

**Lesson Title:** To War or Not To War!

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## **Teaching Traditional American History Program**

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Mike Lair, Project Director

<http://chillihistoryproject.com>

Lesson Overview: This lesson plan is designed to allow students to determine what propaganda techniques were used to change the minds of the American public about U.S. involvement in WW II.

Essential Question(s): Why did public opinion about U.S. involvement in WW II change?

Objectives: After completing this lesson the student will be able to:

- Interpret political cartoons with conflicting viewpoints on the evolution of U.S. domestic and foreign policies, including:
  - Isolationism
  - WW II

MO Grade Level Expectations 9-12, (2a, D. 4.)

Assessment:

- Cartoon Analysis Worksheet (NARA)  
<http://archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/index.html> on this page click on Cartoon

Materials:

- Copy of the two cartoons to be compared for each student
- <http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dspolitic/pm/10515cs.jpg>
- <http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dspolitic/pm/1942/20202cs.jpg>
- Cartoon Analysis Worksheet  
<http://archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/index.html> on this page click on Cartoon

Class Time: One class period

Teacher Input: After going over propaganda techniques (bandwagon, fear, glittering generalities, name-calling, plain folk, transfer, repetition) with your students and during your unit on WW II, this activity provides a hands-on opportunity for students to understand that people change their minds, even about as important a topic as war. Web addresses for the cartoon and analysis worksheet are given under teacher resources.

Activities:

- Students will examine the cartoons listing on front of note card what they think each cartoon is saying
- Students will divide up into groups of 3 or 4 to discuss their opinions about the cartoons (this provides some guidance for students who are unsure about what they are seeing), putting on the back of their note card a statement describing the cartoons agenda
- Students will individually complete their cartoon analysis worksheet

Questions for review:

At this time I hold a classroom discussion with students sharing their views on the cartoons and U.S. change in attitude about our involvement in WW II. Include the causes leading up to U.S. involvement (failure of WW I peace settlement, the rise of a. Nazism in Germany, b. Fascism in Italy, c. Militarist control of Japan, the fall of much of Europe, d. Pearl Harbor attack).

Closure: Go over with students why most Americans had changed their minds about isolationism. Point out how well the two cartoons portrayed the change in American attitudes (a picture is worth a thousand words).

References:

Cartoon #1 (U.S. Isolationism)

- <http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dspolitic/pm/10515cs.jpg>

Cartoon #2 (U.S. Entry into WW II)

- <http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dspolitic/pm/1942/20202cs.jpg>

Additional cartoons may be found at

- <http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dspolitic/>

Cartoon Analysis Worksheet

- <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/index.html>

Graphics:

The first two references are the two cartoons used.