



Trench Warfare

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Social Studies
Grades 9–12



Introduction

Students will learn about the aspects of trench warfare. They will gain an understanding of trench warfare and its effects by reading a journal entry written by a British soldier. Students will compose their own journal entry from the perspective of a British soldier.

Learning Objectives

- Students will examine and describe the circumstances surrounding trench warfare.
- Students will describe the effects of trench warfare on soldiers.

Materials Needed

- Photographs of authentic trench systems from World War I
- [Video about life in the trenches](#)
- Journal/notebook or notebook paper
- [A journal entry by Harold Saunders](#), a British soldier from World War I

Procedure

1. (Prior to beginning this lesson, students should have background knowledge of World War I.) Introduce trench warfare to the students. Describe what it was, how it was used, conditions, etc. Play the video about life in the trenches for the students. The link is provided above; however, please review the video first to ensure that it is appropriate for your students. You may also display photographs of authentic trench systems used during World War I throughout the discussion. Also, discuss the significance of stalemates and the weaponry used during World War I. Ask students to use their notebooks, journals, or notebook paper to write down important points.
2. On the board, display the journal entry by Harold Saunders (link above). Please review the journal entry beforehand to ensure that it is appropriate for your students.
3. Read through the entry together. Stop periodically to discuss what is taking place. Be sure to clarify any confusing or unknown terms for the students. Some of the terms that students may need help deciphering are:
 - **No Man's Land:** the area between two enemy trench systems
 - **Jerry:** a German soldier

Continued on page 2



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Continued from page 1

The journal entry is quite long so it will take at least half of the class period to read through and discuss. Students are free to take notes as needed.

- On a piece of notebook paper, students will now create their own diary entry. Students must imagine that they are a British soldier stationed in the trenches. Students must describe the living conditions around them, their emotional state of mind, war circumstances, etc. Students should be creative and descriptive in their responses but ensure that they are historically accurate and in line with what they have learned about trench warfare. Students may complete their diary entry in class or complete as homework if needed

Evaluation

Please use the following rubric to evaluate each student's diary entry.

	5 (Outstanding)	4 (Good)	3 (Okay)	2 (Needs Improvement)	1 (Unacceptable)
Diary entry describes living conditions in the trenches accurately.					
Students use appropriate, historically accurate descriptions of trench warfare.					
Diary entry describes the soldier's state of mind.					
The student uses complete sentences with appropriate capitalization, grammar, and punctuation.					