



CURRICULA

FOR GRADES :
6 TO 9

CANADA'S CAPITAL TREASURES

Introduction:

The National Capital Commission, TEACH Magazine and the Virtual Museum of Canada have collaborated to celebrate and commemorate key people, places and events as represented by important monuments, buildings, memorials and structures in the nation's capital. Seven classroom-ready lesson plans and five introductory videos highlight and explore the significance and importance of Canada's Capital Treasures. These treasures represent knowledge, sacrifice, commitment and ingenuity. We invite you to investigate and in doing so, come to understand their importance to Canada and Canadians.

Lesson One: National War Memorial

The National War Memorial is close to many other buildings and monuments in the Capital that commemorate Canada's role in war and peace, including the Peace Tower (and the Memorial Chamber), the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument, and Reconciliation: the Peacekeeping Monument.

Materials

The Response: The National War Memorial video:

http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/tresors-treasures/?page_id=7474&lang=en

Learning Objectives

The learner will:

- Learn more about the act of commemoration and explore the idea of community service;
- Discover the importance of the First World War and the Battle of Vimy Ridge to Canada's nationhood;
- Identify times and places in their own lives where the act of remembrance is valued;
- Determine how supporting elements like music and audio enhance the impact of video when used as a media literacy tool; and
- Create a piece of persuasive media to attract visitors to an event.



National War Memorial, 1939

Photo: Library and Archives Canada / C-6545

The National War Memorial was dedicated on May 21, 1939, by His Majesty King George VI. The artist who created the memorial, Vernon March, died before its completion, and the work was finished by his family, pictured here.

Keywords

National War Memorial; Remembrance Day Ceremonies; commemoration; First World War; Second World War; The Response; Mackenzie King; Vernon March; Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Introduction

The National War Memorial is instantly recognizable: 22 bronze figures marching through a giant granite arch. It is featured on Canadian \$10 bills and on some 25-cent coins. Every Remembrance Day, the Governor General and the Prime Minister lay wreaths at its base. This ceremony connects Canadians to more than 6,000 local war memorials across the country, and reflects our many smaller and more personal acts of remembrance.

The monument stands in the centre of Confederation Square, a short distance from the Parliament Buildings, in the very hub of downtown Ottawa. The square is a central public gathering place where many ceremonies and celebrations occur. Originally, the Gatineau Hills were considered for the location of the National War Memorial. However, then-Prime Minister Mackenzie King wanted it to be in the heart of Canada's Capital where everyone could see and access it. Confederation Square was created to receive the memorial.

The sculptural ensemble is entitled *The Response*. The memorial was created in the wake of the First World War, during which time Canada responded to Great Britain's call for aid. Artist Vernon March did not live to see the memorial completed. After his death in 1930, March's family finished his complex sculptural plan. They attended the opening ceremonies in the spring of 1939, a few short months before Canada would, once again, march to war at Britain's request.

Take a moment to view the video "The Response: The National War Memorial". You will notice that all branches of the service are represented in the sculpture, from infantrymen pulling a large cannon, to airmen and seamen. Other figures are given equal importance, however: the nurses who cared for war's casualties, and the expert foresters who cut wood for railways and cleared terrain for airfields. Perched at the apex of the arch itself, two winged figures symbolizing peace and liberty reign over all.

The First World War was a turning point in Canadian relations with Great Britain and the world. Following the war, during the 1919 Treaty of Versailles negotiations, Prime Minister Robert Borden insisted that Canada have the right to its own seat at the table, and to sign the treaty independent of Great Britain.

Originally honouring those who had served in the First World War, the National War Memorial was rededicated in 1981 to commemorate the response of all Canadians who have served our country in times of conflict and peace.

The National War Memorial is close to many other buildings and monuments in the Capital that commemorate Canada's role in war and peace, including the Peace Tower (and the Memorial Chamber), the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument, and Reconciliation: the Peacekeeping Monument.

Next to the National War Memorial is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. (In the video, you can see it best at 0:50, lit up in the night scene. It is at the base of the National War Memorial.) The Unknown Soldier fell at Vimy Ridge during the First World War and was buried in France near the battle site. The anonymity of the fallen soldier is important; he symbolizes all Canadians — past, present and future — who have given, or will give, their lives in military service.

In 2000, the soldier's body was flown to Canada on a Canadian Forces plane with an honour guard, a group of veterans, a chaplain and two youth representatives. The body lay in state for three days and was then interred in Confederation Square's

upper plaza. The sarcophagus is made from Quebec granite, and features bronze relief sculptures of a sword, helmet and leaves, the same as those found on the altar at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in Vimy, France. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is depicted on a 2008 commemorative 25-cent piece.

Activity One: Write a Short Paper

"It can hardly be expected that we shall put 400,000 or 500,000 men in the field and willingly accept the position of having no more voice and receiving no more consideration than if we were toy automata."

— Sir Robert Borden, January 4, 1916

Brigadier-General Alexander Ross, a battalion commander at Vimy Ridge, watched the Canadian troops move out: "It was Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific on parade. I thought then...that in those few minutes I witnessed the birth of a nation."

Consider these two quotes. What was the importance of Vimy Ridge, not just to the war effort, but also to Canada as a nation? The last living Canadian veteran of the First World War has now passed away, taking away all living memory of that war. What is the value in studying a war that happened almost 100 years ago? Write a short paper about the importance, for young Canadians, of remembering the First World War, and particularly Vimy Ridge.

Activity Two: Make a Poster

When the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was unveiled in 2000, Veterans Affairs Canada created a poster for the event. Imagine that it's 1939. You must create a poster for the unveiling of the National War Memorial. Over 100,000 people came to that ceremony on May 21, 1939, and the King of England, George VI, addressed the crowd.

Activity Three: Propose a New Monument

Remember that acts of heroism and sacrifice are important to individuals, communities, cities and nations. Divide into groups and research an individual, group, or particular event that has directly affected your community. Once your group has selected the person or topic, design an appropriate memorial. Submit a plan for the memorial, including the best location for it — consider national or local — and how you propose to unveil it (e.g., What kind of ceremony will there be? What special guests or speakers will unveil the memorial?).



The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, 2006

Photo: Reproduced with the permission of Veterans Affairs Canada, 2010

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is covered in poppies, following Remembrance Day ceremonies in 2006. It has become tradition to leave poppies on the tomb, immediately after the ceremony.

Activity Four: Make a Commemoration Display

Monuments are just one way we commemorate important individuals and events. Name five more ways. List examples of these sorts of commemorations. What are the pros and cons of commemorating in these ways? Collect examples of these commemorations and analyze their strengths and weaknesses. Make a classroom display of the commemorations. Extend the activity by creating "pitch" teams, small groups that "sell" the idea of the commemoration to a panel of judges who will select the most effective pitch.

Activity Five: Individual Research and Class Discussion

The "central square" is an important feature of most communities, whether villages or large cities. Where is the "meeting place" in your community? What are its important features and how is it used? Research Confederation Square in Canada's Capital. When was it designed? What important events have happened there? Compare it to your community's "central square." What features are the same? Which are different? As a class, make a list on the board about your community's city square. What improvements would you suggest for your square?

Extend the activity: In small groups, propose plans for an "improved" Confederation Square. What additions should be

made and why? Should anything be removed or relocated? Draw out your revised plans using online maps and resources as a starting point.

Activity Six: Consider Names of Monuments (Grade 7)

The National War Memorial is named "The Response." Consider why it might have been given this name and research to find out more. Evaluate whether or not you think the name is a good one. Now think of three other possible names for the Memorial. List your reasons for choosing each one.

The "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier" is a name given to a specific type of grave. There is one in Ottawa; there are similar graves in other countries around the world. Mark as many of these as possible on a world map. How do you think these graves have come to share the same name? What might be the effect of the shared use of this name worldwide?

Activity Seven: Evaluate Community Service (Grade 8)

You have read that, although originally honouring those who had served in the First World War, the National War Memorial now commemorates all Canadians who have served our country in times of conflict and peace. What do you think the word "served" means in this context?

Reread the introduction and/or view the video again as you make a list of the variety of roles Canadians have played in these conflicts. Then do further research to add to your list, looking also at what Canadians did on the home front to help the war effort. Make a similar list of the variety of ways in which Canadians serve their country in times of peace. What is "community service"? In what ways is it an important Canadian value? Think about the volunteer hour requirement for high school students in many provinces and territories, and write a paragraph explaining whether or not you think this could be an important experience for you.

Write a statement indicating whether or not you think it is important that the National War Memorial commemorates Canadians who have served our country and list three or four reasons for your opinion.

Activity Eight: Hearing an "Echo" (Grade 9)

Vimy Ridge, located in France, was the site of a decisive battle fought by four divisions of Canadian Expeditionary Forces during the First World War. It has come to be a symbol of Canadian achievement and sacrifice. The Canadian National Vimy Memorial

was built on Vimy Ridge to commemorate the Canadian soldiers who fought there and throughout France during the First World War. Find images of the Canadian National Vimy Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Ottawa, and the National War Memorial. Why do you think the bronze relief sculptures of a sword, helmet, and leaves on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were created to replicate those on the altar at the National Vimy Memorial? How might "echoes" of specific symbols be an important way of conveying messages?

When you compare images of the Canadian National Vimy Memorial and the National War Memorial, what common messages do you think they might be sharing? Who do you think is responsible for deciding the content of these messages? Research to find out. Why do you think these particular messages were chosen? Tell a partner how you arrived at this conclusion.

Extension activity: Read Activity Six and think about how Tombs of the Unknown Soldier around the world might be considered "echoes," meaning, examples of sacrifice and dedication to a cause or an ideal, in this case by those who are unknown and died in wars for their respective countries. "Can you think of any other examples of echoes in other types of art such as, books or movies? Why are "echoes" powerful? (Hint: Consider actions in the Harry Potter series, books and films and Lord of the Rings books and films, as potential examples.)

Media Literacy Activity

View the video "The Response: The National War Memorial" again, but this time, watch it without the sound. What do you notice? Think about how both the music and the script affect your reaction to the content of the video. With a partner, choose two or three other music clips as background sound for the video. Play these for another set of partners. What effect were you trying to create? Use the comments of the listening pair to decide whether you were successful.

Extend the activity: With a partner, read the transcript for the video. Then write a new script for the video. What aspects of the National War Memorial will you choose to highlight and why? How does bias affect your final product?