Activity: Horace Pippin: The Artist of No Man's Land

Guiding question:
How were the realities of trench warfare reflected in the memoir and art of Horace Pippin?

DEVELOPED BY JAMIE L. LATHAN
Grade Level(s): 9-12
Subject(s): Social Studies, Art History, Art
Overview
This 90-minute activity will allow students to learn about the war experiences of Horace Pippin. Through his memoir and art, students will analyze Pippin’s experience of trench warfare. African-American soldiers lost many battles along the racial frontlines due to the persistence of racial inequality and violence in the immediate aftermath of World War I. However, their sacrifice, courage, and military accomplishments laid the foundation for a more racially just society for all Americans.

Historical Context
The art of Horace Pippin emerged from the trenches of World War I. Pippin was shot in the right shoulder and arm on September 26, 1918, and left for dead. He was immobilized, hungry, and thirsty for an entire night before being rescued. When Pippin returned home from the war, he no longer had use of his right arm due to his injury. Despite the physical disability, Pippin began painting by holding a brush with his right hand and using his left arm to move the canvas. He was one of the first African-American artists to address social justice and political issues in his paintings. For Pippin, painting was a form of emotional and psychological healing from the scars of the war.

Objectives
At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

• Analyze a painting;

• Analyze and interpret a memoir excerpt; and

• Write an argumentative essay about the painting and memoir excerpt.
Standards Connections

Connections to Common Core

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Connections to C3 Framework

D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

D2.His.6.9-12. Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.

D2.His.15.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

Documents Used ★ indicates an ABMC source

Primary Sources

American Battle Monuments Commission

Horace Pippin, The Ending of the War, Starting Home
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of Robert Carlen, 1941-2-1

Horace Pippin, “Horace Pippin memoir of his experiences in World War I,” pp. 54-55
Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
Materials

- Computer with Internet access for each student
- Analyzing Horace Pippin's Memoir Handout
- Horace Pippin Memoir Transcription
- *The Ending of the War, Starting Home* Painting
- Horace Pippin: The Artist of No Man's Land Essay Rubric

Lesson Preparation

- Ensure that all technology and websites are working properly.
- Make one copy of the following for each student:
  - Analyzing Horace Pippin's Memoir Handout
  - Horace Pippin Memoir Transcription
  - *The Ending of the War, Starting Home* Painting

Procedure

Activity One: Anticipatory Set (15 minutes)

- Display the painting *The End of the War, Starting Home*.
- Ask students to look at the painting and answer the following questions:
  - *What is going on in the painting? What makes you think that?*
  - *What objects seem to be emphasized in the painting? What makes you think that? Why might the artist have included them?*
  - *How does this painting reflect what you already know about World War I?*
  - *How does the painting reflect the African-American experience in World War I?*

Activity Two: Analyzing Pippin's Memoir (45 minutes)

- Direct students to read the excerpt from Pippin's memoir.
- Ask students to outline the events that took place in the memoir excerpt and any personal details that Pippin included on a piece of paper.
- Ask students:
  - *Why are Pippin's details important?*
  - *How do they help the reader understand fighting in World War I?*
  - *What do they tell us about Pippin?*
  - *What questions do you have about the writer?*
• Direct students to view and analyze the photographs from the excerpted pages of *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe (Blue Book)*.

• Ask students to discuss what the photographs reveal about the setting in which Pippin fought.

• Direct students to compare and contrast three photographs from the Blue Book with *The End of the War, Starting Home* on the Analyzing Horace Pippin’s Memoir Handout.

• Discuss as a class the similarities and differences among the memoir excerpt, the painting, and the photographs from the Blue Book excerpt.

**Assessment**

• Direct students to construct a 1- to 2-page paper answering the following question:
  ◦ *How do the art and memoir reflect Pippin’s experiences as an African-American soldier? What might this tell us about the experiences of other African-American soldiers in World War I?*

**Methods for Extension**

• Students may find and analyze other pieces of art by Pippin.

• Students may compare and contrast art by Pippin and works by other white and African-American service members.

**Adaptations**

• Students who struggle with essay construction could be given an essay organizer.
## Analyzing Horace Pippin's Memoir Handout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph Title and Page</th>
<th>Similarities with Painting</th>
<th>Differences with Painting</th>
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Horace Pippin Memoir Transcription

(p. 54)...some French snipers came by. They look for Germans that is left back. So he seen me laying there. When he did so he stopped to say something to me. But he never got it out. For just then a bullet past through his head and he sank on me. I seen him coming on but I could not move. I were just that week. So I hat to take him. I were glad to get his water and all so bread. I took my left hand and I got some coffee after some hard time getting it from him, after that I felt good and I tried to get up again. But I were so week to do so. Night were coming on and it began to rain. Then I tried to get the Blanked [blanket] from my Dead comrade. That I could not do. And I could not get him off of me. The rain came more and more on till I were in water.

(p. 55) Yet I were growing weaker and weaker all the time and I went to sleep. I can’t say how long I slept. But two boys came and I woke up. They took the Frenchman off of me and then took me out of the shell hole for some Distens [distance] where there were more wounded ones. I were left there the rest of the night. Every time I would get in a sleep I would be woken up by the French troops going to the line. On till near morning four French took me in to a Dugout and then to another on till they found a Dr. then he did something. I do not know any more that night. When I woke up, it were Day. Then I were carried out of the Dugout. I seen then that it were full of shot up men like myself some worst then I. I layed out there for some time in the rain waiting for my turn [turn] to be taken Down.

*The pages of Horace Pippin’s memoir have been transcribed as written. Only words where the meaning might not be obvious have been placed in brackets.*
The Ending of the War, Starting Home Painting

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of Robert Carlen, 1941-2-1
# Horace Pippin: The Artist of No Man's Land Essay Rubric

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<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Argument</strong></td>
<td>Essay has a clear, reasonable, and sophisticated thesis statement.</td>
<td>Essay has a clear and reasonable thesis statement.</td>
<td>Essay has a clear thesis statement.</td>
<td>Essay has an unclear or missing thesis statement.</td>
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<td><strong>Historical Evidence</strong></td>
<td>Essay successfully uses at least four identifiable references from the painting or memoir.</td>
<td>Essay successfully uses at least three identifiable references from the painting or memoir.</td>
<td>Essay successfully uses at least two identifiable references from the painting or memoir.</td>
<td>Essay successfully uses one or fewer identifiable references from the painting or memoir.</td>
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<td><strong>Accuracy</strong></td>
<td>Essay successfully engages with relevant historical facts without error.</td>
<td>Essay engages with relevant historical facts with minor errors.</td>
<td>Essay engages with relevant historical facts with several significant errors.</td>
<td>Essay has little or no command of relevant historical facts.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td>Essay is coherent with no spelling or grammatical errors.</td>
<td>Essay is coherent with some minor spelling or grammatical errors.</td>
<td>Essay may lack coherence in some places and/or contains grammatical errors that affect readability.</td>
<td>Essay lacks any coherence and/or contains grammatical errors that prevent readability.</td>
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