

THE GREAT WAR and the Shaping of the 20th Century

Companion website

<http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/>

- The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century is a 1996 documentary series that aired on PBS. It chronicles World War I over eight episodes. It was narrated by Dame Judi Dench in the UK and Salome Jens in the United States. [Wikipedia](#)
- • [First episode date](#): November 10, 1996
- [Program creator](#): [Jay Winter](#)
- [Language](#): English
- [Awards](#): [Peabody Award](#), more
- [Writers](#): [Jay Winter](#), [Carl Byker](#), [Blaine Baggett](#)
- [Nominations](#): [Directors Guild of America Award for Outstanding Directing – Documentaries](#)

War in Bosnia...the struggle for peace in the Middle East...the Cold War and the Atomic Age...the spread of world democracy-much of today's world can't be fully understood until students learn about World War I and the unsettling peace that emerged afterwards. Now you can take high school and college students back to explore the events that set the course of the 20th century.

THE GREAT WAR and the Shaping of the 20th Century portrays the historical events that occurred between 1890 and 1939 through the words and experiences of people who lived through them. Extensive primary resource material involves students in the sights and sounds of these turbulent times. Autobiographical accounts convey the thoughts and emotions of soldiers and civilians whose lives were forever changed by war. And interviews with leading scholars explain important historical concepts every student should know, including:

- How conditions, events and attitudes made war all but inevitable
 - What made World War I so different from other wars that came before it
 - How people of different countries, social positions and genders were affected by the war
 - Why "the war to end all wars" instead gave rise to a century of conflict
-

Episode Youtube links

One:
Explosion http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=DRtdSoeYQYk

Two:
Stalemate http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=Gflb_jSYTV0

Three:
Total
War http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=bKfsWtJ8R_c

Four:
Slaughter http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=1krztItfcR8

Five:
Mutiny http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=T6haP4AQfhQ

Six:
Collapse http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=5KnONdIDU1c

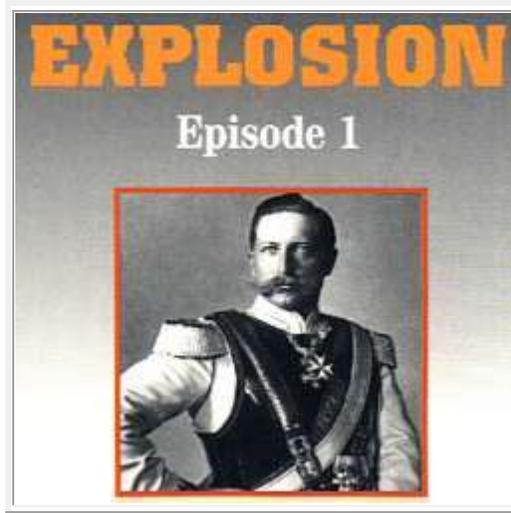
Seven:
Hatred
and
Hunger Youtube link not found

Eight:
War
Without
End http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=_9DNDSKUIxk

[Contents of the Deluxe Teaching Edition](#)

Please note that the dates listed above are for the national feed of PBS. Local stations may vary, so be sure and check your local listings prior to the viewing date.

What Students Learn From THE GREAT WAR and the Shaping of the 20th Century:



Introduce students to European life at the turn of the century, when new technologies were also creating an arms race among European super powers. Through portraits of Kaiser Wilhelm, II of Germany and Tsar Nicholas, II of Russia, students learn about the instability of the European monarchies and the diplomatic agreements that made war all but inevitable. Autobiographical accounts from ordinary citizens paint a vivid backdrop of the times including the labor movement and the fight in Britain over women's rights to vote. Students explore the conflicts between change and tradition that characterized life at this time and well into the 20th century.



Focusing on the period from August 4 to December 31, 1914, this episode relates the emotions and conditions that fueled the war efforts on all sides. Students learn how nationalism and propaganda demonized enemies and prolonged conflict, and how new technologies that were supposed to shorten war instead created weapons that were immune to human suffering. Autobiographical accounts reveal how civilians responded to the call for more volunteers and how the reality of war clashed with human expectations about victory and heroism. Archival photos show what life in the trenches was like and how men tried to adjust and cope. And a fascinating account of the unofficial "Christmas truce" of 1914 helps students understand how 19th century values and etiquette ended on the battlefields of Europe.

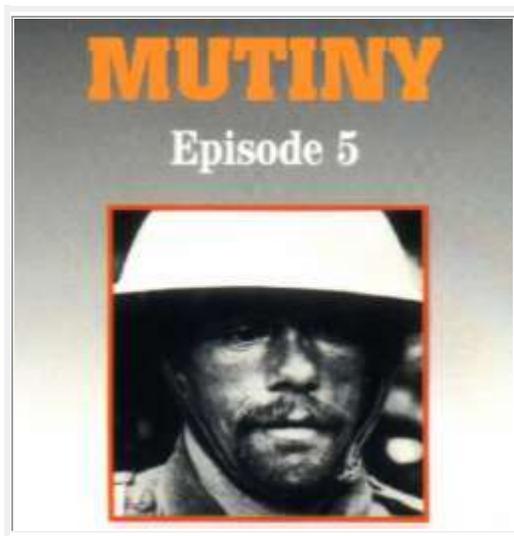


Explain to students why World War I was the first "total war" which involved civilians in the war effort as much as soldiers. Students learn how the war changed women's lives, how it changed government and law, and why factories and civilians become targets of military campaigns. Firsthand accounts from soldiers and civilians recount how new technologies, such as lethal gas and submarines, brought unrestricted warfare to everyone's lives and, with

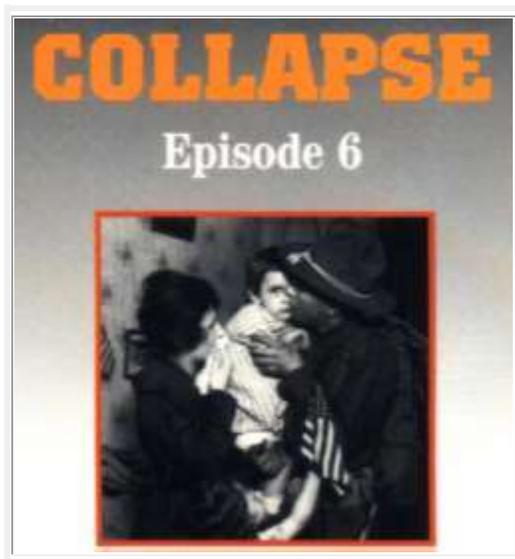
the sinking of the Lusitania, brought the U.S. and its citizens near to entering into the conflict. Plus, students learn how the mass killings of Armenians in Turkey, the first genocide of the 20th century, sets a precedent that Adolph Hitler chose to follow years later.



In paintings of Otto Dix and the words of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, students explore the horror of war and the battle of attrition that left many soldiers in the trenches wondering why they were fighting. Autobiographical accounts from soldiers at Verdun, the Somme, and Passchendaele, plus letters and diary entries from civilians, relive the suffering and conflicting emotions of wartime. Students examine the reasons why soldiers and generals and the governments they serve would continue to fight in the face of staggering losses-as many as 20,000 lives in one day. Plus, clips from the first war documentary, "The Battle of the Somme," reveal how mass media began to bring the horror of war home to the general public in a dramatic new way.



This episode explores the many ways that people in different roles tried to adjust to war or challenge authority. Examples from war literature capture the conditions and feelings of men at the front. The writings of soldiers and ordinary civilians dramatize the psychological effects of the war and offer powerful examples of what mechanized warfare can do to human beings. Students learn how shell-shocked men returning from the front lines are treated with a new technique, psychotherapy, and how grieving wives and parents turned to supernatural "visits" from their dead husbands and sons. Firsthand accounts of mutinous soldiers on the Western front and striking workers in the munitions factories help students better understand the events leading up to the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917.



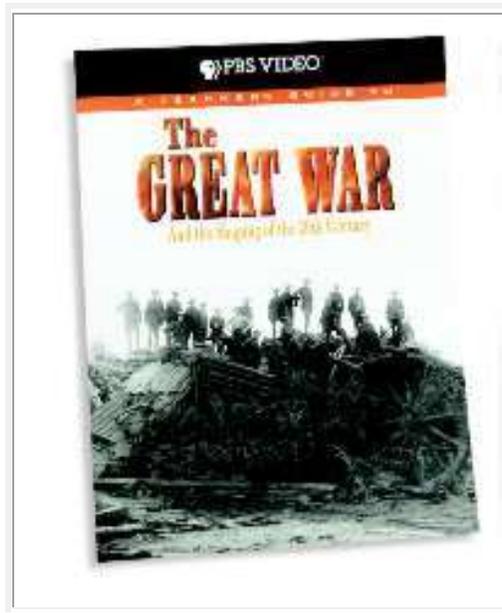
Use this episode to set the stage for student understandings of the long-term effects of World War I on world and U.S. history. Through autobiographical accounts and footage from Germany, students learn about mass mutinies, strikes and other events that caused the collapse of the war effort, which enabled German leaders after the war to claim that its army had not been defeated on the battlefield. Explain how German actions provoked the U.S. into the war, delivering a psychological boost to the Allied cause. And show students how the end of the war opened an opportunity for President Woodrow Wilson to propose a new world order based on the principles of democracy.



Focusing on the months preceding and just after the cease fire, this episode explains how the brutality of trench warfare was brought home to city streets in the forms of political assassinations, revenge, starvation and anarchy. Students learn how the war changed the world and why positive change was so difficult to attain. Firsthand accounts express the painful bitterness of German reparation and explain how the death of the Tsar affected the Russian people. Students explore many events and conditions that foreshadowed the post-war world, including the emergence of the Dada Movement, the efforts of Herbert Hoover to bring relief to millions, the confrontations between Bolsheviks and Allied forces in Russia and the prolonged blockade of Germany. Archival footage and first-person accounts describe how world leaders in Paris partitioned nations and unknowingly set the stage for conflicts to come.



This final episode explores the aftermath of war and the failed peace, including the painful efforts to deal with the losses suffered during the war and the climate in Germany that launched the political career of Adolph Hitler. Students explore writings and artwork from the "Lost Generation" and learn about cultural movements that focused on grieving, loss and spiritualism.



Video Series with Teaching Materials Scheduled Availability: November 1, 1996

Included when you buy the Deluxe Teaching Edition of THE GREAT WAR:

- The entire series on eight 60-minute videos with PBS VIDEOindex®, the exclusive feature that makes it easy to fast-forward or rewind to exact sequences in the program.
- A comprehensive Teacher's Guide with eight modules for instruction and assessment. Each module includes:
 - unifying CONCEPTS AND THEMES that relate to history curriculum
 - key GENERALIZATIONS AND IDEAS that can be emphasized before, during and after viewing the videos
 - student LEARNING EXPECTATIONS OR OBJECTIVES that specify key abilities students are expected to attain during and retain following the module
 - a SYNOPSIS of each video segment to help you prepare lessons and locate material on the videos
 - a GUIDE FOR LESSON PLANNING that describes a possible sequence of activities for guiding student learning
 - ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES that help students extend their learning and understanding
 - POST-VIEWING QUESTIONS that help students reflect on what they've seen and heard on the videos
 - over 50 reproducible STUDENT HANDOUTS
- A Resource Package containing:
 - maps
 - over 30 archival photographs
 - 8, 4-color recruiting posters

- timeline poster
- A printed index that puts every person, place, issue and event contained in the vast, rich content of the series at your fingertips through the PBS VIDEOindex® technology

You may contact PBS VIDEO by e-mail at: video@pbs.org.