Historica Canada Education Portal

First World War Arms and Technology Auction

Overview

This lesson introduces technology used in the First World War in an interactive and fun way. Students will learn what weapons were important in trench warfare.

Aims

Students will work collaboratively to identify and "acquire" weapons they think would have been most effective.

Background

This lesson is normally presented after the students have been introduced to the causes of the First World War. However, the actual conditions of trench warfare have not been discussed - their choices in the auction should be based on what weapons they would consider most useful before knowing the conditions.

Activities

Time Allowance: 75 minutes

Procedures:
Choose two students from the class - one that is very organized and one that likes money! They will help you run the auction, keeping track of money and collecting the bids.

The remaining students should be divided into six (6) groups, with each group representing one of the following: Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russia, France, and Britain.

Assign roles within each group:

- one student is to handle the country's finances
- one student is to make the bids
- one student is to record the Weapons Choice and How Many on a sheet of paper (what they bought & how many)
- one student is to tally the group's points when the auction ends
- one student is to make a sign at the start so countries can be identified
- entire group are part of the decision-making process

ARMS AUCTION

The "Banker" and "Collector" distribute funds to the countries. With six (6) groups, $35,000 is given to each country.

The teacher should outline weapons of choice and provide brief description (JUST what they are, not their importance or how effective they were).

Group members plan their purchase strategy (what they want to buy, how many - maximum of six in each category, how much they are willing to spend).

Decide the order for bidding, and let the bidding begin!

Those who present the highest amount of money for the number of weapons wanted, win the bid.

Collector should keep track of what countries have purchased (which weapons & number of weapons), as well as each group.

The banker collects money after each purchase of the bidding.

The teacher keeps track of the number of weapons purchased overall during bidding on overhead to make sure only six are sold.

Bidding stops when all the weapons are gone.

Once the bidding in finished, the teacher shows the overhead of the Arms Auction Points and student tallies the group's purchases.

The country with the most points wins the war.

TECHNOLOGY IN WORLD WAR ONE ORGANIZER

Students return to their seats and review the information about weapons provided in the worksheet.

The teacher should review the worksheet and any further readings with the class. Students can highlight as they see fit.

Students complete reinforcement activities using the worksheet information and/or additional research.

Evaluation:
Teachers could evaluate the reinforcement activities (questions) that students will complete.

Required Materials:
One thousand dollar bills (Monopoly or Mad Money, photocopied and cut).

Resources

The attached worksheet has information about weapons that were used and their effectiveness in the First World War. Students should be given this information following the auction.

Canadian Military Innovations Learning Tool - The Memory Project

First World War – The Canadian Encyclopedia

The Memory Project

First World War Timeline – The Canadian Encyclopedia

Canadian Expeditionary Force – The Canadian Encyclopedia

First World War Collection – The Canadian Encyclopedia