

WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Getting the Message: How Governments Use Public Information Posters to Inform and Inspire



Historic Posters



In this lesson, you will be learning about the important work artists played in educating the public about important historic events and public safety.

Today you will:

- Follow the directions on each slide to complete this assignment
- Analyze different posters and explain what you think each one means
- Design your own informational or persuasive poster

Read First:

The use of art and artists to both build positive attitudes and emphasize a particular point of view has been common throughout the history of the United States.

Whether directly recruiting for the war effort (such as the famous I Want You for the U.S. Army Uncle Sam poster) or to encourage new behavior, the work of artists has been important in how society responds to times of great social change and uncertainty.



Posters are an amazing source of historical information. The unique combination of words, color, and art grab people's attention with the goal of portraying a message.

Posters are used to persuade, give information, or both.

For most of American history, posters were produced quickly, printed on low-quality paper, for as cheap as possible.

They were meant to be posted, serve their purpose, and then thrown away.

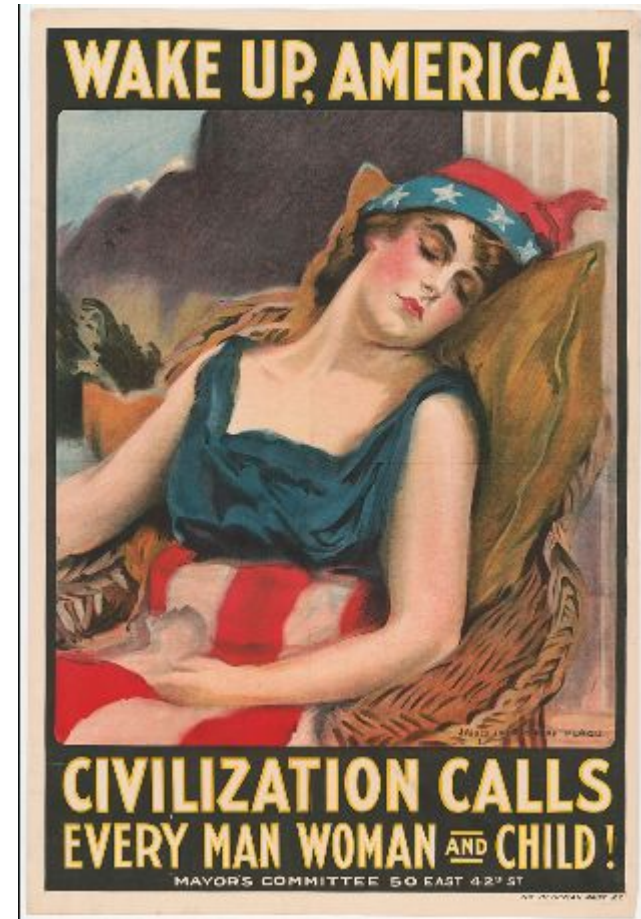


Task #1: Analyzing Historical Posters

Directions:

The next few slides contain several different historical posters.

- Study the slide and read the description providing more information about the slide.
- After studying the poster and information, go to the next slide to answer the questions.



Poster #1: *YOU CAN HELP*

DESCRIPTION

World War I poster featuring a young woman sitting in a chair knitting. The symbol of the Red Cross is in the upper left corner. The poster reads: "You can help, American Red Cross."



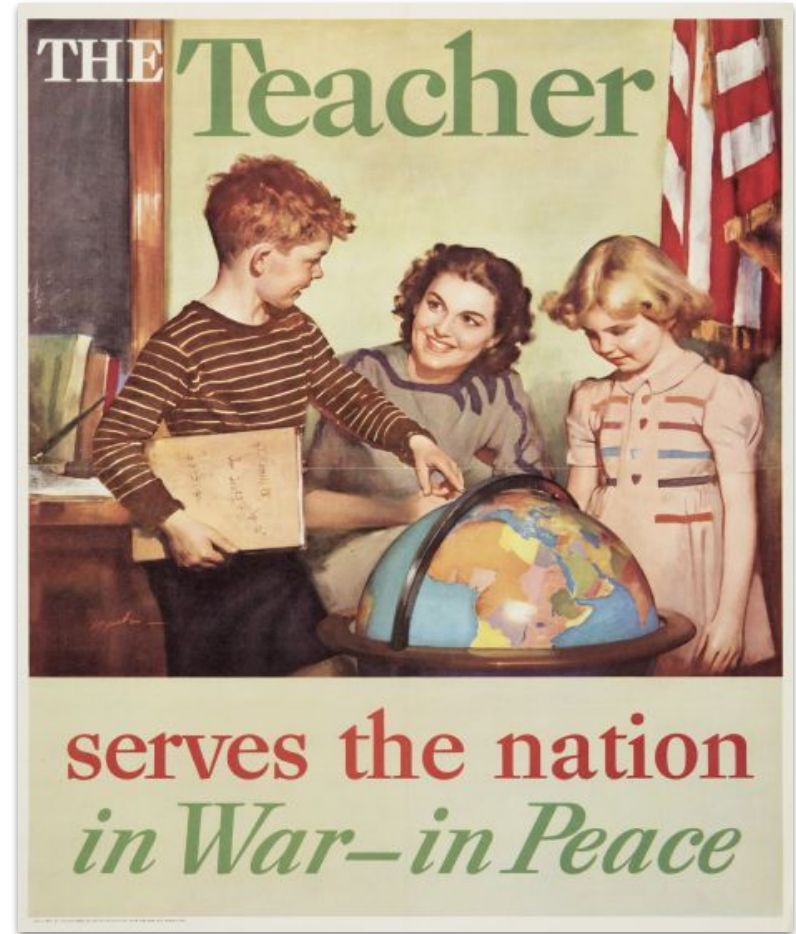
Answer the Following Questions about *You Can Help*

Questions	Type answers below-
What is the message this poster is trying to convey?	
What problems is this poster hoping to solve?	
What “call to action” is this poster hoping to create? (What does this poster want people to do?)	

Poster #2: *This Teacher Serves*

DESCRIPTION

World War II poster published by the National Education Association, showing a teacher working at a globe with a girl and a boy. The boy is holding a book with a brown paper book cover.



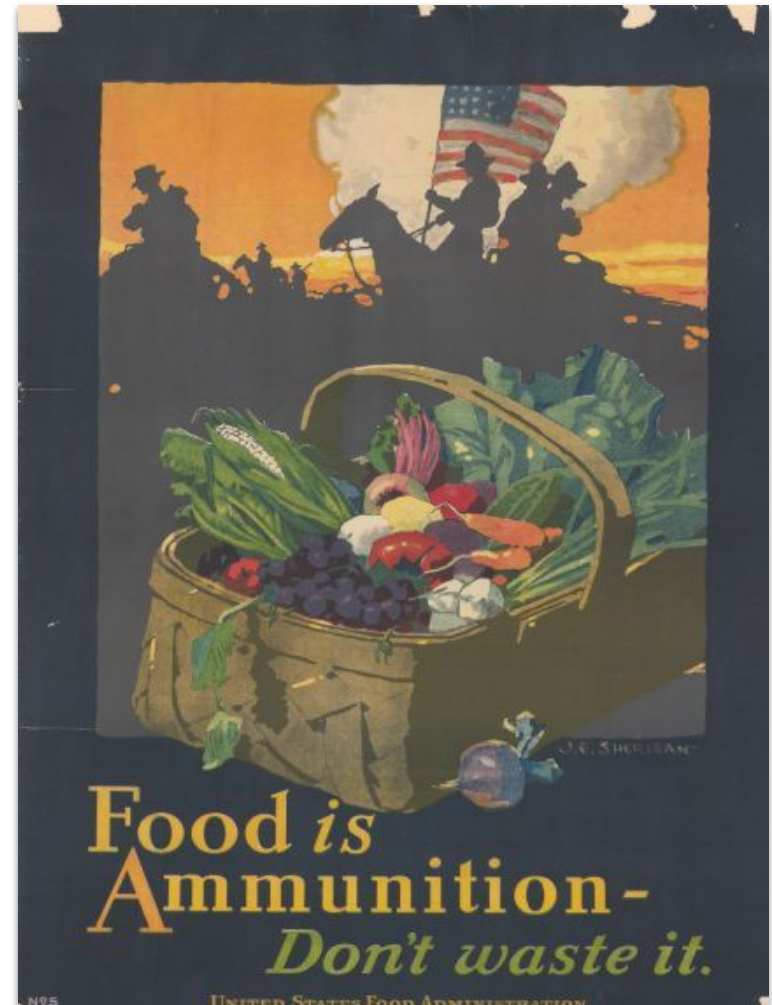
Answer the Following Questions about *This Teacher Serves*

Questions	Type answers below-
What is the message this poster is trying to convey?	
What problems is this poster hoping to solve?	
What “call to action” is this poster hoping to create? (What does this poster want people to do?)	

Poster #3: *Food is Ammunition* (1918)

DESCRIPTION

Poster with an illustration of soldiers silhouetted against a colorful sky riding on horseback and carrying an American flag. In the foreground is a basket full of produce.



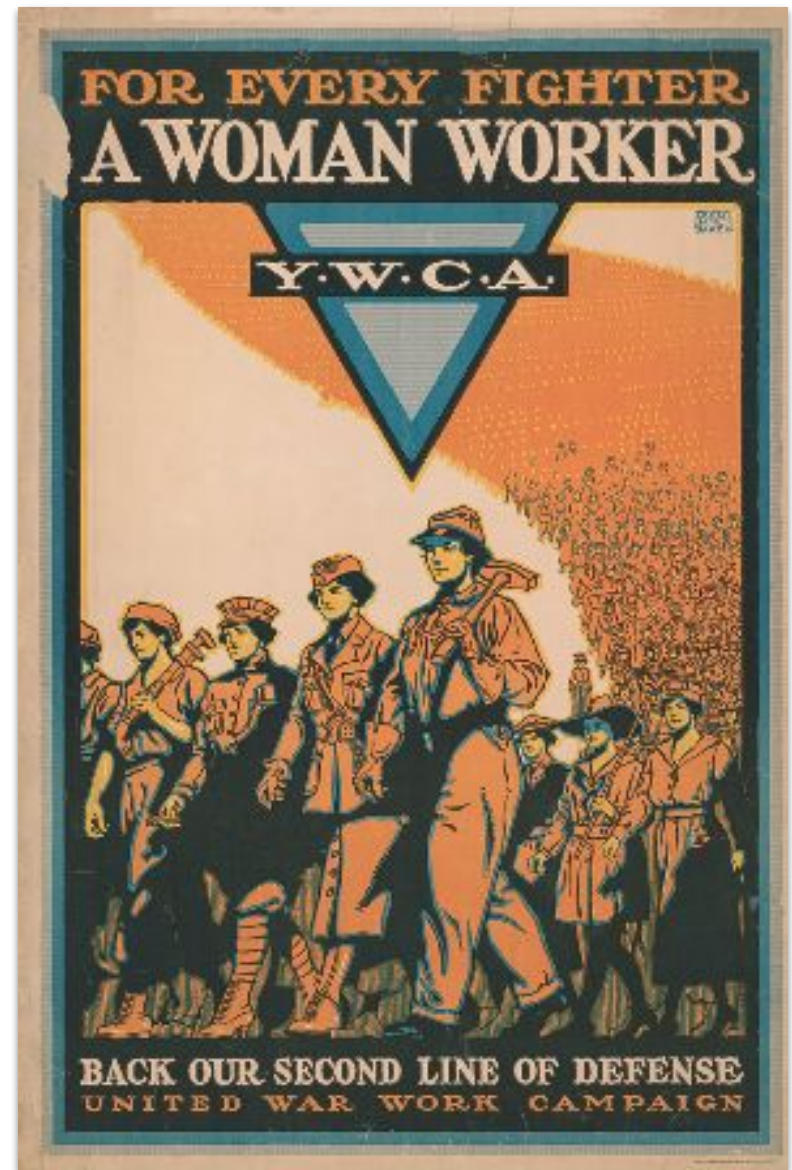
Answer the Following Questions about *Food is Ammunition*

Questions	Type answers below-
What is the message this poster is trying to convey?	
What problems is this poster hoping to solve?	
What “call to action” is this poster hoping to create? (What does this poster want people to do?)	

Poster #4: For Every Fighter A Woman Worker

DESCRIPTION

Poster showing a parade of women workers wearing uniforms appropriate for specific jobs.



Answer the Following Questions about *For Every Fighter*

Questions	Type answers below-
What is the message this poster is trying to convey?	
What problems is this poster hoping to solve?	
What “call to action” is this poster hoping to create? (What does this poster want people to do?)	

Task #2 Create Your Own Poster!

Create your own public information poster. You can design your poster by hand or on the computer:

- Pick a theme of health and public safety that speaks to today's issues
- Informational posters are persuasive and draw viewers attention
- What is your call to action? (What do you want people to do?)
- What information do people need to know?
- Use LARGE LETTERS and BOLD COLORS
- Take a photo of your finished work and share it with your class
- With a parent or guardian's permission, share it on Facebook or Instagram with the *hashtag* #BIGHistoryIsHappening

See the next slide for possible themes

Possible Themes (Or Create a New One!)

- Conserving Resources
- Education at Home
- Helping Family and Friends
- Shelter in Place
- Social Distancing
- Support Local Businesses
- Support Food Drives
- Support Medical and Essential Employees
- Wash Your Hands
- We Will Get Through This Together

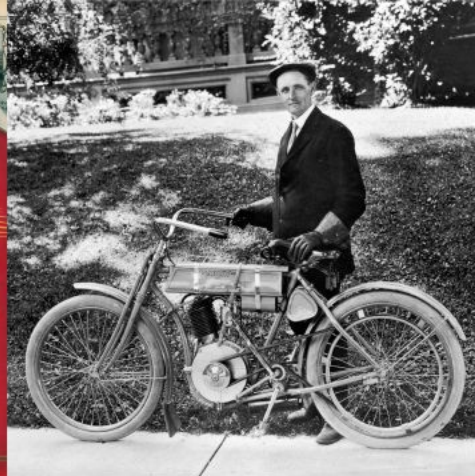
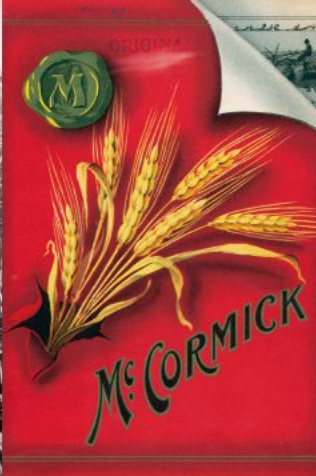


Images courtesy the Library of Congress (www.loc.gov) and the Wisconsin Historical Society (www.wisconsinhistory.org)

Based on work submitted by Kate Van Haren

Questions? Contact education@wisconsinhistory.org





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THANK YOU

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