



Curricula

Roll A Coin Through the Curriculum

Unit 3: The War Years

Introduction

When we refer to the War years, it means the periods of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945. During the First World War, Canada became involved as part of the British Empire and managed to prove itself in a bloody conflict. In particular, the Canadians took the lead and prevailed in the Battle of Vimy Ridge, which in many ways, marked a turning point in the country's evolution on the global stage. The Canadians accomplished something its allies couldn't. In 1939, Canada declared war on another country for the first and only time in its history. Like the First World War, this second global conflict changed Canada and its people dramatically and irrevocably. War presents new and difficult challenges for nations and Canada was no exception. In the Second World War, Canadians were called upon to learn new skills, develop new strategies, to rely more on themselves and each other than ever before. Where the First World War marked Canada's debut on the world stage, the Second World War accelerated the country's industrial capacity, its spirit and independence... all at a terrible price.

General Outcomes/Expectations

Students will:

- Understand the impact of global war domestically and internationally
- Research the conditions and events that led to the first two world wars
- Gain insight into the economics of war
- Attempt to understand war through culture, specifically, visual arts and poetry
- Explore key issues such as conscription and what effect it had on the psyche of the country
- Work together cooperatively in teams
- Hone critical assessment and evaluation skills

Key Concepts and Issues

Students will explore why and how Canada was affected by its involvement in two world conflicts and what influence these events had on the evolution of the country.

WWI - 1914-19

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Activities

Junior (grades 4-6),
intermediate (grades 7-9) and
senior (grades 10-12)

Junior Level Activity

The War Years: Painting the Conflict

Duration

Three to four class periods

Equipment Required

art supplies, pens, paper, markers, pencils, computers with Internet access

Key Concepts

Students will:

- Research the history of Canadian art and war
- Research the artists who were sent overseas to document the war years
- Understand the role art plays in documenting wars
- Create a poster or visual display on a war-related theme or event
- Use critical thinking and analytical skills
- Apply knowledge to current events
- Work cooperatively in teams

Resources

www.canadianencyclopedia.ca/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0008436

www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=collections/paintings

www.collectionscanada.ca/war-artists/index-e.html

Intro

Canada's War Art program officially began in 1916 by Lord Beaverbrook (Max Aitken). Artists in Canada and from around the world were commissioned to document the ongoing European conflict we know as the First World War. Some 800 works of art were produced as a result depicting civilians and the military, the battlefronts and conditions at home. The works of art that were produced, often under dangerous and difficult conditions, represent a valuable and all too human archive of the conditions surrounding warfare. The artists brought their own creativity and interpretation to the images they saw before them. As a result, an invaluable and poignant legacy was created and is available to those of us who have not experienced war firsthand. None of the commissioned works were exhibited while the First World War was ongoing but received public display after the War's end. Canada was also the first country to establish a war art program.



The Home Front Poster

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Discuss

Have a general discussion about art and its role as a vehicle for documenting events. War artists have played an important role during earlier

conflicts from history such as the American Civil War. So, the role of the war artist had already been well established.

Research

Students will research the history of Canadian War art.

Write

Students will summarize their research findings. Maximum length: one page

Select

Students will select a war artist from the list above (see Resources). Students will summarize the life and career of the war artist they have selected. Maximum length, one page.

Background

The Canadian War Museum (please see Web address in the Resources section) has divided up its exhibition on Canadian war art into different themes. The theme are as follows: Battle (images of conflict), Service (preparation and waiting for war), Work (those who aren't on the front lines but contributing to the war effort), Captivity/Casualties (those captured during ongoing battles and those wounded or killed, and Home/Leisure (what people on the home front were doing and taking time off from war).

Select

Students will select one of the above mentioned themes.

Design

Students will draw, paint, design, sketch their own visual image (painting, drawing, poster, cartoon etc.) based on the theme they have selected.

Write

Students will write a short narrative piece no more than two paragraphs in length describing their visual image, what it represents and its significance.

Present

Students will briefly present their images to the class.

Extension Activity

Form

Students will be placed in groups of three or four.

Discuss

The members of the group will discuss the visual image they have created with the other members. How do each of the images fit together? Can they tell a story?

Create

Using the images students have created, they will be pooled together to form a collage.

Write

Students will write some accompanying text describing their collage, its meaning and significance. Maximum length: ½ page.

Present

Each team will present its collage to the class and discuss its meaning and significance.

Intermediate Level Activity

The War Years: Symbols of War

Duration

Two to three class periods

Equipment Required

art supplies, paper, pens, markers, pencils, computers with Internet access

Key Concepts

Students will:

- Understand the sacrifice men, women and children make in war time
- Gain appreciation for Canada's role in major conflicts overseas
- Learn about Canadian war medals, their meaning and significance
- Learn about national symbols and their importance
- Design their own version of a war medal
- Explore the significance of national symbols
- Work cooperatively in teams
- Hone critical thinking and analytical skills

Resources

www.airmuseum.ca/web/ammq9911.html

www.quebecoislibre.org/010707-12.htm

www.histori.ca/peace/page.do?pageID=337

www.pch.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/sc-cs/index_e.cfm

<http://fraser.cc/FlagsCan/Nation/NatSym.html>

Intro

There is a lot about war and the events surrounding war that are symbolic. In the evolution of any country or society, symbols play an important role. They act as a standard of meaning, an image that is representative of that country. And the symbol communicates a message. During periods of war and peace, a country's armies employs objects that act as symbols. There are flags and heralds and standards, even different sorts of arms boast symbols, the configuration of the handle of a sword or a design etched into the blade of a knife. The patches and medals worn by military personnel, even their uniforms represent rank and actions undertaken. That is, did they complete a certain course or program, commit a heroic act or deed, fulfill obligations and responsibilities to attain a certain rank and so on. Wherever we look in society, we see the world filled with symbols even if it is an icon on a computer or a text message. Within the realm of the military, however, and the theatre of war, symbolism is ever present and pervasive.



Tombac, nickel, 1943



The Defence of Britain medal
Source: Veteran Affairs Canada

Discuss

Have a general discussion about symbols in our society. What are their purpose? What do they mean? Have students list as many symbols as they can think of and write them on the board. What about national symbols (flag, maple leaf, beaver etc.)? Can students list any of Canada's national symbols and if so, do they understand their significance?

Research

Students will use the resources list above and research Canada's national symbols. They will select two symbols.

Write

Using the research conducted on the two Canadian symbols, students will write a short summary of each describing the symbol and its significance. Maximum length: ½ page.

Draw

Students will select one of the symbols they have researched and draw it. The drawing must be in context, however. This means that the symbol shouldn't appear on its own but connected to something. For example, the maple leaf is a symbol and it should be drawn as it could appear on a flag, a plaque, a uniform etc.

Research

Using the resources listed above, students will research Canada's military medals and decorations.

Select

Students will select two of the military medals and decorations.

Write

Based on the research they have done, students will write a short summary of the two military medals or decorations they have selected stating the history and significance of each. Maximum length: ½ page.



The War Medal, 1939-45
Source: Veteran Affairs Canada



Top: 2004 Silver Poppy Quarter

Bottom: 2005 Circulation Poppy Quarter

Extension Activity

1. In 1949, The Royal Canadian Mint struck two war medals, the Defence of Britain medal and the War Medal, 1939-45. The class will be divided up into teams of two or three students. Each team will research these medals and produce a short summary description of their history and significance, no longer than one page in length. The teams will then set about using all of the research they have done to date and design their own war medal. The medal may commemorate any conflict such as The First or Second World War, the Korean War, The Vietnam War or even a conflict currently afflicting the globe. Included with the concepts must be a brief explanation of the medal's significance. Students may also create a PowerPoint presentation displaying their research and medal concepts. The medal design will then be presented to the rest of the class.

Or:

2. Students, working in teams will read *In Flanders Fields*, a poem by Colonel John McCrae, a Canadian military surgeon who served during the First World War. It is one of the most famous war poems ever written. Based on how they perceive the poem, each student team will design a commemorative medal or coin that represents John McCrae's poem. Accompanying the design will be a narrative description of the coin or medallion talking about its meaning and significance. The designs will be presented to the rest of the class.

In Flanders Fields

By Colonel John McCrae



In Flanders fields the poppies blow
 Between the crosses, row on row
 That mark our place; and in the sky
 The larks, still bravely singing, fly
 Scarce heard amid the guns below.
 We are the Dead. Short days ago
 We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
 Loved and were loved, and now we lie
 In Flanders fields.
 Take up our quarrel with the foe;
 To you from failing hands we throw
 The torch; be yours to hold it high.
 If ye break faith with us who die
 We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
 In Flanders fields.

Senior Level Activity

The War Years: Reporting the War

Duration

Three to four class periods

Equipment Required

art supplies, pens, paper, markers, pencils, computers with Internet access

Outcomes / Expectations

Students will:

- understand the role of a war correspondent;
- gain appreciation for reporting during war time;
- learn how the media operate during war time;
- experiment with a variety of media to simulate war reporting;
- learn to critically assess media reports during war time;
- understand the difference between objective reporting and propaganda;
- work cooperatively in teams; and
- hone critical thinking and analytical skills.

Resources

www.cbc.ca/news/background/ve-day/correspondent.html

www.cmhg.gc.ca/html/glossary/default-en.asp?letter=W&t=&page=1

www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/newspapers/information_e.html

www.canada.com/topics/news/features/afghanistan/story.html?id=1f29d9bd-3499-4ec4-841f-83e267c65aad&k=73423&p=3

www.civilization.ca/pub/pub011.html

www.cbc.ca/news/reportsfromabroad/murray/20000529.html

www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/ubcreports/2003/03feb06/flak_jacket.html

Introduction



Canada Overseas

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In ancient times, war news was reported by messenger. Runners were sent by field commanders to deliver the news of a battle's outcome to an anxious ruler. Before the invention of electricity, war correspondents were sent to far-off battlefields and filed their reports via stagecoach, railroad or ship. When the battles were distant, the reports came slowly and the public received their information from newspapers that were rarely up-to-date on war events. The information was filtered through the eyes of the correspondent. Today, we live in an age of instantaneous news. Multiple news sources are available to us through a variety of media such as TV, computers and cell phones. When we receive information about combat do we think about who provides it? Do we understand what is required for war correspondents to report on dangerous and often tragic events? Should we take all the information presented to us at face value? How do we decide what to believe?

Discuss

Have a general discussion about war and war correspondents. Ask students to talk about the role of the war correspondent and its importance. Is the public well-served by the war correspondent? If so, why? If not, why not?

Research

Using the resources listed above, students will research the history and the role of the war correspondent.

Write

Students will summarize their research findings. Maximum length: one page.

Form

Students will be placed in groups of three or four.

Review

Students will track war reporting over a period of a week. This activity includes watching the news on television, scanning news on the Internet, and clipping articles from newspapers or magazines.

Report

Students will report to the group on what they saw and read over a week's time. Each group will make a list of their observations noting the type of coverage, the use of images, the use of sound, the slant of the report, the role of the reporter and the effectiveness of the reporting.

Present

Each group will make an oral presentation to the class.

Extension Activity

1. Students, working in teams, will research the history of propaganda. Searching the Internet, they will select a period such as the Second World War and determine the role of propaganda in that conflict. How effective was propaganda? How did it influence civilian populations? How was propaganda used to influence public opinion? The group will put together a PowerPoint presentation for the class.

2. Student teams will write or videotape their own stories about war. The group will decide whether stories will be based on actual or fictitious events. Each team will determine what medium they will use. Print stories should be a maximum of three pages and must include photographs or illustrations. Video stories will run a maximum of two minutes and will emulate what is shown on television or the Internet. Student teams will present their war stories to the class.