

Student Lesson



Lesson Title: V-Mail Poster

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
- 3.1 explain the origin and impact of an idea on society
- 3.2 analyze how historical conditions shape the emergence of ideas and how ideas change overtime
- 3.3 understand how ideas and technological developments influence people, resources, and culture

◆ Art

- 1.3 use and develop arts skills and techniques to solve problems and express ideas
- 3.2 reflect and respond critically to the use of the arts in all forms of communication
- 4.1 use arts skills and knowledge in other subject areas
- 4.4 recognize the influence of the arts in shaping and reflecting cultures and history

◆ 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:

Soldiers of most wars are separated from home, family and friends, which can have a profound impact on their morale. This can affect the way each soldier copes with difficult and stressful situations in a war zone. During WWII armies of all nations realized the importance of "mail call" and tried to keep the connection to home as best they could. The U.S. government devised a method of sending mail to the troops called V-Mail.

PURPOSE:

This lesson will give students an opportunity to understand the importance of mail to family members from the war zone or mail to the soldiers from the home front. The lesson will give the student an opportunity to use artistic abilities as well as communication and writing skills.

MATERIALS:

1. The WWII Video "When We Were Kids...We Went To War"
2. VCR – TV
3. Access to the world wide web or the library for research
4. Art supplies (pens, scissors, rulers) Poster Paper or Tag Board –(12 in. wide X 18 in. long)
5. Writing supplies

ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES:

1. Have students watch the "Mail Call" segment of "When We Were Kids...We Went To War."
2. Have students read and focus on the transcripts provided with the lesson and available on www.wwiihistoryclass.com
3. On the web or in the library, research V-Mail, its purpose and the effect of mail during war. Research can also include censorship of letters and how many words were allowed in each letter.
4. Each student will turn in a written paper, listing V-Mail research results.
5. Each student will create a poster paper sized V-Mail that will be displayed on the hallway wall, outside the classroom. The V-Mail poster will include a letter to a boyfriend or brother who is:
 - a) Stationed in the combat zone in France just after the D-Day invasion, or
 - b) Was shot down over enemy territory and is now in a German POW Camp, or
 - c) Is stationed on an aircraft carrier that has just recently been attacked by Japanese Kamikazes.

EVALUATION:

The teacher can use a rubric for assessment.

(A rubric for V-Mail artwork and the V-Mail letter are included with the lesson plan.)

Student Handout



Walter Boyden, U. S. Army*

Question: Did you have any contact with home or were you on the move so much that you...

Answer: With home?

Question: Like mail.

Answer: Oh yeah. We got mail pretty well. They kept up with us very well. Yeah, I never wanted for mail. Except during the Bulge and we weren't getting it because nothing could get through. Yeah they were, they were very good about that. Whoever handled the APO, I'd get letters from my girlfriend and from my parents that were written maybe three, four days earlier.

Question: Wow.

Answer: Yeah, so they were flying them over and...

Question: Was that hard, getting things from home or were they writing saying they were proud of what you were doing and...?

Answer: No. Well it was harder on them than it was on us, because when they got a letter from us you know, they didn't know if we were still alive or not so. But there, you'd hear about what was going on in the home front and how everybody was and they missed you, and all that, and it was a good morale lifter. And once in a while you'd get a package of Toll House cookies through, (laughs) or something like that. My sister was great at that. She was a little girl then when I left she was twelve, and she would make me a batch of Toll House cookies every month and send them.

Question: Wow.

Answer: And the platoon would enjoy the heck out of them (laughs).

Question: Everybody was your best buddy that day.

Answer: Yeah (laughs), oh yeah.

William Welch, U.S. Army*

Answer: Mail call was one of the most important things. I mean everyone really looked forward to it. The sad part about it was that there were some individuals that never got a letter, and you could just read the disappointment.

Alva E. Berg, U.S. Navy*

Answer: Then we had, of course, the Dear John club.

Question: You had some of those?

Answer: Oh, we had a whole bunch of those right near the end of the war. By then, of course, you had been away for quite a while. I was president. I got mine first.

Question: You got a Dear John?

Answer: I got a Dear John

Question: So, how did you feel?

Answer: Well, that one upset me more than anyone else. Those Dear Johns were vicious things. You had your mind all set to go back and meet the gal, and suddenly she wasn't there.

Question: Was she at least gentle in her Dear John?

Answer: I think the basic statement summed it up just right. "The problem is, he is here and you are not."

* Full text of interviews available at www.wwiihistoryclass.com

Print the complete address in plain letters in the and your return address in the space provided to the right. Use typewriter, dark ink, or dark pencil. Faint or small writing is not suitable for photographing



(CENSORS STAMP)

TO

Four horizontal lines for the recipient's address.

SEE INSTRUCTION NO. 2

FROM

Three horizontal lines for the sender's address.

[Senders complete address above]

FOLD TOP AND BOTTOM IN OTHER FOLD IN CENTER AND SEAL
NO OTHER ENVELOPE SHOULD BE USED

HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE
ADDRESS AT TOP?



HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE
ADDRESS AT TOP?

V-Mail Poster Rubric
Grading for V-Mail Letter

CATEGORY	A	B	C	D
Ideas	Ideas were expressed in a clear and organized fashion. It was easy to figure out what the letter was about.	Ideas were expressed in a pretty clear manner, but the organization could have been better.	Ideas were somewhat organized, but were not very clear. It took more than one reading to figure out what the letter was about.	The letter seemed to be a collection of unrelated sentences. It was very difficult to figure out what the letter was about.
Format	Complies with all the requirements for a friendly letter.	Complies with almost all the requirements for a friendly letter.	Complies with several of the requirements for a friendly letter.	Complies with less than 75% of the requirements for a friendly letter.
Sentences & Paragraphs	Sentences and paragraphs are complete, well-constructed and of varied structure.	All sentences are complete and well-constructed (no fragments, no run-ons). Paragraphing is generally done well.	Most sentences are complete and well-constructed. Paragraphing needs some work.	Many sentence fragments or run-on sentences OR paragraphing needs lots of work.
Grammar & spelling (conventions)	Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling.	Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar and/or spelling.	Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar and/or spelling	Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar and/or spelling.

V-Mail Poster Rubric Grading for Art

100 95 90% ----- A Excellent Outstanding Exemplary	89 85 80% ----- B Above Average Very Good Acceptable	79 75 70% ----- C Average Good Not Yet Acceptable	69 65 60% ----- D Below Average Needs Improvement Barely Acceptable	59% and below ----- F Unsatisfactory Poor Unacceptable
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V-Mail Poster

- A** Planned carefully, made several sketches; chose color scheme carefully, used space effectively.
- B** The artwork shows that the student showed an awareness of filling the space adequately.
- C** The student did the assignment adequately, yet it shows lack of planning and little evidence that an overall composition was planned.
- D** The assignment was completed and turned in, but showed little evidence of any understanding of planning.
- F** The student did the minimum or the artwork was never completed.

Creativity/Originality

- A** The student explored several choices before selecting one; generating many ideas; tried unusual combinations or changes on several ideas; demonstrated understanding of problem solving skills.
- B** The student tried a few ideas before selecting one; or based his or her work on someone else's idea; made decisions after referring to one source; solved the problem in a logical way.
- C** The student tried an idea, but it lacked originality; might have copied work.
- D** The student fulfilled the assignment, but gave no evidence of trying anything unusual.
- F** The student showed no evidence of original thought.

Effort/Perseverance

- A** The project was continued until it was complete as the student could make it; gave it effort far beyond that required; took pride in going well beyond the requirement.
- B** The student worked hard and completed the project, but with more effort it might have been outstanding.
- C** The student finished the project, but it could have been improved with more effort; adequate interpretation of the assignment, but lacking finish; chose an easy project and did it indifferently.
- D** The project was completed with minimum effort.
- F** The student did not finish the work adequately.

Craftsmanship/Skill/Consistency

- A** The artwork was beautiful and patiently done; it was as good as hard work could make it.
- B** With a little more effort, the work could have been outstanding; lacks the finishing touches.
- C** The student showed average craftsmanship; adequate, but not as good as it could have been, a bit careless.
- D** The student showed below average craftsmanship, lack of pride in finished work.
- F** The student showed poor craftsmanship; evidence of lazy this or lack of understanding.