

## Jonathan Brasfield

### Lesson Plan Summary

Title: Reflections on the American Soldier: A Preparation for Memorial Day Celebration.

Duration: 90 minutes

Audience: U.S. Government students at the secondary level (grades 9-12).

Rationale: Inspired by the “The Price of Freedom” exhibit found at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History, this lesson is designed to develop a student’s understanding and appreciation of the special role the American soldier has played in the development of our national character and how they influenced international affairs. The lesson would be ideally delivered on or shortly before Memorial Day to enhance the student’s ability to reflect during this national holiday.

### Curriculum Standards

South Carolina U.S. Government Course Standards

- USG-4: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the United States’ relations with other nation-states and its role in world affairs.
- USG-5: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the concept of personal and civic rights and responsibilities and the role of the citizen in American democracy.

### Student Objectives

- Identify and sequence the armed conflicts Americans have engaged in throughout history.
- Summarize the historical context, leading causes and eventual outcomes of each major war.
- Explain the role military service has in preserving the American principle of freedom.
- Express an appreciation toward the sacrifices made by the American soldier.

### Materials Required

The Price of Freedom: Americans at War DVD

Internet-connected computer (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/>)

### Learning Activities

- 1) Opening discussion on Memorial Day and view *Americans at War* introductory video segment on DVD. (5 minutes)
- 2) Each student creates a list of American military conflicts in chronological order to the best of his/her ability, and then he/she pairs with other students to compare lists and identify missing information. Teacher helps students compile lists into one classroom list on board. (15 minutes)
- 3) Students participate in teacher-led discussion and make notes identifying date range, causes, casualties, and outcomes of these major U.S. military conflicts: (3 min each, 30 minutes total).

a. Revolutionary War	f. World War I
b. War of 1812	g. World War II
c. Mexican-American War	h. Korean War
d. Civil War	i. Vietnam War
e. Spanish-American War	j. Gulf War (1991)
- 4) View DVD video segments detailing soldier’s personal accounts. (15 minutes)
- 5) Student’s visit online Smithsonian exhibit “The Price of Freedom: Americans at War” at URL <http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/> (25 minutes)
- 6) Student will choose two of the following assignments: (homework)
  - a. Write a “Thank You” letter to a specific American soldier encountered in the lesson.
  - b. Create a work of art (painting, poem, etc.) that commemorates the soldiers of a specific war.
  - c. Create a graphical timeline that summarizes the major U.S. military conflicts

### Assessment

- 1) Student chronological list of American military conflicts (formative, informal)
- 2) Student participation and note-making during discussion (informal)
- 3) Student chosen homework assignments: letter, art, or timeline (formal)