

World War II: The Home Front

Analyzing Visual Primary Sources

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Introduction

Primary sources are the building blocks of history. Using these sources to introduce students to historical periods offers students the opportunity to become historians themselves—to analyze the evidence, form hypotheses, and learn how to support arguments based on evidence. They learn what it means to interpret the past in ways that provide meaning for the present. Textual primary sources can often be difficult for students to engage with because they are often couched in unfamiliar language from a different historical era. Visual primary sources can prove more appealing and accessible to students, and they also involve different types of “reading” skills.

How to Use This Product

This PowerPoint® presentation is designed to walk students through the process of primary source interpretation. Slides help to focus students’ attention and train them how to “read” visual primary sources. Targeted questions and enlarged insets from images help to train students to see deeper into the historical record, to uncover evidence that, though plainly before their eyes, is not always obvious at first glance.

The posters provide visual reinforcement for the images analyzed in the presentation. Use them before or after the PowerPoint® analysis for either pre- or post-reading activities. In addition, we have provided extra images on each disc so that once the students are trained in the skills of analyzing visual primary sources they can further hone their skills. You can print them out and distribute as handouts for in-class or independent study, or you can import the images into PowerPoint® for students to analyze individually or with the class as a whole.

Let Us Know What You Think

At Social Studies School Service, we always strive to provide the best supplemental curriculum materials at a superior value. If you have feedback that could help us improve this product, requests for other titles in this series, or stories of how it has helped your students, please let us know. You can e-mail us at access@socialstudies.com.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Aaron Willis
Chief Education Officer
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World War II: The Home Front

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While GIs fought overseas during World War II at places such as Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, Normandy, and Anzio, millions of ordinary Americans back on the “home front” assisted in the “Great Crusade.” Putting America on a war footing at home involved a range of measures and affected different parts of the population in different ways.

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- Propaganda



- Women on the Home Front



- Japanese American Internment



- Rationing



- Home Front Defense

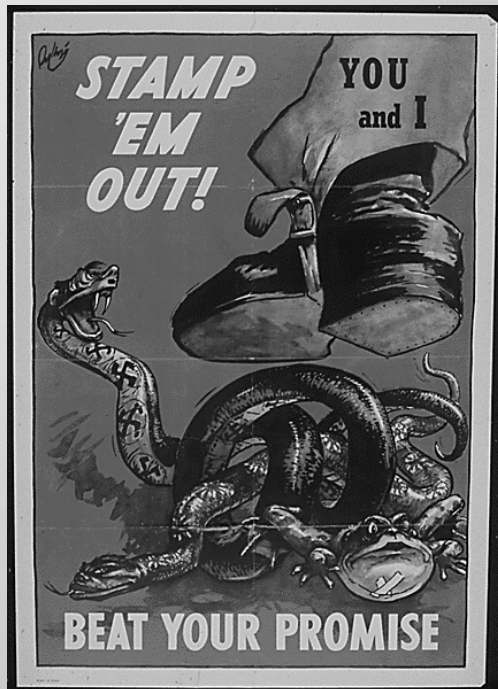
Propaganda

- Demonizing the enemy
- Boosting morale
- Encouraging support of wartime measures
- Recruitment
- Vigilance and paranoia

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During the war, the U.S. government issued hundreds of propaganda posters designed to accomplish several different goals. These posters used a variety of tactics to both directly and subtly get across key messages. Some of these messages were positive: they aimed to boost morale, convince people to sign up for the armed services, and get the public to lend support to the war effort by buying war bonds or planting “victory gardens.” Other messages had a much darker tone, insinuating that spies could be anywhere in America and using vicious—and often racist—caricatures to demonize the Axis countries and heighten fear of them.

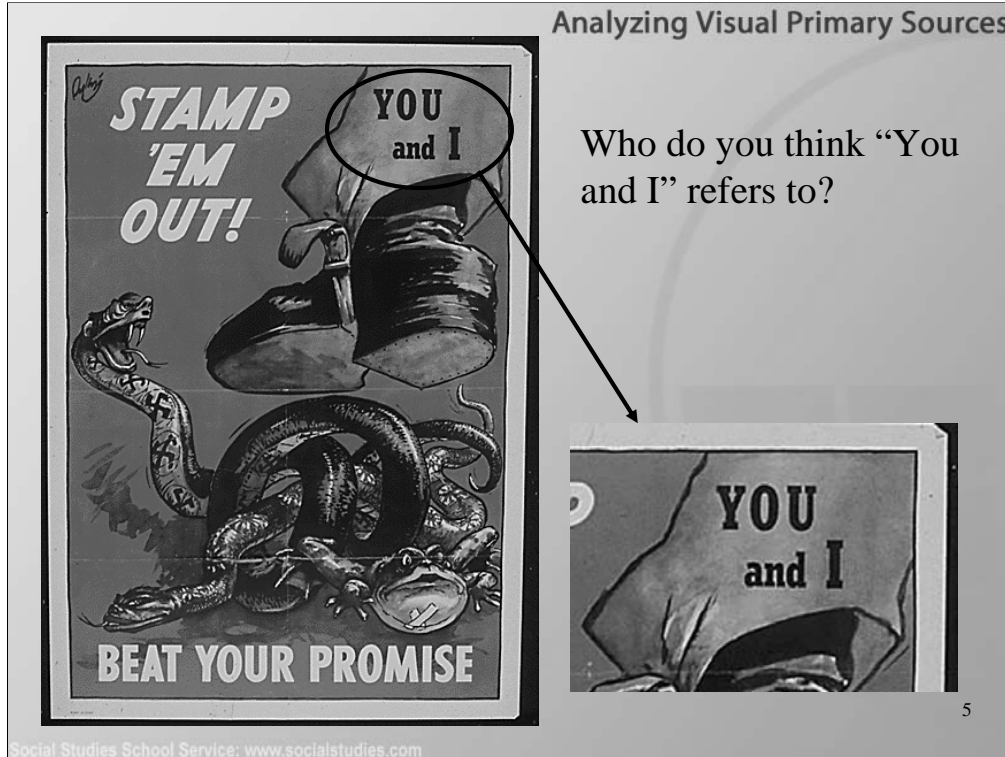


Demonizing the Enemy

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Give students about one minute to look at this poster, then move on to the following slides.

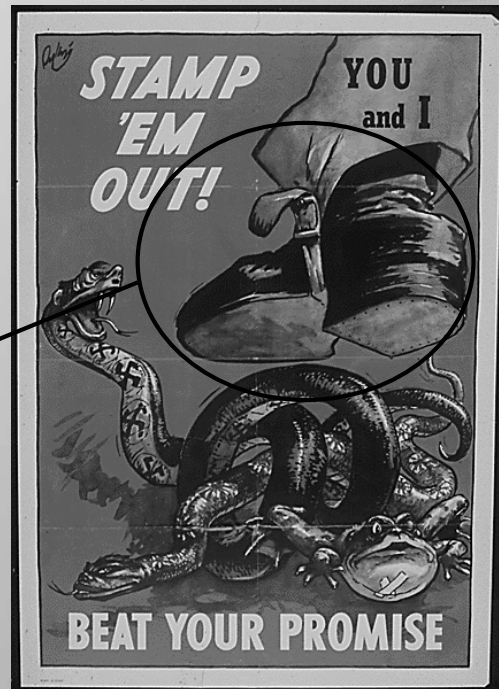
Analyzing Visual Primary Sources



“You and I” is a phrase that implies national unity. The idea here is that the enemy threat can be eliminated, but only if all citizens—“You and I”—work together.

Analyzing Visual Primary Sources

What might the boot symbolize?



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Though it's not made explicit in the poster, the boot in a general sense represents the United States. In a more specific sense, however, it's a figurative representation of the "You and I" mentioned on the pants cuff just above the boot.