent your property.

Do you work for wages? You will have to forego higher wages for your particular job for the duration of the war. All of us are used to spending money for things that we want, things, however, which are not absolutely essential. We will all have to forego that kind of spending. Because we must put every dime and every dollar we can possibly spare out of our earnings into War Bonds and Stamps. Because the demands of the war effort require the rationing of goods of which there is not enough to go around. Because the stopping of purchases of non-essentials will release thousands of workers who are needed in the war effort.

As I told the Congress yesterday, "sacrifice" is not exactly the proper word with which to describe this program of self-denial. When, at the end of this great struggle we shall have saved our free way of life, we shall have made no "sacrifice."

The price for civilization must be paid in hard work and sorrow and blood. The price is not too high. If you doubt it, ask those millions who live today under the tyranny of Hitlerism.

Ask the workers of France and Norway and the Netherlands, whipped to labor by the lash, whether the stabilization of wages is too great a "sacrifice."

Ask the farmers of Poland and Denmark, of Czechoslovakia and France, looted of their livestock, starving while their own crops are stolen from their land, ask them whether "parity" prices are too great a "sacrifice."

Ask the businessmen of Europe, whose enterprises have been stolen from their owners, whether the limitation of profits and personal incomes is too great a "sacrifice."

Ask the women and children whom Hitler is starving whether the rationing of tires and gasoline and sugar is too great a "sacrifice."

We do not have to ask them. They have already given us their agonized answers.

This great war effort must be carried through to its victorious conclusion by the indomitable will and determination of the people as one great whole."

4. In your opinion, which of the sacrifices mentioned in the speech would be the hardest for you and your family to make today if placed in a similar situation?

5. How does Roosevelt describe people who opposed making these sacrifices?

Days 5 and 6- Rationing

Day 5 will begin with students revisiting a familiar propaganda poster from their gallery walk...



Poster link—<http://cdm15138.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15138coll18/id/272/rec/14>

The teacher will ask students to talk about the following with a partner:

- What is the message of the poster?
- What do you think it means to ration?
- Why do you think rationing was necessary during the war?

After some think time, the teacher will engage students in a whole class discussion of these questions. Then, the teacher will show the following video clip to students to add clarification and meaning to the discussion.

Rationing Video: <http://tn.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/f8a74f29-d299-4d96-be73-e117d5313fea/rationing-during-world-war-ii-world-war-ii-stories/>

Next, the teacher will show students a sample ration book provided in the trunk, helping students identify different key components of a ration book and talking through how the ration book was used by the consumer. Following this, the teacher will display the following list of rationed items during the war to discuss with students why each item was rationed.

- Sugar
- Coffee
- Meats
- Canned Goods
- Cheese
- Fats
- Tires
- Typewriters
- Cars
- Bicycles
- Gasoline, Kerosene, and Other Oils
- Shoes, Especially Rubber Shoes

Then, the teacher will introduce the following Ration Book Simulation Activity to Students:

Student Task: In a small group of 4, students will brainstorm a list of supplies that are essential to maintaining what they need throughout a typical school day. Next, they need to rank the order of supplies listed from most needed to least needed. Have students place a star beside the 5 most needed supplies in a typical day. Then, as a whole group, discuss the supply lists each group has compiled and create one class list of supplies that all can agree upon and decide as a class on the number of coupons each group will receive per day per item. Finally, have each group create their own ration books using construction paper, rulers, and markers.

Day 6- At the start of the day, have students pull out their ration books. Let students know that today, all of their supplies are rationed and that in order to obtain the supplies they need for the day, they will have to use their ration books and coupons. At the end of the day, discuss the following questions as a whole group?

- What coupons did you use most throughout the day? Did this surprise you? Why?
- What coupons did you use the least throughout the day? Did this surprise you? Why?
- What was the toughest part about your supplies being rationed today? Why?
- Looking back at the list of goods that were rationed during WWII that we viewed yesterday, what items on that list do you think would be the most difficult items for your family to have to ration today?
- If the need to ration were to arise in today's world, what items do you think would be added to or changed on the list?

Day 7- Victory Gardens

Victory Garden Activity Station- Lily's Victory Garden Children's Book

Step 1: Ask students to discuss with a person near them what they know about Victory Garden's from the activities they have completed so far. Engage in a whole class discussion after giving students a few minutes of think and paired discussion time. Add to the KWL chart from the beginning of this series of lessons.

Step 2: Project the following handout for all students to see, taking the time to discuss it and reading it together. <http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/ww2-history/at-a-glance/victory-garden-fact-sheet.pdf>

Step 3: The teacher will read, *Lily's Victory Garden*, by Helen L. Wilbur, stopping to discuss and ask some of the following questions:

- What do Lily and her brother collect every Saturday?
- Based on the story, what kinds of plants are planted in Victory Gardens during WWII?
- Why can't the Bishop's be disturbed?
- What does Lily say is harder to do than the leaflet says?
- Why does Lily run home in tears?
- Create a Venn Diagram Chart comparing and contrasting Lily's life with your own. What are some of the similarities and differences?
- What was the importance of Victory Gardens during WWII and how might the concept of them still be applicable in today's world?
- Do we have any gardens today that serve the same purpose Victory Gardens did during WWII?

Step 4: In small groups, students will develop and write a business letter, proposing that a Victory Garden be developed on school property. The letter/proposal should address the purpose of the garden, the pros and cons of the garden, how, when, and where it will be developed, and should include examples of the produce to be grown.

Day 8- Women during WWII

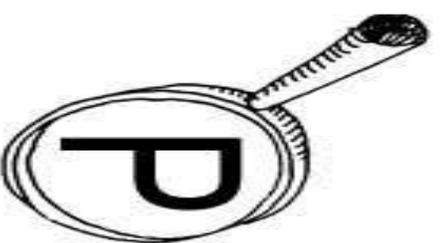
The teacher will begin with a close read of the following article, "[Women in World War II](#)", Written By: Dr. Kristine M. McCusker, Humanities Tennessee

<http://humanitiestennessee.org/sites/humanitiestennessee.org/files/Women%20in%20World%20War%20II-%20McCusker.pdf>

As a whole group, students will work to answer the following questions:

- How did women's roles change/alter when the war began?
- What roles did women play prior to the war?
- What different roles did women play during WWII?
- What difficulties do you think women faced in these roles?
- What happened to these women after the war ended?

The teacher will provide students with the Primary Source Investigation Handout from the Library of Congress. Students will work in teams to complete the handout, rotating through each primary source provided. Once students have viewed all 3 sources, have them write a conclusion paragraph, discussing the importance of each role women played during the war and the impact they had on our winning the war.



Primary Source Investigation

Study items one at a time, in the numbered order, and record your observations below. Try to determine what all of the items have in common or what they represent as a group. Be prepared to explain the clues in each that lead to your conclusion.

	I see ...	I think that ...	I wonder ...
Item 1			
Item 2			
Item 3			



Source 1:

Title: Women in the workforce during World War II

Description : Workers assembling P-38 Lightning fighters at the Vultee Aircraft Corporation factory.

Historical Note: During World War II over six million women took wartime jobs in factories or farms, three million women volunteered with the Red Cross, and over 200,000 women served in the military. As men were shipped overseas by the thousands, women had to take over jobs traditionally held by men, despite their lack of experience. Women took important jobs in such factories as the Vultee Aircraft Plant in Nashville, where approximately one-third of the wartime employees were women. This plant built O-49 observation planes, A-35 Vengeance dive bombers, and P-38 Lightning fighters. Any woman who worked in the factories was soon dubbed "Rosie the Riveter" after a popular cartoon figure.

Source #2

First, students will read the following secondary source to gain background knowledge on Cornelia Fort and her Tennessee connection.

[“Cornelia Fort”, Written By: Rob Simbeck](#), The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture

<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=500>

Then, students will view Source #2:

http://www.wingsacrossamerica.us/records_all/wasp_articles/twilight.pdf

Source #3



Title: Become a nurse: your country needs you

Description: This poster from World War II shows a nurse receiving her cap from Uncle Sam. The message "become a nurse, your country needs you" encourages Americans to consider nursing to support the war effort. It instructs viewers to write the Nursing Information Bureau in New York.

Extended Assessment Activity:

As a concluding activity for all of the activities and lessons in this packet, students can write and illustrate their own children's book, depicting life on the home front in Tennessee during WWII. Students could do this individually, or students could work to create their book in a group, with each student focusing on a different aspect of the home front. If time permits, share the following personal history with students about life on the Tennessee Homefront, prior to them creating their books.

<http://cdm15138.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15138coll18/id/672/rec/2>

Title: Essay submitted by Katherine R. Barnes (Mrs. Melville) regarding her experiences on the home front in Tennessee during World War II

Description: As part of a Tennessee Historical Society project documenting and interpreting "Home Front Tennessee: The World War II Experience", Mrs. Katherine R. Barnes of Nashville submitted this seven page personal essay in response to a series of questions intended to explore an individual's experience here in Tennessee during World War II. Mrs. Barnes writes about what was expected of Americans, the role of women during the war, the availability of consumer goods, the rationing of food and gas, planting Victory Gardens, and the likelihood of Nashville being in danger during the war. She relates a story about college-educated men being able to get commissions in their desired service and how many of her friends took this option rather than taking a chance on the draft. Mrs. Barnes husband was called by the lottery in the winter of 1944. He reported to Camp Forrest in Tullahoma and then was turned down because he "weighed too little". She concludes by writing about President Franklin D. Roosevelt and their opposition to him holding a third term and the surrender of Japan.

List of Primary Sources with Information Links

1. [Use it up- wear it out- make it do!](#)
2. [Rationing means a fair share for all of us](#)
3. [How Farm Families Can Help Win the War](#)
4. [Plant a victory garden](#)
5. [I'll carry mine too!: trucks and tires must last till victory](#)
6. [Can all you can: it's a real war job!](#)
7. [Save waste fats for explosives, take them to your meat dealer](#)
8. [Could this be you? Don't travel unless your trip helps win the war](#)
9. [Women in the workforce during World War II](#)
10. [At the twilight's last gleaming](#)
11. [Become a nurse: your country needs you](#)
12. [Essay submitted by Katherine R. Barnes \(Mrs. Melville\) regarding her experiences on the homefront in Tennessee during World War II](#)