

# United We Win: Labor on the World War II Homefront

## Lesson Question

### Why did the U.S. government create this poster in 1943?

#### Lesson Task

After learning about U.S. employment during World War II and analyzing a U.S. government poster from 1943, students take on the role of the poster's designer and write a three-paragraph essay describing how the words, images, and design of the poster persuasively communicate the government's needs.

**NAEP Era:** 7. Modern America and the World Wars (1914 to 1945)

**Focal Skill:** Reading for point of view and purpose

**Number of Documents:** 2

**Number of Days:** 4–5

**Common Core Standards**

- CC reading standard: RHSS.6-8.6 Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose
- CC writing standard: WHSS.6-8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts

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*[Suggested time: ½ session]*

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*[Suggested time: 1–2 sessions]*

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## OVERVIEW

[Suggested time: 5 minutes]

### Content Objectives

Students will understand how racial tension and violence became a problem for war industries and the government in 1943, and how the government communicated a need for an integrated work force.

**African Americans' protests** led President Roosevelt to ban racial discrimination in hiring for defense jobs.

**Racial tensions** resulted from white and black factory workers—producing planes, ships, trucks and military hardware for the U.S. Army during World War II—living and working together for the first time.

**The U.S. government** needed an integrated workforce to work well together to support the war effort.

### Historical Thinking Objectives

- Close Reading
- Contextualization
- Sourcing

### Skill Objective

- Identify how authors convey point of view and purpose, using craft and structure

### Instructional Sequence

Before you begin the lesson you should share a brief agenda with students:

<b>HOOK</b>	Together, we will look at and discuss the <i>United We Win</i> poster.
<b>CONTEXT</b>	We'll then review some background context that led to the government's need to recruit more African-American workers.
<b>DOCUMENTS</b>	On your own, you will read a secondary source document and re-read the <i>United We Win</i> poster. We will discuss each document after you read and take notes on it.
<b>CONNECT</b>	We'll discuss how the documents connect to the Context and the lesson question.
<b>WRITE</b>	You'll write a three-paragraph explanatory essay from the perspective of the designer of the poster.

## Lesson Background

As the U.S. prepared to enter World War II, the federal government needed to expand its military quickly and supply it with the equipment it needed to fight against Germany and Japan. Many more workers were needed in factories to produce things like tanks, guns, ammunition, airplanes, and ships that would be necessary for the U.S. and its allies to fight the war. The government began using a variety of propaganda to not only recruit soldiers but to spread the message that every American was needed to help with the war effort, including those (like women and African Americans) who had previously been excluded from jobs in heavy industry. The government also produced propaganda that promoted equal opportunity for African Americans, recognizing that racial unity would be crucial to maintaining homefront morale and industrial production.

African Americans had long been discriminated against and not hired for factory jobs. If they were hired in factories, it was almost always for the low-skilled, low paying jobs. Starting in the 1930s, African Americans began protesting against discrimination in hiring. “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” campaigns took place in northern cities, where African Americans picketed businesses that refused to hire black workers. In 1941, Black labor leader A. Philip Randolph and other activists founded the March on Washington Movement (MOWM). They called for a mass protest march to express their unhappiness with segregation in the U.S. military and discrimination against African Americans in government jobs. In cities around the country, local March on Washington committees sprang up, and there was great support for the idea of a march. President Roosevelt didn’t want this march to happen, so he met half of their demands by issuing Executive Order 8802. That executive order established a federal agency (the Fair Employment Practices Committee, or FEPC) which made sure that the government and companies that received government contracts did not discriminate against any workers based on their race.

The overwhelming need for workers during World War II meant that factories were, for the first time, hiring black workers in skilled and high-paying jobs. Industrial jobs motivated African Americans to move in search of economic opportunity: thousands moved out of the rural South into urban areas to work in shipyards, ammunition factories, or aircraft plants. However, their new white co-workers and neighbors resented the change in the status of Jim Crow. Black migrants encountered prejudice, discrimination and sometimes violence. Such tensions spilled over into racial violence throughout 1943, when 250 incidents erupted in forty-seven cities.

## Student Background Knowledge

- Because of widespread racial segregation and discrimination (sometimes known as Jim Crow), African Americans did not have access to equal educational opportunities and well-paying jobs.
- After Japan attacked a U.S. naval base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, the U.S. entered World War II.

## THE HOOK

[Suggested time: 10 minutes]

### United We Win

#### Purpose

To introduce students to the lesson's central document with an engaging first experience.

- The image is visually captivating and provides clear details for students to observe, but also raises questions that can't be answered by visual investigation alone. Through observation and discussion students will be motivated to learn more about the context and the creator to better understand this document.

#### Process

**Display** the United We Win image (without the headnote).

**Introduce** the lesson inquiry and **ask** students the **Think About It** question: What's going on in this image?

**Say** to students: Images can help us understand history. In this lesson, we are going to use this poster to unlock a bigger historical story. Our first step is to carefully observe this image.

- Keep in mind that the focus here is on what students see. Students will have a natural tendency to want to draw conclusions, make inferences, and impose meanings on what they are observing. At this stage of the lesson, discourage students from jumping to bigger conclusions. The idea is to set up a situation in which students realize they need further data to understand the meaning of this image.

Questions you might **ask** to encourage close observation include:

- What do you see? [People, words, images, objects, layout, etc.]
- How do the small details work together as a whole?
- How do you know?
- Are you making an inference? How could we confirm that inference?
- Is there another way to think about that?
- What might that symbolize?
- What don't we know about this image?

Briefly **summarize** the discussion. After discussing the details of the image together, **ask**: What do you think the message of the image was?

- Allow this to be an open discussion. Conflicting or incomplete perspectives are fine at this point in the lesson. It is best, in fact, if students' understanding is incomplete (for example, that the main message is to instill patriotism) as the main thrust of the lesson is for students to use contextual information to understand the image more deeply.

United We Win Poster, 1943



After discussion, **say** to students:

- We now have a better understanding of this poster, but do we have a complete understanding of it? Do we know exactly who made it? Or why they made it in 1943?
- When historians look at images they ask themselves questions such as: What is going on in this poster? Who made it, when and why was this made in 1943? What else was going on at that time?
- These kinds of questions represent two kinds of historical thinking skills:
  - Contextualizing: What else was happening at the time these documents were created? How do these documents connect to the larger historical context?
  - Sourcing: Who made this document, when, and what point of view did the creator have?
- In this lesson, you will be the historians who contextualize and source this poster to understand it more deeply.
- The big question we will be investigating is: **Why did the US government create this poster in 1943?** In other words, what was the purpose of this poster and how does knowing when it was created help us to better understand its purpose?

## TRANSITION TO CONTEXT-SETTING

Transition students to the Context slides by letting them know that they are now going to look in a little more detail at what was happening at the time this poster was created.

Context slides are intended to serve as a support for a relatively quick “interactive lecture” with students. The goal is to both provide essential background information and engage students’ prior knowledge and thinking.

While you can certainly slow the process down according to your students’ needs, context is not intended to be a “deep dive” into slide images. Documents in the Context slides serve the role of illustrating content, sparking quick observations and reactions, and making abstract ideas more concrete.

# CONTEXT

[Suggested time: 25–30 minutes—to be completed in the first session]

## Context Overview

The purpose of these slides is to provide the background information that students need in order to understand what led to racial tension in 1943, and what forms those tensions took.

The five Context slides focus on these ideas:

***U.S. Employment During World War II***—Due to the government’s need to expand military production, the number of factory jobs in the U.S. increased

***Job Segregation, 1940***—Discrimination limited the types of jobs available to African Americans

***Blacks Demand Equal Access to Jobs***—Protests led the government to guarantee new defense jobs would go to white and black workers alike

***African Americans and National Defense Jobs, 1940–1943***—A timeline charts African Americans’ struggle to work in the wartime industries

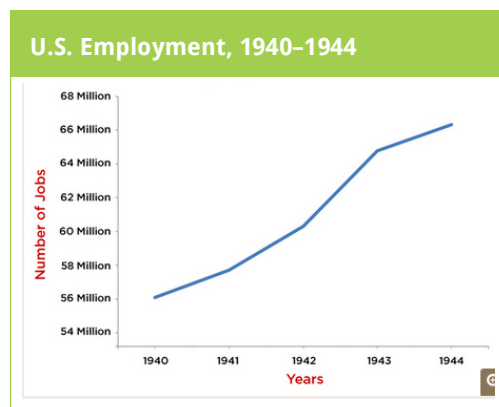
***Strikes in Detroit Factories, 1943***—Integration led to conflicts between black and white workers

## Slide 1: U.S. EMPLOYMENT DURING WORLD WAR II

### Purpose

To help students understand that mobilizing for war created a large number of new, well-paying factory jobs.

- As the U.S. prepared to enter World War II, the federal government needed to quickly expand its military and supply it with the equipment it needed to fight against Germany and Japan. Many more workers were needed in factories to produce things like tanks, guns, ammunition, airplanes, and ships that would be necessary for the U.S. and its allies to fight the war.



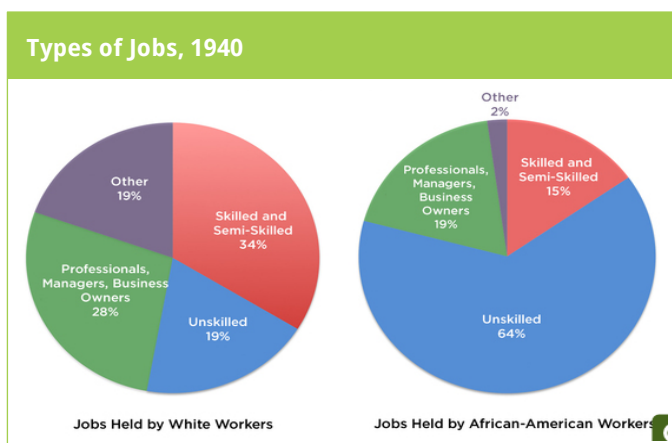
### Suggested Process

- **Read** the slide title and introduction.
- **Ask** students to spend a few moments analyzing the graph.
- **Support** their ability to pull information from the graph. **Ask:**
  - What is the title (and subtitle) of this graph? What can we infer from the title?
  - What do the two axes represent?
- Ask the **Think About It** question: What happened to employment during World War II? Why?
- Some concrete questions you can **ask** to help them generate ideas about what could have *caused* this spike in employment include:
  - What do soldiers need when they go into battle? (Guns, bullets, tanks, planes, warships, food, uniforms)
  - How could the U.S. get all of those things in a hurry? (If students answer, “buy them from another country,” explain that lots of countries were involved in this war and needed those items, too).
  - Explain that the U.S. needed to expand factories and add new ones, which created many, many new jobs in factories.

## Slide 2: JOB SEGREGATION, 1940

### Purpose

To demonstrate how racial discrimination kept African Americans confined to specific, low-paying jobs in the years leading up to World War II.



## Suggested Process

- Ask students to **read** the pie charts in this slide.
- To support them, you can **ask**:
  - What is the title of the slide and the title of each pie chart? What can we infer from these titles?
  - What do the different colors represent?
- **Explain** to students that at this time (1940):
  - African Americans mostly worked on farms or in service jobs.
  - Due to discrimination and lack of training, almost no blacks were hired to work in factories, and those few who did were stuck in the low-skilled, lowest paying jobs (like being the janitor, or working in the most dangerous parts of the factory).
  - War-related factory jobs would be classified as “skilled” or “semi-skilled.”
- Help students to **compare** the two charts. **Ask**: What differences between these two charts do you notice?
- **Ask** the **Think About It** question: Since many of the new war-related factory jobs required prior skilled work experience, who was likely to get them? Why?
  - 64% of African Americans were working in unskilled jobs, and only 19% of white workers were working in unskilled jobs.
- **Ask** students: Factory owners hadn’t been willing to hire African Americans before; do you think they will now that war is coming and they need to rapidly expand production?
  - Students may answer yes, because there is a war emergency, or no, because they are prejudiced. It is OK to allow a range of responses at this point.

## Slide 3: BLACKS DEMAND EQUAL ACCESS TO JOBS

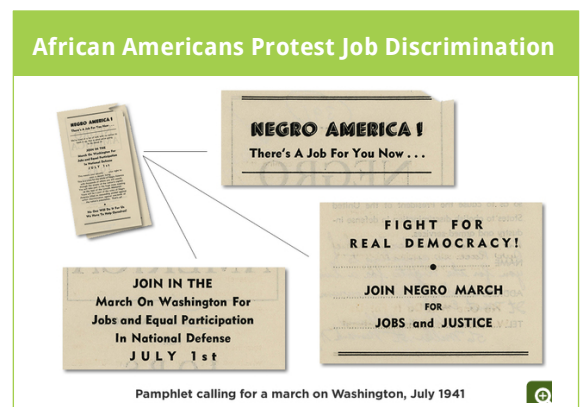
### Purpose

To show how African Americans used social and political protest to demand equal access to the new jobs created by World War II mobilization.

- Their protests help lead to an executive order that established the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC), which forbid companies who received government contracts from discriminating based on race.

## Suggested Process

- Have students **read** the slide title and subtitle.
- **Look at** the posters with students.





- **Share** with them the history of job discrimination protests and the March on Washington Movement.
  - Starting in the 1930s, African Americans began protesting against discrimination in hiring.
  - In 1941, black labor leader A. Philip Randolph and others founded the March on Washington Movement (MOWM).
  - They called for a mass protest march to express their unhappiness with segregation in the U.S. military and discrimination against African Americans in government jobs. There was great support for the idea of a march around the country.
- **Ask:** Do you think A. Philip Randolph and other African Americans thought they would be able to get the new factory jobs? What did they do to try to force President Roosevelt to help them?
- **Tell** students that the protests were successful. **Describe** the executive order that Roosevelt passed.
  - President Roosevelt hadn't wanted this march to happen, so he met half of the protesters' demands by issuing Executive Order 8802 a month before the march. That executive order established a federal agency (the Fair Employment Practices Committee, or FEPC) which made sure that the government and companies that received government contracts did not discriminate against any workers based on their race.
- **Ask** the **Think About It** question: Why else do you think Roosevelt issued an order to ban job discrimination based on race?
  - Students may identify that the protests were successful. You can also prompt them to think back to Slide 1. What does Roosevelt need?

## Slide 4: AFRICAN AMERICANS AND NATIONAL DEFENSE JOBS, 1940–1943

### Purpose

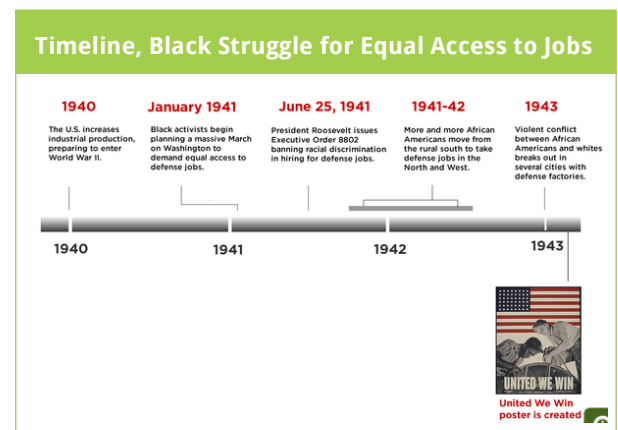
To review the timeline of events around the increase in industrial jobs and African Americans' struggle to gain access to those jobs.

To place the poster students will study within its historical context.

To think about cause and effect.

### Suggested Process

- Ask students to **read** the timeline title and to notice where the timeline begins and ends.
- **Read** through the timeline entries with students.
- **Ask** students the **Think About It** question: What was the impact of Executive Order 8802?
  - Students should be making inferences about *cause and effect relationships*. The order caused more jobs to become available. In 1941–42, more and more African Americans moved from the rural South to take jobs in the defense industries. But that didn't mean they were welcome.
  - In 1943, conflict between African Americans and whites broke out in several cities where defense plants were located in the North and West.





- > **Ask:** Why do you think conflicts arose in these places at this time?
  - Let students know that in the next slide you'll be looking in a little more detail at some of the racial tension that occurred in factories.
- > Finally, **point out** to students that the primary source document that they observed in the Hook, and that they will explore more deeply later in the lesson, was created in 1943, as these other events were unfolding.

## Slide 5: STRIKES IN DETROIT FACTORIES, 1943

### Purpose

To show how racial tension in the workplace escalated as African Americans moved to urban areas and took factory jobs.

### Suggested Process

- **Explain** to students that this chart shows a few examples of cases where white workers in Detroit went on strike (stopped working in order to protest working conditions or wages).
  - In 1943, there were 50 strikes in the U.S. at war production factories related to racial issues—either white workers objecting to the hiring of African Americans, or African Americans protesting discrimination.
  - The incidents in this chart are from one city, Detroit, for a three-month period in 1943. The government was very concerned about anything that slowed or stopped work at war production factories, and so they kept records about all disruptions to factory work.
- Before students read the chart, you will need to **explain** a few things to them.
  - During the war, car companies converted their factories to produce tanks, jeeps, and other military vehicles.
    - > Even though factories that were producing items for the war had to hire black workers, white workers didn't necessary like the idea of working alongside African Americans as equals.
  - We anticipate that the concept of “man-days idle” will be confusing to many students. You may need to define “idle” for students as well as explain what “man-days” means (total days of work for all workers).
    - > If you divide “Man-days idle” by the number of workers who went on strike, you get the number of days the strike lasted. For example, the strike at Hudson Motor Car Co. resulted in 45 man-days idle and involved 15 workers, which means the workers were on strike for 3 days. (You needn't ask students to do all the math, but this formula can help students get a picture of the length of each strike).
- Have a student volunteer **read** aloud from each entry on the chart: Company, Number of workers involved, and Issue. [You can also read one entry aloud and have students read the rest on their own.]

Workplace Conflicts in Detroit, 1943

Company	Workers Involved	Man Days Idle	Reason for Strike
Hudson Motor Car Co.	15	45	Hiring of black plant guards.
Vickers, Inc.	40	60	Black workers placed in Production Department.
Hudson Naval Arsenal	750	750	Refusal to work with black tool-maker.
U.S. Rubber Company	1,064	3,955	Hiring black workers and demand for separate sanitary facilities.
Packard Motor Car Co.	26,883	97,145	Upgrading of black workers.

- **Discuss** data from the chart with students, and **ask** questions such as:
  - For which factories does it seem like most of the workers went out on strike? For which factories did strikes perhaps only occur within one department?
  - What do you notice about the issues that caused these strikes?
    - > Most strikes are related to the hiring of black workers for higher skill positions (e.g., Tool maker, Production Department), although there is also a protest about hiring African Americans as security guards, and about sharing “sanitary facilities” (i.e., bathrooms, showers, changing rooms).
- **Ask** the first **Think About It** question: How did some white factory workers respond to having African Americans working alongside them?
  - As students discuss, a follow-up question could be: How do you think this impacted black workers? Factory owners?
- Then, **ask** the second **Think About It** question: What was the effect on war production?
- **Remind** students that these strikes took place in Detroit, not in a southern state that had segregation laws requiring blacks and whites to be separate.

## Slide 6: CONTEXT REVIEW: WORLD WAR II JOBS

### Purpose

To review and take notes on key Context ideas and information that students will need to draw on in reading, discussion and writing.

### Process

- **Look** at the image on this slide.
- **Tell** students that they will use some of the information they’ve just learned or reviewed to answer the lesson question. They will now spend a few moments to *review and take some notes*.
- Guide students in remembering the most important information to answer the two **Take Notes on Context** questions:
  - How did the war impact jobs at this time?
    - > Factory production increased (tanks, planes, weapons, etc.) for the war effort
    - > There were more jobs available because many workers were serving in the military
  - What was standing in the way of full war production?
    - > Discrimination meant that factory owners did not want to hire black workers, which led to not having enough workers.
    - > White workers did not want to work side-by-side with black workers, which led to strikes that slowed war production.
- If necessary, click back to past slides to jog students’ memories. Allow students to **discuss** their answers at table groups or with a partner. Each student, however, should **record** his/her own notes.



## TRANSITION TO DOCUMENTS

After reviewing the Context slides say to students:

Now we know a little more about what was happening at the time that this poster was created. The next step is to look at two documents on your own. First, you will read a secondary source document that will give you even more information about the historical context (that is, what was happening in the world at the time this poster was made). Then you will return to the poster. This time, the poster will have a headnote with more information about its creation. You will use the information from the secondary source and the headnote to source the document. Remember, sourcing means asking questions like: Who made this document? Why? And what is the point of view of the creator? The contextualization and sourcing you do will help you to think more deeply about the lesson question: **Why did the U.S. government create this poster in 1943?**

## DOCUMENTS

[Suggested time: 2 sessions]

### Documents: Overview

Students read one secondary and one primary source document to develop the skills of contextualizing and sourcing primary source documents. In this case, the secondary source document provides further contextual information that helps students to understand the underlying message and purpose of the poster.

#### **Crowded Cities, Racial Violence During World War II** *Secondary Source, 2014*

*Central Information:* During World War II, large numbers of black and white workers moved into cities to take defense industry jobs. Many conflicts based on racial tensions resulted between the workers.

#### **“United We Win”** *U.S. Government Poster, 1943*

*Purpose:* It was created as a recruitment poster to encourage factories to hire more black workers in the face of worker shortages and pressures from the black community.

*Message and Context:* Through its appeal for a peacefully integrated workforce, it was responding to racial tension and violence between whites and blacks, and white workers’ strikes that were occurring in 1943.

The central reading skill is to identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose.

Note: Students can work on these documents independently while you circulate and support their work. (See PD Doc on supporting students during document work.)

## Document 1: CROWDED CITIES, RACIAL VIOLENCE DURING WORLD WAR II

### Purpose

To provide further contextual information that helps students to understand the underlying message and purpose of the *United We Win* poster.

Large numbers of black workers moved into cities to take defense industry jobs. Violent conflicts based on competition for jobs and housing resulted between blacks and whites.

### Key Reading Challenge

In addition to the text, students will also read and take notes from a table. Depending on their table-reading skills, it might be helpful to preview the table with them.

Secondary Document, 2014



### Suggested Process

- As students read independently, move around the room to diagnose difficulties and offer coaching. When you note several students struggling with particular passages or questions bring them to the attention of the class as appropriate.
- Use your Teacher Dashboard to scan and assess student responses to specific Document questions (such as the Big Idea question) once a majority of students have finished reading the document. This will prepare you for the class discussion.

### Document 1: Class Discussion

It is critical for students to briefly discuss each document after they have read it.



### Purpose

Check for and deepen students'

- comprehension of the document
- grasp of the “Big Idea”—i.e., the racial tension and violence that erupted in urban areas in the early 1940s was a result of population changes driven by the war.

### Process

Engage students in discussing one or two key questions they have answered in the tool.

- Zoom In* provides Source It, Read Closely, Gather Evidence, Big Idea and Think About It questions and prompts alongside this document. Depending on your class's needs, you may choose to focus on certain question types over others.
- We strongly recommend using structures such as turn-and-talk and table group discussions as you engage students in these questions.
- Most important, be sure to follow up on student comments by *pressing for reasons and evidence*, and *for accountable talk*. Use the prompts for the extension questions below.

## FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Select student responses to the “Big Idea” question, and use them to guide discussion.

- Ahead of time, use the Lesson Dashboard to quickly scan your students’ responses to the “Big Idea” question:
  - How did population changes caused by the war affect people living in these cities?
  - What is the strongest evidence from the document to support your answer?
- Identify student responses that reflect understanding of the Big Idea, and good use of supporting evidence, and those that reflect confusion or misunderstanding.
- Select and project a range of student responses to the summary questions. You can choose model responses as well as responses that need development as a way to spark student discussion. (See the PD document and video on “Discussion Phase 1: Formative Assessment of Student Comprehension of Individual Documents” for more support on using students’ responses to analyze their reading strengths and needs.)

## Discuss the Source It Questions

**Flag** with students that this is a secondary document written by historians. It includes a description of events and conditions as well as a table with factual information about race riots.

**Ask** students: What do you think the purpose of this source is?

- To inform

**Ask** students: Why are we reading this source? Why might a secondary source be useful to read as we are learning more about a primary document (the poster)?

- The document gives additional context about population changes in U.S. cities during WWII, and the types of violence that resulted from them.

## Discuss the Read Closely Questions

In addition to discussing *why* African Americans were moving to cities in the early 1940s (for defense jobs), help students think about *how* this population shift led to tensions in and beyond the workplace.

**Ask** these follow-up questions to deepen students’ thinking about the questions:

- How did the war impact population changes in cities? Why?
- What were race relations like at this time? Where do we see evidence of discrimination? What was the source of competition? [jobs, housing]
- How do you think competition and racial tension influenced each other? How did this impact people’s lives?
- Where did you see that idea in the text?
- Can you find an example? Does anyone else have a different example?
- What information do we learn from the table?

## Discuss the Gather Evidence Questions

**Ask** students to share quotes they highlighted for the first **Gather Evidence** question: What happened when black and white citizens came into closer contact?

**Focus on** key quotes, including:

- Black migrants found segregation, discrimination, competition with whites for jobs, and sometimes police brutality in their new homes.
- Overcrowded public spaces and neighborhoods resulted in social tension, and sometimes, violence directed at black residents.

Follow-up questions you could **ask** include:

- What tensions did you notice? Where did they take place? Why did you highlight this quote?
- Is there more or less of the text you should include? Why?
- Did anyone find a different place in the text that discussed what happened when blacks and whites came into contact in cities?

**Prompt** students to put the quotes *in their own words*.

**Ask** students to share quotes they highlighted for the second **Gather Evidence** prompt: Describe the kinds of violence caused by racial tensions in 1943.

**Focus on** key quotes, including:

- The year's worst riot erupted in Detroit, where a fight at the Belle Isle amusement park ignited thirty hours of violence and left nine whites and twenty-five blacks dead and more than seven hundred people seriously injured.
- In Beaumont, Texas, thousands of white shipyard workers terrorized black neighborhoods, assaulting African Americans and destroying property.

Also, **discuss** the *types of outcomes* listed in the table. **Focus on** key details, including:

- A total of 44 people died
- 50 people injured in Alabama and in Texas, and more than 700 hospitalized in Detroit
- \$2 million property damage in Detroit
- More than 500 arrested in New York

Follow-up questions you could **ask** include:

- What kinds of violence did you notice? Why did you highlight this quote?
- Is there more or less of the text you should include? Why?
- Who seemed to be responsible for initiating the violence?
- Did anyone find a different place in the text that discussed acts of violence?
- What happened to people?
- How do you think property damage affected people? Is that an act of violence? Why?

**Prompt** students to put the quotes *in their own words*.



## Discuss the Big Idea Questions

Students move at this stage from connecting the specific details in the document to the Big Idea about how population changes caused by the war were connected to the violence that erupted in 1943. One way to articulate the Big Idea is:

- Many African Americans moved from the rural South to cities across the U.S. during World War II to take defense jobs. This led to competition for jobs and housing, and caused violence between whites and blacks who were living and working together for the first time.

**Anticipate** these difficulties that students will have getting to the Big Idea:

- They may focus too much on smaller details (*Population changes led to a huge riot in Detroit that killed 25 African Americans*)
- Or, they may articulate ideas quite generally, without staying connected enough to the document details (*Population changes led to racism*)

**Ask** these questions to help students *identify and articulate the Big Idea*:

- We noticed a lot of important details. How do these details connect? Is there another way to think about this?
- How would you summarize the population changes that took place during the war? What were the main effects of these changes?
- What seems like the strongest evidence to support this idea? Is there other evidence that is stronger? Why?

The idea here is not to push students towards the “right” answer, as there are many possible ways to articulate the Big Idea, but to push them to **engage in a rich discussion with one another** in which they have to articulate their ideas and ground their thinking in the document.

## Discuss the Think About It Question

**Ask** the **Think About It** question: How would racial tension and violence be a problem for war industries and the government?

**Say:** Let’s remember the country is at war. What did the government need at this time?

- Workers to produce war materials in the factories

This question will prime students to re-examine the *United We Win* poster with an eye to thinking about the government’s message and purpose in creating it.

**Have students revise their notes.** Allow students time to revise their notes after and/or during the discussion. Students may need to be prompted to revise how they have articulated the Big Idea.

## Document 2: UNITED WE WIN

### Purpose

To uncover the messages underlying the *United We Win* poster, and the U.S. government's purpose in creating the poster in 1943.

**Message:** Through its appeal for a peacefully integrated workforce, the poster suggests that the U.S. needs blacks and whites working together in defense factories to win the war.

**Purpose:** To encourage factories to hire more black workers in the face of worker shortages and pressures from the black community.

**Why 1943?:** The poster was a response to racial tension and violence between whites and blacks, and white workers' strikes that were occurring in 1943.

U.S. Government Poster, 1943



### Suggested Process

- As students read independently, move around the room to diagnose difficulties and offer coaching. When you note several students struggling with particular passages or questions bring them to the attention of the class as appropriate.
- Use your Teacher Dashboard to scan and assess student responses to specific Document questions (such as the Big Idea question) once a majority of students have finished reading the document. This will prepare you for the class discussion.

### Document 2: Class Discussion

It is critical for students to briefly discuss each document after they have read it.



### Purpose

Check for and deepen students'

- comprehension of the document
- grasp of the "Big Idea"—i.e., the broader messages and purposes behind *United We Win*
- understanding of how the poster's language and imagery convey this perspective

### Process

Engage students in discussing one or two key questions they have answered in the tool.

- *Zoom In* provides Source It, Gather Evidence, Big Idea and Think About It questions and prompts alongside this document. Depending on your class's needs, you may choose to focus on certain question types over others.
- We strongly recommend using structures such as turn-and-talk and table group discussions as you engage students in these questions.
- Most important, be sure to follow up on student comments by *pressing for reasons and evidence*, and *for accountable talk*. Use the prompts for the extension questions below.

## FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Select student responses to the “Big Idea” question, and use them to guide discussion.

- Ahead of time, use the Lesson Dashboard to quickly scan your students’ responses to the “Big Idea” question:
  - What do you think the purpose of this poster was, in 1943?
  - What is the strongest evidence to support your thinking?

## Discuss the Source It Questions

It may be worth spending some additional time on the Source It questions as one of the central goals of this lesson is developing sourcing skills.

**Ask** students where they located sourcing information for this document. If there is any confusion, discuss why this is a primary source document.

You may want to **clarify** the “author” of the document for students. In this case, the creator of the document is essentially the U.S. government. We don’t know the name of the poster’s designer (though we know the photographer), but we do know government commissioned the poster for a specific purpose. Therefore, we can think of the U.S. government as the creator.

Additional questions you could **ask** include:

- Why is it important to know the date that this poster was created? What was going on in 1943?
- Why create a poster like this? We thought during our first look that it was meant to make people feel patriotic. Does it have another purpose?
  - At this stage it’s OK for students to know that the purpose was to “persuade,” without discussing exactly what the government is trying to persuade people to do. That can be discussed later when you get to the poster details.
- Has our thinking about the purpose of this document changed?
- Who specifically do you think the audience was? General public, yes, and specifically which groups of people did the government want to persuade?
  - Factory owners and white workers

## Discuss the Gather Evidence Questions

Ask students to **share** the parts of the image they tagged in response to the **Gather Evidence** question: How did the designer of this poster use words and images to communicate a message?

**Focus on** key details, including:

- U.S. flag
- “UNITED WE WIN”
- One white man and one black man
- Men are holding drills, dressed in factory clothing, working on a plane
- Men are working side-by-side

Follow-up questions you could **ask** include:

- What did you notice? Why did you tag this detail? Did anyone have a different idea about what the message of this detail might be?
- Why do you think the designer made these choices?

### Discuss the Big Idea Questions

Students move at this stage from connecting the specific details in the poster to the Big Idea about the messages and purposes of the *United We Win* poster. One way to articulate the Big Idea is:

- *United We Win* was created as a recruitment poster to encourage factories to hire more black workers in the face of worker shortages and pressures from the black community. The poster was meant to convince factory owners and white workers that in order to win the war, the U.S. needed an integrated and productive workforce.

**Support** students in getting to the Big Idea.

**Ask** these questions to help students *identify and articulate the Big Idea*:

- We noticed a lot of important details. How do these details connect? Is there another way to think about this?
- How would you summarize the poster designer's main purpose in creating this in 1943?
- Let's think about the audience again. Who was the government trying to persuade with this poster? What did the government want that audience to do?
- What evidence best supports that as a main purpose? Does anyone have a different idea about this? Is there other evidence that is stronger? Why?

The idea here is not to push students towards the "right" answer, as there are many possible ways to articulate the Big Idea, but to push them to **engage in a rich discussion** with one another in which they have to articulate their ideas and ground their thinking in the document.

### Discuss the Think About It Question

**Ask** the **Think About It** question: How do the poster's purposes connect to what was happening at this time?

- Through its appeal for a peacefully integrated workforce, *United We Win* was responding to racial tension and violence between whites and blacks, and white workers' strikes that were occurring in many American cities in 1943.

**Have students revise their notes.** Allow students time to revise their notes after and/or during the discussion. In particular, students may need to be prompted to revise how they have articulated the Big Idea.

## CONNECT

[Suggested time: ½ session]

### Purpose

Before students write in response to a historical question, they need opportunities to talk. They need to clarify their understanding of the documents and how they connect with the larger context and the question they are answering. Your job as a *Zoom In* teacher is to create these discourse opportunities.

### Cross-Document Discussion

In this discussion the main goal is to help students to synthesize their learning across documents and connect back to the context and the larger historical question under investigation. This supports the historical thinking skills of corroboration and contextualization.

Three major moves should happen here:

- Re-engage students in the historical inquiry
- Support students in comparing big ideas and details across documents
- Support students in articulating their own thinking, while listening and responding to their peers

#### A) Re-engage students in the historical inquiry

Begin by reminding students of the lesson question and the larger historical context. Do an initial informal assessment of what “big picture” students have walked away with. **Say** to students:

- When we first looked at *United We Win* many of you thought that is was a patriotic poster meant to appeal to Americans to work together to win the war. My guess is that after learning more about what was going on at this time (contextualizing), and more about what the government needed this poster to do (sourcing) that now you are able to see even more messages in this poster.
- Let’s remember that we are examining the lesson question: **Why was this poster created in 1943?**

In turn-and-talk or table groups, have students **discuss** the following questions about context.

- What was going on in 1943? What did the government need and what kinds of issues were making meeting these needs challenging?
  - Prompt students to think back to the Context slides. Students can return to the slides and/or their notes to support this part of the discussion.
- After students have had time to discuss, **say**: Not only did we learn important background information from the Context slides, but the secondary source you read can also help us understand this poster and why the government would have wanted to make something like this in 1943.

The purpose of this initial phase is to prime students’ thinking and to give you an initial assessment of their general level of understanding. You do not need to spend a long time on these questions because you will dig in deeper in the next phases.

**B) Support students in comparing big ideas and details across documents**

Display the Connect Tab.

**Tell** students:

- Let's look across these two documents at the Big Ideas you identified.

**The Connect tab will display the key discussion questions:**

- How did racial tension and violence become a problem for war industries and the government in 1943?
- How does knowing about these racial tensions help us better understand the message and purpose of the United We Win poster?

Connect will also display a t-chart labeled “Essay” and “Poster” that displays student notes on the Big Idea questions, and their supporting evidence. You can choose one student's work to project to guide the discussion, or you can project notes you've “starred” while using the Teacher Dashboard to review students' Big Idea notes.

CONNECT	
Essay	Poster
<p><b>Crowded Cities, Racial Violence During WW II</b> <b>Big Idea:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>African Americans left the rural South to take factory jobs in cities. This led to tensions between blacks and whites who had never lived and work together before.</li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 1943, Detroit's black population had increased by 50,000 people and that year a riot at an amusement park led to 25 blacks being killed, and more than 700 people getting hurt.</li> </ul>	<p><b>United We Win</b> <b>Big Idea:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The poster was meant to persuade white factory workers to work with African Americans and not to strike, so that they could help the U.S. win the war.</li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The poster's caption is “United We Win” and shows a black and white man working together in front of an American flag.</li> </ul>

**Engage** students in the Connect questions.

We recommend that you give students time to discuss these questions with each other in small groups or turn-and-talks before engaging with them as a whole group. Follow-up questions you could **ask** include:

- Why do you think these were the main purposes of the poster?
- What support from the documents do you have for your thinking? Let's go look; what did it say here...?
- How did this purpose connect to what was going on at the time? What did the government need? Why? Is that all? How do you know the government needed these things? Let's go back and look. How did these needs connect to the poster? How do you know?

This part of the discussion is intended to support students in both synthesizing the documents and reflecting on their larger historical significance.



Give students time to **edit** their responses in *Zoom In* based on class discussion.

### C) Support students in articulating their own thinking

Finally, be sure to allow students time to speak with each other about their own thinking. This can happen at any stage of the discussion through turn-and-talks or small group discussion. Questions to support this kind of thinking include:

- So, what do you think about this?
- What ideas were new for you and why?
- What do you think is most important here and why?
- Do you think this poster is effective in communicating its message?

## WRITING

[Suggested time: 1–2 sessions]

In this three-paragraph essay, students must describe the historical context in which the *United We Win* poster was created, and connect the context to the poster's purposes. The focal writing skill is for students to identify the creator's purposes and describe the ways in which the designer's choices support the poster's purposes. In their conclusion, students are asked to explain why the poster is effective in communicating its message.

### Teacher's Roles During Writing

As students are writing, support them in these key ways according to their needs:

- Circulate and observe students' progress through the template or outline. Take some notes to help you think about mini-lessons in writing you may want to teach to the whole class.
- Conference individually with students on their writing. Support their development through asking probing questions:
  - You seem stuck; where might you find that information?
  - If you don't remember what that quote means, where can you go?
  - Tell me why you introduced that evidence that way? What more do you think the reader might want to know?
  - Can you tell out-loud what the Big Idea is here? OK, how could you put that into writing?
- If you see patterns, pull together small groups of students for mini-lessons, or to review instructions.
- Support students in being peer editors.
- Help students move on to polished writing.

### Preparing Students to Write

Tell students that the next stage of the lesson will be their writing. Remind them they will be writing a three-paragraph explanatory essay. The key elements of historical essay writing you will help them with are:

- Identifying the poster’s purpose and explaining the historical context in which it was created
- Describing how the poster’s design supports its purposes
- Writing a conclusion that persuades the audience

It’s important to remind students that while they have been reading like historians looking back in time, they will shift perspectives in their writing to take on the voice of someone from 1943 making a presentation.

Briefly preview with students some of the ways that their writing might reflect this shift. For example:

- They can use the “I” voice, but they have to be careful that they are not writing their own personal opinions.
- They are making a presentation, which means they have to know who the audience is and keep that audience in mind.

**Project the Essay Outline View.** Use this to review the writing prompt and preview the essay structure with students. Review explicitly each part of the essay and the role it serves in developing an answer to the historical question. Making these elements of the essay explicit for students will help them to develop the skills to construct essays more independently down the road.

## Essay Outline View

**Prompt:** Imagine you are the designer of the United We Win poster, and write a three-paragraph essay explaining how it communicates the government’s need for an integrated workforce.

Paragraph-by-paragraph guidance: In your essay you must have the following sections:

- **An introduction in which you connect racial tensions to the war effort**
  - Address your audience and introduce why you are presenting to them.
  - Provide historical context on government employment needs and the impact of existing racial tensions.
  - Introduce your thesis about the central purposes of the poster.
- **A body paragraph in which you describe how the poster persuades its audience**
  - Provide a topic sentence that connects the details in the poster to its purpose.
  - Provide two supporting details from the poster that are intended to persuade your audience.
  - Describe each detail and explain how the detail connects back to the poster’s purpose.
- **A conclusion in which you explain why the committee should choose your poster**
  - Restate the main idea you are writing about (the purpose of the poster).
  - Share new information that strengthens your presentation—State who the audience of the poster will be.
  - End strong! Make a case for why the committee should select your poster.

## Setting the Level of Writing Support

Using the Teacher Dashboard, you can set the level of students' writing support. (Note: Do this before they begin drafting their essays, or essay writing will be lost.) *Zoom In* offers two levels of writing support. High Support (the default) gives all students sentence-level tips, optional sentence-starters, and guidance in selecting and using evidence. As students show progress as historical writers – especially in using evidence from documents to support their ideas – teachers can set writing support for individual students to Low Support. The system will provide these students with paragraph-level tips only, meaning students will shape and support their essays substantially on their own.

## Preparing Students to Write with Low Supports

If most of your students are writing with Low Supports (meaning with outline only, rather than the detailed Writing Template), you may wish to give them more up-front preparation to write their historical essays. The following outline may help.

### Overview

- Let students know that the next stage of the lesson will be their writing.
- Remind them that they will be describing how the design of the United We Win poster supports its purposes, and connects to the historical context in which it was created.
- Their final product will be a three-paragraph explanatory essay.

### Introduction

- Remember, what are you trying to explain here? That's right, why this poster best meets the government's needs and how the design communicates the intended message.
- What needs to go into this introduction? [Topic sentence, context and thesis.] How is it going to be similar to and different from other introductions?
- What do you think a presentation to a committee would look like? Sound like?
- Imagine you are standing in front of a small group of people explaining why your poster design best meets their needs. How might you begin your presentation?
- What is the historical context you'll want to include?
- What is the thesis statement in an essay like this? Right, you are explaining what the government is trying to persuade people to do.

### Body Paragraph

- OK, now that we have a sense of what needs to go into the introduction, let's think about the body paragraph.
- How will you demonstrate that this poster design best communicates the government's messages?
- Your big job here is to explain how the details from the poster communicate a message and connect back to the larger purpose the government had in creating this poster.
  - Connecting evidence back to the larger historical ideas is typically the hardest move for students to make, and may be worth spending some time discussing and/or modeling.

## Conclusion

Finally, let students know that the conclusion is the place in their essay where they will summarize the main ideas, but where they will also make their final case for why the committee should select their design.

Allow students time to ask questions for clarification before they move on to independent writing.

## Sample Student Essay

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to explain why my poster design could do the best job of meeting your needs. To begin with, I understand that you need to make sure the military has enough men and factories have enough workers. This is important because without enough factory workers making supplies we won't be able to win the war. I also know that 1943 has been a difficult time because the government does not have enough workers in factories. There is a problem with racial violence and tension in cities and white workers don't want to work with black workers. Many white workers are going on strike and there is racial violence in the cities. For example, in Detroit 25 blacks were killed at an amusement park. I know that you need to persuade people to hire more black workers and to persuade black and white workers to work more peacefully together.

My poster will communicate these messages because of the details I have included. First, the poster shows a white man and a black man working together peacefully. This detail means that black and white workers can work side by side. I have included this because this will help employers feel better about hiring more black workers. The other details that I included are a large American flag and the words "United We Win." This detail means we have to work together to win the war. I include this because we need to persuade people not to strike or to act violently towards each other.

The message of my poster is that we need both black and white workers working peacefully side-by-side to win the war. This poster could be shown in work places, schools, train stations and restaurants because everyone will understand it. You should choose my poster because my images are convincing and because this poster best meets your needs of recruiting new workers and telling people they should work together peacefully.

## Assessing Student Writing with the Essay Rubric

For information on assessing student writing, see these documents:

- "Zoom In Essay Rubric" (PDF)
- "Tracking Students' Progress and Assessing Student Work" (PDF)