

Worksheet 3: Poisonous Gas

Group work

1. Inform the pupils about the basic facts on the use of poisonous gas in the First World War. Part the class in three groups, each group reads the texts of Theodor Zuhöne, Otto Borggräfe or Fritz Haber. Give them the work instruction to create a chart that depicts in short the biographic details, the position during the war and the personal experiences. Collect the results and lead a discussion concerning the multi-perspectivity of war time memories.

Interpretation of a source

2. Distribute a copy of the caricature „Gashahn zu!“ (Close the gas tap!) in the class and ask the pupils to describe what is depicted. That aims at clarifying the message of the picture and is concerned with the ambivalence between the horrors of war and the humoristic processing of such impressions.

Data Base Research

3. Show the photography of the „gas-bell“ in the trenches to the pupils, and explain its meaning. Inform the pupils that this picture originates from "Europeana 1914–1918" and introduce this online platform in short. Form groups of two pupils each and tell them to search on <http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/de> for the keyword "gas" and to find an artifact that is connected to the use of gas in the warfare of the First World War. Ask the pupils to collect precise information on their chosen object and if necessary to search for further information. Collect the results and lead a discussion concerning the diversity of material remains from gas warfare.

Propaedeutic exercise: Historic Biographic

4. Tell the pupils to find biographic information on the noble prize laureates, who have been involved in gas warfare. Especially the statements of the Noble Price Comity are of interest in this context. Collect the results and lead a discussion in the class that is concerned with the biography of the scientist, the ethics of science and discuss the "generation concept" in Historiography.

Research

5. Ask the pupils to find a scientific article that deals with chemical warfare. Be sure that the whole span from antiquity until modern times is covered. Ask them to write an annotated bibliographic abstract about the found scientific article. Collect the abstracts in a commented bibliography and distribute it in class. Lead a discussion with the class concerning the development of warfare with a special focus on the developments in modern times.

Essay

6. Encourage the pupils to engage in a role-playing were they have to take the part of a German soldier who participated in gas warfare. Ask the pupils – after they have read the letter from Arthur Ramsay Stanley-Clarke to his mother – to write a letter to their family that describes their emotions and experiences on the front. Urge the pupils to stick to the formal criteria of the text genre.