



Minnesota Stories from the Gulf

LESSON PLAN

Grade: 9-12

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Subject: Social Studies,
History/Social Studies Literacy

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Duration: 1-2 class periods
(Lesson includes optional
extended learning activities.)

Minnesota veterans served in the two Gulf conflicts that America became involved in over the past thirty years — the 1991 Gulf War, and the Iraq War that followed. The program presents oral histories from Minnesotans who served in both conflicts.

This Lesson Plan engages classrooms in a guided exploration of the documentary, focusing on the varied experiences of the “civillian soldiers” interviewed. An extended learning activity offers the opportunity for students to design an oral history interview.

Where to Watch:

Web Viewing:

- Lakeland PBS Website: <https://lptv.org/local-show/the-long-deployment-minnesota-veteran-stories-from-two-gulf-conflicts/>
- YouTube (has ads): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otvJCqBHIQw>

Smart TV:

- Download the free PBS App
- Search for “The Long Deployment”

Lesson Plan: *The Long Deployment–Stories from the Gulf*

Grade Level: 9-12

Subject: Social Studies and History

Time: 1-2 class periods, with an optional expanded learning activity

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Standards Addressed | Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards Social Studies 2011

Economics	Grade Level: 9-12	9.2.1.1.1
<i>Substrand 5: Economic Reasoning Skills</i>		
	<i>Standard 1:</i> People make informed economic choices by identifying their goals, interpreting and applying data, considering the short- and long-run costs and benefits of alternative choices and revising their goals based on their analysis.	
	<i>Benchmark 1:</i> Apply reasoned decision-making techniques in making choices; explain why different individuals, households, organizations and/or governments faced with the same alternatives might make different choices.	
History	Grade Level: 9-12	9.4.1.2.2
<i>Substrand 1: Historical Thinking Skills</i>		
	<i>Standard 2.</i> Historical inquiry is a process in which multiple sources and different kinds of historical evidence are analyzed to draw conclusions about how and why things happened in the past.	
	<i>Benchmark 2:</i> Evaluate alternative interpretations of historical events; use historical evidence to support or refute those interpretations.	
History	Grade Level: 9-12	9.4.3.14.1
<i>Substrand 3: World History</i>		
	<i>Standard 14.</i> Globalization, the spread of capitalism and the end of the Cold War have shaped a contemporary world still characterized by rapid technological change, dramatic increases in global population and economic growth coupled with persistent economic and social disparities and cultural conflict. (The New Global Era: 1989-Present)	
	<i>Benchmark 1:</i> Analyze the causes and consequences of the long-term unrest in the Middle East. (The New Global Era: 1989 to Present)	
History	Grade Level: 9-12	9.4.4.23.5
<i>Substrand 4: United States History</i>		
	<i>Standard 23.</i> The end of the Cold War, shifting geopolitical dynamics, the intensification of the global economy, and rapidly changing technologies have given renewed urgency to debates about the United States’ identity, values and role in the world. (The United States in a New Global Age: 1980—Present)	

	Benchmark 5: Evaluate the United States' global economic connections and interdependence with other countries. (The United States in a New Global Age: 1980—Present)
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Standards Addressed | Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects

Key Ideas and Details		Literacy in History/Social Studies
Grade: 9-10		
9.12.2.2	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.	
Grade: 11-12		
11.12.1.1	Cite specific textual visual or physical evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.	
11.12.2.2	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.	
11.12.3.3	Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.	
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas		Literacy in History/Social Studies
Grade: 11-12		
11.12.9.9	Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.	

Teaching Tips | *The Long Deployment: Stories from the Gulf Wars*

Essential Question: How do we learn from war stories?

Supporting Questions

- What can we learn from deployed soldiers' war stories?
- How do we meaningfully compare and contrast soldiers' experiences?
- Why is it important that we gather and preserve soldiers' memories?

Historical Thinking or Civics Skills

- Analyzing Primary Sources (Historical Thinking)
- Analyzing Multiple Perspectives (Historical Thinking)

Vocabulary

- Veteran
- Combat

- Deployment
- Insurgent
- RPG
- The Persian Gulf
- Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm
- Operation Iraqi Freedom
- The Coalition of the Gulf War (The coalition consisted of 42 countries and was spearheaded by the United States)

Procedure

Use the lesson plan below to engage students with this documentary through guided discussion and related activities. Define unfamiliar vocabulary as needed (see list above).

Print one double-sided student worksheet for each student to take guided notes throughout the lesson plan.

Print one “Taking it Further” sheet for each student (for teachers who want to complete the optional extended learning activity).

Before Viewing

The Minnesota National Guard: Who are Minnesota’s Historic Civilian Soldiers?

Digital Deep Dive: This section of the lesson plan requires classroom computer access. In the event that student computer access is not possible, teachers may still use these websites to assist students in the development of helpful context for viewing the documentary.

Sources: <https://mn.gov/mnng/>
<https://mn.gov/mnng/careers/serve-here/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIBKrbGOahY>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXovB59FEFs>

1. *What is the National Guard?* Direct students to explore the homepage of the official website of the Minnesota National Guard recruitment page [here](#). In pairs or individually, students should read through the information on this page and use it to inform their answers to section A of the Student Worksheet.

2. *Why would someone sign up to serve in the National Guard?* Direct students to peruse the official website of the Minnesota National Guard recruitment page [here](#). In pairs or individually, students should read through the information on this page and use it to inform their answers to section A of the student worksheet.
3. Together as a class, watch the following brief local news clips:
 - “[Minnesota National Guard Deployment - Lakeland News at Ten - June 3, 2011](#)”
 - “[Over 150 Soldiers From Camp Ripley Will Be Deploying To Kuwait](#)”
4. *Bring it together!* Facilitate a class discussion using the guiding questions on the student work sheet.

Conversation Starters:

- a. What is the difference between National Guard soldiers and full-time active duty military personnel?
- b. What different roles does the National Guard play both at home and abroad?
- c. Why would someone join the National Guard? What type of person might join the National Guard?
- d. From watching the local news clips, what can you learn about the experience of being deployed for soldiers and their communities?

Teachers’ Notes:

- a. The [Minnesota National Guard](#) is under state jurisdiction and can be used by the governor to assist the state during disasters and other state emergencies. In times of war, Minnesota National Guard Soldiers and Airmen can be called into federal active service with the president of the United States as commander in chief.
- b. Since the days before statehood, the [National Guard](#) has served in many roles in support of federal and state objectives: protector of settlers; guardian of freedom; provider of relief; peacekeeper to nations; and homeland defender.
- c. The National Guard offers: Education benefits, Career training, Bonuses, Pay, Insurance, Retirement. Learn more about these benefits [here](#).
- d. Highlight the diverse emotions and viewpoints of the people interviewed in these pieces.

While Viewing

How did different soldiers describe their deployment during their interviews? Direct students to take notes in section B on the front and back of the student worksheet.

Understanding the History

1. What events lead to the first Gulf War?

Teachers' Notes:

- In 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait to occupy their oil fields.
- More than 500,000 US troops were deployed to Saudi Arabia as part of an international coalition (The Coalition of the Gulf War) to remove Iraqi military and liberate Kuwait.
- After diplomatic negotiations failed, The Coalition undertook military action.
- Ground combat ended after 100 hours when the threat was neutralized.
- Peace negotiations left Saddam Hussein in power, as long as he eliminated Iraq's chemical and biological weapons.

2. What events lead to the second Gulf War (The Iraq War)?

Teachers' Notes:

- The war began in 2003 over disputes over Iraqi weapons.
- Disputes over Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) centered on conflicting intelligence, unverified claims of active nuclear, chemical, and biological programs, and Iraq's resistance to United Nations inspections.
- The goal of the American-led coalition's invasion into Iraq was to remove Saddam Hussein from power.
- Saddam Hussein was captured in 2003, however, the Iraqi insurgency began to grow and the conflict grew.
- US troops continued to support the Iraqi military in an attempt to regain control of the country from ISIS.
- The Iraq War officially ended on December 18, 2011, when the United States completely withdrew its remaining military forces from the country. This conclusion followed a gradual exit strategy and the signing of a formal security agreement, transitioning control entirely to the Iraqi government.

What's the Story?

3. How did different soldiers describe their deployment during their interviews? Note any differing descriptions or experiences from the interviews.

Teachers' Notes: The notetaking in this section can be differentiated. Consider using mapping, charting or freeform note-taking styles as appropriate.

After Viewing

Understanding the History.

As a class, briefly review answers to the first 3 questions using the notes above to guide conversation. Ensure students have a basic understanding of the differences between the two wars discussed in this documentary. Consider referring to a [map of the Persian Gulf](#) for added context.

What's the story?

How did different soldiers describe their deployment during their interviews? Use the Teacher's Notes at the bottom of this section to enrich discussion.

Conversation Starters:

1. What differences did you notice between the stories featured in this documentary?
 - a. What can we conclude about the war experience from these different narratives?
 - b. What follow-up questions would you like to ask?
2. Colonel Eric Kerska (17:45) argues that the “kids” he served with figured out how to survive the conflict by “not accepting the army’s answer.” (Note: Kerska argues that soldiers felt they had to make their own decisions on the ground to adapt to worsening conditions on the battlefield). Consider rewatching this clip, time permitting.
 - a. What do you think Col. Kerska meant by this statement?
 - b. What do you think the “army’s answer” was?
3. After listening to the stories of the soldiers in this documentary, how do you feel that their experiences changed them? How did they feel about their service?
4. Why do you think it might be important to listen to the stories of deployed soldiers?

Teachers' Notes: Use the following interviewee quotes from the documentary below to help facilitate discussion and jog students' memories.

First Gulf War

- “Gutwrenching”
- “A proud moment for all of us”
- “We achieved a lot”
- “We felt we were incredibly highly trained. We were confident, but yet, when you are told— hey you are facing the ‘Big Guys’ on the block, at the time, in the Middle East, you had confidence, but a little bit of—a little bit of hesitation is kind of built in by the pure numbers and also the amount of time he (Saddam Hussein) had to prepare defenses.”
- “We were told we anticipate 25% casualties. So, as you look around with 16 guys, and you look at—which 4 of us?”
- “Before you actually experience combat, the typical behavior is you wanna go. You want to experience it...and then after you experience combat it’s something you don’t want to do. It’s an emotionally draining thing.”
- “Driving on a MN gravel road in the summer is nothing compared to eating the dust of hundreds of vehicles in front of you. It was a miserable experience.”
- “It was as if you took a baseball bat and hit a hornet’s nest. They were launching everything they had...I have never seen so many people waving whatever they had that was white in the air...hundreds of them surrendered.”
- “These wars have happened periodically. They will continue to happen.”
- “None of my men were injured or killed. We all came home safely and I was extremely fortunate to experience that.”

Second Gulf War (Iraq War)

- Some of the soldiers who had experienced the First Gulf War were sent again to the same area to serve in Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- “You look at Iraq on a map and it gives no real insight to what the assault on your senses will be...as you are actually flying a helicopter over that terrain.”
- “We thought there would be more of a fight... in the warzone we just entered. But everywhere we landed things were abandoned. We thought it was going to be a very short war. We were convinced.”

- "...it went from just flying from location to location and country to prepping for and executing large-scale air assaults...now we were in a war fight. It was about clearing towns and villages, sweeping out insurgents."
- "It was not like you were fighting on a front and moving forward. The conflict was everywhere at that point."
- "Exposive Foreign projectile was the most lethal weapon in the War in Iraq...what killed the most Americans was the EFP...It had a 90-some percent casualty rate. It was a big problem and it scared the hell out of everybody because there was no armor—it would go through an M1 tank...the only defense against an EFP was to not get hit by one."
- "It was a bunch of smart kids bringing their civilian skills to the battlefield and figuring out really tough problems by not accepting the army answer. That's what saved those lives."
- "My tour as part of Operation Inherent Resolve was extremely rewarding to me professionally. But at the same time, I had two young boys and a wife I loved very much...my wife was pregnant at the time I deployed...that was difficult for me. I was just getting to know them as they were growing up and then had to leave them for what ended up being a very extended deployment of 14 or 15 months."
- "I was changed. After that many months not sleeping in a bed—8 months sleeping in a tent, after eating that many MREs and flying that many combat missions, I was different. I wasn't the mother of a two year old and an eager young captain like before I left."
- "Saying goodbye to your family is never that easy for anybody. And I got to do that a few times. But I got to say hello again too. So my kids paid a price. My wife paid a price. They served their country too."

Taking It Further [Optional Expanded Learning Activity]

Become part of the story! Oral History Activity

Historical Thinking Skill: Developing Civic Understanding and Engagement

Duration: Approximately 30 minutes + optional homework

Background: During this activity, students will act as oral historians, developing original protocols to interview soldiers from the MN 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division. Mentioned during the documentary and known as the "Red Bulls," this historic Minnesota National Guard combat team became the longest serving military unit during the Iraq War, completing a 22-month long deployment.

Instructions: Divide students into groups of 4. Distribute the oral history activity worksheet to all students. Supervise initial discussion and prompt groups as needed. Advise each student to take their own notes.

Teachers' Notes:

- Encourage students to utilize open-ended questions to elicit more complete answers.
- Ensure groups remain mindful of combat trauma in the wording of their questions.

Coming back together as a class, allow each group to share an example from their interview protocol. Critique and workshop questions as a group.

Teacher's Note: Due to the nature of combat trauma in deployed veterans, we advise you to proceed with caution and consideration if considering conducting actual interviews.

Resources for Further Engagement

["Persian Gulf War"](#)

["A Timeline of the U.S.-Led War on Terror"](#)