

Technological Communication During World War I

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Junior Division
Group Website

Website: 1200 words
Multimedia: 1:52 minutes
Process Paper: 500 words

To understand this year's theme, we considered the theme as a question: "what is the key to understanding communication?" Eventually, we came up with an answer: the key to understanding communication is through historical events. When choosing a historical event, we briefly researched a few topics of interest and eventually decided on WWI. To further explore this question and its answer, we took a technological standpoint, and decided to research WWI; however, we realized there was another aspect to the subject other than just WWI affecting communication: communication also affected WWI. We came up with a "flow chart" to help us visualize the concept: WWI affected the advancements of technological communication, and communication, in turn, greatly affected WWI.

When starting our research, we created a topic question and broke it down into smaller subtopics including background and older forms of communication. Then, we divided the work to be efficient. Although some of our subtopics found primary sources more useful than secondary sources, both played an important role in helping us understand our topic. We learned about the advantages and disadvantages of the many different types of communication, and the effect communication had on WWI. In addition to our sources, we had an interview with Dr. Jooyoung Lee, assistant Professor of the Division of General Studies at Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology. He gave us helpful insights about our project that we further researched on in order to improve our student voice and multiple perspectives.

Due to the pandemic, we needed to choose a project that could allow us to work together while staying at home. Between a documentary, performance, or a website, we thought the website would best present our research because we wanted to have the ability to use videos and images. While creating our project, we looked at previous winners for inspiration and created a layout that was easy to navigate. Along the way, we received feedback from the county and state competition, Maryland History Day electronic review, our history and G/T research teacher to better understand our question, and improve our website and historical argument.

When WWI began, soldiers did not have the luxury of time and a few seconds could lead to significant consequences. Military leaders realized that older technologies could not warn troops quickly enough anymore. This led to the use of newer and faster technologies such as the telephone. The forms of communication used during WWI were not perfect, but they have changed history - the telephone used during WWI has influenced the modern cell phones that many of us carry every day; women were given a chance to work as telephone operators that contributed to the women's rights movement. With the pandemic keeping most of us at home, the news forms of communication developed a hundred years ago have helped us stay connected with each other. Communication has affected the lives of people for thousands of years, and they will continue to enhance the lives of people for generations to come.