

# WOMEN USING THEIR GUNS: Women During WWI

by Tina Gersdorf - Whobrey

Summer Fellowship 2007

## LESSON FOUR – Registration

### Abstract

The government took many measures to encourage women to join the war efforts. They encouraged all women register, as a type of war-time census, which helped participation of volunteers/workers. They hung flyers (as demonstrated in lesson two), passed out pamphlets, appealed to women's emotions, and created registration cards. The students will analyze part of a pamphlet with emotional statements and specific reasons why women should register. They will re-write one reason pointed out in the pamphlet. They will also register themselves (as females) for the war efforts, by inventing a profile using an actual registration card from 1918.

### Essential Questions

- What is the most effective and efficient way people provide others with important information?
- How are people motivated to take action? What tactics do people use to motivate others to take action?
- Why were women needed to register for the war efforts at home?

### Duration

1-2 class periods

### Assessments

- [Written Document Analysis worksheet](#)
- Re-written "[Because...](#)" slip on 3x5 index card
- Completed [Registration Card](#) with invented character
- Portfolio

### Materials

- [Registration Document A](#)
- [Registration Document B](#)
- [Written Document Analysis worksheet](#)
- "[Because...](#)" slip
- [Registration Card](#)
- Construction paper
- Stapler or tape

### Setting the Purpose

Ask students:

- "What do you think the government did to build a high level of motivation within women to join the war effort at home?"

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- Discuss that it was very important that people act quick and they needed to powerfully get the word out. You may prompt the students by asking what we do today to spread the word about an organization or a new company.

### Procedure

#### PART I

1. On the overhead or projector, show the students *Registration Document A* and explain that one very popular way the US spread information was through small pamphlets like this one. This is the front and back of a pamphlet.
2. Show *Registration Document B*
  - a. Explain that on the left, they are demonstrating the 'official' nature of the Women's Committee.
  - b. \*Note the last sentence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph under 'A New Governmental Body': "The Woman's Committee, therefore, is not a new organization of women, but a part of a governmental body doing a bit of government business".
  - c. Also explain that they are focusing on the status of women who are "helping out"
  - d. \*Note the last sentence of the first paragraph under "The Women's War Census": "...and place a war value upon each individual woman".
  - e. Ask the students what they think the motivations were behind these statements. Discuss the way certain phrases are worded and the emotions that are being affected by the statements.
  - f. Bring their attention to the "Because..." statements on the right and answer any immediate questions regarding what is going on with these statements.
3. Hand out the *Written Document Analysis worksheet* and have students use it to analyze *Registration Document B* (again, you may wish to provide hand-outs of the document for the analysis process). \*Students can complete the analysis in pairs or they may be ready to complete it individually at this point. Use your judgment based off the success of the last analysis activity.
4. When students have finished, discuss their observations. Focus on who they think wrote the document, why they think it was written, and for whom it was written.

#### PART II

5. Ask students: "What do you think the government did to build a high level of motivation within women to join the war effort at home?" Discuss that it was very important that people act quick and they needed to powerfully get the word out. You may prompt the students by asking what we do today to spread the word about an organization or a new company.

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6. Keep the document on the projector and split the class into 8 or more groups. Pass out a different "Because..." slip to each group. Also pass out a 3x5 index card and glue or tape to each group.

### ACTIVITY POSSIBILITIES

- If there are more than 8 groups, some of the slips will need to be duplicated and given to more than one group.
- Students can select their "Because..." slip from a bag or hat.
- You may want to pre-select groups and assign specific slips based on ability levels or groups.
- More than one copy of the slip within each group may encourage more complete group participation.

7. Each group needs to attach the "Because..." slip to the blank side of the index card. Then, they should re-write the reason, in their own words, on the lined side. Remind them to keep the same feeling in the re-written reason (for example, if the "Because..." slip seems to attempt to make a woman feel guilty, they need to keep that tone or feel of the reason when they re-write it). Give students approximately 5-10 minutes on this activity.
8. When students have finished, tell the class that they will need to listen closely to each explanation given by each group because they will be voting on which reason would affect them the most. Have each group read their "Because..." slip and then read their re-written reason.
9. Give the class a minute or two to look at the projected image of all the reasons. Have students determine which reason would have most affected their decision to register, if they were a woman reading this in 1918. Go through each one, having students raise their hands for the one they chose. ((EXTENSION: students could write down their vote as a way to commit to their opinion)).

### PART III

10. Pass out Registration Cards and explain that through trial and error, it was discovered that registration cards were very effective in influencing women to register and, as a result, serve on the home front.
11. Tell students they have been convinced to register for the war efforts. They should make up a **FEMALE** character and create the entire profile out of their imaginations. This may be difficult for the boys, so encourage them to think about women in their lives and possibly create a profile based on someone they know if they are having trouble. Remind them that everyone is creating a female character and praise them for being creative, brave or innovative.


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12. Filling out the cards can be done in a variety of ways, depending on the needs of your class:
  - a. Students can work individually to develop their character at their own pace.
  - b. Students can work in pairs.
  - c. You can go through each part step-by-step as the students fill out the cards as a way to keep them on task and tackle questions about categories as they come up.
13. The registration card will be the first document in their portfolio, which will contain diary entries and letters by the end of the unit project.

**CREATING A PORTFOLIO**

- Use one piece of construction paper. Holding it 'horizontal', fold the bottom edge almost 2/3 of the way up.
- Staple or tape each end.
- Fold the right side in 2/3 of the way in, and the left side 2/3 of the way in (a basic tri-fold).
- Some students may wish to staple the 'pocket' at each crease as well.
- They can name the portfolio whatever they feel appropriate



### Annotated list of materials and resources

- *Registration Documents A & B* and *Because... Slips*  
"Why Should I Register?". Small pamphlet. Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense. {Illinois State Archives}
- National Archives website: "Teaching with Documents"  
<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/>
- *Registration Cards*  
Registration card. Front and back. {Illinois State Archives}