# Mobilization

## Learning objectives

- Students will learn how Canadians' attitude during the First World War helped prepare them to fight.
- Students will explore enlistment patterns and connect them to demographic trends in Canada at the beginning of the war.

## Time required

50-60 minutes

## Grades

7-12

## Materials

- tiled map: *A Nation Takes Shape*
- enlistment posters to print or to project on-screen (Appendix 2)
- enlistment figures by province (Appendix 2)
- primary source breakdown chart (Appendix 2)
- coloured tokens to show enlistment figures on the map
- digital projector (optional)
- "Valcartier" in *Canadian Geographic*, July/August 2014, page 15 (optional)
- video, "Wanted! 500,000 Canadians for WW1"; McCord Museum (optional)

## Set-up

- Print out the tiled map and adjust your classroom layout to accommodate it. Photocopy propaganda posters, the primary source breakdown chart and the Valcartier article on page 15 in *Canadian Geographic*'s July/August 2014 issue.
- Prepare to display provincial populations on the board or on a digital screen.

## Introduction

First ask students how they would react if they heard that Canada was at war and was going to send thousands of troops overseas. Ask your students what influenced their reactions and what role they think they would play. Discuss how Canadian populations would change if thousands of people left to fight overseas and how they think Canadians would be encouraged to participate in the war. Explain that posters were a main source of public communication during the First World War. These posters were a form of propaganda designed to show Canada's strength and Germany's weakness. They contained biased information to promote a certain point of view.

Review primary and secondary sources with students, reminding them that primary sources are contemporary documents from the time period that have not been altered, while secondary sources are books and articles that usually contain some form of interpretation or subjectivity. Hand out the primary source breakdown chart and, as a class, use it to help analyze propaganda posters from the First World War. Either display the propaganda posters one at a time using the projector or divide your students into small groups and rotate the images between groups. Have students fill out the chart as they examine the images. Discuss the effectiveness of these posters at the time and what feelings they evoke. Have your students compare the posters with current media.

## Development

Explain that more than 500,000 Canadians served in the First World War and show the video, "Wanted! 500,000 Canadians for WW1" (mccord-museum.qc.ca/scripts/projects/CH/animCH.php?tourID=GE_P3_1_EN&Lang=1&type=quicktime).

Assemble the tiled map and ask your students to identify its key features, such as major cities and the railway system. Highlight training camps and ask students what patterns exist between the locations of the camps and the locations of Canada's largest cities (training camps are near large cities and coastal towns).

Project on a screen or write on the board each province's approximate populations in 1914 and its enlistment numbers (provided). Divide students into groups, each representing a province. Have each group use coloured tokens to depict the number of enlistments for their province on the tiled map, with each token representing 10,000 people.

Once all groups have finished, discuss what the map now looks like, focusing on which provinces have high enlistment numbers, which have low ones and what factors may have influenced Canadians to enlist in 1914.

# Conclusion

Have your students compare each province's enlistment numbers to the locations of training camps and explain if they see any patterns or trends.

Bring your class's attention to Canadian Forces Base Valcartier on the tiled map and distribute *Canadian Geographic*'s Valcartier article (page 15). Have students read the article and discuss CFB Valcartier's significance to Canada in 1914 and the purpose and location of training camps in Canada.

# Extend your geographic thinking

Ask your students how they think Canadians would react today to the same type of propaganda that was used to elicit support and enlistment during the First World War, reflecting on whether our idea of war has changed.

Have students create their own propaganda poster. Divide students into groups and have each group create a poster that targets a different audience (First Nation, immigrant, urban businessperson, farmer, etc.).

# Enlistment Figures

| | Estimated population 1914 | Estimated males 18-45 | Served overseas | Served in Canada only | Total served | Percentage of available |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| British Columbia | 442,000 | 179,372 | 43,202 | 12,368 | 55,570 | 31% |
| Alberta | 459,000 | 139,279 | 36,165 | 12,720 | 48,885 | 35% |
| Saskatchewan | 601,000 | 180,069 | 27,374 | 14,315 | 41,689 | 23% |
| Manitoba | 530,000 | 139,103 | 48,042 | 18,198 | 66,240 | 48% |
| Ontario | 2,705,000 | 659,796 | 170,301 | 72,354 | 242,655 | 37% |
| Quebec | 2,148,000 | 442,930 | 50,262 | 37,790 | 88,052 | 20% |
| New Brunswick | 371,000 | 77,860 | 17,016 | 10,045 | 27,061 | 35% |
| Nova Scotia | 512,000 | 111,604 | 22,587 | 13,136 | 35,723 | 32% |
| Prince Edward Island | 95,000 | 19,114 | 2,536 | 1,160 | 3,696 | 19% |
| **TOTAL** | 7,863,000 | 1,949,127 | 417,485 | 192,086 | 609,571 | 31% |

# Primary source Breakdown Chart

| Description of source | Who created/ wrote it? | Who is the intended audience? | Your thoughts (i.e. Is it effective?) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
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"Oh please do! Daddy - buy me a victory bond [Canada]" [between 1914 and 1918] (Archives of Ontario, C 233-2-5-0-268, I0016167)

IF YOU CANNOT JOIN HIM YOU SHOULD HELP HER

If You Can't Join Him, You Should Help Her, Fund-Raising Poster, CWM 19890086-530

Xmas in Belgium, 1914, George Metcalf Archival Collection, CWM 19960077-001