



★

**GREAT WAR, FLAWED PEACE,  
AND THE LASTING LEGACY  
OF WORLD WAR I**

★



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# FEMALE SERVICEMEMBERS OF WORLD WAR I: THEIR STORY



**GUIDING QUESTION:** Was the modern woman of the 1920s a departure or continuation from the role of women as female servicemembers during World War I?

## AUTHOR

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## WHY?

During World War I, women helped the war effort in various ways, but their stories are left untold in many history classrooms. When flipping through different textbooks, I realized the limited information about women's war efforts focused solely on women on the homefront and neglected the women in the military. I wanted to create a lesson that highlighted the important role these women played and how their efforts influenced the creation of the modern woman of the 1920s.

## OVERVIEW

After analyzing a wide array of sources including academic articles, oral histories, a video lecture, government documents and photographs, students will compile a new insert for their textbook about female servicemembers during World War I and compare them to the modern woman of the 1920s.

## OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to

- > Describe the role female servicemembers played in World War I; and
- > Connect the accomplishments of women during World War I to development of the modern woman in the 1920s.

## STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

### CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

## DOCUMENTS USED

### PRIMARY SOURCES

Advertisement, "Women Who Hold Men's Jobs," March 1926  
*Popular Science Monthly*

Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale, "The Women's Revolution," October 1923 (excerpt)  
*Current History*

Hello Girls Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2018  
U.S. Senate  
<https://www.veterans.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Hello%20Girls%20Congressional%20Gold%20Medal%20Act%20of%202018%20-%20Signed%20Bill.pdf>

"The Inquiring Reporter: Every Day He Asks Five Persons, Picked at Random, a Question," April 25, 1922 (excerpt)  
*Chicago Daily Tribune*

Mildred Hardenbergh, "Taking the Hand Off the Cradle to Catch Devil Fish: How Modern Woman is Delving into the Sacred Precincts of Male Occupation and Is Now Found in the Role of Bandit, Judge, Bricklayer, Hunter, and Race Horse Jockey," August, 12, 1923 (excerpt)  
*The Atlanta Constitution*

Oral History, Clara Wilhemina Emily Lewandoske Hoke  
Veterans History Project, Library of Congress  
<https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.31647/>

Reverend Hugh L. McMenam, "Evils of Woman's Revolt against the Old Standards," October 1927 (excerpt)  
*Current History*

"Tom Masson Says [regular feature of humorous commentary]," January 5, 1929 (excerpt)  
*Collier's*

Walter Lionel George, *Hail Columbia!: Random Impressions of a Conservative English Radical*, 1921 (excerpt)

## SECONDARY SOURCES

Colleen Cheslak, "Women of the Red Cross Motor Corps in WWI," October 19, 2018  
National Women's History Museum  
<https://www.womenshistory.org/articles/women-red-cross-motor-corps-wwi>

"In Her Words: Women's Duty and Service in WWI"  
Smithsonian Postal Museum  
<https://postalmuseum.si.edu/in-her-words/Creveling.html>

Lori Boissoneault, "Women on the Frontlines of WWI Came to Operate Telephones," April 4, 2017  
*Smithsonian Magazine*  
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/women-frontlines-wwi-came-operate-telephones-180962687/>

Marian Moser Jones, "American Nurses in World War I: Underappreciated and Under Fire"  
PBS American Experience  
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/the-great-war-american-nurses-world-war-1/>

Marie Allitt, "'A Male Department of Warfare': Female Ambulance Drivers in the First World War," November 20, 2018  
Nursing Clio  
<https://nursingclio.org/2018/11/20/a-male-department-of-warfare-female-ambulance-drivers-in-the-first-world-war/>

Nathaniel Patch, "The Story of the Female Yeomen during the First World War," Fall 2006  
*Prologue Magazine*  
<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2006/fall/yeoman-f.html>

Video, Elizabeth Cobbs, *Women at War: The Hello Girls*, March 22, 2018  
National World War I Museum and Memorial  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbQWCU9OU20>

"Women in World War I"  
National World War I Museum and Memorial  
<https://www.theworldwar.org/learn/women>

## MATERIALS

- > Women in World War I Textbook Insert Assignment (Part I and Part II)
- > The Modern Woman of the 1920s Source Collection
- > Women in World War I Textbook Insert Rubric
- > Computers with Internet capability for student research and textbook page design

## ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- > Make a copy of the following for each student:
  - » Women in World War I Textbook Insert Assignment
  - » The Modern Woman of the 1920s Source Collection
  - » Women in World War I Textbook Insert Rubric
- > Divide students into groups of three to four students each.

## PROCEDURE

### ACTIVITY ONE: WOMEN IN WORLD WAR I (60 MINUTES)

- > Tell students, *After the Great War, President Wilson stated that women during the war rendered services "upon the very skirts and edge of battle itself." Today, we are going to study what some of these women did.*
- > Have students open their textbooks to learn more about the stories of women during the war. If you already know where the section about women during World War I is in your textbook, have them go directly to that page. If not, have them either go to the index or flip through the chapter on World War I to find the section.
  - » Most textbooks have a minimal amount of information about women during the war. The information that is included is about women on the homefront, and not about the female servicemembers who travelled overseas.
  - » Ask students to discuss what the textbook reveals about women's role during the Great War and what they think is missing based on the Woodrow Wilson quote displayed in the classroom. Have them consider if the textbook reveals the whole story about women's contributions to the war effort.
- > Tell students that they will write an insert for their textbooks that tells the story specifically of a group of female servicemembers during World War I. The first half of their insert will be focused on the women in the varying branches, including:
  - » The United States Army Nurses Corps
  - » The United States Army Signal Corps (known as the "Hello Girls")
  - » The United States Navy Yeoman (F) (the "Yeomanettes")
  - » The American Red Cross Motor Corps

- > Divide students into groups of three to four students each and assign each group one of the women’s military auxiliaries listed above (in larger classes, more than one group can have the same assignment).
- > Give each group a copy of the Women in World War I Textbook Insert Assignment.
- > Direct each group research their specific group of female servicemembers using the sources provided. Once they have completed their research, they can collaborate to create their textbook insert.
  - » **Teacher Tip:** Students can complete the project digitally or on paper.

### ACTIVITY TWO: WOMEN AFTER WORLD WAR I (60 MINUTES)

- > Explain that the “modern woman” of the 1920s is an outgrowth of the World War I generation. Explain that they will create a second half of their textbook insert about these women.
- > Distribute The Modern Woman of the 1920s Source Collection to each student.
- > Tell students they will complete their textbook insert by comparing the female servicemembers of World War I with the modern woman of the 1920s.
- > Allow student groups time to analyze the sources and complete their textbook insert.
- > Lead a group discussion, *Was the modern woman of the 1920s a departure or continuation from the role of women as female servicemembers during World War I?* Prompts can include:
  - » *What are some similarities you discovered between the female servicemembers of World War I and the modern woman of the 1920s? What are the differences?*
  - » *How do you think the experiences of the female servicemembers impacted their attitudes toward work and the role of women in society after the war ended?*
  - » *Was everyone in favor of the new modern woman? Explain your answer with support from the sources.*
  - » *Do you think that the female servicemembers you learned about would have become “modern women” based on the reading? Why or why not?*

### ASSESSMENT

- > The Women in World War I Textbook Insert Rubric can be used to score this task.

### METHODS FOR EXTENSION

- > Students with more interest in this topic can research the correlation between the female servicemembers and the suffrage movement in more detail. The National Women’s History Museum is a great resource to use to begin research.
- > Students with an interest in creative writing can create two diary entries: one as a female servicemember of World War I in 1917, and one as the same woman ten years later as a modern woman of the 1920s.
- > Students with more interest in the topic of women in the military can use this lesson as a launching off point to research more into female servicemembers of World War II, including the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs), Women’s Army Corps (WACs), United States Naval Women’s Reserves (WAVES), and the United States Coast Guard Women’s Reserves (SPARS).

# WOMEN IN WORLD WAR I TEXTBOOK INSERT ASSIGNMENT

## PART I: WOMEN IN WORLD WAR I

President Woodrow Wilson stated that women during World War I rendered services “upon the very skirts and edge of battle itself.” But who were these women? What did they do? Why do our textbooks leave out their stories? For this assignment, you and your group will be giving a voice to these women on the “very skirts and edge of battle.”

As a group, you will be creating a new insert to your U.S. history textbook about Female Service Members of World War I. You will begin by conducting your research on your assigned group of women using resources provided below. These sources have a wealth of information to help you compile your new textbook insert.

You will be assigned one of the following groups of female service members:

- > The United States Army Nurses Corps
- > The United States Army Signal Corps (known as the “Hello Girls”)
- > The United States Navy’s Yeoman (F) (the “Yeomanettes”)
- > The American Red Cross Motor Corps

Directions for your textbook insert:

- > Complete a textbook insert that is least 250 words long.
- > Answer the following questions in detail:
  - » What role did your group of female service members have during the war?
  - » What was the significance of your group of female service members during the war?
  - » What are some of the characteristics of the women in these positions during the war?
- > Write **in your own words**. Do **NOT** copy and paste!
- > Use a quote from the provided sources. This quote should be from a woman who experienced the war.
- > Include at least two images of your group of female service members from the provided handout. Each image must have a one-sentence caption detailing why you selected that particular photograph to tell its story.
- > Be creative!

## RESEARCH RESOURCES

All groups should begin your research here. This article gives an overview of the role women played during the war:

“Women in World War I”

National World War I Museum and Memorial

<https://www.theworldwar.org/learn/women>

# WOMEN IN WORLD WAR I TEXTBOOK INSERT ASSIGNMENT

## PART I: WOMEN IN WORLD WAR I

### U.S. Army Nurse Corps

Clara Hoke was a nurse during World War I. Listen to her story from 3:46 to 15:06 minutes to learn more about her experience.

Oral History, Clara Wilhemina Emily Lewandoske Hoke  
Veterans History Project, Library of Congress  
<https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.31647/>

This article gives in depth information regarding nurses during the Great War.

Marian Moser Jones, "American Nurses in World War I: Underappreciated and Under Fire"  
PBS American Experience  
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/the-great-war-american-nurses-world-war-1/>

### U.S. Army Signal Corps ("Hello Girls")

Elizabeth Cobbs wrote the book *The Hello Girls: America's First Female Soldiers*. The following is part of a lecture from the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City. Watch from 41:00 to 44:30 minutes and 47:45 to 50:55 minutes.

Video, Elizabeth Cobbs, *Women at War: The Hello Girls*, March 22, 2018  
National World War I Museum and Memorial  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbQWCU9OU20>

A bill was introduced in 2018 to recognize the "Hello Girls" with a Congressional Gold Medal. This bill provides details of their service and the years following World War I.

Hello Girls Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2018  
U.S. Senate  
<https://www.veterans.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Hello%20Girls%20Congressional%20Gold%20Medal%20Act%20of%202018%20-%20Signed%20Bill.pdf>

This article gives in depth information regarding the "Hello Girls."

Lori Boissoneault, "Women on the Frontlines of WWI Came to Operate Telephones," April 4, 2017  
*Smithsonian Magazine*  
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/women-frontlines-wwi-came-operate-telephones-180962687>

# WOMEN IN WORLD WAR I TEXTBOOK INSERT ASSIGNMENT

## PART I: WOMEN IN WORLD WAR I

### United States Navy Yeoman (F) (“Yeomanettes”)

This article gives detailed information about the Yeoman (F) during World War I, including information about the Naval Services Act of 1916 which opened the door for women to enlist in the U.S. Navy.

Nathaniel Patch, “The Story of the Female Yeomen during the First World War,” Fall 2006

*Prologue Magazine*

<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2006/fall/yeoman-f.html>

This is a short piece about Ruth Woodworth Creveling, who served as a Yeoman (F) in the U.S. Navy during World War I.

“In Her Words: Women’s Duty and Service in WWI”

National Postal Museum

<https://postalmuseum.si.edu/in-her-words/Creveling.html>

### The American Red Cross Motor Corps

This article gives insight into the lives of female ambulance drivers during World War I.

Marie Allitt, “ ‘A Male Department of Warfare:’ Female Ambulance Drivers in the First World War,” November 20, 2018

Nursing Clio

<https://nursingclio.org/2018/11/20/a-male-department-of-warfare-female-ambulance-drivers-in-the-first-world-war/>

This article gives great insight into the women of the Red Cross Motor Corps, including information on society prior to the war regarding women and automobiles, and the effects of the war on these women.

Colleen Cheslak, “Women of the Red Cross Motor Corps in WWI,” October 19, 2018

National Women’s History Museum

<https://www.womenshistory.org/articles/women-red-cross-motor-corps-wwi>

# WOMEN IN WORLD WAR I TEXTBOOK INSERT ASSIGNMENT

## PART II: THE MODERN WOMAN OF THE 1920s

“They were smart and sophisticated, with an air of independence about them, and so casual about their looks and clothes and manners as to be almost slapdash. I don’t know if I realized as soon as I began seeing them that they represented the wave of the future, but I do know I was drawn to them. I shared their restlessness, understood their determination to free themselves of the Victorian shackles of the pre-World War I era and find out for themselves what life was all about.” --Colleen Moore

For the second half of your textbook insert, you will compare the female service members of World War I with the modern woman of the 1920s. To do this, you must first learn about the modern woman of the 1920s. After you have completed your reading, you will create a textbook insert that seeks to answer the question, Was the modern woman of the 1920s a departure or continuation of the role of women as female service members during World War I?

Use the following questions to help guide you as you create your insert:

- › What are some similarities you discovered between the female service members of World War I and the modern woman of the 1920s? Are there any differences?
- › How did the experiences of the female service members impacted their attitudes toward work and the role of women in society after the war ended?
- › Would your group of female service members be considered “modern women” based on the reading? Why or why not?

Directions for your textbook insert:

- › Complete a textbook insert at least 250 words long.
- › Make a definitive stance/argument about the modern woman as being a departure or continuation from the female service members of World War I with a detailed explanation, with evidence, backing up your claim.
- › Write **in your own words**. Do **NOT** copy and paste!
- › Use a quote from the provided sources. The quote should highlight a difference or similarity you seen between the women.
- › Include at least two images of the modern woman, with captions that detail why you chose that picture (how does it help your argument?).



## THE MODERN WOMAN OF THE 1920s SOURCE COLLECTION

WALTER LIONEL GEORGE, *HAIL COLUMBIA!: RANDOM IMPRESSIONS OF A CONSERVATIVE ENGLISH RADICAL*, 1921 (EXCERPT)

"...I have been equally surprised by the conquests made in business by American women. It is rather a shock to a European to meet a pretty girl of twenty-seven, to hear that she is employed in a drug corporation, and then to discover that she is a director. A shock to find a woman running a lawyer's office entailing annual expenses of seven or eight thousand dollars, and making a living. It is a surprise to find the American stenographer earning four times as much as her European sister. All those shocks, however, arise out of particular instances, and, though I agree that the American woman has made herself a good position, when I go through a business reference book I find that not one in a hundred of the leading names is the name of a woman. In American man still rules; all you can say is that he does not rule women so harshly as he does in Europe..."

MILDRED HARDENBERGH, "TAKING THE HAND OFF THE CRADLE TO CATCH DEVIL FISH: HOW MODERN WOMAN IS DELVING INTO THE SACRED PRECINCTS OF MALE OCCUPATION AND IS NOW FOUND IN THE ROLE OF BANDIT, JUDGE, BRICKLAYER, HUNTER, AND RACE HORSE JOCKEY," AUGUST, 12, 1923 (EXCERPT)  
*THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION*

"...Ain't it the truth that some will go to any length to earn pin money (spending money), as it were? Why, I've been reading lately in the papers about any number of the so-called weaker sex that have been invading the particular fields that the men have been surest was their very own, and getting away with it too--especially in these United States. And far be it from me to say them nay, for why shouldn't they be given a chance when they're proving right and left that they're able in plenty to fill the bill--and hang on to their femininity at the same time?"

"Personally, I wouldn't be so keen about trying some of the stunts I've been reading about. But ladies must live, and if some of them prefer dangerous stuff, why, I say, let them have it. Still, just among ourselves, I think even if I did hanker through the rough stuff I could find something a little less exciting than octopus hunting to satisfy my emotional and mercenary demands!"

"Yes, sir, that's just what a lot of them are doing--catching octopus or devilfish, out of Salon Beach, Washington, for \$40 and \$50 a month! They can catch as many as seven a day sometimes, and they sell them to the Chinese and Japanese for 10 cents a pound, all of which makes the sport quite profitable, if you look at it that way...But if you are 'East' you don't have to go west to find women doing men's work and keeping up with fashion, too..."

## THE MODERN WOMAN OF THE 1920s SOURCE COLLECTION

"THE INQUIRING REPORTER: EVERY DAY HE ASKS FIVE PERSONS, PICKED AT RANDOM, A QUESTION," APRIL 25, 1922 (EXCERPT)

CHICAGO DAILY TRIBUNE

**The Question:** Do girls who have earned their living make the best wives?

**Where asked:** In the Strauss building, 6 North Clark Street

**The Answers:**

**Sidney Frisch:** 6 North Clark Street, attorney

My impression is that girls who have earned their own living do not make the best wives. It seems to me that the hustle and bustle of business life has a tendency to develop an unsettled frame of mind. The effect upon them later when they marry is not good.

**Miss Carrie Kelsey:** 6 North Clark Street, switchboard operator

I do not think that working girls--that is, girls who earn their living--make the best wives, for the reason that the most of them become too independent. They become accustomed to paying their own way and having their own way about everything.

**Lonson D. Calkins:** 328 W. Washington Street, manager, Kewanee Boiler Company

It is my opinion that girls who have earned their own living do make the best wives. They have more experience with the world and they should be, and I believe, are more practical than the home girl. The working girl knows the value of money.

**Rudolph Shapira:** assistant state's attorney

Yes, I believe girls who have earned their living make the best wives. They appreciate the value of a dollar, and they know what a home is; in short, they realize that it is to their best interest to make home as comfortable as possible.

**Miss Agnes Blickley:** 1300 N. Dearborn St., artist

The girl who earned money by working knows the value of money, while the girl who hasn't worked does not. Newly married people seldom have any too much money, and when the young wife can't get what she wants when she wants it she is too liable to cause trouble.

## THE MODERN WOMAN OF THE 1920s SOURCE COLLECTION

REVEREND HUGH L. MCMENAMIN, "EVILS OF WOMAN'S REVOLT AGAINST THE OLD STANDARDS," OCTOBER 1927 (EXCERPT)  
*CURRENT HISTORY*

*Note: Reverend McMenamin was a Roman Catholic priest*

"Look about you. The theatre, the magazine, the current fiction, the ballroom, the night clubs and the joyrides--all give evidence of an ever-increasing disregard for even the rudiments of decency in dress, deportments, conventions [standards], and conduct. Little by little the bars have been lowered, leaving out the few influences that held society in restraint. One need be neither prude nor puritan to feel that something is passing in the hearts and in the minds of the women of today that is leaving them cold and unwomanly...

"We may try to deceive ourselves and close our eyes to the prevailing flapper conduct. We may call boldness greater self-reliance, brazenness greater self-assertion, license greater freedom, and try to pardon immodesty in dress by calling it style and fashion, but the fact remains that deep down in our hearts we feel a sense of shame and pity...

"Modern economic conditions, with the mania for speedy profits, have been a powerful factor in producing the 'New Woman,' inasmuch as they have dragged her into the commercial world and made her economically independent. It is quite impossible for a woman to engage successfully in business and politics and at the same time create a happy home. A woman cannot be a mother and a typist at the same time, and unfortunately she elects to be merely a wife, and out of that condition have arisen those temples of race suicide--our modern apartment houses--and the consequent grinding of the divorce mills."

BEATRICE FORBES-ROBERTSON HALE, "THE WOMEN'S REVOLUTION," OCTOBER 1923 (EXCERPT)  
*CURRENT HISTORY*

"The character of American women under the impact of modern conditions has, it would seem to the observer, gained in strength, honesty, initiative, camaraderie, and self-confidence, but perhaps lost somewhat in patience, sweetness, and the more superficial 'feminine' traits. There is no evidence to show that their moral quality has deteriorated."

"TOM MASSON SAYS [REGULAR FEATURE OF HUMOROUS COMMENTARY]," JANUARY 5, 1929 (EXCERPT)  
*COLLIER'S*

Progress

1900: She owns her own home.

1910: She owns her own car.

1920: She owns her own business.

# THE MODERN WOMAN OF THE 1920s SOURCE COLLECTION

ADVERTISEMENT, "WOMEN WHO HOLD MEN'S JOBS," MARCH 1926  
POPULAR SCIENCE MONTHLY

## Expert Woman Welder

Mrs. Martha Hoffman Henke of Chicago, one of the very few woman welders in the world, explaining the art of welding. A short time ago in Boston she gave a demonstration of her mechanical art for the American Welding Society and the students of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

## She Follows Mining

Miss Helen Antonkova overhauling a mining drill. Born in Siberia, she is now a student of mining engineering at the University of Washington.

## A Worker in Wood

Mrs. Park of Garrard's Cross, England, making fittings for her invention—a portable telescopic nursery gate. This British matron knows tools as well as babies, and she keeps a workshop in her home. Her nursery gate placed across the nursery door makes of the room a big and safe play pen.

## With Synthetic Sunshine

Doctor Rosalind Wulzen, of the University of California, is shown above experimenting with synthetic sunbeams. She uses a "sunshine" machine in her search for a cure for various ills now deemed almost incurable.

## Behold "Mrs. Hercules!"

This is Mrs. Angelina Francesca, of Boston, carrying a big barrel. She is six feet six inches in height, and for 10 years she has been handling barrels and hogs-heads at a barrel plant where she is employed. She, without a doubt, is the Amazon of New England.

## Mechanics Her Choice

Miss Thelma Holliday repairing the distributor of an automobile engine. She holds a regular job in a garage in New York City. She always preferred a screwdriver to a typewriter, and today she is said to be a genuinely competent auto mechanic. She says she thoroughly enjoys her unusual vocation and sees no reason why a woman who is mechanically inclined should spend her days filing cards or adding figures.



## WOMEN IN WORLD WAR I TEXTBOOK INSERT RUBRIC

	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Emerging
<b>Writing</b>	Each section in the textbook insert has a clear beginning, middle, and end.	Almost all sections in the textbook insert have a clear beginning, middle, and end.	Most sections in the textbook insert have a clear beginning, middle, and end.	Less than half of the textbook insert has a clear beginning, middle, and end.
<b>Historical Accuracy</b>	All facts in the textbook insert are correct.	Most facts in the textbook insert are correct. Errors are minor.	Some facts in the textbook insert are correct. Errors are more prevalent.	Many facts in the textbook insert are incorrect. Errors impede understanding.
<b>Graphics</b>	Graphics go well with the text and there is a good mix of text and graphics.	Graphics go well with the text.	Graphics are appropriate, but there may be too many or too few.	Graphics do not go well with the accompanying text or appear to be randomly chosen.
<b>Knowledge</b>	All students in the group can accurately answer all questions related to facts in the textbook insert.	All students in the group can accurately answer most questions related to facts in the textbook insert.	Most students in the group can accurately answer some questions related to facts in the textbook insert.	Several students in the group have little knowledge about the facts in the textbook insert.
<b>Organization</b>	The textbook insert is exceptionally appealing with attractive formatting and well-organized information.	The textbook insert includes attractive formatting and well-organized information.	The textbook insert includes organized information.	The textbook insert's formatting and organization are confusing to the reader.



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