

## The figure of the soldier: hero, monster, human?

Previous compulsory steps / Prior students' knowledge	Basic knowledge about wars (or specifically about WWI and WWII)
Learning objectives	Learning about the role and responsibilities of the soldier
Subjects	Media Education, History
Recommended Age	15 – 18
Material needed	Video trailers – Valiant Hearts, Battlefield and Call of Duty
Sequence duration	60 – 90 minutes
Individual or group activity	Group activity
Skills developed (after learning objectives)	Critical thinking, collaboration & teamwork, communication
Price range of the game	Free trailers and videos
Extension / differentiation activities (at the end of the sequence)	This pedagogical sequence as a spectator could later be used as a single player or multiplayer activity to teach more about war stories, empathy, effects of the wars
Similar games to use with the approach of the sequence	This war of mine, Kingdom Come, Wolfenstein

## Step by step: how to implement the sequence

- **Step 1 - Dividing the students in 4 smaller groups and introduction of the topic (10 minutes)**

In this sequence different video games will be used to show different portrait and the role of a soldier. Those games are Valiant Hearts, Battlefield V, Call of Duty: Modern Warfare; and Kingdom Come: Deliverance.

Here is a short description of the games:

**Valiant Hearts:** a game about the **First World War** inspired by letters from the wartime. The player learns more about the war from the perspective of four different characters: a German soldier, a French prisoner of war, a Belgian nurse and an American volunteer. The cartoon-like graphics and simplicity of the puzzles make it an accessible yet emotionally engaging pacifist game (Annart et al., 2018).

**Call of Duty: Modern Warfare** is a first-person shooter video game that follows a CIA officer and British SAS forces as they team up with rebels from the fictional country of Urzikstan, fighting together against Russian forces.

**Battlefield V** is set to the World War II, and it puts focus on the less known battles of the war. Storylines are ranging across major battles of the war. The game is divided into 4 campaigns: "Nordlys" takes place from the point-of-view of a Norwegian resistance fighter taking part in the sabotage of the German nuclear program, "Tirailleur" shows the story of a Senegalese Tirailleur during Operation Dragoon, "Under No Flag" follows the story of Billy Bridger, a convicted bank robber and explosives expert conscripted into the Special Boat Service to take part in Operation

Albumen. And "The Last Tiger," shows the struggles of a German Tiger I tank crew during the Ruhr Pocket in the closing days of the war.

**Kingdom Come: Deliverance** is an action role-playing video game set in 1403 in the medieval Kingdom of Bohemia. Following the orders of Hungarian king Sigismund, Cuman mercenaries raid the mining village of Skalitz, a major source of silver. One of the survivors of the resulting massacre is Henry, the son of a blacksmith. Henry joins the service of Lord Radzig Kobyla, who leads a resistance movement against Sigismund's invasion. As Henry pursues justice for his murdered family, he becomes involved in an effort to restore Bohemia's rightful king and Sigismund's half-brother, Wenceslaus IV, to the throne.

In the first game it is easier to see the soldier as a human and see how war affects the civilians, while in the other games it is not so clear how the soldier is portrayed – as a hero? As a monster? Or as a human?

- **Step 2 - Projecting the trailers/gameplays of the video games to each group (15 minutes)**

Points to pay attention to:

- How is the soldier portrayed in the following videos?
- What is the role of the soldier?
  - Reflect on the role of soldier in the games – a hero? A monster? At the end, is the soldier only a human? Develop arguments for all three categories
- What are the soldiers' responsibilities?

## Valiant Hearts – First World War

- [Valiant Hearts E3 Trailer](#)
- [The Great War Walkthrough](#): (show until 3:22, 8:29 – 9:36, 21:00 – 22:53)
- [Ending: War makes men mad](#)

## Battlefield V – Second World War

- [War in the Pacific – trailer](#) (until 1:13)
- [The Last Tiger – gameplay](#): (until 5:15, 20:19 – 21:03 (visible fear of the young soldier))
- [Battlefield V - Nordlys Campaign Walkthrough](#) (1:57 – 4:36, 25:11 – 26:02)

## Call of Duty: Modern Warfare

- [Reveal trailer](#)
- [Kid Farah Kills a Russian Soldier to Revenge Her Father](#) (4:30 – 5:00 – portrays the soldier as a monster)
- [U.S. Army Rangers Military Base in Afghanistan](#) (5:25 – 6:11 (soldiers doing everyday stuff like exercising and preparing food; while you can hear shots everywhere))
- [Favela Escape / Run and Gun - Modern Warfare 2](#) (1:06 – 2:03)

## Kingdom Come Deliverance

- [Official Final Trailer](#)
- [Gameplay](#): (3:47 - 6:35, 25:00 – 27:12)
- [Dueling Sir Hagen Zoul](#)
- [Gameplay](#) (3:43 – 4:27 (girl talks about soldiers killing her family, portrays soldiers like monsters))

- **Step 3 - Small group discussion (time: 15 minutes)**

After students watched all trailers and gameplays, they will discuss the topic in their small group, and choose a person who will present it to the whole class. This will enhance their communication and collaboration skills, as well as public speaking skills.

- **Step 4 - Reporting to the whole class and shared discussion (time: 25 minutes)**

After the students prepared the presentation in their small groups, they will present to the whole class what their group thought about the depiction of soldier in different games. Following the students' presentations, you may encourage discussion about the responsibilities of soldiers and the role that army has. Encourage students to connect what they saw in the videos with the previous knowledge about war(s).

- **Step 5 - Conclusion (5 minutes)**

Ask the students whether there is something more they wish to share that was not covered in the previous points and discussion to reach the conclusion and end of the class:

In this pedagogical sequence we paid attention to how soldiers are presented in different games. This sequence can be used by itself but it can also serve as an introductory sequence to this topic, which may be further explored in a single-player or multi-player mode.

## References

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Battlefield (October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019) 'Battlefield V – War in the Pacific Official Trailer' [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCZLabOywYU>

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