

SOAR Curricular Material #11

Read the following excerpt of this article and answer the document-based questions.

Universal Military Training (February 1917—Abridged Version)

The Constitution of the United States in its preamble, declares that one of the objects of forming the Union was to provide for the national defense. How is this to be done? Today the Nation has no army. Each State has a National Guard. On June 18 of last year the National Guard was ordered to the Mexican Border. After ten days of maximum effort, the department commanders succeeded in getting just twelve percent of the men started. More than thirty percent of them were found physically unfit for service. Many who went to the border had never seen a single day's training. What is our trouble? It is simply that *we have been depending on volunteer military service and, as this European War has forcefully shown, there is no such thing.* The words "voluntary" and "military" cannot exist side by side. The life of the sailor, independent of its emoluments has never been and never will be sufficiently alluring to attract any very great number of people. All nations which have desired to maintain a military force have been compelled to *resort to a special means to recruit it.* England found she could send no adequate army to the aid of her allies until she resorted to conscription. America is the last great state to retain the voluntary system and *the sooner we substitute universal training in its stead, the sooner we will come to a solution of our military difficulties.* Of course there are those who would argue that universal military training can only be an advance in the direction of militarism, which leads ultimately to war and invariably away from peace. And of course we could cite to them the universal training of the Swiss, which has given them an honorable peace in the midst of war, and to the thousand and one other refutations which authorities have given such arguments in the magazines during the past year. It is not, however, my purpose to re-enumerate what is already so widely distributed or to consider the subject from that standpoint. There is at present a bill before Congress for compulsory military training. The wish of our Congress is *not* to provide a universal military training which will create "militarism." The temperament of the American people will never allow "Prussianism." We want a universal military training which will prepare American manhood to defend American homes and American ideals; we want a training which will improve our youths mentally, morally, physically, and raise them to a standard of citizenship high in the pursuits of peaceful relations at home and abroad. Thus instead of creating warriors, Universal Military Training has as its end and object, the development of boys in to efficient citizens, who place their duty to society above self-interest, and are prepared to render the most able service to their fellow men.

~~Ralph W. Everroad, '18

Document-Based Questions

- 1) What is the main idea of this article?
- 2) Who is the audience of this piece? What in the article makes you think this?
- 3) What is the purpose of this article?

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- 4) What do you think the author means when he says there is “no such thing of volunteer military service” and we must “resort to a special means to recruit it?” Why do you think the author includes this statement in his article?

- 5) The beginning of this article discusses the differing viewpoints the world has on using universal military training. Make an argument for and against universal military training. Use textual evidence to support your argument for each.
 - a. Pro-

 - b. Con-

- 6) Considering the answers to the previous questions, what can we conclude is the standpoint of the author on universal military training?

- 7) What type of universal military training does the author suggest the public wants? (****Hint:** What does he believe is the ultimate goal of this training program?)

- 8) Using your own knowledge and what you have read in this article and your textbook, explain if you are for volunteer military service *or* universal military training and why.