



Photograph of an American soldier with a British Sopwith 1 1/2 Strutter airplane.

Online Collections Database, 2019.109.72, www.theworldwar.org/research/database. National WWI Museum and Memorial. Online.

A Song of the Plane: An Aviator's Awe of the Flying Machine

Recommended Grade Levels: 6-8

Course/Content Area(s): World History, ELA

LESSON OVERVIEW:	Through the exploration of a poem written by WWI pilot, Gordon Alchin, students will discover one perspective of the life a pilot during the Great War. Students will analyze the positive and negative aspects of being a WWI aviator, while also considering what they might have felt flying aircraft that were so new in their design.
OBJECTIVES:	<i>Students will:</i> ● Gather evidence from a primary document about the experience of a WWI fighter pilot ● Understand positive and negative aspects of being a WWI aviator
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT:	National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) C3 Framework Standards: D2.His.3.6-8. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant. D2.His.5.6-8. Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time. D2.His.6.6-8. Analyze how people’s perspectives influenced what information is available in the historical sources they created. Common Core State Standards English Language Arts: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
TIME NEEDED:	30-minutes
INTERDISCIPLINARY:	Poetry, technology and engineering
PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:	● Basic understanding of WWI history ● Explanation of the aviator’s experience ● Explanation of the airplane as a new technology being used in the war
MATERIALS NEEDED:	● Copies of A Song of the Plane worksheet

LESSON

PRE-ASSESSMENT/INTRODUCTION/HOOK:

1. Ask students about modern technologies they are familiar with and how they have played a role in military life.
2. Explain that many technologies that become a part of popular culture have their origins in military development in the time of war (eg. Wireless communications, transistor radios, mobile x-ray machines).

DIRECTIONS:

1. Explain to students that they are going to analyze a poem written by a WWI pilot.
2. Distribute the student worksheet for "A Song of the Plane."
3. Using just the title of the poem, ask students:
 - a. What do you think of the poet's word choice?
 - b. Does this indicate a positive or negative feeling about planes and flying?
 - c. Discuss why.
4. Ask students to look for evidence that the poet felt positively about his experiences, as well as evidence that he also had some negative feelings.
5. As students complete their charts, lead a discussion asking how students dissected the poem. Talk about certain phrases and what can be inferred from each.

POST-ASSESSMENT:

- Instruct students that when they've finished the chart, they should write a paragraph explaining how the pilot felt about his experiences.
- Possible extension: Ask students to put themselves in the place of a pilot, using a new form of transportation and weaponry. How would they feel relying on something so unfamiliar? Would it be thrilling, terrifying, or both?

MODIFICATIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS

- Consider allowing students to work in groups to support each other and discussion.
- Determine if students might need any vocabulary defined from the poem in advance.