

The figure of the soldier in Valiant Hearts: The Great War

Previous compulsory steps / Prior students' knowledge	Basic knowledge about wars (or specifically about WWI)
Learning objectives	Learning about the role and responsibilities of the soldier
Subjects	Media Education, History
Recommended Age	15 – 18
Material needed	PC, Android or iOS device
Sequence duration	6 – 7 hours (it can be shorter depending on how many chapters you want students to play)
Individual or group activity	Individual activity
Inclusion best practices	The game has very few dialogues, so it is appropriate for students with all levels of English language skills
Skills developed	Critical thinking, collaboration & teamwork, communication
Price range of the game	<20€
Extension / differentiation activities	This pedagogical sequence as a single player could be used in combination with the pedagogical sequence as spectators to teach more about war stories, empathy, effects, and the consequences of the wars



Similar games to use with the approach of the sequence

This war of mine, Kingdome Come, Battlefield V, Call of Duty: Modern Warfare

Step by step: how to implement the sequence

- **Step 1: Introducing the topic (10 minutes)**

In this sequence we will use the game Valiant Hearts to explore the portrait and the role of a soldier.



Image 1. Source: <https://www.ubisoft.com/en-us/game/valiant-hearts>

Description of the game: Valiant Hearts: The Great War is a game about the First World War inspired by letters from 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., 2019). You can also check out the [Valiant Hearts E3 Trailer](#).

Cutting the cost:

Buy one or several copies of the game and project the game in front of the classroom. Students can alternate between being a player and being a spectator.



Image 2: Emile – Nueve Chapelle. Source: <https://www.ubisoft.com/en-us/game/valiant-hearts>

How to get the game?

You can get the game on the [Ubisoft website](#) or on [Steam](#).

- **Step 2: Playing the game**

The whole game takes about 6 hours to finish and there are 4 different chapters: Dark Clouds, Broken Earth, The Poppy Fields, and Wooden Crosses. However, you can adapt this to your lesson and students can play only a part of the game.

While playing the game, guide the students to pay attention to:

- What is the game about? Who are the main characters?
- How are the soldiers portrayed?
- What is the role of the soldier? What are the soldier's responsibilities?
 - Reflect on the role of soldier in the game – a hero? A monster? At the end, is the soldier only a human? Develop arguments for all three categories.

While the students are playing, check on them and see whether they need any support.



Image 3. Emille and the gas machine. Source: <https://www.ubisoft.com/en-us/game/valiant-hearts>

- **Step 3: Class discussion (30 minutes)**

Once students finish the game or a specific chapter, you can discuss the game with all of them. Ask them to share their experiences during the gaming session and encourage discussion about the responsibilities of soldiers and the role that the army has. You can focus on the points in Step 2 to guide the discussion. Encourage students to connect the game to their previous knowledge about war(s).

- **Step 4: Conclusions (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.

References

Annart, J., Gilson, G., Cornut, A., Michnik, G., Fenaert, M., Marquet, V., Plumel, D., Guquet, T., Bonvoisin, D., Culot, M., Ponsard, J.. (2019). Jeux vidéo et éducation, Ateliers de Pédagogie vidéoludique. FOR'J. <https://www.quai10.be/projets-pedagogiques/gaming/>

Krupa, D. (November 24th, 2018). Valiant Hearts: The Great War Review. Winning Hearts and Minds. IGN. [Blog post] <https://www.ign.com/articles/2014/06/24/valiant-hearts-the-great-war-review>

Ubisoft (June 10th, 2014) 'Valiant Hearts E3 Trailer [US]' [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MP8q5F6dFqQ>

Ubisoft Montpellier (2014). Valiant Hearts: The Great War. [Video game] <https://www.ubisoft.com/en-us/game/valiant-hearts>

Image sources: <https://www.ubisoft.com/en-us/game/valiant-hearts>