

World War I Art & Literature Assignment

The Lost Generation

Many Americans were shocked by the horrors of World War I. They thought that something must be very wrong with traditional values if those values caused World War I. Nothing could excuse the death and destruction that young men and women experienced during the war. American writers traveled to Europe in search of inspiration. They hoped to create something new in a land where the old world had been destroyed. These Americans were expatriates, or people who choose to live in a foreign country.

American writer Gertrude Stein spent most of her life in France. She described these wandering Americans as the Lost Generation. These writers included F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, and Stein herself. They were “lost” because they felt strongly that something was wrong but did not know what to do about it. They wrote stories and poetry that criticized consumer society.

The novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald and his wife, Zelda, spent many years traveling in Europe. They mostly traveled throughout France. In his book *Tender is the Night*, Fitzgerald wrote about how his generation was damaged emotionally by World War I. According to Fitzgerald, they were dedicated “to the fear of poverty and the worship of success.” This description reflects the commercialism in the United States.

Fitzgerald’s most famous novel is *The Great Gatsby*. The main characters are obsessed with money and how to spend it. They go to lavish parties and are always looking for entertainment. Their relationships are based on lies. Fitzgerald was speaking out about his problem with people who care more about social position and money than personal relationships.

Ernest Hemingway was another famous novelist who spent many years living in Europe. The characters in his books *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* are members of the Lost Generation. William Faulkner’s story “The Bear” tells the story of a boy coming to terms with the adult world by learning to hunt. The story celebrates pride, humility, and courage. Faulkner feared that these qualities were being lost as Americans left the country for the city. He thought that people needed to be connected to nature. Industrialization took that away. Sinclair Lewis wrote about small-town life in his novel *Babbitt*. He showed how consumerism and conformity in American values created boredom and destroyed happiness.

During the 1920s, many American writers and thinkers studied the effects of a changing American society on those men and women who grew up during World War I. Their works reveal the problems of the Jazz Age.

1. How did life change the way the famous artists mentioned above created their art and literature?
2. How did literature respond to the cultural changes of the 1920s? 4-6 Sentences

<p style="text-align: center;">“Suicide in the Trenches.” By Siegfried Sassoon, 1917</p> <p>I knew a simple soldier boy Who grinned at life in empty joy, Slept soundly through the lonesome dark, And whistled early with the lark.</p> <p>In winter trenches, cowed and glum, With crumps and lice and lack of rum, He put a bullet through his brain. No one spoke of him again.</p> <p>You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye Who cheer when soldier lads march by, Sneak home and pray you'll never know The hell where youth and laughter go.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THE SONG OF THE MUD (FROM AT THE SOMME) Mary Borden-Turner, 1917</p> <p>This is the song of the mud, the obscene, the filthy, the putrid, The vast liquid graves of our Armies – It has drowned our men – Its monstrous distended belly reeks with the undigested dead – Our men have gone down into it, sinking slowly, and struggling and slowly disappearing. Our fine men, our brave, strong young men, Our glowing, red, shouting, brawny men, Slowly, inch by inch, they have gone down into it. Into its darkness, its thickness, its silence, Relentlessly it drew them down, sucking them down, They have been drowned there in thick, bitter, heaving mud</p>
<p>In the sections below, APPLE the poems above.</p> <p>Author: Who created the source? What do you know about the author? What is the author’s point of view?</p> <p>Place and Time: Where and when was the source produced? How might this affect the meaning of the source?</p> <p>Prior Knowledge: What do you already know that helps you understand the source? For example, do you recognize any symbols, people, terms, or other ideas?</p> <p>Listeners (or “Lookers”): Who is the audience? Who was the primary source created for? How might this affect the reliability of the source?</p> <p>Effect: Why is this source important? How does this primary source change history? Ask yourself, “So what?”</p>	

Source: A Farewell to Arms By: Ernest Hemmingway

The wounded were coming into the post, some were carried on stretchers, some walking, and some were brought on the backs of men that came across the field. They were wet to the skin and all were scared. We filled two cars with stretcher cases as they came up from the cellar of the post and I shut the door of the second car and fastened it. I felt the rain on my face turn to snow. The flakes were coming heavy and fast in the rain.

1. How does Hemmingway portray war in this section?

When daylight came the storm was still blowing, but the snow had stopped. It had melted as it fell on the wet ground and now it was raining again. There was another attack just after daylight but it was unsuccessful. We expected an attack all day, but it did not come until the sun was going down. The bombardment started to the south below the long wooded ridge where the Austrian guns were concentrated. We expected a bombardment, but it did not come. It was getting dark. Guns were firing from the field behind the village and the shells, going away, had a comfortable sound.

2. How is the day to day life of a soldier described in this passage?
3. If this was how it was during World War I, how would this mentally impact soldiers?

We heard that the attack to the south had been unsuccessful. They did not attack that night, but we heard that they had broken through to the north.

In the night word came that we were to prepare to retreat. The captain at the post told me this. He had it from the Brigade. A little while later, he came from the telephone and said it was a lie. The Brigade had received orders that the line of the Bainsizza should be held no matter what happened. I asked about the breakthrough and he said he had heard at the Brigade that the Austrians had broken through the twenty-seventh arms corps up toward Caporetto. There had been a great battle in the north all day.

4. If you were a soldier, how would this day to day grind impact you? How would you feel about war after a month of this?
5. Would you be a part of the Lost Generation after this?
6. What larger statement do you think Hemmingway is trying to make about the nature of warfare in the 20th century? *4-6 Sentences, cite examples from the text.

World War I Artist Biography:

Directions: Select a World War I Artist or member of the "Lost Generation" and complete a Bio on them gathering the information below:

Artist Name:

Include a Photo of the Artist:

Date of Birth:

Role in WWI::

Country of Birth:

Famous Works of Art:

World War I Postcard Assignment

Directions: On a notecard, you must make a two sided post card to send home from the front lines of the war. On one side must be a drawing and fully colored image. On the other side is the message you are sending home.