



# WHEN THE BORDER VANISHES

## “It’s the Granddaddy of Them All”: The 1918 Influenza Pandemic

Note: The source of the title is from this quote, “If you’re in the business of infectious disease epidemics, you can’t ignore the 1918 flu—it’s the granddaddy of them all.”

Donald Burke, professor of International Health, Bloomberg School

**Standard:**

- II. Time, Continuity, and Change
- III. People, Places, and Environment
- V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
- VIII. Science, Technology, and Society
- IX. Global Connections
- X. Civic Ideals and Practices

**Grade Level:** 7–12

**Objectives:**

The student will:

- Explore the story of the 1918 flu pandemic
- Correlate the 1918 flu and the 2009 H1N1 flu outbreaks
- Analyze the global aspects of a pandemic
- Interpret primary documents

**Time:** 1–2 class periods

**Materials:**

*Handout #1:* The Influenza Epidemic of 1918

*Handout #2:* Questions about the Influenza Epidemic of 1918

*Handout #3:* US Map of the 1918 Influenza

*Handout #4:* Blank map of the United States

Color markers, pencils, or crayons

**Procedures:**

1. Distribute copies of *Handout #1: The Influenza Epidemic of 1918*.
2. Have students read this story and answer questions in *Handout #2*.
3. Additional stories about the 1918 influenza can be found at:  
<http://www.flu.gov/storybook/stories/sickness/wright/index.html>
4. Provide *Handouts #3* and *#4* to students. Have students to assess the original map and its legend. Sections of the map are not easily viewed, however students can refer to regions or specific areas of the country.  
Determine which areas of the U.S. were first affected by the flu? How quickly did it spread to other regions of the country? How long, according to this map, did the 1918 influenza last?
5. Have students duplicate the original map on the blank U.S. map. First, create a legend using five colors to show the five chronological periods of the 1918 flu. Use these colors on the blank map to replicate the original map.
6. Additional sources to expand discussion of the 1918 pandemic:  
<http://1918.pandemicflu.gov/index.htm>  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/influenza/player/>  
(includes an excellent documentary about the 1918 outbreak)

**Extension Activity:**

Have students reflect on the 2009 H1N1 epidemic. Compare and contrast it with the 1918 epidemic. It is important, when analyzing historic events, to have oral histories provided by eye witnesses. Have students write short oral histories about H1N1. Compare these accounts with those at:

<http://www.flu.gov/storybook/stories/sickness/wright/index.html>. ■