



WWI - 1914-1918

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Roll A Coin Through the Curriculum

Unit 3: The War Years

www.mint.ca/teach

Introduction

The war years refers to 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 their allies could not. 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, to develop new strategies, and to rely on themselves, and each other, more 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 heavy price.

Curriculum Links

Evaluation and Assessment

Rubric

See the above documents posted at www.mint.ca/teach

Activities

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

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; and
- hone critical assessment and evaluation skills.

Key Concepts and Issues

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



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This resource was produced for the Royal Canadian Mint by TEACH Magazine. For more information about this educational program, please visit www.teachmag.com or email us at info@teachmag.com

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

Outcomes / Expectations

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; and
- work cooperatively in teams.

Resources

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

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/courage/canadianwarart.html>

www.civilization.ca/cwm/artwar/introduction_e.html

www.civilization.ca/cwm/disp/dis010_e.html

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

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

Introduction

Lord Beaverbrook (Max Aitken) officially started Canada's war art program in 1916. Artists from Canada and around the world were commissioned to document the ongoing European conflict we know as the First World War. As a result, some 800 works of art were produced depicting civilians and the military, the battlefronts, and conditions at home. Often created under dangerous and difficult conditions, these works of art 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 first-hand. None of the commissioned works were exhibited during the First World War. These works were displayed publicly after the war's end. Canada was the first country to establish a war art program.



The Home Front Poster
© Teach Magazine

Discuss

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

historical conflicts such as the American Civil War, their role was already 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 their selected war artist. Maximum length: one page.

Background

The Canadian War Museum (please see Web address in the Resources section) has divided its exhibition on Canadian war art into different themes: 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 and soldiers taking time off from war were doing).

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) 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

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

Create

Images created by students will be combined to form a collage.

Write

Students will write accompanying text describing their collage, its meaning and significance. Maximum length: half-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

Outcomes / Expectations

Students will:

- understand the sacrifice men, women, and children made 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; and
- hone critical thinking and analytical skills.

Resources

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

<http://mainmenu&CFID=2147406&CFTOKEN=71044034>

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>

Introduction

Much about war and the events surrounding war is symbolic. In the evolution of any country or society, symbols play an important role. They communicate a message and act as a standard of meaning: an image that is representative of that country. During periods of war and peace, a country's army employs objects that act as symbols: flags and heralds, and standards. Different arms boast symbols such as the configuration of the handle of a sword, or a design etched into the blade of a knife. Patches, medals and uniforms worn by military personnel, represent rank and recognition: completion of a certain course or program, performance of a heroic act or deed, fulfillment of obligations and responsibilities to attain a certain rank, etc. 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, and the theatre of war however, symbolism is ever present and pervasive.



Tombac, nickel, 1943



The Defence of Britain medal
Source: Veteran Affairs Canada



The War Medal, 1939-1945
Source: Veteran Affairs Canada

Discuss

Have a general discussion about symbols in our society. What is their purpose? What do they mean? Have students list as many symbols as possible on the board. Cite national symbols (flag, maple leaf, beaver and so on) and what they represent. Do students understand their significance?

Research

Students will use the resources listed above in researching two of Canada's national symbols.

Write

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

Draw

Students will draw one of the symbols they have researched in the context it represents. This means that the symbol should not appear on its own but connected to either a flag, a plaque, a uniform, and so on.

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



2004 coloured Circulation Poppy Quarter - The first coloured circulation coin in the world.

Extension Activity

1. In 1949, the Royal Canadian Mint produced two war medals: the Defence of Britain medal and the War Medal, 1939-1945. The class will be divided into teams of two or three students. Each team will research these medals and summarize their history and significance in one page or less. The teams will then use the research and design their own war medals. The medals may commemorate conflicts such as the First or Second World Wars, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, or even a current conflict afflicting the globe. A brief explanation of the medal's significance must be included with the concepts. 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. The teams will also write a description of the coin or medallion, including 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.journalism.ubc.ca/thunderbird/archives/2002.02/afghanistan.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

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?



Canada Overseas
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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.