**Spartacus Educational Classroom Activity**

# American Artists and the First World War (Questions & Answers)

<http://spartacus-educational.com/EXAManswerFWW5.htm>

This commentary is based on the classroom activity: [American Artists and the First World War](http://spartacus-educational.com/ExamFWWU5.htm) (see also [Max Eastman](http://spartacus-educational.com/Jeastman.htm), [The Masses](http://spartacus-educational.com/ARTmasses.htm), [Robert Minor](http://spartacus-educational.com/ARTminor.htm), [Boardman Robinson](http://spartacus-educational.com/ARTboardman.htm) [James Montgomery Flagg](http://spartacus-educational.com/ARTflagg.htm), [Art Young](http://spartacus-educational.com/ARTyoung.htm) and [Henry J. Glintenkamp](http://spartacus-educational.com/ARTglintenkamp.htm)).

Question 1: Study sources 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12. Explain if the images are pro or anti the United States taking part in the First World War.

Anti-War: (1) Robert Minor is arguing that the perfect soldier is one without a head (someone who does not think for himself). It was an attempt to stop young American men from joining the army. (2) Boardman Robinson shows men wearing different army uniforms firing on Jesus Christ. He is making the point that countries taking part in the conflict were claiming to have "God on their side". (8) Henry J. Glintenkamp shows a man having an army medical. The dangers of joining the army is emphasized by portraying the doctor as a skeleton.

Pro-War: (4) James Montgomery Flagg's I Want You for the U.S. Army was America's most successful recruitment poster. It is based on the idea of Britain's most successful poster by [Alfred Leete](http://spartacus-educational.com/ARTleete.htm) featuring [Lord Kitchener](http://spartacus-educational.com/FWWkitchener.htm). (6) This government poster is also by Flagg. Wake Up America!suggests that Germany threatens "Civilization" and that "every man, woman and child" needs to become involved in the war effort. (10) Joseph Leyendecker's Weapons for Liberty – U.S.A. Bonds, uses images of the Statute of Liberty and a Boy Scout to create a patriotic reaction. (12) James Montgomery Flagg's poster again uses the image of Uncle Sam. It is aimed at children who are asked to buy "War Savings Stamps".

Question 2: Would the author of source 3 have liked source 6?

Answer 2: Upton Sinclair had been a critic of the American government but believed that "the difference between the ruling class of Germany and that of America is the difference between the seventeenth century and the twentieth". He goes onto say that "if Germany be allowed to win this war - then we in America shall have to drop every other activity and devote the next twenty or thirty years to preparing for a last-ditch defence of the democratic principle". Sinclair agrees with the message of source 6 that Germany threatens "Civilization".

Question 3: Read source 5 and explain how he helps the production of source 4.

Answer 3: Cathy O'Brien, the granddaughter of James Montgomery Flagg, claims that his image of Uncle Sam was first produced in July 1916 for Leslie's Magazine.

Question 4: Read source 9 and study source 2. Why do you think that Max Eastman believed The Deserter "deserved a place in the history of art"?

Answer 4: Max Eastman, the editor of *The Masses*, was a strong opponent of the First World War. He believed that Boardman Robinson's drawing, The Deserter, captured the futility of war and "deserved a place in the history of art".

Question 5: Read the introduction and source 7 and explain why the authorities believed that some of the cartoons that had appeared in [*The Masses*](http://spartacus-educational.com/ARTmasses.htm) had violated the [Espionage Act](http://spartacus-educational.com/FWWespionage.htm).

Answer 5: Under the terms of the Espionage Act, it was an offence to publish material that undermined the war effort. Cartoons by Robert Minor, Boardman Robinson and Henry J. Glintenkamp were all considered to fall into this category. The legal action that followed forced the magazine to cease publication. In April, 1918, after three days of deliberation, the jury failed to agree on the guilt of the defendants.