

## Student Lesson



### "Prisoner of War"



**Lesson Title:** Prisoner of War

**Grade Level:** 7 – 12

#### **EALRS:**

- ◆ Social Studies: History
  - 1.2 analyze the historical development of events, people and patterns of Life
  - 2.1 investigate and research historical information
  - 2.2 analyze historical information
  - 2.3 synthesize information and reflect on findings
- ◆ Social Studies: Civics
  - 1.1 understand and interpret the major ideas of foundational Governments
  - 2.3 compare and contrast democracies with other forms of government (Benchmark 3 analyze how governmental powers are acquired, used, justified, and balanced)
- ◆ Writing
  - 1.1 develop concept and design (benchmark 3 – develop analysis and synthesis – to hold a readers attention, to make a point, to tell a story, and/or describe a process or phenomenon)
  - 2.2 write for different purposes (benchmark 3 – to communicate research findings, to make inferences or draw conclusions)
  - 3.0 understand and use the steps in the writing process

#### **OVERVIEW:**

Many veterans of WWII were put in the position of losing all of their accustomed freedoms, as they became prisoners of war in both the European and Pacific theaters of war. In those situations it became vital to organize themselves into a governmental system that not only would provide food and shelter for survival, but also plan, as stated in the military code of justice, to try to escape.

#### **PURPOSE:**

This lesson gives students the opportunity to work as a group to achieve the goals of organizing a POW camp government and for each individual to contribute to the task of survival, escape and deception. It also requires each student to research information about actual POW camps, escapes and deceptions that occurred during WWII.

**As this is a two-part assignment, the teacher has the option to have students do both parts of the assignment or be responsible for one of the assignments.**

## **MATERIALS:**

1. The WWII oral history video "When We Were Kids...We Went To War"
2. VCR-TV
3. Access to the world wide web or library for research
4. Writing materials
5. Facilities that allow students to meet in groups

## **ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES:**

### **Individual Task:**

1. This is a homework assignment.
2. Research two or more WWII prison camps.
3. Write an essay giving your impressions of the camps and the experiences veterans of WWII went through as a POW.

### **You may want to address such topics as:**

- a. how camps were organized
- b. successful and unsuccessful escapes
- c. ingenious methods for such things as escape, communication, and organization
- d. the difference between Japanese camps and German camps

### **Group Task:**

1. Determine if you have been taken prisoner by the Japanese in the Pacific or captured by the Germans in the European Theater of war.
2. The enemy has captured you and you have lost all freedoms. You are at the mercy of your enemy guards and their commanders.

### **Your Group Assignment:**

1. Divide students into groups of 5
2. Your group must come to consensus on how to organize yourselves into a POW government that will provide the best chance for your survival, both physically and mentally. You also have to figure out how you will keep your POW government a secret from the enemy guards. You also are required by the military code of justice to try to escape. How will you organize and carry out an escape.
3. Each POW in the group will be assigned a military rank that will be taken into consideration when forming the POW government.

For example:

- i. Student #1 Major in charge of the group and security about the organization
- ii. Student #2 Lieutenant in charge of digging a tunnel to get out
- iii. Student #3 Master Sgt. in charge of making disguises
- iv. Student #4 Sgt. in charge of getting maps and information about an escape route
- v. Student #5 Private in charge of getting information out of the camp and returning home. Must figure out a way to keep the information secret unless he re-captured.

Each POW must contribute ideas within his assignment that will help make the governmental organization and the escape attempt a success and yet remain a secret from enemy spies and guards.

The group will turn in a written paper that answers all of the questions about developing a POW government and how the escape will be organized and carried out.

## **EVALUATION:**

1. Students working in groups can be evaluated with a co-operative learning rubric. A rubric is included with this lesson)
2. The homework/individual assignment can be evaluated with the research/essay rubric included



# Student Handout



## "Prisoner of War"

### Lauren Schwisow Prisoner No. 5155 Stalag-Luft I

	Name: S c h w i s o w
	Vorname: L a u r e n L o u i s
	Dienstgrad: 2. Lt.
	Erk.-Marke: 5155
	Sery.-Nr.: 0 772 524
Nationalität: USA	
Baracke: 407 Raum: 4	

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# WESTERN UNION

A. N. WILLIAMS  
MANAGING

1204

RE C 44-Govt. WUX Washington, D. C.; 10:53 PM Aug. 9, 1944.

Mrs. Reta M. Schwisow, Western, Nebr.

The Secretary of War desires me to express his deep regret that your husband Second Lieutenant Lauren L. Schwisow has been reported missing in action since twenty five July over Austria if further details or other information are received you will be promptly notified.

Ulio the Adjutant General.  
8:50 AM 8/10.

120 Porter St. Providence 5, R. I. October 20,

*Gustave Magnuson*

Dear Mrs. Schwisow; Last evening the writer tuned in the enemy S.W. radio in Berlin, in order to copy the daily list of short messages, written by U. S. men who are now interned in Germany. One was to you from your husband L.L., which was read as follows: DEAR WIFE: I AM P.O.W. IN GER.; IN PERMANENT CAMP; RED CROSS TREATS US FINE; WISH I COULD HAVE SPARED YOU ALL THIS; GIVE MONEY TO THE RED CROSS; SEE LOCAL RED CROSS ABOUT PARCELS; ADDRESS IS STALAG LUFT I; CREW ALRIGHT EXCEPT FOR BOB AND TAIL GUNNER, DO NOT KNOW ABOUT THEM; KEEP YOUR CHIN UP, AND DON'T WORRY, LOVE--- This makes 2993 P.O.W. messages of various types that I have relayed in recent months. May I ask if you would kindly acknowledge this message. -Gustave Magnuson

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# **Prisoner of war Group Participation Rubric**

## **4 - Thorough Understanding**

- ◆ Consistently and actively works toward group goals.
- ◆ Is sensitive to the feelings and learning needs of all group members.
- ◆ Willingly accepts and fulfills individual role within the group.
- ◆ Consistently and actively contributes knowledge, opinions, and skills.
- ◆ Values the knowledge, opinion and skills of all group members and encourage their contribution.
- ◆ Helps group identify necessary changes and encourages group action for change.

## **3 - Good Understanding**

- ◆ Works toward group goals without prompting.
- ◆ Accepts and fulfills individual role within the group.
- ◆ Contributes knowledge, opinions, and skills without prompting.
- ◆ Shows sensitivity to the feelings of others.
- ◆ Willingly participates in needed changes.

## **2 - Satisfactory Understanding**

- ◆ Works toward group goals with occasional prompting.
- ◆ Contributes to the group with occasional prompting.
- ◆ Shows sensitivity to the feelings of others.
- ◆ Participates in needed changes, with occasional prompting.

## **1 - Needs Improvement**

- ◆ Works toward group goals only when prompted.
- ◆ Contributes to the group only when prompted.
- ◆ Needs an occasional reminder to be sensitive to the feelings of others.
- ◆ Participates in needed changes when prompted and encouraged.

**Prisoner of war  
Research/Essay Rubric**

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>SUBSTANDARD</b>	<b>MEETS STANDARD</b>	<b>EXCEEDS STANDARD</b>
	<b>1 POINT</b>	<b>5 POINTS</b>	<b>10 POINTS</b>
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	Student work on the POW essay is disorganized	Student organized POW information	Student creatively organized POW information
<b>PRESENTATION</b>	Presentation is inaccurate	Presentation contains limited inaccuracies	Presentation is entirely accurate
<b>USE OF PRIMARY SOURCES</b>	Student uses no primary sources	Student uses 1-3 primary and secondary	Student uses 3+ primary and secondary sources
<b>INTERPRETATION</b>	No interpretation of historical events through the perspective of the POWs	Some interpretation of events through the perspective of the POWs	Excellent interpretation of events through the perspective of the POWs
<b>USE OF LANGUAGE</b>	Student fails to use language effectively	Student's grammar and mechanics are effective	Student's language enhances the POW presentation