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## **Primary Sources: World War I Era**

**This sample includes the following:**

**Teacher's Guide Cover** (1 page)

**Teacher's Guide Table of Contents** (1 page)

**How to Use This Product** (2 pages)

**Lesson Plan** (4 pages)

**Primary Source Document** (1 page)

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— PRIMARY SOURCES —

# World War I Era

*Dearest,  
I sent you two cablegrams last night telling you of my fate, and hoping they both reached you before the morning, and that you were still the agony. I want to tell you that I am still fresh and well.*



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# How to Use This Product

This unit, with its primary documents, photographs, and support materials, will allow both teacher and student to expand their study of history beyond the textbook and classroom. The resources in this book assist the busy teacher in presenting innovative primary source lessons that meet state and national standards. Easy to follow, concise, and aligned to the curriculum standards, the teacher lesson plans and student activity pages are certain to become a great addition to any classroom.

Using primary sources offers students the opportunity to act and think as historians. Students will participate in the constructive process of history by studying primary documents and photographs. Viewing historic photographs, handling facsimiles of famous documents, and reading the comments and opinions of those in the past will bring history alive for students. Understanding the background of each primary source will help students to put historical events and attitudes into perspective, to think progressively, and to walk in the shoes of their ancestors.

The organization of the kit provides teachers with all they need to accomplish the lessons without additional research or planning. Teachers have the photographs and documents at their fingertips without scurrying to find such references. Activities are varied, interesting, challenging, and engaging.

## The Book

The **teacher pages** provide lesson plans organized with objectives, materials, discussion questions, suggestions for using the primary sources, and extension ideas. **Historical background pages** are provided to give teachers and students information about each of the primary sources being studied. The coordinating **student activity pages** allow the flexibility for a class, individuals, or small groups of students to focus on a specific task and provide direction for a series of tasks to be completed during a time period.

The **standards** and **objectives** for the lessons are both process and content objectives to cover the full range of social studies skills. The standard listed for each lesson is a process standard taken from one of the ten strands of the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS, *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*, <http://www.ncss.org>). The objective listed for each lesson is a content learning objective describing what students will learn and how they will show what they have learned. A complete chart listing each lesson in the book and the corresponding standards is available on the CD in the folder entitled *Lesson Support Files* (standard.pdf).

The **document-based assessment** section provides student preparation and practice on the document-based questions that appear on many standardized tests today. Students will be able to analyze for meanings, compare and contrast, compose short answers, and even respond to and reflect on topics with longer essay questions. The entire testing section will provide students with opportunities to prepare for a variety of testing situations.

## **The Photographs**

Each photograph has four general areas on the back for teacher and student use. The top of the card has a brief **Historical Background Information** section. Along the left side of the card is the **Analyzing History** section. This includes questions and activities designed to make students analyze what they see and learn. In the **Historical Writing** section, students are given two writing assignments, one fiction and one nonfiction. Finally, the **History Challenge** section offers fun extension ideas for the students. The teacher lesson plans do not necessarily refer to each of the sections on the back of the card. These activities can be used by teachers in any way that fits their classroom needs (group work, individual work, learning center, etc.).

## **The Primary Sources**

The documents, letters, maps, and other primary sources are provided in both an authentic-looking format as well as in the book for reproduction. The large copies of the primary sources should be shared with the students so that they can see and feel the facsimiles. The easy-to-read copies of the primary sources in the book can be reproduced for the students to use during student activities. If the text of a document is too long, only an excerpt of the text is included in the book. The entire text of the document is available on the CD.

## **The CD**

The CD provided with the book has copies of the 16 main primary sources and photographs, additional documents and photographs from the time period, and activities to support and enrich the lessons in the book, including 16 student pages to support the introduction. See pages 75–76 for more information about using the CD.

## **Objectives of This Unit**

By participating in the lessons provided in this book, students will:

- articulate their observations.
- analyze what they see.
- improve their vocabularies.
- be prompted by visual clues.
- compare their assumptions against others.
- expand their appreciation for other time periods.

By presenting the lessons in this book, teachers will:

- improve students' test scores and improve test-taking skills.
- meet curriculum standards.
- create a learning environment that extends beyond the classroom.
- encourage students to take an active role in learning history.
- develop critical-thinking skills in students.

# Intercepting the Zimmermann Note

## Standard/Objective

- Explain conditions, actions, and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among nations. (NCSS)
- Students will create different codes for the Zimmermann telegram and work toward deciphering them.

## Materials

Copies of the facsimile *Zimmermann Telegram*; Copies of the historical background information (page 52); Copies of the student activity sheet, *Cracking Codes* (page 53); Copies of *The Deciphered Zimmermann Note* (page 54) or copies of all four pages of the *Deciphered Telegram* available on the CD (telgram1–4.jpg)

## Discussion Questions

- What was Germany's motivation for asking Mexico to side with the Central Powers?
- How would Germany benefit from Mexico entering the war?
- If the Zimmermann note had never been sent, do you think the United States would have entered the war eventually?

## Using the Primary Source

Share copies of the original Zimmermann telegram written in code. Tell students that this is an important telegram that was sent during the war. Ask students what they think this telegram says. Then distribute copies of the *Deciphered Telegram* available on the CD (telgram1–4.jpg) for students to read. These files not only have the text of the telegram decoded, but they also contain the rest of the message sent to President Wilson from the United States Ambassador Walter Page. Have students discuss the questions above in small groups. Then review the historical background information together as a class.

Tell students that they are each going to create an original code for someone in the room to crack. The code must carry an important factual secret concerning World War I and should be at least three sentences long. Students should also create keys to their codes so that their classmates can check their work. The codes should not be revealed to anyone else in the room. When all the coded messages are created, have students trade papers and try to decipher the work. After the activity, discuss what the students decided to include in their messages, how the codes were created, and how students went about trying to decipher them.

## Extension Idea

Have students research how the British cracked the code and compare the information using the original telegram.

# Intercepting the Zimmermann Note *(cont.)*



## Historical Background Information

In April 1916, almost a year after the *Lusitania* had been torpedoed, Germany ordered its U-boats to stop unrestricted submarine warfare. This order came in response to President Woodrow Wilson's objections to the tactics of German warfare. Because Germany did not want to fight the United States, they agreed to warn merchant ships before sinking them and rescue those on the sinking ships. American merchant ships once again began safely sending war materials to the Allies and Germany's hold on the seas weakened.

In response to this, Germany used its embassy in the United States for spying and sabotaging. Germany's ambassador planned to bribe members of Congress by paying them \$50,000 each to speak against President Wilson. However, the State Department and American public found out about these plans and put a halt to them. Spies were closely followed by the Secret Service, and not one secret was ever stolen. There were some successful saboteurs who caused problems in America before the war. Dr. Anton Degler used vials of anthrax bacteria to poison horses and mules that were awaiting shipment to the Allies. Dr. Walter Scheele secretly constructed bombs in a factory in Hoboken, New Jersey. These bombs were then placed on cargo ships and exploded a few days out to sea, ruining the ammunition.

Less than a year later, on February 1, 1917, Germany once again employed unrestricted submarine warfare. Germany reasoned that United States soldiers were not prepared for European warfare and would be defeated quickly, especially at sea. In a statement to the State Department in Washington, Germany informed the United States that any and all ships traveling through the waters surrounding Europe would be sunk without any attempts for rescue. The United States was allowed one ship to sail to Europe provided that it did not contain any war materials, left for the destination on Wednesdays and Sundays, had a painted hull with red and white stripes, and displayed the American flag at the stern. Germany's bold action outraged the American public.

At the end of February, Germany's Foreign Secretary, Alfred Zimmermann, sent a telegram to the German minister in Mexico. This telegram instructed the minister to ask Mexico for an alliance with Germany and Japan against the United States, if and when the United States entered the war. In return, Germany promised Mexico land in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The Mexican government was in no position to fight when civil war was looming throughout its country. The Japanese were presently on the side of the Allies, but enjoyed being courted by the Germans. They openly shared this information with the Allies.

When the British intercepted this telegram, it was sent to a government department that specialized in unraveling German codes. The British had secretly laid hold of several German code books. The Germans used an arbitrary code on their telegrams that made it necessary to have a code book to decipher it. The codes changed on a daily basis depending on who was receiving the telegram. Newspapers spread the contents of the telegram throughout the United States. To make matters worse, during the first few weeks of March, German submarines sank four American ships. The American public, Woodrow Wilson, and Congress had had enough and on April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Cracking Codes

## Background Information

The Zimmermann telegram encouraged American entry into the war. This infamous telegram was addressed from Alfred Zimmermann, Germany’s Foreign Secretary, to the German minister in Mexico asking him to persuade the Mexican government to join a three-pronged alliance with Germany and Japan against the Allies. This telegram also promised land in America to the Mexicans. British intelligence intercepted the telegram, deciphered the code, and shared it with the United States ambassador in London and the press.

## Activity

**Directions:** As a federal agent, you have some important information regarding your country (you can choose any country involved in World War I) and the war. It is your job to get your message to the people who need to see it without anyone cracking the code and reading this classified information. Codes can be written using letters, numbers, equations, or anything else that can be proven. Your code must be accurate and so must the information within your telegram. Find an important piece of information regarding World War I to send in your message and create a code to hide its meaning in the space below. On another sheet of paper, create an answer key so that your classmates can check their work.

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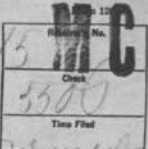
### Challenges

Review the original Zimmermann coded telegram and compare it with the deciphered telegram. See if you can identify the code the Germans used.

Find out how long it took for the British to decipher the telegram. How was it deciphered? See if you can write a new message using that same code.



# The Deciphered Zimmermann Note

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED		WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM		RECORDING No.					
Fast Day Message	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
Day Letter	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Night Message	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Night Letter	<input type="checkbox"/>								
<small>Patrons should mark, on X opposite the class of service desired. OTHERWISE THE TELEGRAM WILL BE TRANSMITTED AS A FAST DAY MESSAGE.</small>		NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT		Time Filed					
Send the following telegram, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to				via Galveston					
GERMAN LEGATION MEXICO CITY				623 7/60 7/9 JAN 29 1917					
130	13042	13401	8501	115	3528	416	17214	6491	11310
18147	18222	21580	10247	11518	23677	13805	3494	14938	
98092	5905	11311	10392	10371	0302	21290	5161	39895	
23571	17504	11289	18278	18101	0317	0228	17894	4473	
23284	22200	19452	21589	87893	5569	13918	8958	12137	
1333	4725	4458	5905	17106	13851	4458	17149	14471	6706
13850	12224	8929	14991	7382	15857	87893	14218	36477	
5870	17553	87893	5870	5454	18102	15217	22801	17138	
21001	17388	7448	23838	18222	8719	14331	15021	23845	
3158	23552	22098	21804	4797	9497	22484	20855	4377	
23810	18140	22280	5905	13347	20420	39889	13732	20687	
8929	5275	18507	52282	1340	22049	13339	11265	22295	
10439	14814	4178	8992	8784	7632	7357	6926	52282	11267
21100	21272	9348	9559	22484	15874	18502	18500	15857	
2188	5378	7381	98092	16127	13488	9350	9220	78036	14219
5144	2831	17920	11347	17142	11284	7887	7762	15099	9110
10482	97558	3569	3870						
BEPNSTOFFF. Charge German Embassy.									

National Archives

## Translation

We intend to begin on the first of February unrestricted submarine warfare. We shall endeavor in spite of this to keep the United States of America neutral. In the event of this not succeeding, we make Mexico a proposal of alliance on the following basis: make war together, make peace together, generous financial support and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The settlement in detail is left to you. You will inform the President of the above most secretly as soon as the outbreak of war with the United States of America is certain and add the suggestion that he should, on his own initiative, invite Japan to immediate adherence and at the same time mediate between Japan and ourselves. Please call the President's attention to the fact that the ruthless employment of our submarines now offers the prospect of compelling England in a few months to make peace." Signed, Zimmermann

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
Fast Day Message	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Day Letter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Night Message	<input type="checkbox"/>
Night Letter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patrons should mark an X opposite the class of service desired; OTHERWISE THE TELEGRAM WILL BE TRANSMITTED AS A FAST DAY MESSAGE.	

CHARGE  
8587

# WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM



NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

12
Receiving No.
Check 5500
Time Filed

Send the following telegram, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

via Galveston

JAN 19 1917

GERMAN LEGATION

MEXICO CITY

130	13042	13401	8501	115	3528	416	17214	6491	11310
18147	18222	21560	10247	11518	23677	13605	3494	14936	
98092	5905	11311	10392	10371	0302	21290	5161	39695	
23571	17504	11269	18276	18101	0317	0228	17694	4473	
22284	22200	19452	21589	67893	5569	13918	8958	12137	
1333	4725	4458	5905	17166	13851	4458	17149	14471	6706
13850	12224	6929	14991	7382	15857	67893	14218	36477	
5870	17553	67893	5870	5454	16102	15217	22801	17138	
21001	17388	7446	23638	18222	6719	14331	15021	23845	
3156	23552	22096	21604	4797	9497	22464	20855	4377	
23610	18140	22260	5905	13347	20420	39689	13732	20667	
6929	5275	18507	52262	1340	22049	13339	11265	22295	
10439	14814	4178	6992	8784	7632	7357	6926	52262	11267
21100	21272	9346	9559	22464	15874	18502	18500	15857	
2188	5376	7381	98092	16127	13486	9350	9220	76036	14219
5144	2831	17920	11347	17142	11264	7667	7762	15099	9110
10482	97556	3569	3670						

BEPNSTOPFF.

Charge German Embassy.

INSPECTED  
3

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