"Over the Top!"
World War One - Trench Warfare Simulation

Purpose: have the students discover the conditions in the trenches

TEKs Correlation

(1) History. The student understands traditional historical points of reference in world history. The student is expected to:

(F) identify major causes and describe the major effects of the following important turning points in world history from 1914 to the present: the world wars and their impact on political, economic, and social systems; communist revolutions and their impact on the Cold War;

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(F) identify major causes and describe the major effects of the following important turning points in world history from 1914 to the present: the world wars and their impact on political, economic, and social systems;

(10) History. The student understands the causes and impact of World War I. The student is expected to:

(B) identify major characteristics of World War I, including total war, trench warfare, modern military technology, and high casualty rates;

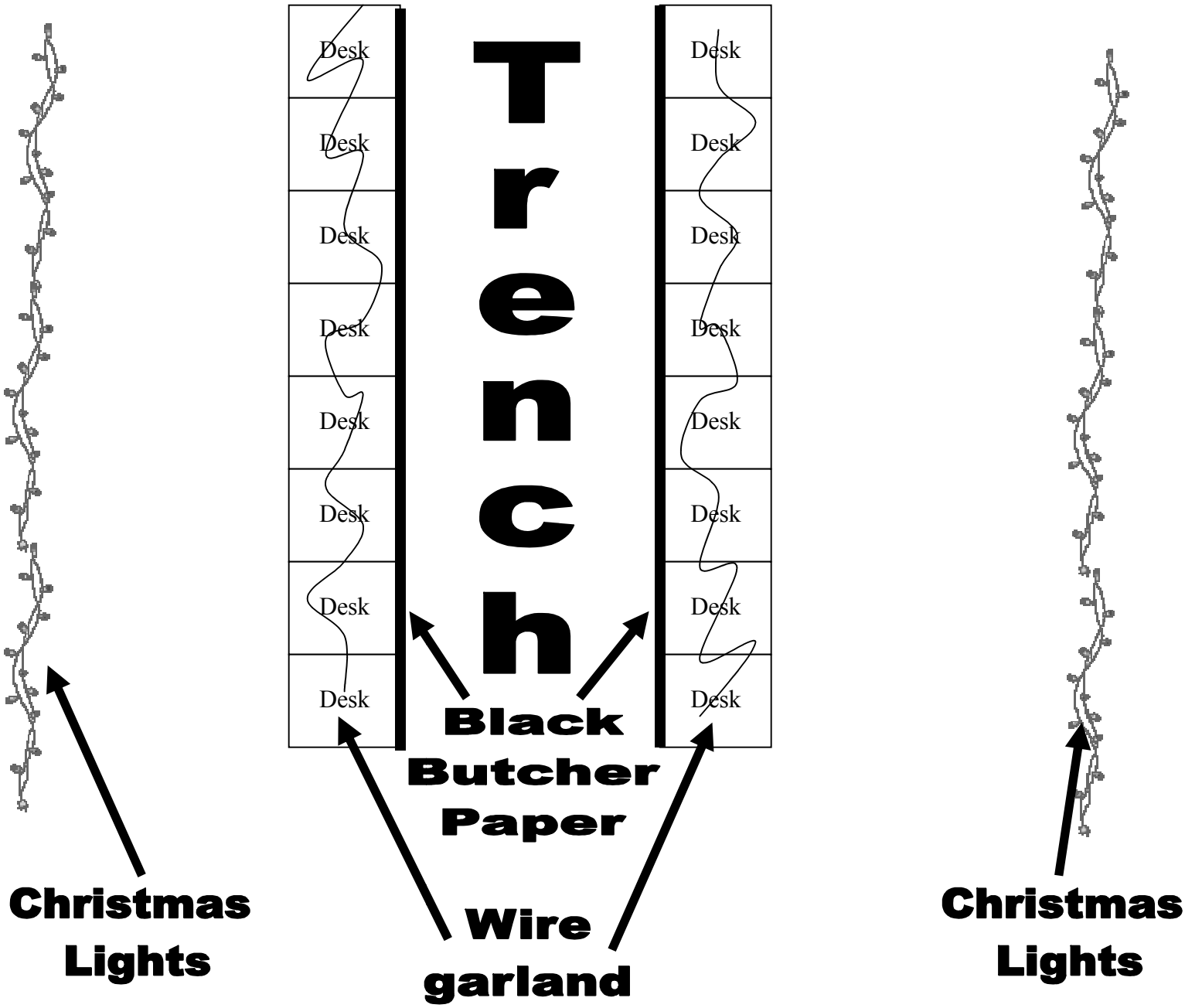
Materials Needed:

- Black butcher paper
- Tape
- Wire garland (with stars)
- Glowstick bracelets
- Christmas lights
- Notebook paper & pencils
- "Ammunition" papers (**document 3B**)
- Signs – Central Powers & Allied Powers (**document 3A**)

Room Setup**see diagram on the next page!*

1. Divide room into two sides, labeling each "Central Powers" or "Allied Powers."
2. Move the desks to make a "trench" in the middle of the room. Use the black butcher paper to cover the "trench" desks, the windows, and any other light sources in the room. The room should be as dark as possible when the simulation starts.
3. String the Christmas lights on the far sides of the trench for ambient light.
4. Use the wire garland at the top of the trench to simulate barbed wire.
5. If you want sound during your simulation, there are places to find war sounds
    a. If you have an android device, you can use this app to play war sounds: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ape.soundboard.warsounds
    b. If you have an Ipad / Iphone, you can use this app to play war sounds: https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/80+-war-sounds-free-soundtrack/id447425109?mt=8
    c. If you have a PC, you can use this site to play war sounds: http://soundbible.com/tags-war.html

Room Setup


Desk
Desk
Desk
Desk
Desk
Desk
Desk
Desk
Desk
Desk
Desk
Desk
Desk
Desk
Trench
Black Butcher Paper
Christmas Lights
Wire garland
Christmas Lights

Simulation Instructions:

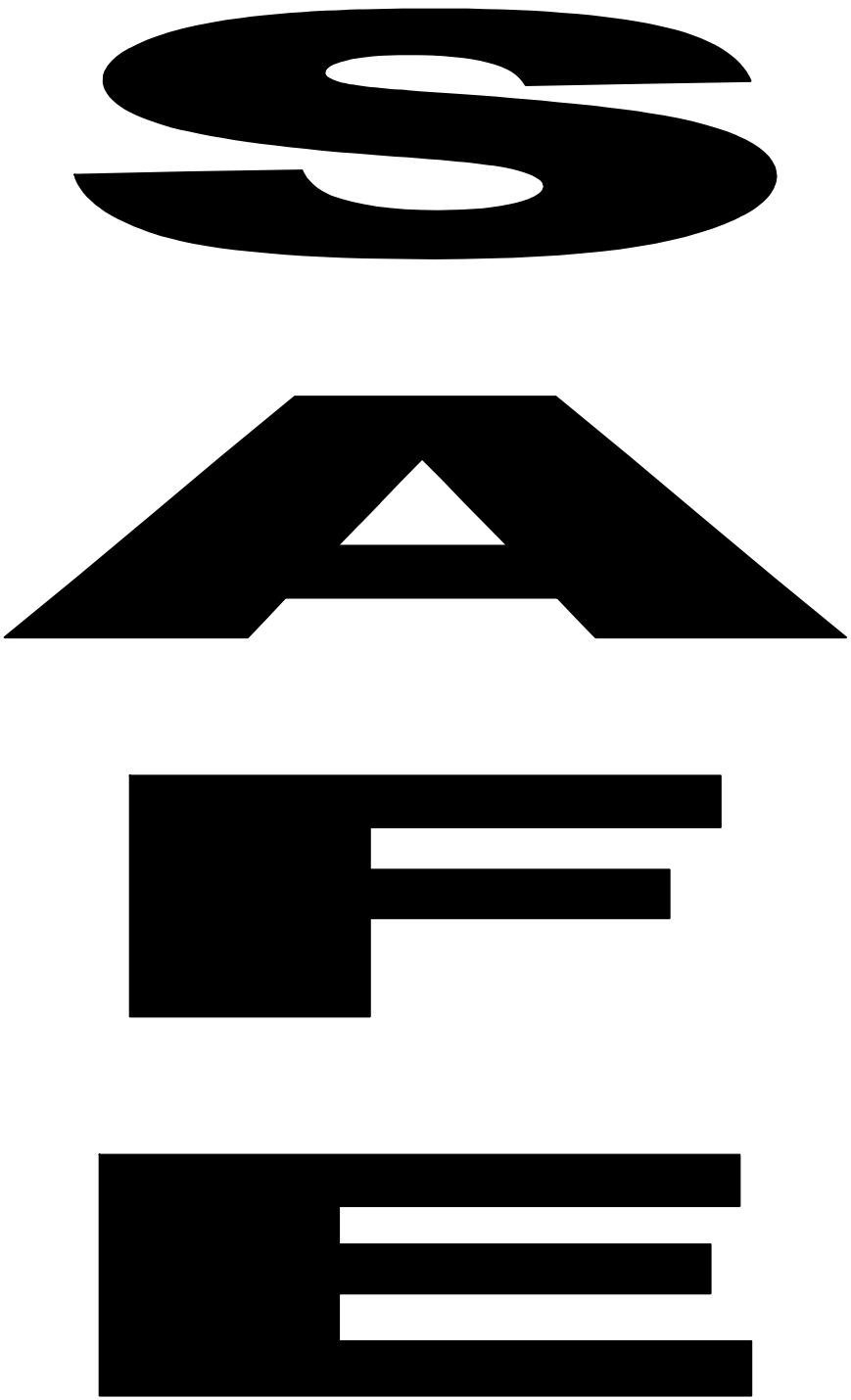
1. When the students arrive, assign them to a side of the conflict. Have all students put their bags out of the way (possibly against a wall or on a table).
2. Instruct students to take out a pencil / pen and a piece of paper – that is all they will need.
3. Pass out two "ammunition" cards to each student **(document 3B).**
    a. Have the students tear the ammunition card in half **(document 3B)** into two parts. Each student needs 2 safe cards & two blank cards.
    b. Students need to crumple the "safe" cards into small balls.
    c. On the blank papers, students need to write two scenarios that might happen to them in the battle. Some examples include:
        i. Bitten by rats
        ii. Arm blown off
        iii. Trench-foot
        iv. Deaf from explosions
    d. Students will then crumple up their "scenario cards" to use as ammunition. They should have 4 "missiles" total.
4. Pass out glow bracelets to all students. Tell them that these are their chemical lights and cannot be broken yet. They will be used during the simulation.
5. Once students are in position and suitably "armed" with their ammunition, paper & pencil, start the simulation.
    a. Turn the lights off. Have the students break their chem lights.
    b. Instruct the students that they have been assigned to the Western Front. They are going to write a letter home to their parents / loved ones about conditions on the Western Front. (Here I usually adlib about the conditions at the front -- rats, diseases, mud, etc).
    c. Remind the students that at no time should they lift their head above the trench because it could be shot off.
    d. If you want, play a clip to inspire / interest them. There are many on YouTube – these are just suggestions (they are both violent, so I would recommend previewing them first).
        i. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeJkpsOqQgc
        ii. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXtsiqrhqsU
    e. Remind the students at any time a battle could break out, and they would be expected to join in. If they did not, their governments would shoot them for treason.
    f. Have students begin their letter.
    g. Begin to play sounds from the trenches (particularly the rain & gunshots).
    h. Two minutes after the lights go out scream "Over the edge!" Students need to through their paper missiles across the trench. Remind them to keep their heads down otherwise they will be declared dead. Students must keep throwing the entire time you yell "Fire FireFire!"
    i. Once the firing has stopped, students need to pick up the nearest ball. The students need to unfold the ball and incorporate whatever scenario they found into their story.
    j. Repeat as many times as you want.

Personal Note

I love this simulation & so do my students. I find it works perfectly on a 45 minute day if you just want to run the simulation – getting the kids in the room, explaining, "battling", and then cleaning up is about 45 minutes. I have also used it in a block schedule as the whole day. My students come in & we start talking about World War One in the divided classroom – they do everything (notes on the causes, the simulation, the effect) in that divided classroom to symbolize the shifts that had broken Europe & the divisions that were left after the war too.

Allied Powers

Central Powers


SAFE