



In this simulation of life on the Western Front, students will experience and empathize with the futility of war and the frustration of an ongoing stalemate.

**Focus Skills: Imagination, Vocabulary, Writing, Comprehension**

**Grades: 7+**

**MATERIALS:** Desks and chairs from a typical classroom, large pile of scrap paper

**STEP 1.** Split the class into two teams: the French and the Germans and select a military officer (leader) for each team.

**STEP 2.** Divide supplies evenly between the two teams. Each team should have an equal number of desks and chairs with which to build their trench and an equal amount of scrap paper to use as ammunition.

**STEP 3.** Instruct students that they have ten minutes to build and fortify a trench so that soldiers inside the trench are protecting from incoming fire. They may also use these ten minutes to create their chosen weaponry out of the provided scrap paper. ONLY paper may be used as a weapon. Students on each team should work together to stack desks and chairs in any manner they design, building their very own trench.

**STEP 4.** Round 1 of the battle will commence. When the teacher says "begin", each army may begin firing on the opposing army by throwing paper ammunition for 5 minutes. If the trenches are well constructed, this round will be considered a stalemate with very few soldiers dying. Any soldier hit by a piece of paper should sit down and admit their defeat.

**STEP 5.** All deceased soldiers may come back to life for the Round 2. For the next 5 minutes, the French soldiers will remain in their trench, while the German soldiers are ordered to advance through No Man's Land (the area between the trenches). Allow this battle to rage for 5 minutes. Most of the German army will be killed. Students should be able to see just how futile it was for the attacking army to break through the trench.

**STEP 6.** Review and discuss the effectiveness of trench warfare and the strategies used. Define and discuss the words "futile" and "stalemate".

