

WORLD HISTORY

World War I

COMMON CORE

A S S E S S M E N T S

MindSparks
CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO THINK HISTORICALLY



World War I

BY JONATHAN BURACK



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Teacher Introduction

These Common Core History Assessments are designed to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they learn about World War I. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Similar sets of assessments are available (or planned) for each unit in a typical world history class.

★ *Historical Thinking and the Challenge of the Common Core*

This set includes nine assessments aligned with the first nine Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. We have left out the tenth Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard, which does not lend itself to assessments of the sort provided here. The set also includes two writing tasks aligned with two key Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards.

These Common Core standards challenge history teachers to develop in students the complex literacy skills they need in today's world and the ability to master the unique demands of working with historical primary and secondary source texts. The Common Core standards are supportive of the best practices in teaching historical thinking. Such practices include close reading, attending to a source's point of view and purpose, corroborating sources, and placing sources in their historical context. These are the skills needed to make history less about rote learning and more about an active effort to investigate and interpret the past.

These assessments are also useful in many ways for ELA teachers. They assess many of the skills specified in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, which put a good deal of emphasis on the reading of informational texts. The Anchor Standards form the basis for all of the various Common Core standards for English Language Arts.

★ *What Are These Assessments Like?*

- **A group of nine reading skills assessments and two writing tasks for each major era of world history**

Each reading skills assessment is based on one of the key Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards—Assessment 1 addresses Common Core Reading Standard 1, Assessment 2 addresses Common Core Reading Standard 2, and so on. Two writing tasks are based on the first two College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, which are the basis for the Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards. The two writing standards focus on writing arguments to support claims and writing informative/explanatory texts.

- **Based on primary or secondary sources**

In most cases, one primary source is used. In some cases, an assessment is based on more than one primary source or on a primary and a secondary source. The sources are brief. In most cases, texts have been slightly altered to improve readability, but without changing meaning or tone. Links to online versions of print media are available in the Bibliography. Please note that these links were valid at the time of production, but the websites may have since been discontinued.

Teacher Introduction

- **Brief tasks promoting historical literacy**

For each assessment, students write brief answers to one or two questions. The questions are not tests of simple factual recall. They assess the students' mastery of the skills addressed by that assessment's Common Core History/Social Studies Standard.

- **Two versions of each of the nine reading standards assessments**

A *basic* and an *advanced* version of each assessment are provided. The *basic* assessment addresses the Common Core Standard for grades 6–8. The *advanced* assessment is based on the Common Core Standard for grades 9–10 and grades 11–12 combined. Each version uses the same source or sources. In some cases, sources have been somewhat shortened for the *basic* version.

- **Easy to use as both learning and assessment tools**

These assessments do not take valuable time away from instruction. The primary sources and background information on each source make them useful mini-lessons as well as tools to assess students' historical thinking skills. The sources all deal with themes and trends normally covered when teaching the relevant historical era.

- **Evaluating student responses**

Brief but specific suggestions are provided, defining acceptable and best responses to each question asked in the assessment. The suggestions are meant to aid in evaluating students, but even more importantly, they are a way for teachers to help students better understand and master the skills on which the assessment is focused.

Assessment 1 *Basic Level*

The Dual Alliance, 1879

★ Key Ideas and Details

- 1. (6–8)** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their world history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Assessment 1 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8. It asks students to cite specific textual evidence from two documents. It also challenges students to adapt that reading skill to the unique demands of thinking historically as they carefully interpret textual evidence in a primary source from a time in the past and a secondary source account of that same time in the past.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should state that Germany and Austria-Hungary mainly agreed to defend each other fully against a Russian attack on either of them. If another party were to have attacked one of them, the other treaty partner must have at least remained neutral—unless that attacker was supported by Russia, in which case each partner had to aid the other with its “whole fighting force.” Acceptable responses to the second assessment question should see that the Dual Alliance aimed to defend Germany and Austria-Hungary against both Russia and France. It thus helped motivate those two nations to ally with one another. Soon Great Britain joined France and Russia, and Italy joined Germany and Austria-Hungary. Two powerful triple alliances faced each other. This made it likely that even small conflicts could quickly involve all the major industrial powers of Europe in a huge war. This is exactly what did happen in 1914.

The Dual Alliance, 1879

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and one secondary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Document 1: A Primary Source

ARTICLE 1. Should, contrary to their hope, and against the loyal desire of the two High Contracting Parties, one of the two Empires be attacked by Russia the High Contracting Parties are bound to come to the assistance one of the other with the whole war strength of their Empires, and accordingly only to conclude peace together and upon mutual agreement.

ARTICLE 2. Should one of the High Contracting Parties be attacked by another Power, the other High Contracting Party binds itself hereby, not only not to support the aggressor against its high Ally, but to observe at least a benevolent neutral attitude towards its fellow Contracting Party.

Should, however, the attacking party in such a case be supported by Russia, either by an active cooperation or by military measures which constitute a menace to the Party attacked, then the obligation stipulated in Article 1 of this Treaty, for reciprocal assistance with the whole fighting force, becomes equally operative, and the conduct of the war by the two High Contracting Parties shall in this case also be in common until the conclusion of a common peace.

Source Information: Prussia finally established a united German Empire in 1870. This new and powerful Germany sought a greater role both within Europe and as an imperial power abroad. Its fear of being checked by Russia and France soon led it to seek allies. One of the first examples of this was the Dual Alliance, established on October 7, 1879, between Austria-Hungary and Germany. Document 1 is made up of the first two articles of the treaty establishing the Dual Alliance. The entire treaty is available from the Avalon Project through the Yale Law School.

Document 2: A Secondary Source

Nationalism and the competition for colonies led to ever-increasing mistrust among the nations of Europe. The result of such mistrust was the formation of alliances in the late 1800s and early 1900s. An alliance is an agreement among nations to act together and to help each other. If one nation in an alliance is attacked, the other members are pledged to come to its aid.

Two such alliances were formed. Germany and Austria-Hungary had formed the Dual Alliance in 1879. The two parties pledged to aid one another if one was attacked by Russia or by Russia and one other European power. A key goal of this alliance was to isolate France from the rest of Europe, since France was assumed to be the likely “other European power.” In 1870 and 1871, Germany had battled France for Alsace-Lorraine, a region between the two countries. Germany had won, but more than ten years later, its leaders still feared France would seek revenge for the defeat. Italy, a fairly weak nation, also feared the possibility of a French attack, so in 1882 Italy joined Germany and Austria-Hungary in what became known as the Triple Alliance.

The second alliance to appear was the Triple Entente, formed in 1907. Entente is a French word meaning a “friendly agreement.” The Triple Entente grew out of an alliance formed in 1894 between France and Russia. At the time, France needed an ally and Russia needed money. France granted Russia a loan in return for its help should the Triple Alliance pose a threat. In 1907, Great Britain, fearful of Germany’s growing navy, joined the two, creating the Triple Entente.

Europe was now divided into two armed camps. Should any two rival powers “come to blows,” all six nations would be drawn into the conflict. Thus Europe was on the brink of world war almost a decade before it actually broke out. All that was needed was a spark to set it off—and that spark occurred in Bosnia in the Balkans in June 1914.

Source Information: This document is a secondary source about the growing system of alliances in Europe in the years before World War I. A secondary source is an account of past events written later by someone who did not experience or take part in those events. This particular secondary source account is adapted from “Background and Causes” in *Everyday Life: World War I* by Walter A. Hazen (Culver City, CA: Good Year Books, 2006), p. 5.

Assessment Questions

1. In Document 1, the “High Contracting Parties” are Germany and Austria-Hungary. In this treaty, they make a distinction between Russia and any other “attacking party.” What different promises did they make regarding Russia and any other attacking party?
2. What details in Document 2 help to make clear why the Dual Alliance treaty contributed to making World War I so destructive?

Assessment 1 *Advanced Level*

The Dual Alliance, 1879

★ Key Ideas and Details

- 1. (9–10)** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- 1. (11–12)** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

★ Using This Assessment

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Assessment 1 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 1 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to cite specific textual evidence from two documents. It also challenges students to adapt that reading skill to the unique demands of thinking historically as they carefully interpret textual evidence in a primary source from a time in the past and a secondary source account of that same time in the past. As called for by the Common Core standard for grades 11–12, it also prompts students to relate the textual details to “an understanding of the text as a whole.”

★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should note that Germany and Austria-Hungary agreed to defend each other fully against a Russian attack on either of them or an attack by another party supported by Russia. This would be especially isolating and threatening to Russia since it would make it hard for the Russians to depend on any other ally for help. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question should see that the Dual Alliance aimed to defend Germany and Austria-Hungary against both Russia and France. It thus helped motivate those two nations to ally with one another. Soon Great Britain joined France and Russia, and Italy joined Germany and Austria-Hungary. Two powerful triple alliances faced each other. This made it likely that even small conflicts could quickly involve all the major industrial powers of Europe in a huge war, which is exactly what happened in 1914.

The Dual Alliance, 1879

Directions: This exercise asks you to study one primary source document and one secondary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 1: (9–10) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information. **(11–12)** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

Document 1: A Primary Source

ARTICLE 1. Should, contrary to their hope, and against the loyal desire of the two High Contracting Parties, one of the two Empires be attacked by Russia the High Contracting Parties are bound to come to the assistance one of the other with the whole war strength of their Empires, and accordingly only to conclude peace together and upon mutual agreement.

ARTICLE 2. Should one of the High Contracting Parties be attacked by another Power, the other High Contracting Party binds itself hereby, not only not to support the aggressor against its high Ally, but to observe at least a benevolent neutral attitude towards its fellow Contracting Party.

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Source Information: Prussia finally established a united German Empire in 1870. This new and powerful Germany sought a greater role both within Europe and as an imperial power abroad. Its fear of being checked by Russia and France soon led it to seek allies. One of the first examples of this was the Dual Alliance, established on October 7, 1879, between Austria-Hungary and Germany. Document 1 is made up of the first two articles of the treaty establishing the Dual Alliance. The entire treaty is available from the Avalon Project through the Yale Law School.

Document 2: A Secondary Source

Nationalism and the competition for colonies led to ever-increasing mistrust among the nations of Europe. The result of such mistrust was the formation of alliances in the late 1800s and early 1900s. An alliance is an agreement among nations to act together and to help each other. If one nation in an alliance is attacked, the other members are pledged to come to its aid.

Two such alliances were formed. Germany and Austria-Hungary had formed the Dual Alliance in 1879. The primary goal of this alliance was to isolate France from the rest of Europe. In 1870 and 1871, Germany had battled France for Alsace-Lorraine, a region between the two countries. Germany had won, but more than ten years later, its leaders still feared France would seek revenge for the defeat. Italy, a fairly weak nation, also feared the possibility of a French attack, so in 1882 Italy joined Germany and Austria-Hungary in what became known as the Triple Alliance.

The second alliance to appear was the Triple Entente, formed in 1907. Entente is a French word meaning a “friendly agreement.” The Triple Entente grew out of an alliance formed in 1894 between France and Russia. At the time, France needed an ally and Russia needed money. France granted Russia a loan in return for its help should the Triple Alliance pose a threat. In 1907, Great Britain, fearful of Germany’s growing navy, joined the two, creating the Triple Entente.

Europe was now divided into two armed camps. Should any two rival powers “come to blows,” all six nations would be drawn into the conflict. Thus Europe was on the brink of world war almost a decade before it actually broke out. All that was needed was a spark to set it off—and that spark occurred in Bosnia in the Balkans in June 1914.

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Assessment Questions

1. In Document 1, the “High Contracting Parties” make a distinction between Russia and any other “attacking party.” Describe that distinction and explain why it only added to tensions between Russia and the two High Contracting Powers.
2. What details in Document 2 make clear the broader significance of the Dual Alliance treaty?

Assessment 2 *Basic Level*

In Praise of War

★ Key Ideas and Details

- 2. (6–8)** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

★ Using This Assessment

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Assessment 2 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 2 for grades 6–8. It asks students to summarize the central ideas in a source from the text itself without imposing ideas or attitudes external to the text. This is not easy to do. This activity assesses the ability to read closely in order to build an overall understanding of the source out of the text itself.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should be able to see that von Bernhardi's main claim is that war is a positive force in promoting human progress. According to von Bernhardi, "those intellectual and moral factors which insure superiority in war" are also those that contribute most to human progress. The passage says "progressive development" is a result of constant struggle in which the strongest and best societies triumph over and replace weaker and inferior ones. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question may vary. The source information suggests this is an extreme statement but one that was shared by many nationalists in Germany. The statement's celebration of military virtues could have contributed to an aggressive spirit in Germany leading into the war. The idea that powerful nations need and have a right to seize new territories may have provided a justification for aggressive war by the most powerful European states against one another.

In Praise of War

Directions: This exercise asks you to study one primary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical primary source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

A Primary Source Document

In war, the nation will conquer which can throw into the scale the greatest physical, mental, moral, material, and political power, and is therefore the best able to defend itself. War will furnish such a nation with favorable vital conditions, enlarged possibilities of expansion and widened influence, and thus promote the progress of mankind; for it is clear that those intellectual and moral factors which insure superiority in war are also those which render possible a general progressive development. They confer victory because the elements of progress are latent in them. Without war, inferior or decaying races would easily choke the growth of healthy budding elements, and a universal decadence would follow. . . .

Struggle is, therefore, a universal law of Nature, and the instinct of self-preservation which leads to struggle is acknowledged to be a natural condition of existence. . . .

Strong, healthy, and flourishing nations increase in numbers. From a given moment they require a continual expansion of their frontiers, they require new territory for the accommodation of their surplus population. Since almost every part of the globe is inhabited, new territory must, as a rule, be obtained at the cost of its possessors—that is today, by conquest, which thus becomes a law of necessity.

The right of conquest is universally acknowledged.

Source Information: Friedrich von Bernhardi (1849–1930) was a Prussian general and military writer in the years leading up to World War I. His highly aggressive notions about war and national expansion were not exactly the official views of Germany’s leaders. However, they were similar to those of many extreme nationalists in Germany before, during, and after the war. This passage is adapted from *Germany and the Next War* by Frederick von Bernhardi, translated by Allen H. Powles (New York: Longman, Green and Co., 1914).

Assessment Questions

1. The central idea of this passage is its claim about war and human progress. Briefly, what does the passage claim?
2. Do you think von Bernhardi’s views might have helped bring on World War I? Why or why not?

Assessment 2 *Advanced Level*

In Praise of War

★ Key Ideas and Details

- 2. (9–10)** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- 2. (11–12)** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their world history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Assessment 2 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 2 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to summarize the central ideas in a source from the text itself without imposing ideas or attitudes external to the text. This is not easy to do. Moreover, when it comes to the unique demands of thinking historically we do also want students to use knowledge of historical context to help them interpret sources. But that sort of contextualizing also demands that students suspend their own present-day ideas while studying a source. This activity assesses the ability to read closely in order to build an overall understanding of the source out of the text itself.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should see that von Bernhardt's main claim is that war is a positive force in promoting human progress. According to von Bernhardt, "those intellectual and moral factors which insure superiority in war" are also those that contribute most to human progress. The passage says "progressive development" is a result of constant struggle in which the strongest and best societies triumph over and replace weaker and inferior ones. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question should see that von Bernhardt views struggle as "a universal law of Nature," based on an "instinct of self-preservation." This clearly suggests human warfare is one example of a broader natural process prevalent among all living organisms. How reasonable this analogy is depends on whether one sees human social development as similar to an instinctual struggle by each organism for physical survival. Most will probably feel that warfare is a more complex social and cultural activity that is not exactly the same as animal behavior based solely on instinct.

In Praise of War

Directions: This exercise asks you to study one primary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical primary source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 2: (9–10) Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text. **(11–12)** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

A Primary Source Document

In war, the nation will conquer which can throw into the scale the greatest physical, mental, moral, material, and political power, and is therefore the best able to defend itself. War will furnish such a nation with favorable vital conditions, enlarged possibilities of expansion and widened influence, and thus promote the progress of mankind; for it is clear that those intellectual and moral factors which insure superiority in war are also those which render possible a general progressive development. They confer victory because the elements of progress are latent in them. Without war, inferior or decaying races would easily choke the growth of healthy budding elements, and a universal decadence would follow. . . .

Struggle is, therefore, a universal law of Nature, and the instinct of self-preservation which leads to struggle is acknowledged to be a natural condition of existence. “Man is a fighter.” Self-sacrifice is a renunciation of life, whether in the existence of the individual or in the life of states, which are agglomerations of individuals. The first and paramount law is the assertion of one’s own independent existence. By self-assertion alone can the state maintain the conditions of life for its citizens, and insure them the legal protection which each man is entitled to claim from it. This duty of self-assertion is by no means satisfied by the mere repulse of hostile attacks; it includes the obligation to assure the possibility of life and development to the whole body of the nation embraced by the state.

Strong, healthy, and flourishing nations increase in numbers. From a given moment they require a continual expansion of their frontiers, they require new territory for the accommodation of their surplus population. Since almost every part of the globe is inhabited, new territory must, as a rule, be obtained at the cost of its possessors—that is today, by conquest, which thus becomes a law of necessity.

The right of conquest is universally acknowledged.

Source Information: Friedrich von Bernhardi (1849–1930) was a Prussian general and military writer in the years leading up to World War I. His highly aggressive notions about war and national expansion were not exactly the official views of Germany’s leaders. However, they were similar to those of many extreme nationalists in Germany before, during, and after the war. This passage is adapted from *Germany and the Next War* by Frederick von Bernhardi, translated by Allen H. Powles (New York: Longman, Green and Co., 1914).

Assessment 3 *Basic Level*

Sinking the *Lusitania*

★ Key Ideas and Details

- 3. (6–8)** Identify key steps in a text’s description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their world history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Assessment 3 is designed to measure students’ ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 3 for grades 6–8. It asks students to follow the way a set of ideas or sequence of events in a text interacts together to describe a process or develop a central idea. This activity assesses the students’ ability to read closely in order to understand various connections between each detail and the next in a text.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Answers to the first assessment question should produce an outline that includes these items:

1. Commercial steamers were included on a British Admiralty list of auxiliary cruisers to aid it in the war.
2. English merchant vessels had been equipped with guns. *Lusitania* had such guns.
3. The British had advised merchant vessels to disguise themselves behind neutral flags.
4. The British offered rewards to merchant vessels to destroy German submarines.
5. The *Lusitania* on her last trip had Canadian soldiers and munitions on board.

Answers to the second assessment question will vary. The question is an opportunity to consider how valid the statement’s overall argument is. Judge responses on how well argued they are and use them as the basis for further discussion.

Sinking the *Lusitania*

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical primary source, read and make use of the source information just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 3: Identify key steps in a text’s description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

A Primary Source Document

With regard to the loss of life when the British passenger steamer *Lusitania* was sunk, the German Government has already expressed its deep regret to the neutral Governments concerned that nationals of those countries lost their lives on that occasion.

The German Government must state certain important facts most directly connected with the sinking of the *Lusitania* that may have escaped the attention of the Government of the United States. . . .

The Government of the United States assumes the *Lusitania* is to be considered as an ordinary unarmed merchant vessel. However, the *Lusitania* was one of the largest and fastest English commerce steamers, constructed with Government funds as auxiliary cruisers, and is expressly included in the navy list published by the British Admiralty.

Moreover, the German Government knows from reliable information furnished by its officials and neutral passengers that for some time practically all the more valuable English merchant vessels have been provided with guns, ammunition and other weapons, and reinforced with a crew specially practiced in manning guns. According to reports at hand here, the *Lusitania* when she left New York undoubtedly had guns on board which were mounted under decks and masked.

Furthermore, . . . the British Admiralty by a secret instruction of February of this year advised the British merchant marine not only to seek protection behind neutral flags and markings, but even when so disguised to attack German submarines by ramming them.

High rewards have been offered by the British Government as a special incentive for the destruction of the submarines by merchant vessels, and such rewards have already been paid out. In view of these facts, the German Government is unable to consider English merchant vessels any longer as “undefended territory” in the zone of maritime war designated by the Admiralty Staff of the Imperial German Navy. The German commanders are consequently no longer in a position to observe the rules of capture otherwise usual and with which they invariably complied before this.

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Lastly, the German Government must specially point out that on her last trip the *Lusitania*, as on earlier occasions, had Canadian troops and munitions on board, including no less than 5,400 cases of ammunition destined for the destruction of brave German soldiers who are fulfilling with self-sacrifice and devotion their duty in the service of the Fatherland.

The German Government believes that it acts in just self-defense when it seeks to protect the lives of its soldiers by destroying ammunition destined for the enemy with the means of war at its command. The English steamship company must have been aware of the dangers to which passengers on board the *Lusitania* were exposed under the circumstances.

In taking them on board in spite of this the company quite deliberately tried to use the lives of American citizens as protection for the ammunition carried, and violated the clear provisions of American laws which expressly prohibit, and provide punishment for, the carrying of passengers on ships which have explosives on board. The company thereby wantonly caused the death of so many passengers.

According to the express report of the submarine commander concerned, which is further confirmed by all other reports, there can be no doubt that the rapid sinking of the *Lusitania* was primarily due to the explosion of the cargo of ammunition caused by the torpedo. Otherwise, in all human probability, the passengers would have been saved.

Source Information: On May 7, 1915, a German U-boat torpedoed and sank the British passenger ship *Lusitania*, causing the deaths of 1,198 passengers and crew. This included 128 citizens of the United States, which had not yet entered the war against Germany. Firing on a non-military ship without warning supposedly violated international law. This document is a shortened and adapted version of the official German response to U.S. protests over the sinking of the *Lusitania*. It is quoted in *The Great Events of the Great War*, vol. 3, edited by Charles F. Horne (New York: National Alumni, 1920), pp. 196–99.

Assessment Questions

1. Make a brief outline of all the reasons Germany gives to explain why the attack on the *Lusitania* was justified.
2. What do you think is the most convincing part of this statement? What is the least convincing part? Explain your answers.

Assessment 3 *Advanced Level***Sinking the *Lusitania***★ *Key Ideas and Details*

- 3. (9–10)** Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
- 3. (11–12)** Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 3 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 3 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to follow the way a set of ideas or sequence of events in a text interacts together to describe a process or develop a central idea. The activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand various connections between each detail and the next in a complex text. It also asks them to evaluate the explanation offered in the passage and consider how adequate it is.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Answers to the first assessment question should identify such details as the claim that commercial steamers were included on a British Admiralty list of auxiliary cruisers to aid them in the war; that English merchant vessels were equipped with hidden guns, advised to disguise themselves under neutral flags and attack submarines if possible; and that *Lusitania* had such guns and had carried Canadian soldiers and munitions. All these claims are used to support the idea that Germany was indeed attacking a vessel engaged in warfare, and that civilian losses were the responsibility of the British and Americans. Answers to the second assessment question will vary. Some may feel that the Germans did make a good case and that technically they did not violate international law if their claims about merchant vessels being armed were correct. However, others may question the morality of what they did anyway—or the wisdom of it in provoking the United States as they did.

Sinking the *Lusitania*

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical primary source, read and make use of the source information just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 3: (9–10) Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them. **(11–12)** Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

A Primary Source Document

With regard to the loss of life when the British passenger steamer *Lusitania* was sunk, the German Government has already expressed its deep regret to the neutral Governments concerned that nationals of those countries lost their lives on that occasion.

The German Government must state certain important facts most directly connected with the sinking of the *Lusitania* that may have escaped the attention of the Government of the United States. . . .

The Government of the United States assumes the *Lusitania* is to be considered as an ordinary unarmed merchant vessel. However, the *Lusitania* was one of the largest and fastest English commerce steamers, constructed with Government funds as auxiliary cruisers, and is expressly included in the navy list published by the British Admiralty.

Moreover, the German Government knows from reliable information furnished by its officials and neutral passengers that for some time practically all the more valuable English merchant vessels have been provided with guns, ammunition and other weapons, and reinforced with a crew specially practiced in manning guns. According to reports at hand here, the *Lusitania* when she left New York undoubtedly had guns on board which were mounted under decks and masked.

Furthermore, . . . the British Admiralty by a secret instruction of February of this year advised the British merchant marine not only to seek protection behind neutral flags and markings, but even when so disguised to attack German submarines by ramming them.

High rewards have been offered by the British Government as a special incentive for the destruction of the submarines by merchant vessels, and such rewards have already been paid out. In view of these facts, the German Government is unable to consider English merchant vessels any longer as “undefended territory” in the zone of maritime war designated by the Admiralty Staff of the Imperial German Navy. The German commanders are consequently no longer in a position to observe the rules of capture otherwise usual and with which they invariably complied before this.

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Lastly, the German Government must specially point out that on her last trip the *Lusitania*, as on earlier occasions, had Canadian troops and munitions on board, including no less than 5,400 cases of ammunition destined for the destruction of brave German soldiers who are fulfilling with self-sacrifice and devotion their duty in the service of the Fatherland.

The German Government believes that it acts in just self-defense when it seeks to protect the lives of its soldiers by destroying ammunition destined for the enemy with the means of war at its command. The English steamship company must have been aware of the dangers to which passengers on board the *Lusitania* were exposed under the circumstances.

In taking them on board in spite of this the company quite deliberately tried to use the lives of American citizens as protection for the ammunition carried, and violated the clear provisions of American laws which expressly prohibit, and provide punishment for, the carrying of passengers on ships which have explosives on board. The company thereby wantonly caused the death of so many passengers.

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Assessment Questions

1. The German government considered its attack on the *Lusitania* to be “justified self-defense.” What evidence does it present in this passage in support of this claim?
2. Do you think the concept of “justified self-defense” was a reasonable one for the Germans to use to guide the actions of their U-boat commanders? Why or why not?

Assessment 4 *Basic Level*

Just for “a Scrap of Paper”

★ Craft and Structure

4. (6–8) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

★ Using This Assessment

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Assessment 4 is designed to measure students’ ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 4 for grades 6–8. It asks students to recognize that words and phrases must be understood in relation to the meaning of the text as a whole. In seeking to understand historical sources, this is an especially important challenge. Words and phrases need to be understood as they were used within their historical context. This activity assesses the students’ ability to read closely in order to understand terms in these ways.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Answers to the first assessment question should see that Bethmann-Hollweg thinks Great Britain should care little about upholding its older treaty promising to protect Belgian neutrality. He thinks Belgium’s rights under that treaty are a trivial matter. The phrase “a scrap of paper” expresses his contempt for the agreement the British say they must honor. He seems unable to grasp how Great Britain could favor that promise over Germany, “a kindred nation who desired nothing better than to be friends with her.” Answers to the second assessment question should see that the phrase seems to mock and show contempt for international treaty obligations in general and in particular Britain’s moral obligations to uphold a formal pledge to protect a smaller and weaker nation. The incident led many to see Germany as guided by nothing more than considerations of force and power.

Just for “a Scrap of Paper”

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical primary source, read and make use of the source information just below it. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

A Primary Source Document

I found the German Chancellor [von Bethmann-Hollweg] very agitated. His Excellency at once began a harangue, which lasted for about twenty minutes. He said that the steps taken by the British government were terrible to a degree. Just for one word—“neutrality,” a word which in war time had so often been disregarded—just for a scrap of paper Great Britain was going to make war on a kindred nation who desired nothing better than to be friends with her. All his efforts in that direction had been rendered useless by this last terrible step, and the policy to which, as I knew, he had devoted himself since his accession to office had tumbled down like a house of cards. What we had done was unthinkable. It was like striking a man from behind while he was fighting for his life against two assailants. He held Great Britain responsible for all the terrible events that might happen. I protested strongly against that statement. And I said that, in the same way as he wished me to understand that for strategic reasons it was a matter of life and death to Germany to advance through Belgium and violate the latter’s neutrality, so I would wish him to understand that it was, so to speak, a matter of “life and death” for the honor of Great Britain that she should keep her solemn engagement to do her utmost to defend Belgium’s neutrality if attacked. That solemn compact simply had to be kept, or what confidence could anyone have in engagements given by Great Britain in the future? The Chancellor said, “But at what price will that compact have been kept? Has the British Government thought of that?” I suggested to his Excellency as plainly as I could that fear of consequences could hardly be regarded as an excuse for breaking solemn engagements, but his Excellency was so excited, so evidently overcome by the news of our action, and so little disposed to hear reason that I refrained from adding fuel to the flame by further argument.

Source Information: On August 4, 1914, Great Britain’s ambassador to Germany, Sir Edward Goschen, went to see German Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg. War had just broken out, and Germany was already invading France through Belgium at that time. Great Britain had committed to a treaty in 1839 that guaranteed Belgium’s neutrality. This required Great Britain to come to Belgium’s aid. This is an excerpt from Goschen’s report on his meeting with Bethmann-Hollweg. The report is available from the World War I Document Archive, Brigham Young University.

Assessment 4 *Advanced Level***Just for “a Scrap of Paper”**★ *Craft and Structure*

- 4. (9–10)** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.
- 4. (11–12)** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

★ *Using This Assessment*

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★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Answers to the first assessment question should see that Bethmann-Hollweg’s use of the phrase “a scrap of paper” was his way of expressing contempt for the treaty commitment Great Britain had made in 1839 to guarantee Belgium’s neutrality. German forces were invading that nation and Bethmann-Hollweg clearly saw Belgium’s rights as a trivial matter. This contemptuous attitude outraged many as a sign that Germany cared little for international agreements and could not grasp how Great Britain could put the treaty ahead of the needs of Germany, “a kindred nation who desired nothing better than to be friends with her.” Answers to the second assessment question may vary. Many may feel that Germany should have understood that Britain would never abandon its treaty obligations or its moral obligation to uphold a formal pledge to a smaller, weaker nation. However, some may feel that it might have been wiser for Great Britain to avoid the all-out war that ensued by accepting the German aggression and trying to moderate it in some other way.

Just for “a Scrap of Paper”

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical primary source, read and make use of the source information just below it. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 4: (9–10) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science. **(11–12)** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

A Primary Source Document

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Assessment 5 *Basic Level*

Douglas Haig's "Features of the War"

★ *Craft and Structure*

5. (6–8) Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 5 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 5 for grades 6–8. It asks students to pay attention to a text's "structure"—that is, to the overall pattern or organizational arrangement of its headings, sentences, paragraphs, stanzas, and chapters, as well as its various stylistic features. These formal elements can contribute to a text's meanings in many ways. This activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand the impact of the way one historical primary source is structured to present its information.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should see that the entire passage is organized around a listing of causes as to why the war lasted so long. Hence, the text structure is one of "cause and effect." The passage makes this clear in the first sentence, in which the intention of examining a set of causal factors is announced. Each time a new cause is analyzed, the passage alerts the reader through the use of such transitional phrases as "the first place," "the second consequence," "thirdly," etc. Each of these announces a new cause of the duration of the war—the unpreparedness of the British, their lack of sufficient manpower for a long time, Russia's sudden withdrawal from the struggle, etc. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question should see that Haig is not posing a "problem" to be solved; he is stating an outcome that needs to be explained. Nor has he ranked his various causes in an order of importance from most to least important. Instead, all the causal factors are presented as important and as interacting with one another.

Douglas Haig's "Features of the War"

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical source, read and make use of the source information located just below it. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 5: Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

A Primary Source Document

If the causes which determined the length of the recent contest are examined in the light of the accepted principles of war, it will be seen that the duration of the struggle was governed by and bore a direct relation to certain definite factors which are enumerated below.

In the first place, we were unprepared for war, or at any rate for a war of such magnitude. We were deficient in both trained men and military material, and, what was more important, had no machinery ready by which either men or material could be produced in anything approaching the requisite quantities. . . . In consequence, the full man power of the Empire was never developed in the field at any period of the war. . . .

The second consequence of our unpreparedness was that our armies were unable to intervene either at the outset of the war or until nearly two years had elapsed, in sufficient strength adequately to assist our Allies. The enemy was able to gain a notable initial advantage by establishing himself in Belgium and northern France, and throughout the early stages of the war was free to concentrate in undue proportion of his effectives against France and Russia. . . . A further cause adversely influencing the duration of the war on the western front during its later stages, and one following indirectly from that just stated, was the situation in other theaters. The military strength of Russia broke down in 1917 at a critical period, when, had she been able to carry out her military engagements, the war might have been shortened by a year. . . .

Thirdly, the Allies were handicapped in their task and the war thereby lengthened by the inherent difficulties always associated with the combined action of armies of separate nationalities differing in speech and temperament, and, not least important, in military organization, equipment, and supply.

Finally, because of the huge numbers of men engaged on either side, whereby a continuous battle front was rapidly established from Switzerland to the sea, outflanking was made impossible and maneuver very difficult. This necessitated the delivery of frontal attacks. This factor, combined with the strength of the defensive under modern conditions, rendered a protracted wearing out battle unavoidable before the enemy's power of resistance could be overcome. So long as the opposing forces are at the outset approximately equal in numbers and morale and there are no flanks to turn, a long struggle for supremacy is inevitable.

Source Information: Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig was the senior British officer in command of the British Expeditionary Force in Europe from 1915 to the end of World War I. At the end of the war, he wrote a report titled “Features of the War.” This excerpt is from that report. A large part of Haig’s report, including this passage, is available from the World War I Document Archive, Brigham Young University.

Assessment Questions

1. “Text structure” refers to the way paragraphs and longer texts are organized, with different structures serving different purposes. Here are three types of text structure:

- *Cause and Effect:* A pattern showing what factors caused an effect or set of effects.
- *Problem/Solution:* A problem or question is presented and a solution or series of steps in a solution follows.
- *Order of Importance:* A sequence of ideas is presented, from first in importance to last in importance.

Of these three text structures, choose the one you think most accurately describes the text structure of this document. Explain your choice.

2. Explain why the other two text structures are not as acceptable.

Assessment 5 *Advanced Level***Douglas Haig's
“Features of the War”**★ *Craft and Structure*

- 5. (9–10)** Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.
- 5. (11–12)** Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 5 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 5 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to pay attention to a text's "structure"—that is, to the overall pattern or organizational arrangement of its headings, sentences, paragraphs, stanzas, and chapters, as well as its various stylistic features. Students should see how structure is deliberately used to enable the text to achieve certain goals. Such formal elements can contribute to a text's meanings in many ways. This activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand the impact of the way one historical primary source is structured to present its information.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should see that the entire passage is organized around a listing of causes as to why the war lasted so long. Hence, the text is one organized with a "cause and effect" structure. The passage makes this clear in the first sentence, in which Haig announces his intention of examining a set of causal factors that can explain the long duration of the war. The rest of the passage uses various transitional phrases to alert the reader each time a new cause is analyzed—the unpreparedness of the British, the lack of sufficient manpower for a long time, Russia's sudden withdrawal, the difficulty in getting different national armies to work together, the long front that made flanking maneuvers difficult, etc.

Douglas Haig's "Features of the War"

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and answer one question about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical source, read and make use of the source information located just below it. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment question that follows.

CCS Standard 5: (9–10) Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis. **(11–12)** Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

A Primary Source Document

If the causes which determined the length of the recent contest are examined in the light of the accepted principles of war, it will be seen that the duration of the struggle was governed by and bore a direct relation to certain definite factors which are enumerated below.

In the first place, we were unprepared for war, or at any rate for a war of such magnitude. We were deficient in both trained men and military material, and, what was more important, had no machinery ready by which either men or material could be produced in anything approaching the requisite quantities. . . . In consequence, the full man power of the Empire was never developed in the field at any period of the war. . . .

The second consequence of our unpreparedness was that our armies were unable to intervene either at the outset of the war or until nearly two years had elapsed, in sufficient strength adequately to assist our Allies. The enemy was able to gain a notable initial advantage by establishing himself in Belgium and northern France, and throughout the early stages of the war was free to concentrate in undue proportion of his effectives against France and Russia. . . . A further cause adversely influencing the duration of the war on the western front during its later stages, and one following indirectly from that just stated, was the situation in other theaters. The military strength of Russia broke down in 1917 at a critical period, when, had she been able to carry out her military engagements, the war might have been shortened by a year. . . .

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Finally, because of the huge numbers of men engaged on either side, whereby a continuous battle front was rapidly established from Switzerland to the sea, outflanking was made impossible and maneuver very difficult. This necessitated the delivery of frontal attacks. This factor, combined with the strength of the defensive under modern conditions, rendered a protracted wearing out battle unavoidable before the enemy's power of resistance could be overcome. So long as the opposing forces are at the outset approximately equal in numbers and morale and there are no flanks to turn, a long struggle for supremacy is inevitable.

Source Information: Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig was the senior British officer in command of the British Expeditionary Force in Europe from 1915 to the end of World War I. At the end of the war, he wrote a report titled “Features of the War.” This excerpt is from that report. A large part of Haig’s report, including this passage, is available from the World War I Document Archive, Brigham Young University.

Assessment Question

“Text structure” refers to the way paragraphs and longer texts are organized, with different structures serving different purposes. Describe the text structure of this passage and explain the point about the war that this structure helps Sir Douglas Haig answer.

Assessment 6 *Basic Level*

Two Views of the Battle of the Somme

★ *Craft and Structure*

- 6. (6–8)** Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 6 is designed to measure students’ ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 6 for grades 6–8. It asks students to note a text’s point of view as expressed by looking closely at details in the text itself. These details may take the form of emotional language, distorted or exaggerated descriptions, stereotyped labeling, etc. However, even a text with a neutral tone may express bias or point of view by selectively emphasizing some facts while omitting others. Therefore, students also need to go outside the text to interpret point of view by considering sourcing information such as the author’s background, purpose, and audience. In addition, students need to see that when sources express conflicting points of view they may still be reliable in certain ways—for example, by what they share in common or by backing up their claims with solid evidence.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable answers to the first assessment question could note many differences. Document 1 provides a broad overview of the entire battle. Document 2 is a very limited account of one soldier’s experience. Document 1 is very positive in its assessment of British success, stressing the ease with which soldiers advanced (they “encountered no resistance”) and their confident mood (“the British swept forward cheering”). The smoke and noise did not distract, but gave the British troops cover and “little difficulty was experienced.” Private Ball, however, did experience great confusion because of the noise and smoke, and the constant machine-gun fire. He describes the move out of the trenches as one of terror, not “cheering.” He recalls plenty of resistance. He got lost and accidentally found himself behind enemy lines. All in all, the reader gets a sense of the terrifying disorientation of fighting under such conditions. Acceptable answers to the second assessment question should consider

that reporter Phillip Gibbs is writing for a British newspaper and may be trying to present the battle in reassuring and glowing terms for an anxious audience back home. He is writing about the entire battle and obviously had to rely on other reports in putting his own together. Private Ball is writing his memoir for himself and perhaps for a few others to read long after the fact. His focus is on his own personal experience only. His purpose seems to be to tell his story with all the drama and confusion he himself felt. This would lead him to stress all the disorienting details of the battlefield as he experienced it.

Two Views of the Battle of the Somme

Directions: This exercise asks you to read two primary source documents carefully and answer two questions about specific details in them. In order to better understand these documents as historical primary sources, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 6: Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

Document 1: A Primary Source

For a fortnight the British plans were discussed secretly in the mess rooms, and the soldiers, watching the arrival of scores of guns, smiled grimly. Everybody was aware that the earlier bombardment was preparatory to a great assault, but the secret was well kept.

The offensive has begun satisfactorily. There is not yet a victory. It is only the beginning. We are advancing, not easily, but doggedly, capturing the enemy’s strongholds. The German dead are lying thickly in the tracks of our regiments.

The attack was preceded by an outburst of fire from our trench mortars. Clouds of smoke were liberated, hiding them the whole time, and screening our infantry. Only our reserves were visible.

One minute after 7:30 on Saturday morning came the rushing sound of rifle and machine-gun fire. The German artillery was “barraging” our lines.

Little difficulty was experienced in the earliest attacks. Our bombardment had flattened the enemy’s trench parapets, and smashed his wire entanglements. The British swept forward cheering. They encountered no resistance. The surviving Germans were hidden in their dug-outs, many of which were filled with dead bodies. Some Germans crept out, dazed and deafened, held up their hands, and bowed their heads.

Source Information: This passage is a news report about the first day or two of ground fighting in the Battle of the Somme, which began July 1, 1916. This battle was one of the bloodiest in history. On the first day of ground fighting, British soldiers moved to attack German trenches across open, crater-pocked land and barbed wire obstacles in the face of withering machine-gun fire. The British suffered 20,000 killed and 40,000 wounded on that one day alone. This account of the battle was by Phillip Gibbs, a special correspondent for the British newspaper *Daily Chronicle*. This is one of a collection of news reports received from London by the Australian and New Zealand Cable Association on July 3, 1916. The report is found in “British Soldiers in Attack,” page 7 of *The Press* (Canterbury), July 4, 1916.

Document 2: A Primary Source

Suddenly the noise of the guns eased off. For a second or two there was quiet. Then the fury of our barrage dropped like a wall of roaring sound before us. By some means the signal to advance was given and understood and we found ourselves walking forward into the mist, feeling utterly naked. Who can express the sensations of men brought up in trench warfare suddenly divested of every scrap of shelter?

Forward we stumbled into a mist that seemed to grow ever thicker. So great was the noise that the order to keep in touch with one another was passed only by means of shouting our hardest, and our voices sounded like flutes in a vast orchestra of fiends.

All at once I became conscious of another sound. A noise like the crisp crackle of twigs and branches, burning in a bonfire just beyond my vision in the mist, made me think I must be approaching some burning building. I realized, when my neighbor on the right dropped with a bullet in the abdomen, that the noise was machine-gun and rifle-fire. . . .

Presently we came to the first enemy trench. . . . After scrambling over what remained of this trench, I found myself with another signaler, cut off completely from the rest by the mist. We had come close together in our scrambling and remained together. We were alone in a mist which we began to suspect was not altogether made by Nature. Here was a fine mess. Fryer (that was my companion's name) and myself cut off from our comrades, not knowing whither we were going nor how far we should go.

What should we do? We did what irresponsible private soldiers could do—dropped into the nearest shell hole. Discussing our position over a Woodbine, shared by the simple and wasteful expedient of breaking it in two, we went to sleep!

An hour later I was nudged into wakefulness by Fryer. It was considerably quieter, but bullets were still zipping past. The mist had cleared a little and visibility was extended to about 400 or 500 yards. Together we raised our heads, cautiously, above the shell hole, and saw not a soul. Suddenly, from Fryer, "Down! Keep down!" and he suited the action to the word, pulling me with him. . . . Then, a moment or two later, "Look behind." Carefully I raised my head again and looked. Behind us, in a part of the trench we had crossed that had escaped the general smashing in of high explosives, was a German. A brave man, braver than either Fryer or I, was standing in that bit of trench.

With a rifle to his shoulder he was firing steadily in the direction of our old front line, and by his side, keeping under what little cover there was, was another, busily loading a second rifle. I raised my own to shoot the first active German enemy I had seen, but Fryer pulled me back. "Don't be a bloody fool," he said. "Don't you see we're surrounded?"

I won't worry you with the argument I had with Fryer—nor with myself—about what was our duty. Enough that discretion won and, astonishing though it may seem, we lay down and went to sleep again.

Assessment 6 *Advanced Level*

Two Views of the Battle of the Somme

★ *Craft and Structure*

- 6. (9–10)** Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
- 6. (11–12)** Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

★ *Using This Assessment*

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their world history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Assessment 6 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 6 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to note a text's point of view as expressed by looking closely at details in the text itself. These details may take the form of emotional language, distorted or exaggerated descriptions, stereotyped labeling, etc. However, even a text with a neutral tone may express bias or point of view by selectively emphasizing some facts while omitting others. Therefore, students also need to go outside the text to interpret point of view by considering sourcing information such as the author's background, purpose, and audience. In addition, students need to see that when sources express conflicting points of view they may still be reliable in certain ways—for example, by what they share in common or by backing up their claims with solid evidence.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable answers to the first assessment question should see that reporter Phillip Gibbs adopts the perspective of an all-knowing observer high above the battlefield, able to take in its whole pattern. He is writing for a British newspaper and may be trying to present the battle in reassuring and glowing terms for an anxious audience back home. He certainly does this, with his many references to soldiers encountering no resistance as they “swept forward cheering.” Private Ball adopts the point of view of one soldier caught up in very confusing and terrifying events he can barely understand. He is writing his memoir for himself and perhaps a few others to read long after the fact. His focus is on his own personal experience only. His purpose seems to be to tell his story with all the drama and confusion he

himself felt. This would lead him to stress all the disorienting details of the battlefield as he experienced it. Acceptable answers to the second assessment question may find both accounts useful, but they should show awareness of the limitations in each. Gibbs' account (Document 1) is a broad overview of the battle, but it was only about the first day or two, and it is clearly too positive given what the source information for the document suggests did happen on the first day. Private Ball's account (Document 2) is vivid and possibly quite reliable about his experience but by itself cannot be taken as representative of the entire battle.

Two Views of the Battle of the Somme

Directions: This exercise asks you to read two primary source documents carefully and answer questions about specific details in them. In order to better understand these documents as historical primary sources, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 6: (9–10) Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts. **(11–12)** Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

Document 1: A Primary Source

For a fortnight the British plans were discussed secretly in the mess rooms, and the soldiers, watching the arrival of scores of guns, smiled grimly. Everybody was aware that the earlier bombardment was preparatory to a great assault, but the secret was well kept.

The offensive has begun satisfactorily. There is not yet a victory. It is only the beginning. We are advancing, not easily, but doggedly, capturing the enemy's strongholds. The German dead are lying thickly in the tracks of our regiments.

The attack was preceded by an outburst of fire from our trench mortars. Clouds of smoke were liberated, hiding them the whole time, and screening our infantry. Only our reserves were visible.

One minute after 7:30 on Saturday morning came the rushing sound of rifle and machine-gun fire. The German artillery was "barraging" our lines.

Little difficulty was experienced in the earliest attacks. Our bombardment had flattened the enemy's trench parapets, and smashed his wire entanglements. The British swept forward cheering. They encountered no resistance. The surviving Germans were hidden in their dug-outs, many of which were filled with dead bodies. Some Germans crept out, dazed and deafened, held up their hands, and bowed their heads.

Source Information: This passage is a news report about the first day or two of ground fighting in the Battle of the Somme, which began July 1, 1916. This battle was one of the bloodiest in history. On the first day of ground fighting, British soldiers moved to attack German trenches across open, crater-pocked land and barbed wire obstacles in the face of withering machine-gun fire. The British suffered 20,000 killed and 40,000 wounded on that one day alone. This account of the battle was by Phillip Gibbs, a special correspondent for the British newspaper *Daily Chronicle*. This is one of a collection of news reports received from London by the Australian and New Zealand Cable Association on July 3, 1916. The report is available from "British Soldiers in Attack," page 7 of *The Press* (Canterbury), July 4, 1916.

Document 2: A Primary Source

Suddenly the noise of the guns eased off. For a second or two there was quiet. Then the fury of our barrage dropped like a wall of roaring sound before us. By some means the signal to advance was given and understood and we found ourselves walking forward into the mist, feeling utterly naked. Who can express the sensations of men brought up in trench warfare suddenly divested of every scrap of shelter?

Forward we stumbled into a mist that seemed to grow ever thicker. So great was the noise that the order to keep in touch with one another was passed only by means of shouting our hardest, and our voices sounded like flutes in a vast orchestra of fiends.

All at once I became conscious of another sound. A noise like the crisp crackle of twigs and branches, burning in a bonfire just beyond my vision in the mist, made me think I must be approaching some burning building. I realized, when my neighbor on the right dropped with a bullet in the abdomen, that the noise was machine-gun and rifle-fire. . . .

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What should we do? We did what irresponsible private soldiers could do—dropped into the nearest shell hole. Discussing our position over a Woodbine, shared by the simple and wasteful expedient of breaking it in two, we went to sleep!

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With a rifle to his shoulder he was firing steadily in the direction of our old front line, and by his side, keeping under what little cover there was, was another, busily loading a second rifle. I raised my own to shoot the first active German enemy I had seen, but Fryer pulled me back. "Don't be a bloody fool," he said. "Don't you see we're surrounded?"

I won't worry you with the argument I had with Fryer—nor with myself—about what was our duty. Enough that discretion won and, astonishing though it may seem, we lay down and went to sleep again.

Assessment 7 *Basic Level*

War in an Industrial Age

★ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- 7. (6–8)** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

★ Using This Assessment

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Assessment 7 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 7 for grades 6–8. It asks students to do something historians must do all the time—integrate evidence found in several primary sources presented in a variety of visual and textual formats.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Acceptable answers to the assessment question should note that Document 1 refers to many industrial-age technologies and weapons central to the war effort—trains, train stations, troop transports, airplanes, bombs, cannons, machine-guns, etc. The passage makes clear how all aspects of the battlefield were dependent on a vast industrial infrastructure and production process. Document 2 suggests the enormous scale in terms of cost and loss of life that this industrial efficiency made possible. Document 3 comments critically on the naval arms race leading up to the war, suggesting that only the world's most powerful industrial nations could afford to play in this “poker game.” The stakes in that game are huge battleships and other vessels, products only a nation with great industrial capacity could build in great numbers.

War in an Industrial Age

Directions: This exercise asks you to study three documents carefully and answer one question on what these sources have in common. In order to better understand the documents and their importance as historical evidence, read and make use of the source information located just below or next to each document itself. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment question that follows.

CCS Standard 7: Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Document 1: A Primary Source

On 18 June the serene time came to an end. Operation “Summer Night’s Dream” came into play. The Regiment was loaded in the early morning at the train station at Rappoltsweiler. The long transport rolled toward the cannon’s thunder. On 19 June the train rolled through Cambrai and Douai, and was unloaded southwest of Douai at the small train station at Corbehem. There the troop transports immediately were bombed by enemy planes. . . . The regiment commander and the Battalion Commanders got information of the combat line between Thules and Neville, but it did not affect realignment of the Regiment. Early in the night of “Summer Night Dream Reverse,” the Regiment Staff, Machine Gun Company II, and III Battalion were loaded at the train station at Vitry and departed. In the early morning dawn the roar of cannons increased as before. Only the First Battalion stayed to assist the First Bayern Reserve Division. However due to the reestablishment of the second defense line they joined the regiment again on July 7.

Source Information: This brief passage is from an account compiled by Gerhard Friedrich Dose from the book his father wrote titled *187th in the Field*. The book is a history of Germany’s 187th Infantry Regiment in World War I. The book is available online through Brigham Young University.

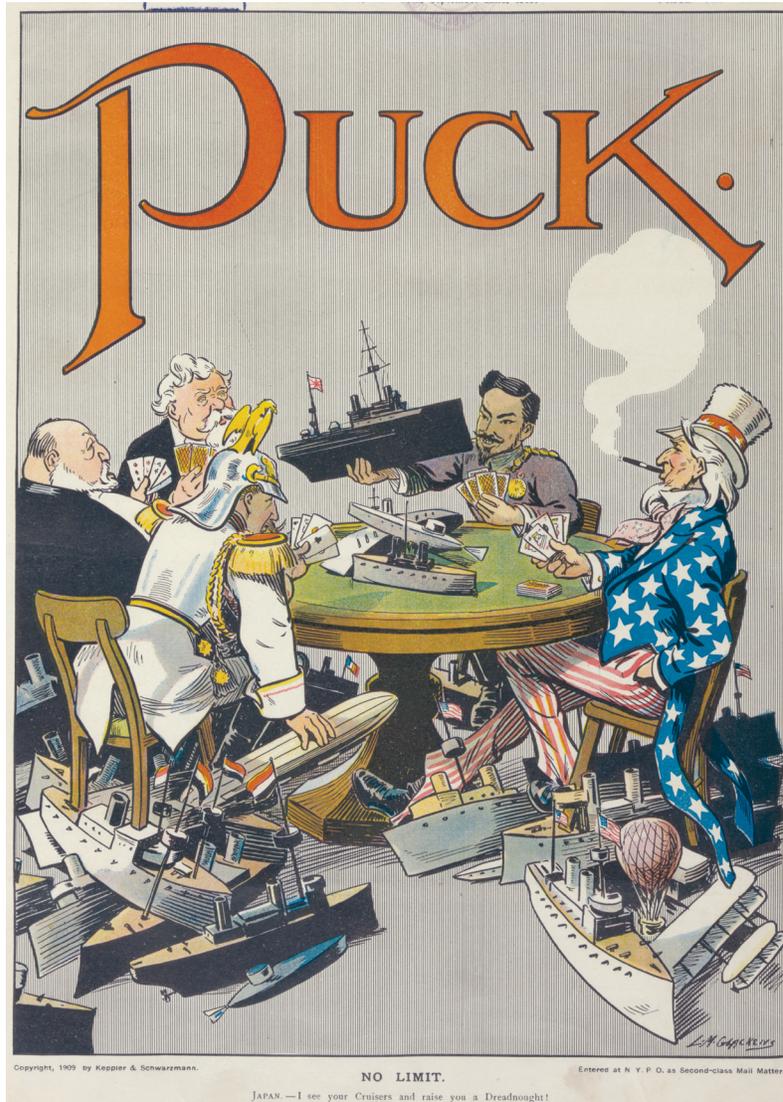
Document 2: A Primary Source

Main Allies	War Expenditures	Population	Military Deaths
United Kingdom	\$38 billion*	46.0 million	908,371
France	\$26 billion	39.6 million	1,397,800
Russian Empire	\$18 billion	167.0 million	1,700,000 (estimate)
United States	\$22 billion	103.0 million	116,516

*This figure is for Great Britain and Dominions.

Source Information: This table shows key statistics for the four major Allies during World War I. The expenditures information is adapted from table 13 in *The War with Germany: A Statistical Summary*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1919). The military deaths numbers are from “WWI Casualty and Deaths,” available on the PBS website. Population numbers are from the NZHistory website, History Group of the New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

Document 3: A Primary Source



Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-26411

Source Information: This illustration by Louis M. Glackens was on the cover of the American magazine *Puck*, Vol. 66, no. 1699, September 22, 1909. It shows a high-stakes poker game with Uncle Sam, German emperor William II, the emperor of Japan, Emile Loubet of France, and Edward VII, king of Great Britain. The emperor of Japan is raising the bid by one battleship. The larger caption reads, "No Limit." The smaller caption reads, "Japan: 'I see your cruisers and raise you a dreadnought.'"

Assessment Question

Consider this statement: "World War I was a fully industrial war, one requiring the mobilization of the entire economic might of each of the world's wealthiest and most powerful nations." How do all three of these documents offer evidence in support of this statement?

Assessment 7 *Advanced Level*

War in an Industrial Age

★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 7. (9–10) Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
- 7. (11–12) Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 7 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to do something historians must do all the time—integrate evidence found in a wide variety of primary sources presented in many visual and textual formats. It also asks them to judge the relative strengths and weaknesses of visual as compared with written sources.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable answers to the first assessment question should identify the common theme in these documents as the idea of World War I as a fully industrial war requiring the total mobilization of the economic as well as military might of the world's most powerful nations. Document 1 refers to many industrial-age technologies and weapons, showing how all aspects of the battlefield were dependent on a vast industrial infrastructure and production process. Document 2 suggests the enormous scale in terms of cost—as well as the drastic loss of life such industrial efficiency made possible. Document 3 comments critically on the naval arms race leading up to the war, while also suggesting how only the world's most powerful industrial nations could afford the battleships and other vessels required to play this “poker game.” Acceptable answers to the second assessment question may vary. Some may feel the cartoon as an expression of opinion is useless as hard evidence. Others may find that it adds insight by suggesting how the industrial might of the great powers may have intensified their arrogant and aggressive attitudes.

War in an Industrial Age

Directions: This exercise asks you to study three documents carefully and answer two questions focused on what these sources have in common. In order to better understand the documents and their importance as historical evidence, read and make use of the source information located just below or next to each document itself. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 7: (9–10) Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text. **(11–12)** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Document 1: A Primary Source

On 18 June the serene time came to an end. Operation “Summer Night’s Dream” came into play. The Regiment was loaded in the early morning at the train station at Rappoltsweiler. The long transport rolled toward the cannon’s thunder. On 19 June the train rolled through Cambrai and Douai, and was unloaded southwest of Douai at the small train station at Corbehem. There the troop transports immediately were bombed by enemy planes. . . . The regiment commander and the battalion commanders got information of the combat line between Thules and Neville, but it did not affect realignment of the Regiment. Early in the night of “Summer Night Dream Reverse,” the Regiment Staff, Machine Gun Company II, and III Battalion were loaded at the train station at Vitry and departed. In the early morning dawn the roar of cannons increased as before. Only the First Battalion stayed to assist the First Bayern Reserve Division. However due to the reestablishment of the second defense line they joined the regiment again on July 7.

Source Information: This brief passage is from an account compiled by Gerhard Friedrich Dose from the book his father wrote titled *187th in the Field*. The book is a history of Germany’s 187th Infantry Regiment in World War I. The book is available online through Brigham Young University.

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Main Allies	War Expenditures	Population	Military Deaths
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Source Information: This table shows key statistics for the four major Allies during World War I. The expenditures information is adapted from table 13 in *The War with Germany: A Statistical Summary*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1919). The military deaths numbers are from “WWI Casualty and Deaths,” available on the PBS website. Population numbers are from the NZHistory website, History Group of the New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

Assessment 8 *Basic Level*

The Use of Chemical Weapons

★ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

8. (6–8) Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

★ Using This Assessment

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Assessment 8 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 8 for grades 6–8. It asks students to pay attention to the way a text reasons about its factual claims and to distinguish between these and expressions of opinion. This could mean paying close attention to the factual evidence offered or to the reasoning process and logic used to support a claim—as well as an ability to distinguish these from the text's biases or expressions of opinion. This activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand a text in these ways.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Responses to the first assessment question should see that the Germans justify their actions by referring to a French War Ministry document they were able to obtain. This document shows that the French were already manufacturing shells with “asphyxiating gases” before Germany’s use of chemical weapons at the Second Battle of Ypres. The Germans basically say that they were not the first to use such chemical weapons, and they accuse the French of hypocrisy for criticizing them. Answers to the second assessment question could make several points. The French memo refers to “asphyxiating gases,” but it never defines them further. It says these gases are not lethal in small quantities. The German statement insists that this means the gases *are* lethal in larger quantities. The Germans do not specify which gases each side is using, but the source information suggests Germany’s chlorine gas was much more dangerous than the tear gas the French did in fact use earlier. Moreover, Germany’s statement says nothing about the morality of chemical weapons use in general or about international rules outlawing such weapons.

The Use of Chemical Weapons

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical primary source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 8: Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

A Primary Source Document

For everyone who has kept an unbiased judgment, the official assertions of the strictly accurate and truthful German military administration will be sufficient to prove the prior use of asphyxiating gases by our opponents.

On April 16th the French were making increased use of asphyxiating bombs. But let whoever still doubts, consider the following instructions for the systematic preparation of this means of warfare by the French, issued by the French War Ministry, dated February 21, 1915:

Ministry of War, February 21, 1915

Remarks concerning shells with stupefying gases:

The so-called shells with stupefying gases that are being manufactured by our central factories contain a fluid which streams forth after the explosion, in the form of vapors that irritate the eyes, nose, and throat.

There are two kinds: hand grenades and cartridges.

Hand Grenades. . . . They are intended for short distances, and have an appliance for throwing by hand. They are equipped with an inscription giving directions for use. They are lighted with a small bit of material for friction pasted on the directions, after which they must be thrown away. The explosion follows seven seconds after lighting. A small cover of brass and a top screwed on protect the lighted matter. Their purpose is to make untenable the surroundings of the place where they burst. Their effect is often considerably impaired by a strong rising wind.

Cartridges. . . . They are intended for use at longer distances than can be negotiated with the hand grenades. . . . They have central lighting facilities and are fired with ignition bullet guns. The powder lights a little internal ignition mass by means of which the cartridges are caused to explode five seconds after leaving the rifle. The cartridges have the same purpose as the hand grenades but because of their very small amount of fluid they must be fired in great numbers at the same time.

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The vapors spread by means of the shells with asphyxiating gases are not deadly, at least when small quantities are used and their effect is only momentary. The duration of the effect depends upon the atmospheric conditions.

It is advisable therefore to attack the trenches into which such hand grenades have been thrown and which the enemy has nevertheless not evacuated before the vapors are completely dissipated. The attacking troops, moreover, must wear protective goggles and in addition be instructed that the unpleasant sensations in nose and throat are not dangerous and involve no lasting disturbance.

Here we have a conclusive proof that the French in their State workshops manufactured shells with asphyxiating gases fully half a year ago at least.

The number must have been so large that the French War Ministry at last found itself obliged to issue written instructions concerning the use of this means of warfare. What hypocrisy when the same people grow “indignant” because the Germans much later followed them on the path they had pointed out!

Very characteristic is the twist of the French official direction: “The vapors spread by the shells with asphyxiating gases are not deadly, at least not when used in small quantities.” It is precisely this limitation that contains the unequivocal confession that the French asphyxiating gases work with deadly effect when used in large quantities.

Source Information: This document is excerpted and shortened from a statement issued by the German government on June 25, 1915. It was published in response to international outrage at Germany’s use of poison gas during the Second Battle of Ypres, which began on April 22, 1915. The statement includes a French War Ministry memo dated several weeks before the start of that battle. The French did in fact use tear gas in 1914. Germany began using much more dangerous chlorine gas early in 1915. The entire German statement from June 25, 1915, is from *The Great Events of the Great War*, edited by Charles F. Horne (New York: National Alumni, 1920), pp. 138–39.

Assessment Questions

1. This statement defends Germany’s use of chemical weapons, which had already been banned under international law. What main point does this statement make in justifying Germany’s use of such weapons?
2. What weaknesses in Germany’s argument here could a critic point out? Cite details to support your answer.

Assessment 8 *Advanced Level*

The Use of Chemical Weapons

★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 8. (9–10)** Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.
- 8. (11–12)** Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Responses to the assessment question should see that the statement justifies Germany's use of chemical weapons at the Second Battle of Ypres by referring to a French War Ministry document suggesting that the French were already manufacturing shells with "asphyxiating gases." The Germans basically say they were not the first to use such chemical weapons; hence, the French are hypocritical for criticizing them. The French memo refers to "asphyxiating gases" but never defines them further. It claims these gases are not lethal in small quantities, but the German statement uses this claim to suggest the gases *are* lethal in larger quantities. The German statement never clarifies which gases each side is using, but the source information suggests Germany's chlorine gas was much more dangerous than the tear gas the French did in fact use earlier. Moreover, the statement says nothing about the morality of chemical weapons use in general, or about international rules outlawing such weapons. In other words, it defends Germany only by criticizing the French, not by grappling with the ethical implications of using chemical weapons at all.

The Use of Chemical Weapons

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document carefully and answer one question about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical primary source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment question that follows.

CCS Standard 8: (9–10) Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author’s claims. **(11–12)** Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

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The vapors spread by means of the shells with asphyxiating gases are not deadly, at least when small quantities are used and their effect is only momentary. The duration of the effect depends upon the atmospheric conditions.

It is advisable therefore to attack the trenches into which such hand grenades have been thrown and which the enemy has nevertheless not evacuated before the vapors are completely dissipated. The attacking troops, moreover, must wear protective goggles and in addition be instructed that the unpleasant sensations in nose and throat are not dangerous and involve no lasting disturbance.

Here we have a conclusive proof that the French in their State workshops manufactured shells with asphyxiating gases fully half a year ago at least.

The number must have been so large that the French War Ministry at last found itself obliged to issue written instructions concerning the use of this means of warfare. What hypocrisy when the same people grow “indignant” because the Germans much later followed them on the path they had pointed out!

Very characteristic is the twist of the French official direction: “The vapors spread by the shells with asphyxiating gases are not deadly, at least not when used in small quantities.” It is precisely this limitation that contains the unequivocal confession that the French asphyxiating gases work with deadly effect when used in large quantities.

Source Information: This document is excerpted and shortened from a statement issued by the German government on June 25, 1915. It was published in response to international outrage at Germany’s use of poison gas during the Second Battle of Ypres, which began on April 22, 1915. The statement includes a French War Ministry memo dated several weeks before the start of that battle. The French did in fact use tear gas in 1914. Germany began using much more dangerous chlorine gas early in 1915. The entire German statement from June 25, 1915, is from *The Great Events of the Great War*, edited by Charles F. Horne (New York: National Alumni, 1920), pp. 138–139.

Assessment Question

Consider this comment: “This German justification of their use of chemical warfare is not that convincing.” Summarize Germany’s position and explain why critics might find its argument unconvincing.

Assessment 9 *Basic Level*

A “Stab in the Back”?

★ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

9. (6–8) Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their world history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Assessment 9 is designed to measure students’ ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 9 for grades 6–8. It asks students to understand the relationship between primary and secondary sources. This means students must know the difference between the two kinds of sources—that primary sources provide the evidence for secondary source claims and interpretations. This should lead them to adopt a critical approach to secondary sources themselves. That is, such secondary accounts should not be regarded as final and complete. They are interpretations of the past, not the past itself. Students should learn to weigh secondary source accounts against the relevant primary source evidence.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Answers to the first assessment question should see that the phrase “stab-in-the-back” is used for the theory that Germany’s civilian politicians and others back home somehow betrayed or undermined the military effort and caused Germany to lose World War I. In Document 1, Ludendorff says that many German soldiers were “heavily contaminated with the poison” of the socialists and were no longer reliable. He then says the socialist politicians at home should be brought into the government to officially accept the defeat, since, as he puts it, “They made their bed, now they must lie in it!” Document 2 specifically says that Ludendorff did press to “bring civilian politicians into the government and have them take responsibility for ending the war officially.” It also suggests he continued to promote the stab-in-the-back theory after the war. Answers to the second assessment question should note that Ludendorff himself (in Document 1) does acknowledge several military factors that led him to conclude “the war could no longer be won”: Germany’s allies, Austria and Turkey, were in defeat; the American forces were adding new pressures; Germany’s soldiers were no longer able to hold off attacks; etc. Document 2 confirms this view, pointing out that while German forces were still fighting outside of Germany’s own borders, “the generals knew that continued fighting would be hopeless.”

A “Stab in the Back”?

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and one secondary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in them. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 9: Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Document 1: A Primary Source

Terrible and appalling! It is so! Indeed! As we were gathered together, Ludendorff stood up in our presence, his face was pale and filled with deep worry, but his head was still held high. A truly handsome Germanic hero figure. . . .

He said roughly the following: It was his duty to tell us that our military condition was terribly serious. Any day now, our Western Front could be breached. He had had to report this to His Majesty the Kaiser . . . that the Supreme Army Command and the German Army were at an end; the war could no longer be won, but rather an unavoidable and conclusive defeat awaited. Bulgaria had already been lost. Austria and Turkey, both at the end of their powers, would also soon fall. Our own Army had unfortunately also been heavily contaminated with the poison of Spartacus-socialist ideas, and the troops were, he said, no longer reliable. Since the 8th of August the situation had rapidly gotten worse. As a result, some troops had proven themselves so unreliable that they had had to be quickly pulled from the front. If they were replaced with other troops willing to fight, those troops would be received with the label “Strike breakers” and challenged not to fight anymore. He said he could not operate with divisions that were no longer reliable.

It was thus foreseeable, he went on to say, that the enemy in the near future, with the help of American troops anxious to fight, would succeed in a great victory, a breakthrough in grand fashion. As a result, the West Army would lose its last hold and retreat in full disbandment across the Rhine and carry the revolution back to Germany. This catastrophe, he said, must be avoided by all means. For the cited reasons we could no longer allow ourselves to be beaten. Therefore, the Supreme Army Command demanded of His Majesty the Kaiser and of the Chancellor that a proposal for the bringing about of peace be made to President Wilson of America without delay, for bringing about an armistice on the basis of his 14 Points. . . .

Excellency Ludendorff added: “At present, then, we have no Chancellor. Who will fill this position is yet to be determined. I have, however, asked His Majesty the Kaiser to bring those circles [the Social Democrats] into the government whom we can mainly thank that we have come to this. We will now see these gentlemen brought into the Ministries. They should make the peace that must now be made. They made their bed, now they must lie in it!”

Source Information: These excerpts are from Colonel Albrecht von Thaer’s diary notes for October 1, 1918. The notes record remarks by General Erich Ludendorff, who along with Paul von Hindenburg was in charge of Germany’s war effort in World War I. This diary entry suggests the mood of the German military leadership as it realized the war was lost. The entire entry is available from the World War I Document Archive, Brigham Young University.

Document 2: A Secondary Source

In 1918, a final German offensive in Western Europe failed. Germany began a retreat that the generals knew could not be reversed. Opposing armies never actually pushed German forces all the way back into Germany. However, the generals knew that continued fighting would be hopeless. Meanwhile, Social Democrats and other civilian politicians in Germany's parliament were already becoming increasingly critical as public opinion turned against the war. Civilian unrest was spreading to the armed forces themselves with some soldiers and sailors refusing any longer to take up arms.

During the war Germany had been effectively ruled by the Supreme Army Command. By 1918, this was basically Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg and General Erich Ludendorff. However, as the war's end approached, these generals moved to bring civilian politicians into the government and have them take responsibility for ending the war officially. On November 11, 1918, the civilian leaders of the newly formed Weimar Republic signed the armistice. In the eyes of many pro-war Germans, these were the same civilian politicians who had turned against the war while the fighting was still going on. This enabled right-wing politicians to develop what came to be known as the "stab-in-the-back" myth. According to this notion, Germany did not lose the war on the battlefield; it was betrayed by civilians at home, especially socialist politicians, Bolsheviks, and Jews. Ludendorff himself played a key role in fostering this "stab-in-the-back" myth. It was a myth that, in time, would contribute significantly to the rise of Hitler and his Nazi movement.

Source Information: This is a secondary source document. It briefly discusses the mood in Germany as World War I was coming to an end. As a secondary source, this document is not evidence from Germany at the end of the war. It is a later account by someone writing about that time. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity.

Assessment Questions

1. What was the stab-in-the-back theory, and how do both documents together show that Ludendorff helped to foster this theory among Germans in the post-war era?

2. How do both documents provide evidence that the stab-in-the-back theory was wrong?

Assessment 9 *Advanced Level***A “Stab in the Back”?**★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 9. (9–10)** Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
- 9. (11–12)** Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 9 is designed to measure students’ ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 9 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to understand the relationship between primary and secondary sources. This means students must know the difference between the two kinds of sources—that primary sources provide the evidence for secondary source claims and interpretations. This should lead them to adopt a critical approach to secondary sources themselves. That is, such secondary accounts should not be regarded as final and complete. They are interpretations of the past, not the past itself. Students should learn to weigh secondary source accounts against the relevant primary source evidence.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Answers to the first assessment question should see that the phrase “stab-in-the-back” is used for the theory that Germany’s civilian politicians and others back home somehow betrayed or undermined the military effort and caused Germany to lose the war. However, Ludendorff himself (in Document 1) also acknowledges military factors that led him to conclude “the war could no longer be won”: Germany’s allies, Austria and Turkey, were in defeat; the American forces were adding new pressures; Germany’s soldiers were being pushed back toward Germany; and many of those soldiers, not just civilians, were close to rebelling. Document 2 confirms this view, pointing out that while German forces were still outside of Germany’s own borders, “the generals knew that continued fighting would be hopeless.” However, it also makes clear that the stab-in-the-back theory was useful to the generals in shifting blame for the loss to civilian politicians and others they disliked. Answers to the second assessment question may vary. The question of motives and intentions is often a very difficult one for historians. It is hard to interpret Ludendorff’s real feelings from this one document. Some may see him as cynical in blaming civilian politicians for his and his army’s failures. Others may see him as all too ready to believe he had been undermined as a way to reassure himself and protect his honor. There is much to debate here.

A “Stab in the Back”?

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and one secondary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in them. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 9: (9–10) Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources. **(11–12)** Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Document 1: A Primary Source

Terrible and appalling! It is so! Indeed! As we were gathered together, Ludendorff stood up in our presence, his face was pale and filled with deep worry, but his head was still held high. A truly handsome Germanic hero figure. . . .

He said roughly the following: It was his duty to tell us that our military condition was terribly serious. Any day now, our Western Front could be breached. He had to report this to His Majesty the Kaiser . . . that the Supreme Army Command and the German Army were at an end; the war could no longer be won, but rather an unavoidable and conclusive defeat awaited. Bulgaria had already been lost. Austria and Turkey, both at the end of their powers, would also soon fall. Our own Army had unfortunately also been heavily contaminated with the poison of Spartacus-socialist ideas, and the troops were, he said, no longer reliable. Since the 8th of August the situation had rapidly gotten worse. As a result, some troops had proven themselves so unreliable that they had had to be quickly pulled from the front. If they were replaced with other troops willing to fight, those troops would be received with the label “Strike breakers” and challenged not to fight anymore. He said he could not operate with divisions that were no longer reliable.

It was thus foreseeable, he went on to say, that the enemy in the near future, with the help of American troops anxious to fight, would succeed in a great victory, a breakthrough in grand fashion. As a result, the West Army would lose its last hold and retreat in full disbandment across the Rhine and carry the revolution back to Germany. This catastrophe, he said, must be avoided by all means. For the cited reasons we could no longer allow ourselves to be beaten. Therefore, the Supreme Army Command demanded of His Majesty the Kaiser and of the Chancellor that a proposal for the bringing about of peace be made to President Wilson of America without delay, for bringing about an armistice on the basis of his 14 Points. . . .

Excellency Ludendorff added: “At present, then, we have no Chancellor. Who will fill this position is yet to be determined. I have, however, asked His Majesty the Kaiser to bring those circles [the Social Democrats] into the government whom we can mainly thank that we have come to this. We will now see these gentlemen brought into the Ministries. They should make the peace that must now be made. They made their bed, now they must lie in it!”

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Document 2: A Secondary Source

In 1918, a final German offensive in Western Europe failed. Germany began a retreat that the generals knew could not be reversed. Opposing armies never actually pushed German forces all the way back into Germany. However, the generals knew that continued fighting would be hopeless. Meanwhile, Social Democrats and other civilian politicians in Germany's parliament were already becoming increasingly critical as public opinion turned against the war. Civilian unrest was spreading to the armed forces themselves with some soldiers and sailors refusing any longer to take up arms.

During the war Germany had been effectively ruled by the Supreme Army Command. By 1918, this was basically Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg and General Erich Ludendorff. However, as the war's end approached, these generals moved to bring civilian politicians into the government and have them take responsibility for ending the war officially. On November 11, 1918, the civilian leaders of the newly formed Weimar Republic signed the armistice. In the eyes of many pro-war Germans, these were the same civilian politicians who had turned against the war while the fighting was still going on. This enabled right-wing politicians to develop what came to be known as the "stab-in-the-back" myth. According to this notion, Germany did not lose the war on the battlefield; it was betrayed by civilians at home, especially socialist politicians, Bolsheviks and Jews. Ludendorff himself played a key role in fostering this "stab-in-the-back" myth. It was a myth that, in time, would contribute significantly to the rise of Hitler and his Nazi movement.

Source Information: This is a secondary source document. It briefly discusses the mood in Germany as World War I was coming to an end. As a secondary source, this document is not evidence from Germany at the end of the war. It is a later account by someone writing about that time. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity.

Assessment Questions

1. Using both documents, explain why the stab-in-the-back theory was wrong as well as self-serving for the German militarists who helped foster it.
2. Do you think Ludendorff really believed the stab-in-the-back theory, or did he know he was making an excuse when he first began promoting it? Cite details from Document 1 to support your answer.

Writing Assessment 1

World War I

★ The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Writing

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

This standard is the basis for the corresponding No. 1 Common Core Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their world history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Writing Assessment 1 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Writing 1. The Anchor Standards are the basis on which the various Common Core History/Social Studies Standards are based. This assessment asks students to write an essay that makes meaningful claims and that develops those claims using relevant evidence and sound reasoning. The essay should make clear the strengths and limitations of the claims it makes while also considering possible challenges or counterclaims.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to Writing Assessment 1

Essays for this assignment should be scored according to these criteria.

- How well does the essay state a claim addressing all elements of the prompt?
- Does the essay use evidence from all or most of the documents assigned for this task?
- Is the evidence explained effectively using careful reasoning and a logical flow of one idea to the next?
- Does the essay defend the claim in relation to any relevant alternative claims?
- Are ideas presented using precise language, effective transitions, and domain-specific vocabulary?
- Does the essay include an effective conclusion supporting its claims?
- How well does the essay follow rules of usage, spelling, and punctuation?

Writing Assessment 1

The Standard: Write a brief essay that presents a well-reasoned argument focused on historical content.

The Question

Using your background history knowledge and the primary source documents listed here, explain why you do or do not agree with the following statement:

“It would have been best for the world had the British and Americans just stayed out of this senseless war among continental European powers.”

Documents: Base your essay on your general background knowledge and all of the primary and secondary source documents in *World War I* assessments.

Instructions

- Write a brief, well-organized essay that includes an introduction, one to three internal paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- Introduce a specific claim that you can defend in response to the question.
- Support your claim with an argument based on evidence from the documents and sound reasoning about that evidence.
- Consider other possible claims that may differ from your own.
- Include related outside information based on your background knowledge of history.
- Use transitions and a logical arrangement of ideas to connect all parts of your essay to the claim you are making.
- Write a conclusion that follows from the argument your essay has made.

Writing Assessment 2

World War I

★ The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Writing

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

This standard is the basis for the corresponding No. 2 Common Core Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their world history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Writing Assessment 2 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Writing 2. The Anchor Standards are the basis on which the various Common Core History/Social Studies Standards are based. This assessment asks students to write an essay that uses sources effectively to provide strong support and evidence clarifying and explaining a central idea or set of ideas and concepts.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to Writing Assessment 2

Essays for this assignment should be scored according to these criteria.

- How well does the introduction address the prompt with a clear, well-defined central idea and a preview of supporting ideas?
- Does the essay use evidence from many of the documents assigned for this task?
- Is the evidence used effectively to support the essay's key ideas and concepts?
- Does the essay engage in careful reasoning and a logical flow of one idea to the next?
- Are ideas presented using precise language, effective transitions, and domain-specific vocabulary?
- Does the essay include an effective conclusion supporting its key ideas?
- How well does the essay follow rules of usage, spelling, and punctuation?

Writing Assessment 2

The Standard: Write an informative/explanatory essay clearly describing and explaining historical events and trends.

The Question

Why did Europe go to war in 1914? Historians have long debated this question. Among the causes often given were growing nationalism, European imperial competition, militarism, territorial conflict and a rigid system of alliances. By themselves, the documents for this set of *World War I* assessments cannot fully explain the causes of the war. However, they do offer some evidence and some clues about this. Using these documents, write an essay explaining why you believe the war began and why it became so enormously destructive. Support your essay's explanation by making detailed references to at least five of the documents.

Documents: Base your essay on your general background knowledge and on your selection of sources from all the primary source documents in the *World War I* assessments.

Instructions

- Write a brief, well-organized essay that includes an introduction, one to three internal paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- Introduce the topic with a clear, well-defined central idea, and preview in a general way other key ideas your essay will develop.
- Support each of your key ideas with evidence from many of the documents and with sound reasoning about that evidence.
- Include related outside information based on your background knowledge of history.
- Use transitions and a logical arrangement of ideas to connect the major parts of your essay.
- Write a conclusion that follows from and summarizes the main points your essay has made.

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