

Valiant Hearts: The Great War

RATIONALE FOR THIS LESSON: Why are you teaching this lesson?

If you ever wanted to find an engaging way to teach about World War I, from a non American perspective, Valiant Hearts is it. It is a comic book brought to life that portrays the horrors of The Great War, while still remaining accessible to kids. You play as four strangers, accompanied by one dog, whose lives intertwine as they make their way through the trenches of war. The story may be fiction, but the locations and events are all based on fact. Unlike many games set in war, this is a game about war. Instead of combat, it is about exploration, adventure, and puzzles. As you play, you will come across artifacts, facts, and diary entries that all add to a greater portrait of the World War I. These were included with the help of Mission Centenaire, a commemorative organization of the war, and Apocalypse World War I, a documentary mini series about the war. So much love and history was poured into this game and it would be a shame if it never gets utilized in the classroom. It portrays personal stories which are often missing when we teach large scale events like the World Wars. This game supplemented with primary source documents will leave a lasting impression on students. Playing this game will probably take about 6 days in class. There are 4 chapters so you could feasibly only teach one chapter, but it is worth playing the whole thing.

The game also relies on its visuals to tell the story and there is very little actual dialogue. I teach in a school dedicated to English Language Learners and this made it easy for every student to access the story.

Note: This game has A LOT of puzzles. None of them are particularly difficult, but there are moments where you may run around wasting time trying to figure something out. If you see this happening, I recommend just looking at a guide in order to avoid wasting time. You can find a guide at [IGN here](#).

<p>CONTENT AIM (content)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What should be a soldiers primary duty be in times of war? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This question will be expanded upon at the end of the lesson. ○ Don't provide the full question up front because it contains spoilers from the game. ● The full question is: Each person in this story breaks off, or runs away from their "duty" at some point in the game due to personal interests/vendettas. What should be a soldiers primary duty be in times of war? Must a soldier always follow the orders of they are given, or were the characters in <i>Valiant Hearts</i> justified in their decisions to defect from their duties?
<p>WHAT QUESTIONS will SUPPORT THE AIM and DEEP, COMPLEX THINKING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is a video game? ● What can video games teach us?
<p>LESSON OBJECTIVES <i>What should students know or be able to do at the end of the lesson that they couldn't do before that will help them answer the aim.</i></p>	<p><i>Students will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examine four characters' stories and map their experiences. ● Consider challenges soldiers face during war. ● Play through Valiant Hearts: The Great War



*Note: Learning objectives should be about student performance.)	
LANGUAGE AIM (reading, writing, speaking and writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen to other students in a conversation. ● Speak to other students in a conversation. ● Listen to the dialogue in Valiant Hearts. ● Write short response about Valiant Hearts

STUDENT WORK as EVIDENCE OF LEARNING and TOOL for Future Learning and Project Completion	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will complete attached Graphic Organizer. 	

TEXTS TO BE USED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Valiant Hearts: The Great War <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Available on Android, iOS, Microsoft Windows, PlayStation 3, PlayStation 4, Xbox 360, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch
MATERIALS NEEDED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One of the above listed platforms and a way to project in front of the classroom. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You can have students play in pairs on computers if you have those resources available. I used a Nintendo Switch and played together as a class. ● Graphic Organizer. ● Accompanying presentation

LESSON PLAN	
DO NOW: (5 min) The HOOK!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In war, should your allegiance be to the country you live in, or the country you are from? ● Have a short 2-3 min conversation about the student responses.
MODEL/SET THE CONTEXT/ACTIVATE AND ASSESS PRIOR KNOWLEDGE (10-15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the accompanying presentation to transition to talking about video games. Talk about how war is a common theme, or genre, of video games. Most of these games try to replicate the look and feel of war. ● Valiant Hearts: The Great War tells the story of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Emile</u> - A French farmer who (After being drafted into the French army) becomes a POW (Prisoner of War). After being saved (By Freddie) begins to search for his Son-In-Law Karl. ○ <u>Freddie</u> - An American volunteer fighting in the war to avenge his fallen wife. ○ <u>Anna</u> - A Belgian nurse searching for her father kidnapped by Baron Von Dorf. ○ <u>Karl</u> - A German, married to Emile's Daughter Marie. ○ <u>Walt</u> - A Doberman pinscher, who interacts with each of the characters during their adventures.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Valiant Hearts is a comic book brought to life. The five characters are on a grand adventure of survival and exploration as they try to reunite with their loved ones. ● This story takes you back to famous WWI locations like Reims or Montfaucon, revisiting historical battles on the Western Front, such as the Battle of Marne, or the Battle of the Somme. ● This game is very puzzle heavy. Instead of focusing on combat, you will need to think your way out of many different and dangerous situations. ● As you play, you will come across artifacts and diary entries that give a greater insight to life during the war. ● Hand out accompanying packet.
<p>CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING #1 How will you assess or gauge if students are making progress towards the lesson objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check that everyone in class understands the basic concept of the game. Ask individually, or as a class, or in whichever way your class typically responds to you.
<p>PRACTICE TASK (This will greatly depend on how long it takes your students) (Independent, Pair and/or small group task) <i>What activities are planned that align to the lesson objectives?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time to play the game. This game normally takes about five hours so it will probably take a week to play through the entire story. The game is broken up into 4 episodes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Episode 1: Dark Clouds ○ Episode 2: Broken Earth ○ Episode 3: The Poppy Fields ○ Episode 4: Wooden Crosses ● I recommend playing this game together as a class and having students switch off playing in front of the room. You can have students play individually, or in pairs (If you have enough copies of the game) but the game has so many puzzles that it can be difficult to manage. Students will be asking for a lot of help with the puzzles. Especially if certain students don't have a lot of experience playing video games. There is a certain type of literacy necessary to succeed in this game. You can mitigate these issues by playing together and almost treating it like a movie you are watching in class. ● Have the students play through the game, guiding them through when necessary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You can find a guide at IGN here for when you get stumped on a puzzle. ● Have students answer the questions on the accompanying handout while they are playing. Students will be keeping track of the 5 characters in the story and all the main events that occur. ● After finishing Episode 2: Broken Earth, I recommend bringing to the attention of the class that all the adults in the game have their eyes covered in one way, or another. This was clearly a stylistic choice made by the creators of the game. Try to get them to make connections between this choice and the horrors of war. ● After finishing Episode 3: The Poppy Fields, bring to their attention that there is no real dialogue in the game other than a narrator. We never actually here the characters talk to each other. The students will need to



	<p>write about these choices later so it is good to get them thinking while playing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have fun
<p>CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING #2 <i>How will you assess or gauge if students are making progress towards the lesson objectives?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate as students watch and make sure that they understand what is going on in the game. • Ask the class if they have any clarifying questions every so often. • Help guide the students playing, if necessary.
<p>WRAP-UP AND FINAL ASSESSMENT #3 (5-10 min) <i>How are students returning to the lesson objective? How are students self-assessing or engaging in peer assessment of each other's progress towards outcome mastery?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer the Aim together as a class. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ What should be a soldier's primary duty be in times of war? Must a soldier always follow the orders of they are given, or were the characters in <i>Valiant Hearts</i> justified in their decisions to defect from their duties? • Have students complete this short response individually as the summative assessment for <i>Valiant Hearts: The Great War</i> <p>Short Response: Think about all of the stylistic decision that were made when making this game. Most war video games aim for realism, while this game is in the style of a comic book. Write 2-3 paragraphs about why you think the developers created the game in this way. Some things to think/write about can be . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is the game in the style of a comic? • Why are every adult's eyes covered? • Why the focus on puzzles instead of combat? • How come the characters never actually have dialogue?
<p>DIFFERENTIATION/MULTIPLE POINTS OF ENTRY <i>What are the learning styles of your students? How can you support and extend learning for students? (see resources below)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will work together as a class. • You can find a guide at IGN here for when you get stumped on a puzzle.
<p>HOMEWORK (if applicable)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Homework
<p>Common Core Standards</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2</p>



Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9](#)

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.



Name: _____



Aim: What should be a soldier's primary duty be in times of war?

Directions: Fill out the following graphic organizers as your class plays through *Valiant Hearts: The Great War*.

Episode 1: Dark Clouds

	What Challenges Do These Characters Face in this Episode?	Where are These Characters at the end of the Episode?
Emile	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••	
Freddie	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••	
Anna	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••	
Karl	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••	



Episode 2: Broken Earth

What do we learn about Trench Warfare in this episode? _____

How did Anna end up with Emile and Freddie? _____

Episode 3: The Poppy Fields

What did we learn about Freddie? Why did he, an American, join the French forces to fight the Germans?

How did the Mark I Tank change the course of trench warfare?



Episode 4: Wooden Crosses



1) At the end of the game Karl needs to break into his chlorine gas covered home. What was chlorine gas? Why was this such a devastating weapon?

2) What did Emile do at the end of the game? Do you think his actions here was justified? Why?



3) What was Walt's role in the game? Do you think it was/is acceptable to use animals during times of war? Why?





	Where are These Characters at the end of the game?
Emile	
Freddie	
Anna	
Karl	
Walt	

Aim: Each person in this story breaks off, or runs away from their “duty” at some point in the game due to personal interests/vendettas. What should be a soldier's primary duty be in times of war? Must a soldier always follow the orders of they are given, or were the characters in *Valiant Hearts* justified in their decisions to defect from their duties?
