

Selections from “A White Man's War? World War One and the West Indies”

World War One - Document Analysis Activity

Purpose: Students will practice oral summarization and analysis of texts to discover the colonial role in World War I.

TEKs Correlation

- (1) History. The student understands traditional historical points of reference in world history. The student is expected to:
 - (F) identify major causes and describe the major effects of the following important turning points in world history from 1914 to the present: the world wars and their impact on political, economic, and social systems; independence movements;
- (10) History. The student understands the causes and impact of World War I. The student is expected to:
 - (A) identify the importance of imperialism, nationalism, militarism, and the alliance system in causing World War I;
 - (B) identify major characteristics of World War I, including total war, trench warfare, modern military technology, and high casualty rates;
- (13) History. The student understands the impact of major events associated with the Cold War and independence movements. The student is expected to:
 - (E) summarize the rise of independence movements in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia and reasons for ongoing conflicts; and
- (29) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:
 - (F) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, drawing inferences and conclusions, and developing connections between historical events over time;
- (30) Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to:
 - (B) use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation;
 - (C) interpret and create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information; and

Materials Included:

- 2A –“A” selections from “A White Man’s War?”
- 2B –“B” selections from “A White Man’s War?”
- 2C–B activity sheet
- 2D – A activity sheet

Instructions

1. Hand out the A selection (**document 2A.1**) to half the students and the B selection (**document 2B.1**) to the other half of the students. Try to have an even number of “A” & “B” articles.
2. Give students 10 – 15 minutes to read their selection & summarize it.
3. After students have finished summarizing their article, put the students in pairs (one A& one B article per pair).
 - a. The student who has the “A” article will receive the A activity sheet(**document 2D**). This sheet contains questions for the “B” article.
 - b. The student who has the “B” article will receive the B activity sheet(**document 2C**). This sheet

- contains questions for the “A” article.
4. Next, the students will create an oral summary of their part of the article.
 - a. The student who has the “A” article presents first. They have 3 minutes to summarize their article orally to the “B” person. Student B will write the summary down on their sheet. If, in those three minutes, student A does not answer the questions on the bottom of the sheet, student B must orally prompt student A to answer them.
 - b. When the three minutes is up, the roles switch: Student B will now orally summarize the article, and student A will write that summary down. If, in those three minutes, student A does not answer the questions on the bottom of the sheet, student B must orally prompt student A to answer them.
 5. After the time is up, give the students 5 minutes to fill in the chart at the bottom together.
 6. Have students then come to the board & write their answers to the chart.

Student who receives the A article....

A Selections from “A White Man’s War? World War One and t
By Glenford D. Howe
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/west_indies_0

Instructions: Read each section. After each section you will summarize the sect
THIS MUST BE IN YOUR OWN WORDS!

The colonies join the war effort
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 cultural practices, and the proliferation of British institutions, culture and language,
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 Gifts in the value of several thousand pounds were contributed by the coloni

receives the A activity sheet

Summary: **A**

A

Selections from “A White Man's War? World War One and the West Indies”

By Glenford D Howe

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/west_indies_01.shtml

Instructions: Read each section. After each section you will summarize the section in three sentences. THIS MUST BE IN YOUR OWN WORDS!

The colonies join the war effort

By the outbreak of war in 1914, centuries of alienation and the suppression of the remnants of African cultural practices, and the proliferation of British institutions, culture and language, had created staunchly loyal Black Britishers in Barbados and other colonies. The expression of support for Britain from the West Indian population was therefore, not surprisingly, quite overwhelming.

Gifts to the value of several thousand pounds were contributed by the colonies to the war effort; these included sugar, rum, oil, lime, cotton, rice, clothing, logwood, and nine aeroplanes. A total of 11 ambulances and adequate funds for their maintenance were donated, and approximately two million pounds sterling was given to the British government and charities. These donations were made in spite of severe hardships caused by major increases in the cost of living throughout the region which occurred with the proclamation of war.... In several colonies including Trinidad, Grenada, Jamaica and British Honduras, a number of blacks adopted the position that it was a white man's war and therefore black people should not get involved.

Black and coloured reformers who were attacking Crown Colony government in the West Indies regarded the war as an important blessing for the movement for representative government, which was gaining great momentum in the region by 1914. Like their compatriots in South Africa, West Indian middle - class blacks were aware of the relevance of the war in their struggle for political and constitutional change. Couched beneath their protestations of patriotism was a clear linkage between their support for the war effort and the grant of the reforms they desired.....

This section is about _____

Recruitment and return

In the West Indies - as throughout most of the empire, with the exception of some areas of West Africa where coercion was used - the local officials and other recruiting bodies tended to employ moral persuasion in order to attract volunteers as well as the typical 'carrot and stick' measures - medals, glory, discipline, exercise and free land at the cessation of hostilities. The economic advantages of enlisting also constituted a central theme used by recruiters in virtually every territory. In the prevailing conditions of high unemployment, spiraling cost of living, and depressed wages, the groups most susceptible to the economic incentives included plantation workers, artisans and the many unemployed of the working class in the towns.

By the middle of 1916, men rejected in England as unfit or as invalid had begun to return to the West Indies. The exaggerated promises which recruiters pedaled would have become apparent to these men and the public because, without exception, the local governments had made little preparation for the invalids. Moreover, those men discharged as unfit or undesirable were not entitled to any benefits or pensions, while those who were entitled to benefits experienced excessively long delays before they received assistance. In Jamaica the

men were usually given a few shillings, a cheap suit of clothes and free railway transport to their home, but because of transportation problems some had to remain in Kingston for several days. This exhausted their money even before they actually left for home. The situation created major dissatisfaction because many had no other form of support. Having relinquished their jobs to fight for King and Country these men were left to experience destitution and poverty.

This section is about _____

The Halifax Incident

The spectacle of returning invalids had a sobering effect on potential recruits. In Jamaica, however, it was the catastrophic journey of their third contingent that dramatically brought home the possible dangers which awaited potential recruits. On 6 March 1916 the third Jamaica contingent, comprising 25 officers and 1,115 other ranks, departed for England on board the ship *Verdala*. Due to enemy submarine activity in the region, the Admiralty ordered the ship to make a diversion to Halifax - but before it could reach its destination it encountered a blizzard. Since the *Verdala* was not adequately heated and the black soldiers had not been properly equipped with warm clothing, substantial casualties resulted: approximately 600 men suffered from exposure and frostbite and there were five immediate deaths.....

This section is about: _____

B Selections from “A White Man's War? World War One and the West Indies”

By Glenford D Howe

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/west_indies_01.shtml

Instructions: Read each section. After each section you will summarize the section in three sentences. THIS MUST BE IN YOUR OWN WORDS!

Discrimination at war

Even though there was a high degree of standardisation and regularisation in the disciplinary code structure of the army, inequalities in attitudes towards and treatment of the different races, classes and ethnic groups did exist. Major problems of discrimination were to be found in the practical application of army regulations in an environment in which stereotypes of race and class were prevalent. Even though the army structure and system of accountability did in many instances eventually vindicate the rights of all soldiers, adjustment into army life was usually more difficult and precarious for the black soldier than for his white counterpart because of racism. One veteran, Sir Etienne Dupuch, wrote of the 'consciousness of discrimination' against 'native troops' which blacks felt in the army.

One response adopted by the black soldiers was to write to local newspapers urging for 'something hot' to be written against race prejudice. Their intention was to mobilise West Indian public opinion in the hope of getting proper representation and possibly relief from the daily harassment. In fact, soldiers sometimes accused the papers and the local public of getting them into these difficulties by having urged them to enlist....

Relations in Egypt within the BWIR battalions which were most representative of the West Indian colonies were normally friendly, but this was not automatic or immediate. Amicable relations developed over time through interaction and communication, induced by their common experiences.

This section is about _____

Mutiny at Taranto

After Armistice Day, on 11 November 1918, the eight BWIR battalions in France and Italy were concentrated at Taranto in Italy to prepare for demobilisation. They were subsequently joined by the three battalions from Egypt and the men from Mesopotamia. As a result of severe labour shortages at Taranto, the West Indians had to assist with loading and unloading ships and do labour fatigues. This led to much resentment, and on 6 December 1918 the men of the 9th Battalion revolted and attacked their officers. On the same day, 180 sergeants forwarded a petition to the Secretary of State complaining about the pay issue, the failure to increase their separation allowance, and the fact that they had been discriminated against in the area of promotions..... Approximately 60 soldiers were later tried for mutiny and those convicted received sentences ranging from three to five years, but one man got 20 years, while another was executed by firing squad.

Although the mutiny was crushed, the bitterness persisted, and on 17 December about 60 NCOs held a meeting to discuss the question of black rights, self-determination and closer union in the West Indies. An organisation called the Caribbean League was formed at the gathering to further these objectives. At another meeting on 20 December...a sergeant of the 3rd BWIR argued that the black man should have freedom and govern himself in the West Indies and that if necessary, force and bloodshed should be used to attain these aims.

His sentiments were loudly applauded by the majority of those present..... The soldiers decided to hold a general strike for higher wages on their return to the West Indies.....

This section is about: _____

Home Front

Even more alarming to the authorities, especially those in the West Indies, was the fact that between 1916 and 1919 a number of colonies including St Lucia, Grenada, Barbados, Antigua, Trinidad, Jamaica and British Guiana experienced a series of strikes in which people were shot and killed....When the disgruntled BWIR soldiers began arriving back in the West Indies they quickly joined a wave of worker protests resulting from a severe economic crisis produced by the war, and the influence of black nationalist ideology espoused by black nationalist leader Marcus Garvey and others. Disenchanted soldiers and angry workers unleashed a series of protest actions and riots in a number of territories including Jamaica, Grenada and especially in British Honduras.

West Indian participation in the war was a significant event in the still ongoing process of identity formation in the post - emancipation era of West Indian history. The war stimulated profound socio-economic, political and psychological change and greatly facilitated protest against the oppressive conditions in the colonies, and against colonial rule by giving a fillip to the adoption of the nationalist ideologies of Marcus Garvey and others, throughout the region. The war also laid the foundation for the nationalist upheavals of the 1930s in which World War One veterans were to play a significant role.

This section is about: _____

Summary:

B

Student MUST answer these questions in the summary. If they do not, ask them the following:

1. What did the colonies contribute to the war effort?
2. How were the men treated if they were discharged as unfit or undesirable?
3. Why were people so upset about the Halifax Incident?

What did the colonies contribute to World War I?	What did the colonies expect to get from World War I?	What did the colonies actually get from World War I?

Summary:

A

Student **MUST** answer these questions in the summary. If they do not, ask them the following:

- 1. What were the black soldiers’ responses to being discriminated during the war?
- 2. Why did the soldiers commit mutiny at Taranto?
- 3. When the soldiers went home and protested their treatment, what were the results?

What did the colonies contribute to World War I?	What did the colonies expect to get from World War I?	What did the colonies actually get from World War I?