



Lesson Plan

Recruiting a Few Good Citizens

Grades

4, 5, 6

Subjects

art, language arts, public speaking, U.S. history

Time Allotted

45 minutes

Setting

Classroom

Group size

20 to 30 students

Skills

Public speaking, writing, drawing

Methods

Students will work in cooperative groups to design a poster and prepare a persuasive speech (campaign) to recruit a regiment.

Materials

Poster boards, markers, crayons, colored pencils, colored paper, scissors, rulers; an example of a recruiting poster

Keywords

Company
Recruit
Regiment
Persuade

Objectives

At the end of the activity, students will be able to:

- *Identify persuasive speeches.*
- *List the means by which regiments were recruited.*
- *Discuss the importance of recruiting qualified members for a regiment.*



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the Civil War, towns formed companies of men who wanted to fight for the Union or the Confederacy. As the companies began to get organized, they would then file for regiment status. A regiment consisted of ten companies joined together. In some areas more companies formed than were needed; in other areas there were not enough companies to form regiments. Therefore, there was a good deal of variation in the qualifications of members and officers. Both sides had casualties and men deserted as the war progressed, so the need for recruiting qualified soldiers continued. Recruiting posters were plastered throughout towns and cities, and then local generals and commanders in the war gave persuasive speeches. The speeches appealed to the emotions and were well attended resulting in large numbers of men volunteering to serve.

ACTIVITIES

- The teacher will present information about how companies formed into regiments.
- Students will then divide into small groups to design and prepare a recruiting poster for their “company.”
- Each group will then prepare a persuasive speech to recruit soldiers for their “company.”
- Two groups combine “companies” until two opposing “regiments” are formed. While the remainder of the class become volunteers waiting to be recruited. The teacher will have each “regiment” defend a neutral topic, such as “hamburgers are better than pizza” or “chocolate vs. vanilla”. Students will then assemble in a line of battle. (Two lines facing each other)
- Students will “fight” using the “Paper, Rock, Scissors” method. Each student will have a partner from the opposing side. The winner of each round will continue in battle while the loser is “buried” in the death corner. Now the two regiments can recruit from the “volunteers” that have not yet participated in battle to evenly replenish the ranks for another battle. Use the persuasive speeches written by the “companies” to convince the others into joining their cause. Continue until all have participated in a battle. If class is small, instead of using a death corner for losers, simply cycle back into the game as new recruits.
- Allow students to discuss how they felt about their fighting.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Whose Side Are You On? activity

RESOURCES

Mann, Wayne C. “The Road to Murfreesboro: the 11th Michigan Volunteer Infantry from Organization through its 1st Battle,” Thesis, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan. June 1963.

“Humor,” *Civil War Times Illustrated*, September /October 1993, pg 50.

Powell, John W., “How to Pick Out Bad Officers,” *Civil War Times Illustrated*, March/April 1991, pp.46–69.