

Memoirs from the Marne: An American Soldier's Experience in World War I"

Step into the boots of a fresh young soldier from the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), deployed on the battle-scarred terrain of France during World War I. Craft a first-person narrative diary entry detailing your experiences and perceptions during the critical battles and times of waiting, embodying the spirit and reality of the era. Your narrative should focus on the events occurring around the Second Battle of the Marne in 1918, a turning point in the war.

In your narrative, ensure to incorporate the following historical facts:

- **American Involvement:** The United States entered the war in April 1917, however, it wasn't until the middle of 1918 that American troops started seeing serious action. Prior to this, the troops were undergoing intensive training, learning tactics, and forming alliances.
- **AEF Leadership:** The American Expeditionary Forces were led by General John J. Pershing who insisted on maintaining the independence of the AEF and rejected British and French demands that American forces be integrated with their armies.
- **Second Battle of the Marne:** This battle, taking place in July 1918, was the last major German offensive on the Western Front. The AEF played a significant role in the Allied victory, marking a turning point in World War I.
- **Trench Warfare:** A prominent feature of World War I was the extensive use of trench warfare. Conditions in the trenches were incredibly harsh, leading to numerous casualties from attacks, diseases, and poor living conditions.
- **New Technologies:** The war was characterized by the introduction of new weapons and technologies. These included machine guns, tanks, chemical warfare (such as the use of poison gas), and advancements in artillery.
- **End of the War:** The Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, marking the end of World War I. Following the armistice, the Treaty of Versailles was signed in 1919, which officially ended the state of war between Germany and the Allied Powers.

Guidelines:

Your narrative should be personal and immersive. Reflect on how these events and circumstances might affect you as an individual, as well as your outlook on the war. Consider elements like the physical and emotional experience of battle, the camaraderie among soldiers, the impact of foreign surroundings, and the general atmosphere during this pivotal time in history.

Length:

Your diary entry should be approximately 1,000 to 1,500 words.

Criteria for Evaluation:

Your work will be evaluated on the basis of historical accuracy, inclusion of the mandatory historical facts, depth of understanding, and narrative creativity. The vividness of your portrayal, the coherence of your story, and your use of language will also contribute to your grade.

Rubric

Criterion	Outstanding (10 Points)	Satisfactory (7 Points)	Needs Improvement (4 Points)	Unacceptable (0 Points)
Historical Accuracy	Accurately integrates all six key historical facts, demonstrating a clear understanding of the event's timeline and key figures.	Incorporates most key historical facts and shows a good understanding of the event's timeline and key figures.	Some key historical facts are missing or inaccurate. Understanding of the event's timeline and key figures is unclear.	Does not incorporate key historical facts, or they are mostly incorrect. Does not understand the event's timeline and key figures.
Depth of Understanding	Demonstrates a deep understanding of the soldier's likely experiences and emotions. Analysis and reflection on the impact of the events on the soldier is profound and thoughtful.	Demonstrates a good understanding of the soldier's likely experiences and emotions. Some thoughtful analysis and reflection on the impact of the events.	Some understanding of the soldier's likely experiences and emotions. Analysis and reflection on the impact of the events is somewhat shallow.	Little to no understanding of the soldier's likely experiences and emotions. No or superficial analysis and reflection on the impact of the events.
Narrative Creativity	The narrative is exceptionally creative, engaging, and vivid. Language and style are appropriate and compelling.	The narrative is somewhat creative and engaging. Language and style are generally appropriate.	The narrative lacks creativity and engagement. Language and style are basic.	The narrative is not creative or engaging. Language and style are inappropriate or confusing.
Coherence and Structure	The narrative is well-structured, clear, and coherent. The story flows smoothly, with well-crafted sentences and transitions.	The narrative is generally well-structured and coherent. There may be a few unclear transitions or sentences.	The narrative lacks a clear structure and coherence. There are numerous unclear transitions and sentences.	The narrative is not structured or coherent. The story is hard to follow due to unclear transitions and sentences.

Reel vs. Real: A Comparative Analysis of a Historical Movie and its True Historical Counterpart"

The power of cinema in shaping our understanding of history is profound. Historical movies often give us insights into past times, people, and events. Yet, filmmakers may sometimes take liberties with facts to create a compelling narrative or achieve a certain artistic vision. As students of history, it's crucial for us to discern fact from fiction in such portrayals.

The purpose of this assignment is to critically evaluate a historical film of your choice, compare it to the actual events or figures it depicts, and analyze the changes made and their potential impacts. This task not only aids your comprehension of historical accuracy in film but also sharpens your research, analytical, and communication skills. You will delve into a captivating intersection of history and film, becoming a detective who separates cinematic drama from historical truth.

Instructions:

- **Selection of Movie:** Choose a historical movie that is based on real events or figures. The movie can be about any era, culture, or significant event, as long as it claims to be based on or inspired by real history. Confirm your movie selection with your teacher before proceeding. (see list below for ideas)
- **Research:** Once you have selected your movie, conduct a thorough research about the actual historical events or figures the movie is based upon. Make sure you use reliable sources such as books, scholarly articles, documentaries, and reputable online sources.
- **Viewing and Note-Taking:** Watch the movie attentively and take detailed notes. Pay attention to the depiction of characters, events, timelines, settings, dialogue, and any other aspects that can be compared with actual history.
- **Comparison:** With your research and notes, prepare a comprehensive comparison between the movie and the real history. Identify where the movie aligns with history and where it diverges. Consider the following elements:
- **Timeline and Events:** Did the movie accurately follow the historical timeline and events? If not, what changes were made and why do you think these changes were necessary?
 - **Characters:** How accurate are the characters in the movie when compared to their real-life counterparts? Consider their personalities, actions, relationships, and impact on events.
 - **Cultural and Social Aspects:** Does the movie correctly depict the era's cultural, social, and political contexts?
 - **Historical Details:** How well does the movie handle smaller historical details such as costumes, locations, language, etc?
 - **Analysis:** Analyze why the filmmakers might have made changes from the real history. Did these changes help the narrative, create drama, simplify complex events, or convey a particular message? How did these changes affect the overall portrayal of history?
- **Presentation:** Write a report or essay of about 1500-2000 words summarizing your research, comparison, and analysis. Your work should include the following sections:

- Introduction: Brief introduction of the movie and the historical events or figures it is based on.
- Body: Detailed comparison between the movie and the real history. This should include all the points outlined in the 'Comparison' section above.
- Conclusion: Your analysis of why filmmakers might have altered historical facts and how it affected the movie and the viewer's understanding of history.
- Citation: Make sure you properly cite all your sources using the appropriate citation style (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.) as directed by your teacher.

Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (9-10 points)	Good (7-8 points)	Average (5-6 points)	Below Average (1-4 points)
Research	Comprehensive and accurate research from reliable sources.	Good research with some minor inaccuracies or omissions.	Adequate research but lacks depth or details.	Incomplete or inaccurate research with major omissions.
Comparison	Detailed and insightful comparison between movie and history.	Good comparison with some minor gaps.	Adequate comparison but lacks depth or insight.	Inadequate comparison with major gaps.
Analysis	In-depth and thoughtful analysis of changes made in the movie.	Good analysis with minor gaps in reasoning.	Adequate analysis but lacks depth or insight.	Inadequate or superficial analysis.
Writing Clarity	Clear, concise, and well-structured writing.	Mostly clear writing with minor errors or structural issues.	Some unclear writing or structural issues present.	Significant clarity issues, errors or structural issues.
Citation	All sources are properly cited using the required format.	Minor errors in citation format.	Several errors in citation format or some sources are not cited.	Major errors in citation format or many sources not cited.

Movies

Here's a list of 50 American historical movies that could be used for this assignment. The movies in bold are ones we will be doing on movie nights:

"12 Years a Slave" (2013)	"The Founder" (2016)	"American Sniper" (2014)
"Lincoln" (2012)	"Erin Brockovich" (2000)	"Ford v Ferrari" (2019)
"The Revenant" (2015)	"Frost/Nixon" (2008)	"The Trial of the Chicago 7" (2020)
"Glory" (1989)	"Good Night, and Good Luck" (2005)	"Joyeux Noelle" (1994)
"Selma" (2014)	"The Imitation Game" (2014)	
"The Birth of a Nation" (2016)	"JFK" (1991)	
"The Patriot" (2000)	"Lone Survivor" (2013)	
"Saving Private Ryan" (1998)	"Letters from Iwo Jima" (2006)	
"The New World" (2005)	"Harriet" (2020)	
"All the President's Men" (1976)	"Mississippi Burning" (1988)	
"Milk" (2008)	"Moneyball" (2011)	
"Amistad" (1997)	"October Sky" (1999)	
"The Aviator" (2004)	"Platoon" (1986)	
"Gangs of New York" (2002)	"Public Enemies" (2009)	
"The Right Stuff" (1983)	"Ray" (2004)	
"The Great Debaters" (2007)	"Schindler's List" (1993)	
"Gettysburg" (1993)	"Thirteen Days" (2000)	
"The Butler" (2013)	"United 93" (2006)	
"A Beautiful Mind" (2001)	"The Social Network" (2010)	
"Apollo 13" (1995)	"Windtalkers" (2004)	
"Argo" (2012)	"Zodiac" (2007)	
"Hidden Figures" (2016)	"Black Hawk Down" (2001)	
"Bridge of Spies" (2015)	"Invictus" (2009)	
"Dances with Wolves" (1990)	"Just Mercy" (2020)	
"Catch Me If You Can" (2002)	"The Big Short" (2015)	

Screenwriting- A Scene from "Brave New World"

The aim of this assignment is to strengthen your understanding of the themes, characters, and plot elements in Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World," as well as to enhance your screenwriting skills. Your task is to write a movie script for a single scene from the novel.

Details:

1. **Choosing a Scene:** Pick a scene from "Brave New World" that you find compelling and well suited to a visual medium. This could be a scene that involves intense dialogue, significant character development, or an important event in the plot.
2. **Understanding the Scene:** Analyze your chosen scene carefully. Understand the actions, emotions, and motivations of the characters. Note the themes that are explored. Consider the environment and mood of the scene.
3. **Adapting for Screenplay:** Adapt the scene into a movie script. Remember that a script involves not just dialogue but also stage directions, character movements, and visual descriptions. Translate the novel's prose into a form that would work in a visual medium.

Script Format: Your script should include the following:

- Scene Heading (also known as a slugline)
- Action (descriptions of the environment, character movements)
- Character name (centered and capitalized before their dialogue)
- Dialogue
- Parenthetical (if necessary to convey how a line is delivered)
- Length: Your script should run for about 5-10 minutes, which typically equates to 5-10 pages in screenplay format.

Evaluation: You will be assessed on your understanding of the novel's themes and characters, your creativity in adapting the scene for a visual medium, your ability to write compelling dialogue, and your use of correct screenplay format.

Follow-Up: Once all scripts are submitted, we will select a few scripts to act out in class, giving you a chance to see your work come alive.

Remember, the goal here is not just to transcribe the scene directly from the book to the script, but to think critically about how you can adapt the written words for the visual medium of film. Good luck, and have fun with this assignment!

Writing a Letter to Your Elected Official

The objective of this assignment is to deepen your understanding of civic responsibility, advocacy, and the role of government. You will identify an issue that concerns you, research it, and craft a persuasive letter to your elected official addressing the issue.

Details:

1. **Choosing an Issue:** Select an issue that you are passionate about and is relevant to your community, state, or the nation. This could be anything from local environmental concerns to national policy debates.
2. **Research:** Thoroughly research your chosen issue. Understand its causes, effects, and potential solutions. Identify how your elected official can influence or address the issue.
3. **Writing the Letter:** Write a formal letter to your elected official. The letter should include:
 - a. **An introduction:** State your name, where you're from, and the purpose of your letter.
 - b. **A detailed explanation of the issue:** Use facts and statistics to highlight the importance of the issue.
 - c. **A personal connection:** Explain how this issue affects you, your family, or your community.
 - d. **A call to action:** Clearly state what you want the official to do about this issue. Be as specific as possible.
 - e. **A conclusion:** Wrap up your letter and thank the official for their time.

Format: Your letter should be no more than 1-2 pages in length and must adhere to the formal letter format.

Evaluation: You will be assessed on your understanding of the issue, your ability to communicate effectively and persuasively, and your adherence to the proper letter format.

Extension Activity: If you feel comfortable, consider sending your letter to the elected official. It is a great way to engage with your civic duties, and you may even receive a response!

This assignment allows you to not only demonstrate your understanding of the structure of government and the role of elected officials, but it also lets you engage directly with the political process. It encourages you to use your voice to effect change on issues that matter to you. Good luck!