All Together in World War I

Grade 6 and up
Curriculum Connections: World War I, Propaganda, Visual Literacy

This lesson can introduce or expand upon instruction related to World War I as well as help students develop visual literacy within a history curriculum. It is also an introduction to or exploration of propaganda.

Process

You and your students will examine a piece of sheet music created during World War I, both the cover image and the lyrics. You will encourage students to get as much information as they can from the cover image and then generate questions based on their examination. After you have looked at the cover, you will examine the inside of the sheet music and analyze the lyrics to the song.

Use the background material at the end of this lesson whenever you think it will encourage students to ask more questions and think more about how to engage with the letter.

Sheet Music Cover

Give students time to generate and answer questions about the object and write notes. Use the background material below whenever you think it will encourage students to ask more questions and engage with the image more.

Click on the image caption for high-resolution versions of the cover and pages can be displayed for your class.

Potential Questions

- What is this object?
- What was its purpose?
- Who is pictured?
- Why was this assortment of people pictured?
- What other interesting details are in the image?
- What background knowledge do you bring to your understanding of this image?
- What kind of information does this source give you about World War I? About public attitudes during World War I?
- What questions do you have about this image, or as a result of examining it? Where might you be able to get more information or answers to your questions?

E. Paul Hamilton and M. L. Lake, “All Together We’re Out to Beat the Hun” (1918)
Inside the Sheet Music: Lyrics

Verse 1
One night in sleep the Kaiser thought
The whole world he could rule
And when he woke he started in
To plan, the poor old fool.
His spies he sent
On mischief bent in all lands to prepare
The fateful day without delay
When he could spring his snare
He found a chance to hit at France thru
Russian faith to Serb
His robber bands in Belgian lands
The world’s peace did disturb
The Belgian braves
The British Tars
The mighty French Creusot soon proved
to Bill a bitter pill he could not beat the lot

Chorus
All together! Ev'ry mother's son
All together! We're out to beat the Hun
All together! We'll stick to see it thru
We won't give in until we win and "Win we must" say you

Verse 2
On women then and children too,
The Hun waged war on seas
Then did we try to reason why
Such horrors sure must cease
But German ways In our days are
treachrous and unfair
They keep no word that German horde
So Uncle Same told them straight "We'll join the others too"
And now we're bound to win
We'll see the darn' thing thru
The Belgian Braves
The British Tars
The heroes of great France Brave Italy
They soon will see America advance

Potential Questions
- Do the lyrics answer any questions you had about the cover image?
- Do the lyrics raise new questions?
- When was the song published?
- Do the lyrics sound historically accurate?
- What feelings and attitudes do the lyrics play on? How?
- Would you say that these lyrics are propaganda? Why or why not?
- What are some other examples of propaganda on the sheet music?

Background
This is sheet music, including a cover image, for a song written in 1918 by E. Paul Hamilton and M. L. Lake. The term Hun is a derogatory term for a German person, especially a German soldier. The Americans and British used the term during World War I. It came from a statement made during the Boxer Rebellion by Kaiser Wilhelm II when he described German soldiers as striking fear into the Chinese like “Huns"
(Mongol warriors.) The term Hun in this context has a connotation of brutality, cruelty, and barbarity.

World War I began with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria. This began a chain reaction among European powers, who had mutual defense treaties. In the end, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire (which included present-day Turkey and parts of southeastern Europe and the Middle East) were on one side. Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy and, later in the war, Romania, Japan, and the United States were on the other. Countries on both sides had colonies in Africa and other parts of the world. Citizens of those countries also fought in the war, sometimes voluntarily, but often because they were forced to do so. Most people in Allied countries blamed the war on the uncompromising positions taken by Germany’s leader, Kaiser Wilhelm II.

**Words to Know**

**propaganda** | information, often biased or even false, used to influence public opinion

**Additional Resources**

- [U.S. Propaganda and the Arts of World War I](#), online exhibit, 2017, Miami University
- Newberry Collection Essays [Raising Support for World War I](#) and [World War I in U.S. Popular Culture](#).