

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, WWII Heritage City

A series of lessons from the [World War II Heritage Cities Lesson Collection](#)

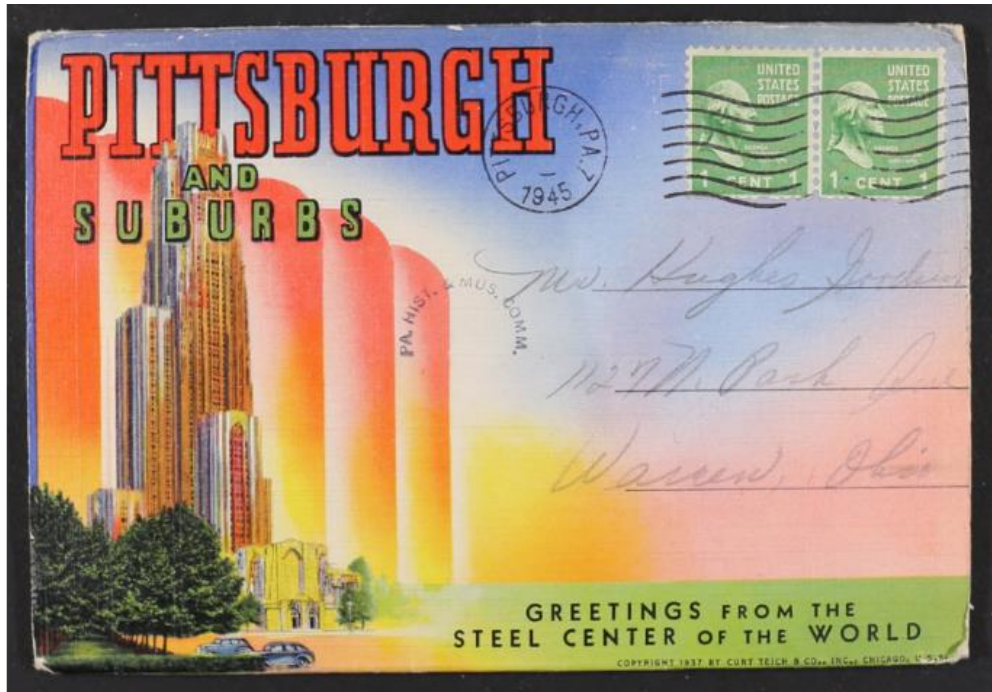


Figure 1: "Pittsburgh and Suburbs. Greetings from the Steel Center of the World" - a postcard with a copyright of 1937 and postmarked in 1945. (Credit: Pennsylvania State Digital Archives)

Introduction

The three lessons, and culminating fourth lesson, support the development of understanding the significance of [Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania](#) as an [American World War II Heritage City](#): its impacts to home front efforts with its contributions to war manufacturing and industry, with accompanying economic, social, geographical, and environmental changes. The lessons highlight specific contributions but connect to larger themes and understandings of the U.S. home front during wartime.

Lessons (with World War II home front topics):

The first three lessons listed can be taught individually or collectively, in any order. The final lesson is to support students in combining learning across the three lessons, and/or comparison to other World War II home front cities in a culminating activity.

1. The Development and Contributions of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, WWII Heritage City (p. 5)

- Home front city development and changes
- Manufacturing and industry
- Civilian workforce
- Double V Campaign
- Propaganda posters
- Environmental impact
- Civics connection

2. Women's Contributions to the Home Front in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, WWII Heritage City (p. 16)

- Social change
- Women in the workforce
- Manufacturing and industry
- Workplace safety for women
- Women's Army Corps (WAC)
- Civics connection

3. African American Contributions on the Home Front in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, WWII Heritage City (p. 30)

- Workforce
- Mining
- Manufacturing and industry
- Hill district

- [Pittsburgh Courier](#)
- [Executive Order 8802](#)
- [Double V Campaign](#)

[4. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Comparing and Connecting WWII Home Front Cities \(p. 42\)](#)

Positioning these Lessons in the Curriculum:

The standards listed beneath the lesson links are a collection of standards covered in the lesson collection. Objectives for each lesson, materials, and resources are listed within the lesson.

Time period: World War II

Topics: World War II, women's history, workforce migration, science and technology

United States History Standards for Grades 5-12

This lesson relates to the following [National Standards for History](#) from the UCLA National Center for History in the Schools:

Era 8: The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

Standard 3: The causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs

Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

This lesson relates to the following [Curriculum Standards themes for Social Studies](#) from the National Council for the Social Studies:

- Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change
- Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Theme 8: Science, Technology, and Society
- Theme 9: Global Connections

Relevant Common Core Standards

These lessons relate to the following [Common Core English and Language Arts Standards for History and Social Studies](#) for middle and high school students:

Key Ideas and Details

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.2

Craft and Structure

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.4

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.7
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.9

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.10

The lesson series was written by Sarah Nestor Lane, an educator and consultant funded by a National Council on Public History's cooperative agreement with the National Park Service.

Lesson 1: The Development and Contributions of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, WWII Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with [Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania](#) designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains photographs, two secondary source readings, and a newspaper excerpt to contribute to learners' understandings about the home front contributions of Pittsburgh and the people who lived there. It examines Pittsburgh's contributions to the US and its Allies, and the change and development of the area. The lesson also contains connections to home front propaganda posters. Extension activities include a civics connection and examining the environmental impacts of the area.

Objectives:

1. Describe the war effort and contributions of Pittsburgh as a major industrial center.
2. Explain and reflect on the impact of World War II on the way of life, workforce composition, and industries in Pittsburgh.
3. Identify challenges and opportunities faced by Pittsburgh on the home front.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 2-9 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (and optional extensions)
3. *Recommended:* Map of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania ([Example plat map](#), a map showing the division and use of land)



Getting Started: Essential Question

How did Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania develop as a home front city, and what was the impact on those who lived and worked there?

Photos



Figure 2: "Steel alloy manufacture. Allegheny Ludlum Steel Corporation, Brackenridge, Pennsylvania. General view of part of the plant where scrap iron and steel are converted into many grades of steel alloys. In the foreground are carloads of finished products, while in the middle foreground can be seen piles and cars of scrap coming in to feed the huge furnaces. In the background is the power house which supplies electricity and steam to turn the wheels of this important defense industry, set in the Pennsylvania hills about thirty miles north of Pittsburgh, one of America's most important steel producing centers" (Credit: Alfred Palmer; Library of Congress)

INCREASES IN CAPACITY OF STEEL INDUSTRY

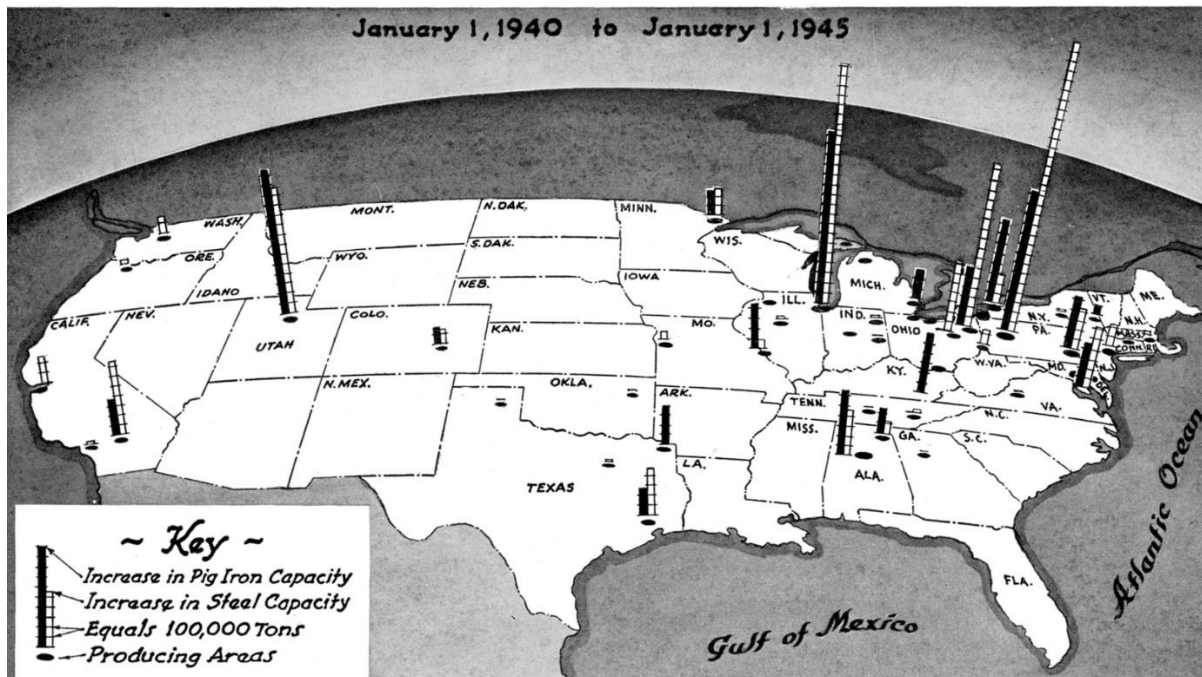


Figure 3: "Increase in pig iron and steel production, January 1, 1940-January 1, 1945." Pig iron is a type of crude iron produced by blast furnaces, (Credit: Pennsylvania State Archives)



By the numbers:

- The Pittsburgh region spent \$511 million on factory expansion during the war, the sixth largest among industry centers in the U.S.
- Production of steel was increased more than 200% by 1942, making Pittsburgh the world's leading producer of steel
- The Mesta Machine Company in Pittsburgh produced more than half of the 155mm gun tubes used in the war.
- Pittsburgh produced 20 percent of LSTs (Landing Ship, Tank) built during the war, as well as sub chasers, LSM (Landing Ship, Medium) and a variety of transport craft.
- More than 100,000 propeller blades were produced each year, 1942-1945 by the Curtiss-Wright Corporation.



Quotation to consider:

“By day, one who loves the American landscape has the feeling of riding over its cut-over grave, and by night he may not even enjoy the deception of darkness, for all around him the hoarse glare of converters and furnaces, the blue lights squinting out from the blackened panes of factory windows, will jeer at his antiquarian regrets. There is hardly a modern industry or trade that is not pounding by night or day through this frenzied area. . . Every small supply trade that can use the basic diet of the mines or the mills.”

- Alistair Cooke on Pittsburgh and the surrounding industry areas, where he visited in 1942, in *The American Home Front: 1941 – 1942*, p. 246



Read to Connect

Reading 1: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania as a Home Front City during World War II

By Sarah Nestor Lane

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was a bustling center of industry and transportation. The location and land features of Pittsburgh were convenient. The rivers and railways supported movement of troops, equipment, and supplies. It was well-connected to the rest of the country in this way. This supported resource movement to other domestic manufacturing sites and the front lines overseas.

Production in Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh became known as the “Steel City.” Pittsburgh produced mass amounts of steel to make weapons, ships, and tanks. The steel industry was critical for providing materials needed for the war effort. For example, the Allegheny Ludlum Steel Corporation developed alloys for use in aircraft and tanks.

Pittsburgh was a leader in steel production. It also produced other important materials. These included aluminum, rubber, radar systems, machinery parts, fuel and energy, and more. Aluminum is lightweight and durable. These characteristics made it ideal for making aircraft, weapons, and equipment. Synthetic rubber was used for tires and vehicle parts. Radar systems made in Pittsburgh were used by the US and allies for detecting enemy aircraft and ships. Pittsburgh-made machinery and heavy equipment included artillery pieces, locomotives, and ship pieces. Coal mining in the area helped produce energy for this production and transportation.

Also in Pittsburgh was the research center for the US Bureau of Mines. The center worked on experiments with explosives in mines and labs. Scientists worked on safe handling and storing of explosives. They studied how explosives react to things like heat and impact. The research contributed to designing a trigger for the atomic bomb for the [Manhattan Project](#). This trigger would set off a reaction causing the bomb to explode. This work, and other projects for the Manhattan Project, was top-secret at the time.

Workforce

Many men from Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania joined the Armed Services. About 1.25 million Pennsylvanians served. Approximately 900,000 of those were men. There was a need for both workers in industry and men in the service. This led to the opportunity for women to work in previously male-dominated professions.

At first, male managers and workers did not welcome women in the mills and industry jobs. Longstanding prejudice against women in these jobs led men to worry that women could not do the work, or that they would be distracting and cause liabilities. However, women filled these roles and succeeded in supporting the war efforts.

Expansion in Pittsburgh: Benefits and Challenges

There were benefits to the industry in Pittsburgh. Factories, mining, and other operations in Pittsburgh supported the war efforts and the Allies' win of World War II. The home front efforts led to women being in the workforce in new ways.

African American workers and service members launched the Double V campaign from Pittsburgh. The campaign started from a letter by [James G. Thompson](#) in the Pittsburgh

Courier. It called out discrimination and inequalities experienced by African Americans in the US. The campaign had long-lasting impact on the fight for equal rights of African Americans.

Some of the geographical challenges faced in Pittsburgh were displacement and pollution. The federal government and private industry displaced approximately 8,000 residents from an area called Homestead. Many lost their homes to make way for new steel mills.

Factories and mills contributed to pollution in the area. Polluted air, water, and soil had negative health impacts on residents. The most noticeable to visitors was the smoke. The local government passed a smoke control ordinance in October 1941, but due to the war effort, implementation of the ordinance for industry and railroads was delayed five years, to October 1946.

Questions for Reading 1 and Photos

1. How did the location and geography of Pittsburgh support the war effort?
2. What were some of the important materials produced in Pittsburgh during the war?
3. Why did more women enter the workforce in the Pittsburgh during the war?
4. What was the Double V campaign?
5. What were some of the social and economic impacts of the war on the Pittsburgh home front?

Photos



Figure 4: Neville Island, by Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad Company, May 27, 1947. Neville Island is described in Reading 2 of this lesson. (Credit: Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad Company Photographs, 1886-1972; University of Pittsburgh)



Figure 5: "Baseball players in war production. Outfielder Vince DiMaggio, of the Pittsburgh Pirates, has been working at the California Ship Building Corporation since last October. He's one of the many former athletic stars who are helping to smash the Axis by building the equipment needed by America's fighting men," 1943 (Credit: Rosener, Ann, photographer; United States Office of War Information, Library of Congress)

Reading 2: Newspaper Article

Teacher Tip: Prior to reading, explain to students two of the abbreviations in the reading. CIO stands for Congress of Industrial Organizations, and A.F.L. for American Federation of Labor. Today, these are combined to make AFL-CIO, the largest federation of unions in the US.

Halifax Calls Pittsburgh The Arsenal of the Nation

British Ambassador, Ending Industrial Tour Here, Voices Hope for Continued British-American Collaboration

October 10, 1942; *The Pittsburgh Press*, p.2

Lord Halifax, British Ambassador to the United States, declared in Pittsburgh last night that 'this is most truly the arsenal of this great industrial country.'

He addressed prominent Pittsburghers at a formal banquet for himself and Lady Halifax as they ended a two-day visit here.

During the day, the Ambassador had been shown something of the Pittsburgh district's industrial might.

In the morning he was taken to the great Homestead Works of Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corp., where he watched molten metal being poured from open hearth furnaces into huge ladles; saw glowing slabs being rolled into sheets, and inspected the new mill buildings rising where a year ago about half of Homestead resided.

Visits with CIO Boss

Later, he called on CIO President Philip Murray, who also came from the British Isles (Scotland) at the age of 16 to start his career in the mines. The two chatted about the contributions of organized labor to the war effort in Britain and America, then went to a luncheon meeting attended by leaders of the CIO and A.F. of L.

In the afternoon the Ambassador was taken to the Dravo shipyards on Neville Island to witness two ship launchings and to see something of the assembly line system which is keeping the Ohio River at that point almost constantly roiled by the launchings of sea-going warships.

He saw launched a submarine chaser and a big tank-landing ship. He and his party later inspected a tank-carrier riding at anchor in the river and saw the shops where parts are fashioned. While they watched, a giant press (largest in the world, it was said) bent a sheet of steel into a keel plate as effortlessly as if it were a stick of chewing gum. . . .

Sees Long War

Last night he stood under British and American flags in the William Penn Hotel and gave the banquet guests some of his ideas on the war situation.

‘I see no need for pessimism about this war,’ he said, ‘but I do feel that unless we realize the gravity of it and put everything into it, it may last a long time and cause a great deal of suffering.’

He later expressed a thought that he has previously voiced in speeches: the hope for continued collaboration between England and America after the war. . . .

Questions for Reading 2

1. What did Lord Halifax do during his two-day visit to Pittsburgh?
2. What is the significance of Lord Halifax's meeting with CIO President Philip Murray?
3. What is Lord Halifax's message to the American people about the war?
4. How does Lord Halifax's visit to Pittsburgh reflect the importance of the city's war industries to the US and the Allies?

Reading 3: Pittsburgh in Propaganda

By Sarah Nestor Lane



Figure 6: “We Can Do It! Rosie the Riveter,” 1943
(Credit: J. Howard Miller, Library of Congress)

Some famous propaganda posters have their roots in Pittsburgh. War propaganda is information that is used to influence people's opinions and attitudes about war. This can include posters, radio, and other media. These examples of propaganda posters show the impact the workforce in Pittsburgh had on the home front both locally and nationwide.

“We Can Do It!” and Westinghouse

Many recognize this iconic Rosie the Riveter poster. This poster was created in 1943 by J. Howard Miller. Miller produced the poster for Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company, headquarters in Pittsburgh, to boost women workers' morale there. The War Production Co-Ordinating Committee used this poster as part of a national campaign in encouraging

women to join the home front workforce.

Westinghouse manufactured over 8,000 different products and contributed research to technological improvements. Examples include developments in plastics, radar, and atomic energy. Women contributed to the important home front work at Westinghouse.

Men Working Together

The Allegheny Ludlum Steel Corporation, located in Pittsburgh, increased production to support the manufacturing of aircraft, tanks, ships, and weapons. In October 1941 photographer Alfred T. Palmer came to document this production. He was hired by the Office for Emergency Management (OEM). On his visit, he took about 80 photos.



Figure 7: Woman making helmet liners at Westinghouse, 1943 (Credit: Westinghouse Electric Corporation Photographs, 1886-1996, MSP 424, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center)



Figure 8: "Men Working Together!" (Credit: Office of War Information Photograph; Library of Congress)

A picture from Palmer's trip was used in the creation of the poster "Men Working Together." The picture was of a welder, George Woolslayer. Woolslayer's picture was placed alongside US Army Corporal French L. Vineyard, and John Marshall Evans, US Navy Radioman, First Class.

When Woolslayer saw his picture used, he wrote a letter in February 1942 to OEM asking for the names of the soldier and sailor also in the poster.

In August 1942 the War Information Office arranged for the soldier and a sailor to visit the factory where Woolslayer worked. Palmer went back to Allegheny Ludlum Steel to take pictures of the three men meeting. Woolslayer was proud to show the visitors how the steel was made for ships, planes, and weapons. Chief Evans [spoke to the steelworkers](#) at the tour, saying, "I know now where we get the stuff for battleships and guns--and even radio parts. And with men like you producing this stuff we need and backing us up, we can't lose this war."

These men, who were once unknown, became famous all over the country. The poster was in many publications and was hung up in factories and mills. (The full photo essay collection "[A Poster Comes to Life](#)" is in the Library of Congress online prints and photographs catalog.)

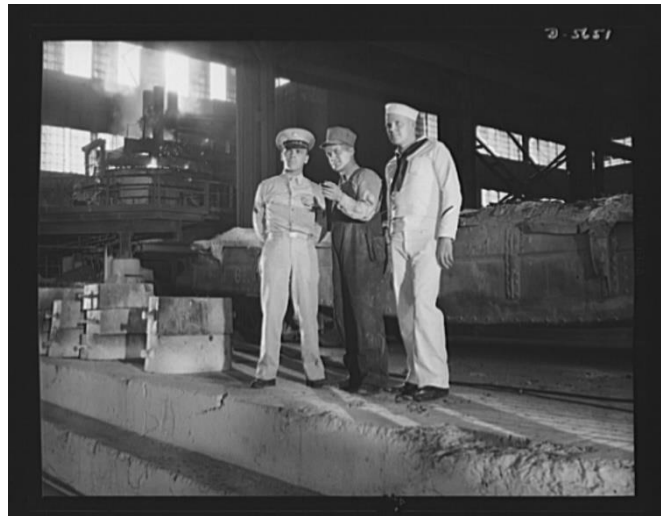


Figure 9: "A poster comes to life. "Now, over there is..." For six days, Woolslayer acted as guide for his Army and Navy companions and even then failed to cover the entire mill. Note, in left background, an electric furnace in operation. Allegheny-Steel, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania," August 1942 (Credit: Palmer, Alfred T., photographer; United States Office of War Information; Library of Congress)

Questions for Reading 3 and Photos

1. How do the “We Can Do It!” poster and “Men Working Together” poster connect to the home front industries and workforce in Pittsburgh?
2. Who are some of the Pittsburgh home front workers not represented in these posters?
3. Do you think these posters were effective propaganda tools? Why or why not?

Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania develop as a home front city, and what was the impact on those who lived and worked there?

Extension Activities

1) Civics and History Connection

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is an example of a city landscape that has changed geographically, socially, and economically throughout and because of World War II. There are multiple perspectives on the costs and benefits of those changes.

- Have students explore collections that interest them by [Historic Pittsburgh, hosted by University of Pittsburgh Library Systems](#)
- Take notes on different categories of change observed across time periods.

Reflection questions:

- How do you think changes were brought about in Pittsburgh?
- How do the changes during the 1940s connect to the changes in the city over multiple time periods?

Return to these questions as students learn more about Pittsburgh as a home front city.

2) Environmental Impact



Figure 10: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1941. (Credit: Vachon, John, photographer; Pennsylvania Pittsburgh Allegheny County United States; Library of Congress)

Examine the pictures in the [Smoke Control Lantern Slides collection by University of Pittsburgh](#). The pictures show smoke pollution issues in Pittsburgh in the 1940s and 1950s, before and after smoke control ordinances were passed regulating the burning of coal. Consider the role of the war industries in contributing to pollution, and how regulations made a difference over time.

Additional Resources

[A History of the Bureau of Mines Pittsburgh Research Center \(cdc.gov\)](#)

[David A. Good Interview, Library of Congress; worker at Curtiss Wright \(Pittsburgh\)](#)

[Meet Winnie the Welder - Heinz History Center](#)

Lesson 2: Women’s Contributions to the Home Front in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, WWII Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains photographs, two newspaper articles, and an interview to contribute to learners’ understandings about the home front contributions of women in Pittsburgh.

Women worked and served in many ways in Pittsburgh during World War II. The lesson does not cover all roles but shares a variety through primary sources and photos for students to consider. The first two readings focus on women in industry, while the third shares about a woman in service. You may choose to divide the readings into two lessons to look at the types of work separately or use it to compare, in the same lesson, across the many roles of women in Pittsburgh.

Objectives:

1. Explain why women entered Pittsburgh’s industry workforce, and the importance of this to home front efforts.
2. Describe the experiences of women working on the home front in Pittsburgh, with details such as workplace safety, living conditions, types of jobs, challenges, and benefits.
3. Compare historical perspectives on women in the workforce during World War II.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 10-16 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3
3. *Recommended:* Map of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to refer to throughout lessons.

Getting Started: Essential Question

How did women in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, contribute to the home front efforts?

Photos



Figure 11: The 1944 poster, "Soldiers without Guns," includes a picture of a woman welder. Welding was one role women had in Pittsburgh. (Credit: Adolph Treidler, artist; Library of Congress)



Figure 12: "Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. One of the women employees in the machine shop of the Greyhound garage working on a cylinder grinding machine," September 1943 (Credit: Esther Bublely, Library of Congress)



Figure 13: "Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Lillie Smith, working as a car washer in a garage, earns fifty-five cents per hour. She formerly did housework but likes this much better; she has one brother in the U.S. Army," June 1943 (Credit: Marjory Collins, Library of Congress)



Figure 14: "Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Woman employee of the mechanic shop in the Greyhound garage," September 1943 (Credit: Esther Buble, Library of Congress)



By the numbers:

- "In such traditionally masculine institutions such as blast furnaces, steel works and rolling mills, where only 1 per cent of workers were women in 1939, they now represent 6 per cent. In aircraft and parts factories the percentage of women employees jumped from 1 per cent in 1939 to 39 per cent in 1943. And in the production of aircraft engines the increase was from 1 per cent in 1939 to 28 per cent in the summer of 1943."
 - "Background of News: Women Wage-Earners" by Burt P. Garnett (November 4, 1943, p. 16 in *The Pittsburgh Press*)
- By September 1943, more than 30,000 workers in U. S. Steel's mills were women, approximately just under 9% of the workforce (340,000 U.S. Steel company workers)



Quotations to consider:

“I think they (men) resented us at first, but they knew that we were there to do a job until the men came back and they respected us. They just weren't ready for us. Like I said they didn't have bathrooms for us or make any accommodations.”

- Mary Jane Farrell Scherer, January 1993

“. . . the men would stand around and talk about you in groups or they would tell you, you weren't strong enough to do that job . . . The reason, I think the men resented us was the girls who had been there . . . had seniority and could be inspectors. And men resented this because that paid more than something else that they would do.”

- Leona Dobis Farmerie, August 1992

Both quotations are sources from interviews in Pittsburgh, PA; *Women in Steel Industry, Harrisburgh, PA*: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.



Read to Connect

Reading 1: Newspaper Excerpt

Teacher Tip: Help students compare the date of this article and its contents to the dates from the “By the Numbers” below the reading, and the next reading. How does the discussion continue to develop around women in industry? You may also choose to read one, or a combination of the three, newspaper excerpts. It may help to assign small groups each with one text to then report back on to the class.

“Victory Belles” by Douglas Naylor

The Pittsburgh Press, October 10, 1942, p.1

Plans have been laid in Pittsburgh for large scale employment of women in war industry, if the government mobilization of fighting men approaches estimates of Maj. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, director of Selective Service.

He has said that between 10,000,000 and 13,000,000 men might be needed, a fighting force of such magnitude that war production industry would have to surrender every man that could be released.

This eventuality has not been left to chance. When every available man can be tapped on the shoulder—without taking any chances of disrupting the rate of plant production.

They will be able to pull out these men successfully by following a plant-by-plant job chart in process of creation in the office of the U.S. Employment Service, 526 Penn Ave.

The charts are being made from a new survey by Alvin D. Snyder, staff technician for the Employment Service.

Jobs Examined

'I am now making a survey of about 12 to 14 plants in the Pittsburgh district which will hire about 70 per cent of all future war industry labor needs here,' Mr. Snyder explained.

'We are examining every job in these plants to determine the employability of women workers,' he said.

'Several angles are taken into consideration to determine the suitability of women. For example, we must find out the worker characteristics required for success on the job, such as strength factors, and ability to stand for long periods of time.

'The limiting factors in the employment of women are principally confined to weight and lifting requirements. In some cases, these might be overcome by increasing the leverage. This would enable women to do many more heavier jobs.

'In respect to dexterity, if you take a group of 100 men and another of 100 women and test them for manual dexterity, they won't differ on scores to any appreciable extent.'

Mr. Snyder said that when his occupational analysis is finished, 'we will know how many women can be employed in each plant.'

'When the labor shortage becomes stringent enough,' he added, 'we can go to an employer and say:

Tests Are Given

"'According to our analysis there are so many jobs in your plant that could be done by women. Why not hire them.'"

Mr. Snyder pointed out that there is enough government training in the trades to fill all these vacancies with women capable of carrying on the work.

To show how job specification is handled for the war crisis, Mr. Snyder referred to the physical requirements needed for woodworkers in aircraft manufacturing. His report – which indicates that women are employable at these jobs—carries these observations. 'Applicants will be required to pass an aptitude test. Worker characteristics significantly required for satisfactory performance are: strength of hands, arms, dexterity of fingers, eye-hand coordination, co-ordination of independent movement of both hands, form

perception, keenness of vision, touch discrimination, ability to work rapidly for long periods, understanding of mechanical devices and emotional stability.”

Mr. Snyder has written a report on ‘The Influence of Women Workers on Labor Supply in the Defense Industries of Pittsburgh,’ published in mimeograph form. In this report he said:

‘The importance of the woman worker as the potential bulwark of the labor supply is increasing daily. A voluntary registration of women is to follow the mass registration of male workers. It is estimated that eventually two and one-half million women will be recruited for war industries.

Standards Changed

‘It is because of this urgency that the Employment Service has made this preliminary survey of available women workers, problems confronting women workers, their influence on the labor market, training facilities for women workers and law regulating their work.

‘Wage differentials between male and female workers will of necessity have to be broken down as the women are hired in greater proportions. Employer’s specifications that often restrict the woman worker from employment will have to be relaxed.

‘Laws regulating the hours and conditions of the employment of women will have to be altered to meet the requirements of the times.

‘In-plant training and upgrading for women within industry will become functions of all industrial concerns. Job simplification and job breakdown will follow as a procedure to introduce the woman worker to industry.

Steps Necessary

“All of these steps, and more, are necessary to keep industrial production on a level with military demands and the inevitable victory that we all hope will be ours at the end of this world-wide struggle.’

Mr. Snyder pointed out that industrial production areas like Philadelphia and the West Coast are able to employ a larger percentage of women in war work than Pittsburgh, because of the predominance of so-called “heavy” industries in this area requiring semi-skilled laborers with more strength than women possess. But he predicted that any abnormally big drainage of manpower for the armed forces might lead to the employment of women in more than half the jobs in the Pittsburgh district, and added that, as more production contracts flow to local plants, the number of employed women here might swing far above 50 per cent.

Questions for Reading 1 and Photos

1. In the photos, what jobs are shown? Why were these positions important to the war effort?
2. In Reading 1, why was Snyder's study conducted?
3. How does the reading describe why women working in industry was crucial to the home front efforts?
4. Do you think information like from Snyder's study was influential in providing women jobs in industry in Pittsburgh? Why or why not?
5. In the quotations to consider, both women speak about men resenting them for working at the steel mills. Why do the women think the men feel this way? What additional factors do you think may have caused resentment?

Reading 2: Newspaper Excerpt

“Basic Needs in Workers’ Togs Given” by Mary Anderson

Excerpts from a discussion on ‘Putting Women to Work in War Industries’ by Mary Anderson, director, Women’s Bureau, United States Department of Labor.

Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph, March 16, 1943, p.11

The kind of clothes women wear on the job has come in for much more attention in recent months. Women’s ordinary street clothes are not practical for machine jobs in a plant.

The Women’s Bureau has never encouraged a rule-of-thumb requirement for work clothes. We do say that clothes should be adapted to the particular job, with all the necessary safety precautions taken into consideration.

The basic requirements for factory work clothes apply to both men and women: Not too tight to hinder free movement, not too loose to get caught in moving machinery; pockets only when they are not a hazard and then limited to certain types; no jewelry, including rings and watches; hair completely protected; and well-fitted shoes completely covering the foot, with extra toe or other protection where necessary.

On some jobs trousers are most practical for women; on many other jobs women can wear a simple type of dress.

Safe Headgear

When intricate hair-dos the fashion, no article of personal protective equipment is of more immediate importance to women workers than the headgear designed for safety. It is necessary, if a hair covering is to be acceptable to the workers, that it be designed for

comfort and attractiveness as well as safety. Fortunately, all of these can go together. Comfort means that the headsize will be generous, and that also means that the hat will be thrown off if a girl does strike a part of the machinery.

Comfort means, too, that it will be possible to completely cover the hair without ruining the hair-do, and that is a guarantee that the hair will not get caught in moving machinery. A good work hat should also have enough height so that it does not touch the top of the girl's head, and have enough stiffness so that it does not catch in revolving machinery. Hairnets alone do not meet these requirements either for safety or attractiveness.

Training Needed

The Women's Bureau is frequently asked, 'How can we enforce safety rules and the wearing of proper work clothes by women?' The answer goes back first to training for the job, or introduction to the job. From there on the whole problem of safety of women workers hinges on supervision. The supervision of women presents problems little different from the supervision of men. However, if the foremen resent the introduction of women into the plant—whether consciously or unconsciously—or if the men themselves dislike the presence of women, there is not likely to be the smoothness of operation that results in adequate production and safe methods.

Beyond the plant gate, unsatisfactory living conditions take a heavy toll in the health and industrial efficiency of women workers. Some women carry heavy home responsibilities in addition to full-time jobs. Women workers also have certain housing and recreation needs somewhat different from those of men.

Crowded Quarters

In some of our war industry areas, many workers are young women away from their homes and families, living in crowded rooms with several others, without adequate opportunities for good meals at reasonable cost, without opportunities for wholesome recreation. Such conditions make it likely that tuberculosis—to mention only one disease—will increase, as health authorities predict it will. Tuberculosis deserves special attention because large numbers of women workers are within that dangerous age range most affected by this enemy. Management, workers, local communities, state and Federal agencies, must combine forces in attacking conditions outside the factory which lead to illness, absenteeism, and less production.

The important thing to keep in mind now is that women are on the job in the war industries; they are turning out the quality and quantity of work the war demands. The nation will need their particular strength and ability even more as time goes on. It is only sound sense to do

everything possible, within the plant and beyond it, to safeguard their health and efficiency for victory.

Questions for Reading 2

1. What considerations were there for women's safety?
2. Why do you think the author refers to comfort and attractiveness with work clothes?
3. What are some of the challenges women faced working in this field, as described in the reading?

Photos



Figure 15: "Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Lithuanian chapter of Red Cross," June 1943 (Credit: Marjory Collins, Library of Congress)



Figure 16: “Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (vicinity). Montour no. 4 mine of the Pittsburgh Coal Company. Miners' wives, members of the Office of Civilian Defense first aid group,” November 1942 (Credit: John Collier Jr., Library of Congress)

Reading 3: Interview of WAC recruiter Marcella Irene Martin (Excerpt)

The interview of Marcella Irene (Jones) Martin is from the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. The interview was collected on May 27, 2015, when Martin was 91 years old. The interviewer’s name is Janet Player. The interview is available in [MP3 format](#) and the following is a transcribed excerpt, condensed for student readability.

Background: Marcella Irene Martin started in the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), mostly for training, and then served in the Women’s Army Corps (WAC). She served from 1943 – 1945. She rose to the rank of Sergeant and spent time in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania as a recruiter, starting in spring of 1944. In her interview, she described some of the challenges of being a recruiter in Pittsburgh.

Marcella Martin (MM): Well we got on the phone, and they gave us a phone book. And they had it all.. We was supposed to hit every single available woman that we could get.

JP: and you were trying to recruit these women for what job?

MM: the Blue Angels. They needed help in the hospitals, and they started this unit, the Blue Angels were ... it was a short-lived thing, but the Blue Angels for Purple Hearts... it was supposed to be where you felt sorry for the boys that needed help. . . I liked the duty, because I knew every girl, I got to go in was going to help... it was a different kind of.. I wasn't replacing a man. I was getting somebody to help the ones that had been wounded. And that's the thing that made it. . .

JP: Very worthwhile.

MM: Very worthwhile.

JP: So, they gave you a list and you called these women, and so tell us what that was like. They had to answer, or their parents would answer.

MM: We'd call. Is Mary there? Yeah, just a minute. Mary, this is Sergeant Jones from the Womans Army Corps. We'd like to talk to you about. . . oh boy, they knew right then, you know. 'I'm not joining the service.' 'Well, can I just talk to you? Can we come out to the house to talk to you?' Well anyway, we managed with our ways to get to go out there. And then we got there, and there's a little old house, and tromp up on the front porch and knock at the door. By that time parents were sitting there waiting for you. They open the door. Here you are in uniform, and they knew what you were there for. The girl had already said maybe I'll join the service. And, 'You're not taking my daughter! You've got three of my sons. She's not gonna go with a bunch of ---'. . . there's nothing you could do, so after that started happening all the time, we decided we'd take a wounded soldier that was just one-legged. . . and of course, nobody argued with that. So he'd go up and knock on the door. And they would let us in. And with him there, he probably put a shame to the girl. It worked beautifully... so at least we got some of them to sign up and come in, but it was a tough go. See, in the morning we did all this phoning and then after lunch, they gave us a squad car and a driver and they took us all over Pittsburgh and they dropped us off here or there or there and. . .

JP: So tell us what your spiel was. You had gotten in the house and you're sitting around the table with the girl and her parents. . .so tell us what you'd say.

MM: Well, you. . . People really have no idea what is going on in the hospital and we invite you to come down to the hospital anytime. There's 28 boys laying there, maybe the 28th one is your son, and he wants his cigarette lit. He's got to wait for 28 more boys for somebody to

tend to him. We're that short. If you're not there helping and you're behind a glass case selling nylons, we think you'd better rethink the thing. And we're not asking to take your daughter to have her killed. . . This would be hospital duty. . . They didn't take the Blue Angels overseas. They needed them all there in Washington DC, all those hospitals. It's amazing. . . that was the height of the... if you ever get any statistics on how many soldiers came back for a week. . . We're talking 100s of thousands and they can't take care of them overseas. They had to bring them over in hospital ships and put them in wards. And there was nobody to take care of them once they got in the wards. It was a very bad situation. . .

JP: It was a very hard time. . . so the girls you got to sign up, what happened next after they signed?

. . . The girls you recruited to be Blue Angels, they had to have a physical exam... tell us about their physicals.

MM: They were going to go to. . . it was the Army; it just wasn't regular Army. So, they had to pass all the physicals. The same thing that all the girls had. The only difference at all was no benefits. And after the thing got rolling and they found out how efficient and how good the women were. They were releasing boys working in post headquarters. They were releasing these boys that they needed to put a gun on their shoulder. And of course, we weren't very popular with the soldiers.

JP: Now being in Pittsburgh, you told us how dirty the city was - sooty and. . . You had cream-colored uniforms and had to wear cream gloves. And how hard it was to stay clean.

MM: Oh, cream gloves, cream hat. . .

JP: At the time you lived with a woman whose daughter was gone. Is that right?

MM: Her daughter was a Navy WAVE. . . We paid her rent, and she made us oatmeal every morning. And she lived at the end of the streetcar track in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Way up, way up. . . So, we get on there, take off our gloves, hang on to the post. Wouldn't dare sit down because we had to. . . it was so dirty that you just had to stay spic and span clean.

JP: And that effected the. . . for every 10 girls you recruited. . . How many of them passed their physical because of all the pollution. . . only 1 right?

MM: Well, it was the same amount, because they hadn't cleaned up Pittsburgh yet...they didn't clean up Pittsburgh until a few years ago, and you would go into the bathroom and wash your hands and go like this. . .*(gesture with finger to look at nose)*

JP: So, a lot of the girls you recruited didn't pass their physical. . . is that right? . . . 1 out of 10 passed, So, 9 didn't.

MM: Right, because of that, and well, a few other things, but mainly because of that. And so, the job was so devastating, because we had to work so hard, between the parents that didn't want their girls to go, and the girls didn't want to go, and their physical health was really bad. So . . .

JP: So you said at this time, I think I asked you what you did for fun. . . and you said, well we really didn't. It was a very serious time, the country.

MM: Yeah, all we did was go to a restaurants. . . In Pittsburgh, all the bars were open for us. You know, if you wanted to drink, after we saw the girl and did this, we'd all meet at the squad car and just go up the steps, and, 'Come on in, girls.' As long as you had a uniform on, that goes for men, too. So that restaurants. . . there was nothing to do, and then we were right back on it early the next day.

JP: And you said everyone was focused on trying to get the war over. . . working just as hard as they could.

MM: We didn't have tickets to this and tickets to that, and stuff. No, right in the middle of a big city. . .

Questions for Reading 3 and Photos

1. What was Martin's work in Pittsburgh?
2. How did pollution in Pittsburgh at the time impact the recruits?
3. What made Martin's service in Pittsburgh both, in her words, "worthwhile" for her and "devastating?"

Lesson Closing

Using the photos and readings from the lesson, make a list of some of the many jobs that women held in Pittsburgh to support the home front efforts.

Answer the essential question with evidence: How did women in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, contribute to the home front efforts?

Lesson 3: African American Contributions on the Home Front in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, WWII Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains photographs, a background reading, and newspaper excerpts to contribute to learners' understandings about the experiences and contributions of African Americans on the home front in Pittsburgh. It examines discrimination faced and the impacts of the Double V campaign from the *Pittsburgh Courier*. Extension activities include documentaries on the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the culture of Wylie Avenue (Hill district) and examining the *Pittsburgh Courier's* coverage of Jewish rights.

Objectives:

1. Describe experiences of African Americans in Pittsburgh on the home front.
2. Identify contributions of African Americans in Pittsburgh to the war effort.
3. Explain how the contributions of African Americans to the war effort helped to challenge racism and discrimination.
4. Discuss the significance of the Double V campaign in the history of civil rights in the United States.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 17-23 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (and optional extension activities)
3. *Recommended:* Map of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Getting Started: Essential Question

How did African Americans in Pittsburgh contribute to the home front efforts and the civil rights movement?

Photos



Figure 17: August 31, 1943, "A black and white photograph of the annual Elks parade procession on the second hill of Wylie Avenue in Pittsburgh's Hill District. Representatives of the Masons, the Shriners, police, fire, and military officials lead the procession, including Voyle Parker (fourth from the left), Lt. James Robinson (sixth from the left), and Elder Beck. A mass of people line the thoroughfare to watch the parade. The back of the photograph is blank." (Credit: Charles "Teenie" Harris; National Museum of African American History and Culture)



Figure 18: ca. 1942 – 1943, "A black and white photograph of Duke Ellington with composer Billy Strayhorn and dancer Alfredo Gustaf inside the Stanley Theatre in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Ellington is seated at a piano and Gustaf is sitting on top. Strayhorn stands to the side of the piano, between the other two men. A floral patterned curtain covers a window in the center background." (Credit: Charles "Teenie" Harris; National Museum of African American History and Culture)



Figure 19: Photographic print of helmeted boy in toy US tank (Credit: Charles “Teenie” Harris; National Museum of African American History and Culture)



By the numbers:

- Pittsburgh’s African American population in the 1940s grew from 62,000 to 86,000 (plus surrounding mill towns). This increase was seen in African Americans composing 8.2% of Pittsburgh’s population in the 1930 census, to about 12% in the 1950 census. In the same time period, the city’s population growth rate overall was +1.4% from 1930 to 1950.
- 75 cents per hour: paid rate advertised for furnace men in a *Pittsburgh Courier* ad, 1943 (Duquesne Smelting Corporation). This is worth \$17.39 today, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI).



Quotation to consider:

“The ‘Double V’ emblem of The Courier has struck me very forcefully. It is of great significance to us as a race and should impress the world with the goals we have set. Every Negro should have some emblem to wear. This Double ‘V’ means more to us than the ‘Buy a Stamp’ or ‘Buy a Bond’ drive!”

- Willa Smith, in letter to the editor; *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 14, 1942; p. 12



Read to Connect

Reading 1: African American Living and work on the Home Front in Pittsburgh, PA

By Sarah Nestor Lane

African Americans migrated to the Pittsburgh area for employment. This was both before and during the US entry to the war. A 3,000-unit housing project, Terrace Village, opened in 1940 in the “Hill District.” Hill District residents, including those at Terrace Village, included 40 percent white residents.

Many African American businesses were thriving in the Hill district of Pittsburgh in the 1940s. The Hill was unique. It was interracial, unlike downtown Pittsburgh and other neighborhoods. Jewish businesses also thrived in the Hill. The businesses included cleaners, tailors, printing, shops, restaurants, and a hotel. There were dance halls and night clubs, and jazz music flourished. Many businesses were on Wylie Avenue, the main commercial avenue. An annual parade celebrated local businesses and organizations.

The *Pittsburgh Courier* started as a small African American weekly newspaper. It was first printed for the Hill district neighborhood. It grew into the largest African American weekly newspaper in the country. The Courier worked to expose discrimination. The Courier reported there was massive non-compliance with Pennsylvania’s laws on nondiscrimination. They reported on segregated bathrooms at worksites, automobile clubs, and more. The Pittsburgh Interracial Action Council also protested segregation. They hosted an interracial picnic at a historically white-only pool. This was one of the Council’s many attacks on segregated areas that led to progress over time.

Home Front Contributions

African American residents of Pittsburgh played a crucial role on the home front. They contributed to the war effort in various ways but faced discrimination and segregation.

President Roosevelt issued [Executive Order 8802](#) in 1941. It stated, "There shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries and in Government, because of race, creed, color, or national origin." The order led to more African American workers in the defense industries. However, it did not fully prevent discrimination in the workplace.

Many African Americans contributed to the war effort by working in mills and factories, such as the city's thriving steel industry. Pittsburgh, nicknamed the "Steel City," produced

steel critical for manufacturing weapons and equipment. African American workers filled jobs that contributed to the production of tanks, ships, and other essential materials. Another example of a workplace that hired African American workers was a grease plant. African American men also worked in mining. Coal mining helped produce energy to fuel wartime distribution and movement. African American workers were usually still paid less and offered less desirable jobs. These jobs often had increased health risks, such as harmful gas exposure.

African American women also worked and served, even with limited opportunities. These women were mostly segregated in their work and limited to opportunities in areas such as cleaning. More working opportunities for African American women were in the Hill district. They also volunteered, such as supporting selling war bonds and drives.

Double V Campaign

African Americans faced racial discrimination, despite their contributions and service at home and overseas. This led to the “Double V” campaign. The “Double V” campaign started from a letter submitted to the Pittsburgh Courier by [James G. Thompson](#). Part of his letter asked, “Should I sacrifice to live half-American?” From this letter came the “Double V,” which stood for victory over two things. First was victory against the Axis powers in the war and second was victory over racial discrimination at home in the United States. Black newspapers and civil rights leaders promoted this idea. African Americans supported the war effort while also fighting for their rights and equality on the home front. The campaign spread nationwide from the Pittsburgh Courier. Pins, clubs, hats, and more for the Double V campaign spread. This was a way for Black Americans to demand the freedoms they were fighting for overseas should extend to them in their own country.

African American residents of Pittsburgh made significant contributions to the war effort. They did so despite facing discrimination and segregation on the home front. Their resilience not only helped win the war but also laid the foundation for important changes in American society.

Questions for Reading 1 and Photos

1. What was the significance of the Hill district?
2. What was the *Pittsburgh Courier*, and what role did it play in the African American community?
3. What were some of the ways that African Americans in Pittsburgh contributed to the war effort?
4. What challenges did African Americans in Pittsburgh face during World War II? How did the Double V campaign confront the challenges?

Reading 2: Newspaper Excerpt

Teacher Tip: Discuss how the text uses historical language and labels that are not used today to describe the race or abilities of individuals.

Poor Distribution Held Actual Cause of Labor Shortage

Top WMC Official Reports Many Plants Still Refuse to Employ Women, Negroes, or Physically Handicapped; McNutt Asks Removal of Barriers

October 19, 1942, *The Pittsburgh Press*, p. 4

Washington, Oct. 19 – A top official of the War Manpower Commission reported today that the so-called man-power crisis has developed because of ‘mal-distribution, rather than an actual shortage of workers.’ Many of this country’s problems have been aggravated by employers and labor unions “who still act as if this were a peacetime labor market,” he asserted.

Bans Still in Effect

This official – who declined to be quoted directly reported many war plants still refuse to hire Negroes, women, aged, or physically-handicapped workers, despite the serious labor shortages that exist in the same localities.

He added that numerous industries are not co-operating with WMC pleas that they step up their training programs. Shortages in nearly 150 skilled work categories already are so acute that the only way they can be obtained is by training unskilled workers, he said.

‘Some plants which still refuse to hire women could replace 30 or 40 per cent of their workers with women’ he said. He mentioned specifically several well-known war plants which still discriminate against Negroes . . .

WMC Chairman Paul V. McNutt just last night announced WMC’s first ‘statement of policy’ regarding women workers. It urged removal of all barriers against women workers, that they be hired and trained ‘on a basis of equality with men,’ and that they be given ‘free access to foreman’s supervisory and technical jobs.’

It urged employers ‘to analyze all jobs to determine which can be filled by women and to prepare for employing the largest possible number.’

Contributing to Problem

Mr. McNutt listed the following reasons why America’s manpower problems have developed.

1. War contracts have been let too liberally in labor shortage areas. WPB Chairman Donald M. Nelson ordered recently that future contracts be let wherever possible in labor surplus regions, if equipment and other facilities are available.
2. Employers have disrupted Federal efforts to stabilize the manpower front by 'pirating' workers from other plants and 'hoarding' other workers in anticipation of future needs. This situation has been aggravated further by worker migrations to better paying jobs.
3. Recruiting campaigns have led many badly needed skilled workers to enlist. Selective Service boards often have refused to defer such workers despite careful instructions from Washington.
4. Employers often are refusing to hire women, Negroes, the aged, and the physically-handicapped because of pre-war employment standards and 'pure prejudice.'
5. And finally because 'we're not getting enough production out of the workers already in war jobs.'

The WMC official estimated that 'if we could increase labor's production capacity by 20 per cent, we could more than offset the drain on the labor force to be caused between now and December, 1943, if the Army reaches its goal of 7,500,000 men by that time.'

Questions for Reading 2

1. What is the main point of the article?
2. What are some of the reasons why the War Manpower Commission says there is a manpower crisis?
3. What are some of the solutions that the War Manpower Commission proposes to address the manpower crisis?
4. President Roosevelt issued [Executive Order 8802](#) in 1941. It stated, "There shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries and in Government, because of race, creed, color, or national origin." This newspaper article was printed in October 1942. What does the article show about the progress against wrongful discrimination?

Photos



Figure 20: "Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (vicinity). Montour no. 4 mine of the Pittsburgh Coal Company. Coal miner waiting to go underground." Pennsylvania Pittsburgh Allegheny County United States, 1942. Nov. (Credit: Collier, John, Jr; Library of Congress)



Figure 21: Photo: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania vicinity. Montour no. 4 mine of the Pittsburgh Coal Company. Miners getting their head and safety lamps. Pennsylvania Pittsburgh Allegheny County United States, 1942. Nov. Photograph. (Credit: Collier, John, Jr; Library of Congress)

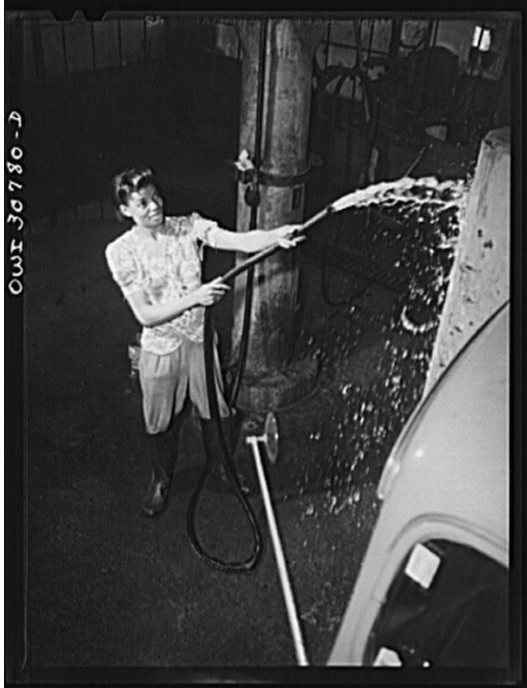


Figure 22: “Ruby Lois Robbins, thirty-one, employed as a car washer in a garage, earning fifty-five cents per hour. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She formerly worked in a cigar store in Tuskegee, Alabama,” May-June 1943 (Credit: Marjory Collins; Library of Congress)



Figure 23: “Pittsburgh, Pa. The coopers plant at the Penola, Inc. grease plant, where large drums and containers are reconditioned Here a workman lifts a drum from a boiling lye solution which has cleaned it from grease and dirt particles,” March 1944 (Credit: Gordon Parks; Library of Congress)

Reading 3: Newspaper Excerpt

The Double V Campaign / The Women's Army

The Pittsburgh Courier, March 28, 1942, p. 6

Among Negroes there is the greatest unanimity in history about the *Pittsburgh Courier's* Double V campaign – Victory for Democracy at home and abroad.

From the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Canada to Cuba, men women and children are stirred as never before by this slogan which sums up so succinctly the goal of all Americans of good will.

Every person who possesses one of the Double V pins will wear it proudly and prominently, and every person who sees one will know exactly what it means.

This is not a campaign waged by colored citizens alone; it is a campaign waged by all citizens, regardless of color.

Every thoughtful American realizes that the independence of this nation depends upon victory for our armies against the forces of totalitarianism abroad on a dozen fronts.

It is widely understood that at home democracy may perish unless every one of us is unusually vigilant.

If we are to have no democracy at home, it does not make a great deal of difference what happens abroad.

Victory for Democracy abroad means beating the armies of Hitler, Mussolini and The Mikado.

Victory for democracy at home means beating disfranchisement, racial pollution laws, residential segregation, economic discrimination based on color, jim-crowism, social and educational inequalities, and all efforts to curtail or abolish the safeguards of the Bill of Rights.

A Double V pin indicates allegiance to these high ideals for which great men have fought and died through the centuries that we might have a measure of freedom today.

Questions for Reading 3 and Photos

1. What is the symbolic meaning of wearing Double V pins?
2. What does the author mean by "democracy may perish unless every one of us is unusually vigilant"?

3. Explain how the Double V campaign was a response to the challenges faced by African Americans in the United States during World War II.

Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did African Americans in Pittsburgh contribute to the home front efforts and the civil rights movement?

Extension Activities

1) Documentaries

The following documentaries connect to the readings in the lesson, and could be watched in part or full:

- [A Beacon for Change: The Pittsburgh Courier Story](#) (28:06, WQED)
- [The Pittsburgh History Series: The Wylie Avenue Days](#) (1:01:11, American Archive of Public Broadcasting)

2) The *Pittsburgh Courier* and Coverage of Jewish Rights

Pittsburgh had, and continues to have, a large Jewish community. In *The Jewish Community of Pittsburgh, December, 1938: A Small Study*, by Dr. Maurice Taylor, it was reported that there were 22,000 Jewish-identifying persons (41% of the Pittsburgh Jewish population) living in the Squirrel Hill District (separate from the Hill District), and 11,000 in the Hill district (mentioned in Reading 1).

The *Pittsburgh Courier* published several stories and coverage supporting the Jewish population abroad and, in the US. These were both local to Pittsburgh and national publications.

Read the following excerpts from a *Pittsburgh Courier* article with students and compare this writing to the purpose of the Double V campaign. Additionally, the Jewish population in Pittsburgh offers a rich history that can be explored with students using the oral history collection by the University of Pittsburgh, [Pittsburgh and Beyond: The Experience of the Jewish Community](#).

Note: Some historical language must be addressed with students as now culturally insensitive and should not be used today.

Anti-Semitism Spreads: Jewish Problem Similar to Ours (excerpts)

By Marjorie McKenzie, *Pittsburgh Courier* Columnist

October 30, 1943 (p.1, 4)

Washington, D.C. -- It requires considerable self-control for a Negro to read about the anti-Jewish riots in Boston and refrain from I-told-you-so attitudes. Nothing but great objectivity and tolerant understanding of the basis of their own problems can keep Negroes from feeling a fierce satisfaction over the accuracy of their warnings regarding the war-time mushrooming of American prejudices. For they know that a nation that learns to make a scapegoat of Negroes has learned, above all else, to hate, and eventually will lust for more than one victim.

Into the maw of America's hate are sucked all weak and defenseless minorities – Negroes, Jews, Mexicans, Chinese-Americans, Jap-Americans, and aliens—until gorged and stupid from its own avarice, our country risks the danger of becoming the ludicrous world figure that Germany is today. The Negro press and Negro organizations have been saying this for years: they have advocated the Negro's cause, not on a narrow group basis, but in terms of preserving the American ideal—by making of the Negro a symbol of a democracy at the cross-roads rather than a special pleader. . .

Must Combine Strength

There are always such measurements as skin color and hair types and other differences which science has recorded and catalogued. To refuse to recognize them is comparable to sticking one's head in the sand. It seems simpler to conquer one's fear of the stranger, to accept him as different but equal to oneself. It is the very dissimilarities among people which enrich and embroider the culture.

The time has come when, if we wish to preserve ourselves—Jew and Negro and Mexican – as well as our integrity, which is indeed the honesty and soundness of America herself, we must combine our strengths and fight together for a future which we have a right to share with our white, Christian brother.

Additional Resources

- [A Day at the Grease Plant \(placesjournal.org\)](http://placesjournal.org)
- [Double Victory | National Museum of African American History and Culture \(si.edu\)](http://si.edu)
- [The Double V Victory | The National WWII Museum | New Orleans \(nationalww2museum.org\)](http://nationalww2museum.org)
- ["The Good Fight" Documentary \(28:01\) | History Documentaries | WQED](http://wqed.com)

Lesson 4: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Comparing and Connecting WWII Home Front Cities

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains photographs, two readings, optional documentary extension, and a culminating mastery project. The first reading shares the voices of several Pittsburgh citizens to the President, and the second connects Pittsburgh to the designation of a Heritage City. The culminating project contributes to learners' understandings of the city as a WWII Heritage City, with the opportunity to combine lesson themes from the three other lessons in the Pittsburgh [lesson collection](#). This is to summarize the city's contributions and encourage connections to the overall U.S. home front efforts.

Objectives:

In a culminating product:

- a. Identify important World War II home front locations in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and describe their historical significance
- b. Summarize the contributions of diverse Pittsburgh civilians and service members to home front wartime efforts
- c. Evaluate the short- and long-term changes experienced in Pittsburgh, such as economic, social, geographical, and environmental changes
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Pittsburgh, PA and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 24-27 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2
3. Maps, project materials (as needed)
4. Student graphic organizers (See Figure 28 at end of lesson, for reference)

- Create Comparison Matrices for your students to use. To compare two cities, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows. Label the left column Theme/Topic and the other columns City 1 and City 2. For a Comparison Matrix for three cities simply add an additional column.
- Create two Single-Point Rubrics to assist students' self-assessment. One is for assessing proficiency in meeting teacher-selected standards. One is for assessing proficiency in meeting objectives.
- For the rubric on standards, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows of content. Label the first column "Areas for Improvement," the second column, "Proficient (Meeting Standard)," and the third column, "Areas of Exceeding Standard." Leave the first and third columns blank. In each row of the second column identify a Standard and indicate a space for noting the evidence for meeting the standard. Include a space at the bottom of the page for assigning points for each column.
- For the rubric on objectives, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows of content. Label the first column "Areas for Improving toward Objective," the second column, "Proficient (Meeting Objective)," and the third column, "Areas of Exceeding Objective." Leave the first and third columns blank. In the four rows of the second column identify these four objectives:
 - a. **Objective:** Identify important World War II home front locations in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and describe their historical significance
 - b. **Objective:** Summarize the contributions of diverse Pittsburgh civilians and service members to home front wartime efforts
 - c. **Objective:** Evaluate the short- and long-term changes experienced in Pittsburgh, such as economic, social, geographical, and environmental changes
 - d. **Objective: Optional:** Describe similarities and differences of Pittsburgh, PA and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

Include a space at the bottom of the page for assigning points for each column. See the last photo of this lesson for reference.

Getting Started: Essential Question

Why was Pittsburgh chosen as an American World War II Heritage City, and what are its similarities and differences to other home front cities?

Photos



Figure 24: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the evening, February 1941 (Credit: Jack Delano; Library of Congress)



Figure 25: "A poster comes to life. The middle man in the poster looks at his image mounted on a wall at Allegheny-Ludlum Steel Corporation, wonders what the other two fellows are like, and where they are these days. George Woolslayer, thirty-two-year-old welder, was chosen as a model for this poster when an Office of War Information photographer visited the plant in the fall of 1941. His interest in the soldier and sailor prompted him to write OWI (Office of War Information) asking for information on the servicemen. Result: furloughs were obtained for the two, who came to the steel mill and saw that "Men Working Together" is the formula by which American soldiers, sailors and workers will win this war. Allegheny-Steel, Pittsburgh" (Credit: Alfred Palmer; Library of Congress)



Quotation to consider:

“Pittsburgh has a long and rich history of providing the materials and manpower to change the world. During World War II, Pittsburgh served as one of the nation’s crucial defense manufacturing centers. In the decades since local organizations and residents have preserved this critical legacy in museums, memorials, and local programming. Understanding and honoring our history is vital to building a better Pittsburgh, and a better world, for all of our children.”

- Mayor Ed Gainey, [City of Pittsburgh press release](#), December 16, 2022, on receiving the designation of an American [World War II Heritage City](#)

Reading 1: Voices of Pittsburgh: “Dear Mr. President”

This recording is from January or February 1942. It can be [listened to online](#) from the Library of Congress.

Unidentified Man: You will now hear several speakers from different walks of life forming a cross-section of Pittsburgh. They have been asked to speak as though they were addressing the President of the United States, privately if they were given a short interview with him in his office. They will identify themselves.

Mrs. William Houghton: I am Mrs. William Houghton of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A mother of two small children and a housewife. My dear Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity of pledging my wholehearted support in any small way that I can help in these troubled times, and also to thank you for many past benefits, because in the past the government has been such a good friend of ours. For six years, my husband held a position in the liquor stores, which he would never had had but for the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment.

In the past year and a half we have lived in the government housing projects and so have lived under much better conditions than we could have privately. And my husband has just finished a government sponsored defense course which has enabled him to procure a better position. So I feel that any small thing we have had to do up to now is insignificant and any greater demands that are made on us later will be small repayment to a good and great friend of ours, the United States of America.

Clark W. Kelley: This is Clark W. Kelley of Pittsburgh representing western Pennsylvania newspapers. Dear Mr. President, it is a pleasure for me to tell you as director of the central office of our newspaper organization, that there is complete unity among these publications in the support of every phase of our war effort. Everyday, there come to my

desk many newspapers large and small. Some are the last word in typographic display, others are printed in less-modern style. Together they represent every type of community life, a real cross-section of America. They are rightly called papers of the people because they truly reflect public sentiment on all vital questions. The greater Pittsburgh territory covered by these newspapers is known as the workshop of the world from which much comes much of the war munitions for our cause.

Whatever the differences of opinion were that existed among these newspapers and their readers before December 7th, they have now all disappeared. Since then, like the men in the armed forces, the newspapers like the workers in the workshop of the world, are enlisted as soldiers under you, their Commander in Chief.

Gladys Crawley: I am Gladys Crawley, a Negro girl employed by the city of Pittsburgh as a clerk in the city deeds registry. I feel, Mr. President, that it is largely due to the position you have taken in seeing that the Negro citizens and other members of minority groups are accorded equal opportunities, that the members of my race are more hopeful than ever before. I know I speak for them when I pledge my deepest loyalty to you and all your efforts.

We do feel that Negroes have not been given equal opportunities for service in the camps and defense industries. But our faith in you is such that we know that you will do everything that can be done to remedy this condition and at the earliest possible time.

I know you will be glad to know that all the groups of which I am a member are doing their full share as American citizens in Red Cross work, purchase of defense stamps, and all other activities which will help speed us to victory.

Paul L. Houston: This is Paul L. Houston, president of the Yellow Cab Company of Pittsburgh. More and more each day, I am impressed with the tremendous importance of having Franklin D. Roosevelt in the White House during these uncertain and trying days when our world is being made over before our eyes.

Men today, as always, want, need, and must have a flesh and blood leader in whom they trust and in whom they have implicit faith, and this requirement, I feel, is met to its highest degree in our president. Everyone I talk to seems to feel that the old world we lived in before December 7, 1941 has passed out of existence. And we are in a whole new universe which each of us in our own way, day-by-day, are fashioning into a better place in which to live. I never felt so confident or so hopeful in my life. Heavy burdens, such as we all must bear, and trying days such as we must experience seem to bring out the best in us. We seem to appreciate the real things in life such as our homes and our families and they seem more precious to us as we feel that we are fighting to protect them. With President Roosevelt to chart the course, we all feel the ship is headed for a very, very safe port.

John Forelli: Mr. President, I am John Forelli an ordinary coal miner, Library, Pennsylvania. I work for the Pittsburgh Coal Company, one of the world's largest producers of coal. We miners all know that our country's at war. And the war will only end when the enemies of democracy are destroyed. Our part is to produce coal in a larger scale and we're the guys who can do it. We also know that while we're producing coal everybody else must be doing his bit for coal alone won't win this war.

The miners are behind you, Mr. President, always as in the past. And we'll endeavor to perform any task our government may ask of us. We all have friends in this battle as we have had before. And no miner is going to be a slacker by letting our government down.

George J. Shale: Mr. President, my name is George J. Shale, superintendent of public safety equipment and maintenance for the city of Pittsburgh. I wish to report that our police and fire equipment has been prepared to take its part in the civilian defense effort for a final victory. We have added cruising patrol ambulances equipped with two-way radio communication, warning devices, first-aid kits, stretchers, and machine guns. Fifty other cars with similar equipment patrol the city continuously. The past month a twenty-five percent reduction in mileage to save tires was accomplished.

Our ninety pieces of fire apparatus are in a high state of efficiency and sixteen current deliveries will bring our firefighting power to the recommended point of preparedness. The restrictions placed on tires, parts, and cars has not been felt very seriously to date. We hope that the vital public safety services can be maintained efficiently. But we are prepared if any act of war visits Pittsburgh.

Questions for Reading 1 and Photos

1. What do the photos depict? How do they connect to your understanding of Pittsburgh as a city at the time?
2. In the reading, what do the speakers have in common?
3. Explain how the speakers' personal experiences and identities shape their views on the war.
4. How do the speakers' perspectives develop our understanding of the experience on the home front in Pittsburgh in World War II?
5. What does this text reveal about the public mood in Pittsburgh during World War II?

Extension

Argue for or against the following statement: The speakers in this text represent a cross-section of American society during World War II.

Photos



Figure 26: [Untitled photo, possibly related to: Pitcairn, Pennsylvania. Miss Mary DaVanzo, twenty-two, employed at the Pennsylvania Railroad steel car shop boiler room as a stationary firemen's helper, earning seventy-two cents per hour. She lives on a farm in in nearby Delmont and was formerly a waitress in the Mercy Hospital, Pittsburgh.] May 1943 (Credit: Marjory Collins, Library of Congress)



Figure 27: African American War Bond Volunteers, 1944 (Credit: Carnegie Museum of Art, Second Century Acquisition Fund and gift of Milton and Nancy Washington, 1996.55.7)

Reading 2: Heritage City Designation

Excerpt from: “[House Report 115-998](#), “*To Direct the Secretary of the Interior to Annually Designate at Least One City in The United States as An ‘American World War II Heritage City,’ and for other purposes*” (October 30, 2018)

“ . . .PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 6118 is to direct the Secretary of the Interior to annually designate at least one city in the United States as an “American World War II Heritage City”.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

On December 7, 1941, military forces of the Empire of Japan attacked the U.S. Naval Fleet and ground bases at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. On December 8, 1941, one day after what President Roosevelt referred to as, “a date which will live in infamy,” the United States declared war against the Empire of Japan. Three days later, on December 11, 1941, Japan's ally, Germany, declared war on the United States. Sixteen million Americans, mostly young working-age men, served in the military during World War II, out of an overall United States population of 113 million.

While an unprecedented number of Americans served in World War II, the country drastically increased its war production on the home front, serving not only the needs of the armed forces of the United States but her allies as well--in what President Franklin Roosevelt called “The Arsenal of Democracy.” The combination of millions serving in the military, during a period of necessary and drastic increases in production, led to significant social changes on the American home front.

The World War II period resulted in the largest number of people migrating within the United States in the history of the country. Individuals and families relocated to industrial centers for good paying jobs out of a sense of patriotic duty. Many industrial centers became “boomtowns,” growing at phenomenal rates. One example, the City of Richmond, California, grew from a population of under 24,000 to over 100,000 during the war. . .”

Questions for Reading 2 and Photos

1. What was the purpose of the bill (H.R. 6118) according to the report?
2. Why do you think Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was designated as a World War II Heritage City? Use details from the bill and from the lesson(s) information.
3. Are there other cities you think of when considering home front contributions during wartime? Which, and why?

Optional Activity: Documentary

The documentary [“America’s Arsenal: How Pittsburgh Powered World War II”](#) (27:33) can be used as a wrap up of learning, and add to understandings, as it shares images and facts that were not fully covered in the other lessons.

Documentary description: “WQED reports on Western Pennsylvania's contributions to World War II, including the Bantam Jeep designed in Butler, LST production on Neville Island, steel production in Homestead and the Westinghouse artist who created the Rosie the Riveter image.”

Culminating Activity/Mastery Product

To demonstrate student understanding, support students in creating a final product that meets the following objectives:

- a. Identify important World War II home front locations in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and describe their historical significance
- b. Summarize the contributions of diverse Pittsburgh civilians and service members to home front wartime efforts
- c. Evaluate the short- and long-term changes experienced in Pittsburgh, such as economic, social, geographical, and environmental changes
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Pittsburgh, PA and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

Mastery products should be:

- . . . **student-led**; Students work as individuals or in collaborative groups.
- . . . **student-directed**: Students are offered a variety of choices for product type.
- . . . **student-organized**; Teacher facilitates by providing students with the comparison matrices and/or resource links from throughout the series of lessons.
- . . . **student-assessed**; Teacher supports student self-assessment and reflection by providing students single-point rubrics to assess for meeting standards and/or lesson objectives.

Note: Depending on time and scope, the comparison of Pittsburgh to another WWII Heritage city(s) within the mastery product (objectives) may be omitted. However, comparing cities is recommended, as it connects students to a deeper understanding of the WWII home front.

Examples of mastery product choices include, but are not limited to:

- **Written:** Letter (opinion or informative), essay, poem, narratives, biography, articles, class book or children’s book, speech or debate (then presented orally), blog / website, plaque or historical displays, pamphlets or rack cards
- **Graphic Organizers:** timeline, flowcharts, mind or concept content maps, Venn diagrams, comparison matrices, posters
- **Artistic Expression:** song, dance, theater (ex. skits), 3-D models, dioramas, photo journal, stamp and coin designs, visual art, architecture/building or monument, museum design
- **Media design and creation:** podcast, historical markers, social media content, interactive virtual maps or tours, infographics, video, comic strips or graphics, game design, slideshows, digital scrapbook

Please view the [NPS Heritage cities lesson collection](#) for information and resources on other cities.

Single-Point Rubric

Areas for Improvement	Proficient (Meeting Standard)	Areas of Exceeding Standard
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
Points		

Figure 28: Single-Point Rubric (Standards; Blank) [Teacher selects priority standards for assessment.] Courtesy of Sarah Nestor Lane

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