

Birmingham City Schools
Division of Curriculum and Instruction
Social Studies Department

Veterans Day

November 11, 2009



Teacher Activity Booklet

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"Education for Social Responsibility"

Celebrate Veterans Day

November 11, 2009

There are lots of ways to recognize our country's soldiers this coming Veterans Day!

Make sure Your Students engage in at least one activity to celebrate this special day.

Students can discuss and develop an understanding of the important role American troops have and the importance of citizens in keeping up troop morale and spirit.

Students can involve themselves in community service by writing letters for or gathering things to send to our troops.

1. Say Thank You! Students can write letters to our troops thanking them for the service they provide our country, protecting American interests and the interests of democracy and peace. Use a class discussion to give students ideas about things they can write- how the troops benefit our country.

Sample Letters and ways to send Thank You Notes can be found on the website: <http://www.amillionthanks.org/> or <http://www.lettersfromhomeprogram.org/>

2. Invite a soldier to speak to your classes about their experiences in the military and how soldiers benefit their country. Have students prepare questions and a presentation to the speaker thanking him or her for speaking to the class.
3. Ask students to interview a soldier or veteran and prepare a written report about the interview that they can share with the class in an oral presentation
4. Ask small groups in your class to prepare a poster that would explain the value and purpose of Veterans Day. The poster must include a statement from each student on their feelings about honoring America's veterans. * To vary this theme posters could be advertisements for Veterans Day;
5. Ask small groups of students to prepare a Newspaper story about Veterans Day with pictures and visuals. Some groups can prepare a Television News broadcast about Veterans Day and each student could serve as reporter, producer, graphic artist, etc.

6. Ask students in whole group, small group, or individually to research Veterans Day and develop a puzzle, graphic organizer, or vocabulary tree using the important terms associated with Veterans.

Sample Vocabulary:

1. Armistice
 2. Dwight D. Eisenhower
 3. World War I
 4. World War II
 5. Congress (Legislature)
 6. Arlington National Cemetery
 7. Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
 8. Military Branch
 9. Veteran
 10. Korean War
 11. Vietnam War
7. Ask students in small groups or individually to list and create a timeline of all the major wars that have involved U. S. troops. (For extra credit: students can research the number of soldiers involved in each war).
 - Students can make booklets of the Major Wars with U. S. Involvement and include illustrations of locations and pictures.
 - Students can make a class timeline that can be displayed in the classroom or in the hall.



Lesson Plan Suggestions

Grades 3-6

What Is Veterans Day?

Grade Levels: 3 - 6

Additional Activities can be found at:
<http://www.va.gov/kids/>

Objectives

- Students will learn why Americans celebrate the Veterans Day holiday.
- Students will practice reading comprehension skills.

Materials

- Copies of [The Story of Veterans Day](#)
- Copies of [Veterans Day Reading Comprehension Questions](#)
- Several dictionaries

Procedures

1. Distribute the [Veterans Day Reading Comprehension Questions](#).
2. Instruct the students to look the words up in the dictionary and write the definitions on a separate piece of paper.
3. Distribute [The Story of Veterans Day](#) and ask the students to read it.
4. Ask students to underline the vocabulary words and then answer the [Veterans Day Reading Comprehension Questions](#).
5. As a culminating activity, have a class discussion about the way different countries remember and honor their war veterans.

The Story of Veterans Day

1. November 11 is Veterans Day. A veteran is a soldier who has served his/her country.
2. Thirty-five countries fought in World War I. They fought for five years, from 1914 to 1918. The United States fought in the war from 1917 to 1918.
3. Finally the countries stopped fighting. The leaders signed an armistice. They signed the armistice on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. The armistice meant that the war was over.
4. Americans were very happy to hear about the armistice. No more soldiers would die in the war. The soldiers could come home.
5. People went out into the streets and laughed and danced. They blew horns and whistles and rang bells. They sang songs. They thought that there would never be another war.
6. President Wilson made November 11 a holiday to remember the end of the war. The holiday was called Armistice Day.
7. At eleven o'clock in the morning, everyone stopped doing whatever they were doing. People were completely silent for one minute. This minute was to remember all the soldiers who have died in wars.
8. The body of an unknown soldier was brought to America from the cemetery in France. His body was buried in a tomb at Arlington National Cemetery. It was called the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.
9. The US was in three more wars: World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The name of the holiday was changed to Veterans Day.
10. The bodies of three more unknown soldiers were brought to the cemetery. On Veterans Day, there are special services at the Tomb of the Unknowns.
11. Americans remember and honor all the veterans.

Excerpted from *ESL Teacher's Holiday Activities Kit*, by Elizabeth Claire.

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Title - Patriotic Collage
By - Mary Cullinane Cofone
Primary Subject - Art
Grade Level - Pre-K-K

Description:

For Memorial Day, Armed Forces Day, Flag Day, or the Fourth of July have your students make a patriotic collage.

Materials:

- Collage Materials:

You'll need scraps of red, white, and blue paper. Flag stickers, foil stars, strips of red paper, and glitter work well, too.

- Stained Glass Window Materials:

Give each student a 9" x 12" piece of clear contact paper and small (1"-3") pieces of red, white, and blue tissue paper. (If you are fancy, you can even cut the tissue paper into stars!)

Procedure:

- To make the collage, simply have the children glue the items listed above on another sheet of paper.
- As an alternative, try a patriotic "stained glass window." Give each student a piece of clear contact paper and small pieces of red, white, and blue tissue paper (described above). Peel off the protective paper on the contact paper. The students place the tissue on the adhesive side and then place the entire collage on a window. The contact paper should cling to the glass, but can easily be removed later.
- The window cling idea can be used for a variety of holidays throughout the year. Just change the colors!

E-Mail [Mary Cullinane Cofone!](#)

“Veterans Day” Word Hunt

How many words can you make using the letters from
Veterans Day?

Veterans Day

1.	21.
2.	22.
3.	23.
4.	24.
5.	25.
6.	26.
7.	27.
8.	28.
9.	29.
10.	30.
11.	31.
12.	32.
13.	33.
14.	34.
15.	35.
16.	36.
17.	37.
18.	38.
19.	39.
20.	40.

Veterans Day Spelling Word Questions

Answer each of the questions using one of the spelling words.



soldiers	sailors	war
weapon	enemy	pilot
helmet	defending	veteran
camouflage	uniform	general

1. A _____ is in charge of the army.
2. The jet was flown by an experienced _____.
3. The _____ put on his life jacket.
4. Thousands of people were killed during the _____.
5. My uncle is a _____ of the Korean War.
6. A _____ protects your head.
7. All of the soldiers wore the same _____.
8. _____ is a type of pattern that makes it hard for the enemy to find you.
9. The _____ marched for twenty miles.
10. The soldiers were _____ the fort.
11. A gun is a type of _____.
12. The Marines defeated the _____.

Honoring Our Veterans Through Poetry Prewriting

Author

[Jill Woolley Stafford](#)
Woodbridge, Virginia

Grade Band

6-8

Estimated Lesson Time

Prewriting = 45 minutes
Class discussion = 30 minutes
Writing = three 30-minute sessions

Overview

This lesson supports sixth- through eighth-grade students' exploration of multiple Web resources to gather and synthesize information, and to create and communicate this information through poetry. Additionally, the activity requires students to acquire new knowledge and to expand upon their understanding of themselves and the culture of the United States. Students are encouraged to participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of their classroom community. Extension activities include publishing their poetry on the Web, creating cards using the students' poems to send to local veterans' hospitals, and creating a display with accompanying artwork for Veterans Day.

From Theory to Practice

Roberts, S.K. (2002) Taking a technological path to poetry prewriting. *The Reading Teacher*, 55, 678–687.

- The Internet provides quick and easy access to a wealth of information that may expand upon student experiences.
- The Internet provides multiple entry points to the prewriting task so that students can focus on aspects of the topic (e.g., historical, technological, visual) that interest them. Additionally it appeals to various learning styles and types of natural intelligences, such as linguistic, visual, and hands-on interactive learners.
- A prewriting activity is useful for gathering concrete information about a topic from a variety of sources.

Student Objectives

Students will

- Effectively use their reading skills to identify main ideas and accurately record information from numerous resources
- Develop content-rich notes to use for a poetry writing assignment
- Learn about the origins of holidays and cultural practices in the United States

Resources

- [CyberStats: Get the Facts!](#) handout
- [Diamante Poems](#)

- [Celebrate! Holidays in the U.S.A.](#)
- [VA Kids 6–12th Grades](#)
- [Activities for Veterans Day](#)
- [The Origins of Veterans Day](#)
- [Department of Veterans Affairs](#)
- [Frequently Asked Veterans Day Questions](#)

Instructional Plan

Preparation

1. Before teaching this lesson, familiarize your students with the poetry form of couplets. You can do this by reading aloud examples of poetry in couplets to the class. Some examples that may be used are from the very basic Dr. Seuss rhymes in *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish* (Random House, 1981) or from the text *My America, A Poetry Atlas of the United States* (Simon and Schuster, 2000).
2. Reserve one class session at your computer lab.
3. Bookmark the following websites:

[Department of Veterans Affairs](#). This site provides links to content-rich web pages about the history of Veterans Day and the current celebrations associated with Veterans Day. The site includes a wonderful link to [Posters for Veterans Day](#) from 1978 to the present.

[Frequently Asked Veterans Day Questions](#). This FAQ section provides answers to questions about both the history of Veterans Day and ways that Veterans Day is celebrated.

[The Origins of Veterans Day](#). This site, hosted by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, focuses on the origins of Veterans Day.

[Activities for Veterans Day](#). This site includes activities for observing Veterans Day with students.

[VA Kids 6–12th Grades](#). Designed for middle and high school students, this site includes games and information about veterans.

[Celebrate! Holidays in the U.S.A.](#) This site is hosted by the United States Embassy in Stockholm and offers a more international, and indeed, global, description of the history and cultural practices associated with Veterans Day.

4. Make one copy of the [CyberStats: Get the Facts!](#) handout per student.

Instruction and Activities

1. Activate students' prior knowledge by asking, "What can you tell me about the Veterans Day holiday?" (Possible responses may include visiting a grandfather or having a school assembly.) Also ask them "What would you like to know about this holiday?"---5 minutes
2. Set up the learning activity by telling students, "Today we are going to go on a cyber search to explore the Veterans Day holiday, an important day of remembrance in the United States. You will be searching for answers to questions about why this holiday was started, who celebrates it and why, and how it is typically celebrated. I am going to give you a [CyberStats: Get the Facts!](#) handout, which includes a list of websites for you to explore. This handout also includes a set of questions for you to answer. In addition to the questions listed, develop two questions of your own about Veterans Day and add those questions to the CyberStats: Get the Facts! handout.

The websites are bookmarked on your computer so you may simply boot up, log in, and go to your bookmarked

sites."---5 minutes

3. Monitor students' progress by moving through the lab and giving assistance as needed. Encourage students to delve into as much detail as they are able to in their notes. Students may assist one another with elements relating to technology and reading of informational texts. Important ideas may be identified through text clues, key words, and other skimming skills.---25 minutes
4. After about 25 minutes, students should be finished researching the seven questions listed on the CyberStats: Get the Facts! handout. Focus them as a whole group and introduce the transition to building a writer's community. Elicit feedback about their findings. For example, for question 1, "What is a veteran?" ask students what they found out about veterans during their Web search. Time permitting, discussion of findings will continue for 30 minutes. If time does not allow, plan for a 30-minute discussion prior to the introduction of the poetry writing activity in Step 5.
5. End the class session by telling students, "Now you have a great deal of information and details about Veterans Day. Tomorrow you will use this research to write a poem honoring our veterans. Your poem will be written in couplets, which uses a total of twelve lines or six pairs of rhyming lines. Review your research for homework. You can further prepare for your poetry writing session tomorrow by finding rhyming pairs of words based on your research." Alternately, you could have students write their poems in a diamond format using the interactive [Diamante Poems](#) tool.

Extensions

- Publish students' poetry on the Web
- Create cards using the students' poems to send to a local veterans' hospital
- Create artwork to go along with the poems
- Write an informational essay using the information gathered about Veterans Day
- Create a display with poems, essays, and accompanying artwork for Veterans Day

Student Assessment/Reflections

- Teacher observation and anecdotal notes based on monitoring during the learning activity and subsequent class discussion
- Student responses to the questions on the [CyberStats: Get the Facts!](#) handout
- The prewriting activity can be counted as a percentage of the final project, which is a 12-line poem in couplets honoring veterans.

IRA/NCTE Standards

1 - Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

2 - Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

4 - Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

5 - Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

7 - Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8 - Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

11 - Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

Art Imitates Life

Subjects

- World History
- Visual Arts

Grades

- 3-5
- 6-8

Brief Description

Students study postcards of World War I and create prints that reflect their lives.

Objectives

Students create prints that focus on images from their lives.

Keywords

postcards, lithographs, printing, Warhol

Materials Needed

- printouts of postcards from [Propaganda Postcards of the Great War](#) or other examples of World War I postcards
- Soft-Kut Print Blocks -- this material is rubberlike and much safer and easier to use than linoleum -- it also has two usable surfaces. Buy 9-inch by 12-inch sheets, and cut each piece into four 4½-inch by 6-inch pieces.
- linoleum-carving tools
- four pieces of 4½-inch by 6-inch pieces of colored paper per student
- one 9-inch by 12-inch piece of white paper per student
- tempera paints

- brayers or brushes
- Andy Warhol prints (preferably repeating patterns)

Lesson Plan

- Ask students to explore [Propaganda Postcards of the Great War](#) or another collection of World War I postcards and select their favorite card. Encourage each student to share the favorite with classmates, explaining why he or she chose the postcard and the historical significance or message the artist was trying to convey.
- Explain to students that the World War I postcards were created using a printing process called lithography. Tell students they are going to create different kinds of prints that reflect various aspects of their own lives.

Assessment

Base evaluation on students' ability to identify symbols of society, participate in discussions, use tools safely and properly, and achieve good craftsmanship.

Lesson Plan Source

[Art Takes Time](#) by Tabitha Miller

Submitted By

Linda Starr

National Standards

[World History:](#)
[NSS-WH.5-12.8](#)

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Title - Veterans in My Family

By - Clara Southerland

Primary Subject - Social Studies

Secondary Subjects - Math, Social Studies, Language Arts

Grade Level - PreK-12

Objective: To create a visual of students' family members who are/were veterans.

To develop an appreciation for people who have served the USA in time of war.

Materials:

KWL Chart

White Stars cut from construction paper (large enough to write name of veteran, branch of service, and war(s) they served in.

Red & Blue ribbon to staple stars to when completed.

Anticipatory set: Ask students what they know about veterans. Ask students what a veteran is. Ask if they know anyone who is a veteran. Write responses on KNOW and WANT TO KNOW part of KWL chart.

As a homework assignment, they are to ask if anyone in their family (grandparents, parents, cousins, siblings, aunts or uncles, whomever they wish to include) served in any branch of the US military during wartime. They are to collect the names of these individuals, the branch of the service, their rank, and the war(s) they served in. You may wish to have them include any commendations that these veterans received.

Example:

Capt. Sue Smith, US Navy, Vietnam War

When they return this list to school they are to write the names and other information on the stars. (One name per star.) Cut the ribbon into lengths that you can easily display in a hallway or on a class wall. Staple the stars to the ribbon about 2 inches apart. Hang the ribbons in the hallway or classroom to create a display of veterans for the school to examine and appreciate. Complete the what we LEARNED part of the KWL chart.

Extension: Interview one of these veterans and create an oral history of veterans in your community.

Research the history and significance of medals and commendations awarded to these veterans.

Interview spouses, siblings, or children of these veterans about how being separated from the veteran during wartime affected them and what they remember.

E-Mail [Clara Southerland!](#)

Lessons in Life: Connecting Kids and Soldiers



While most teachers discuss the war in Iraq with their classes, many find that both they and their students also want to do something concrete to help U.S. troops abroad. [Included: A list of organizations that link students or classes with deployed servicemen and women.](#)

Many teachers may want to extend their lessons on the war in Iraq by inviting students to write letters and send "care packages" to U.S. servicemen and women abroad. Some classes already are "veterans" of these types of activities.

Maureen Danforth's fifth-grade class at Fogarty Memorial School in Glocester, Rhode Island, has been sending letters and packages to U.S. troops in Afghanistan through the [AdoptaPlatoon program](#). They began the class project in September 2002.

Danforth suggested the program to her students after they said they wanted to mark the one-year anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks with an activity. "The kids decided that instead of having a somber ceremony, they wanted to take action," Danforth told Education World.

"So I suggested adopting a platoon," Danforth added. "I had seen something online about it. They loved the idea right from the start. They love the idea of supporting the men and women who are keeping us safe. They love knowing that they are making a difference in the quality of life for our platoon. The students get letters back from some of the men and they are amazed at how much their letters and packages mean to them. One man told us that the letters get passed around so everyone in the platoon reads all of them!"

The class receives monthly letters from the platoon's chaplain, who sometimes sends pictures as well. Individual soldiers also have written letters.

Participation in the project builds students' writing skills and sense of responsibility. The class is divided into four groups, and each week a group is responsible for writing a letter. "The kids know that the guys in our platoon look forward to hearing from us, so they know they have to do this because they are committed," Danforth continued. "We also send monthly packages, and they know the guys depend on those packages."

Shipping costs were becoming a problem, so the students had to brainstorm a solution. "I thought they would vote to abandon mailing packages, but instead, they met with our PTO and came up with a fundraiser," said Danforth. "The students sold Thanksgiving pies made by a local orchard and they raised almost \$600 [for postage]."

"We also have learned a lot about Afghanistan," through the program, she added.

Getting involved with AdoptaPlatoon alleviates some of the helplessness students might experience during uncertain times, and makes them feel that they can make a difference. But getting involved also brings them closer to war's realities. "You do need to be prepared if something bad happens," Danforth told Education World. "We had one of our guys die right before Christmas. The kids were really mature about it; they immediately asked where they could

send sympathy cards. It was a hard lesson to learn; that war is not all winning and glory, but it was a good way to learn how to deal with something like that."

CONNECTING KIDS AND SOLDIERS

While the [U.S. Department of Defense](#) and other service-connected groups know how eager people are to support deployed servicemen and women, right now mail cannot be delivered to most troops in Iraq and Kuwait because they are mobile, according to Austin Camacho, a spokesman for the U.S. Department of Defense. Students can mail letters and packages, but they will not catch up to the troops for a while, Camacho said.

Also, because of security concerns and transportation issues, mail no longer can be sent addressed to "Any Serviceman," Camacho added. Any letters or packages must be addressed to a serviceman or woman by name.

Numerous organizations connect students (and adults) with U.S. servicemen and women deployed overseas, including those stationed in locations other than the Persian Gulf. "Lots of service members in lots of places besides Kuwait and Iraq also would love to hear from people," Camacho said.

Note: *Some programs are on hold because the public's generosity has provided organizations with so many items that there is a mailing backlog, so read the sites carefully.*

Following are some of the groups that are putting people in touch with U.S. troops:

[The American Red Cross](#)

The American Red Cross's Quality of Life program supports military members and their families. The program seeks items such as toiletries, paperback books, and snacks to send to troops overseas. Items will be managed in a secure manner and sent from Red Cross chapter offices to Red Cross personnel deployed with U.S. servicemen and women. Because of unfolding events, the Red Cross cannot promise that collected items can be sent to a specific location.

Currently, the Red Cross has a moratorium on collecting items for troops, because it received so many donations. Schools considering mailing items through the Red Cross should check with their local Red Cross chapters before sending anything.

[AdoptaPlatoon](#)

AdoptaPlatoon is a volunteer non-profit organization. Teachers can apply to correspond with a whole platoon or set up e-mail correspondence with individual soldiers. The site also offers guidelines on what to send to servicemen and women overseas.

[Show Your Support](#)

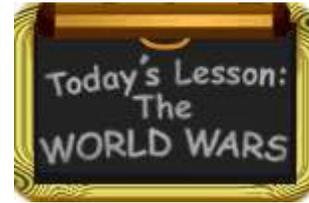
Links to resources and organizations for supporting overseas troops and their families back home can be found at this U.S. Department of Defense site. Included: [Thank the Troops Message Form](#) and [America Reaches Out Map](#).

[Operation Military Pride](#)

This volunteer organization offers a variety of activities for supporting troops, such as writing letters, drawing, and sending cards and packages.

Article by Ellen R. Delisio
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It's Up for Debate



Subjects

- Language Arts and Social Studies

Grades

- 6-8
- 9-12

[Click here to return to the article](#)

Brief Description

Students work in teams to explore a variety of issues related to World War II, review the decisions that were made at the time, and debate the correctness of those decisions.

Objectives

Students learn about the issues surrounding World War II and understand the complexity of the decisions involved in attaining and maintaining world peace.

Keywords

debate, Japan, internment, atomic bomb, Harry Truman, Hiroshima, Nagasaki

Materials Needed

A variety of print and online resources about issues for debate [set dash] Web site suggestions are provided below.

Lesson Plan

Organize students into small groups, and assign each group a topic for debate. Topics might include

- The atomic bomb

[Harry Truman's Decision](#)
[Atomic Bomb: Decision](#)
[Should It Have Been Dropped?](#)
[Hiroshima: Was It Necessary?](#)

- Japanese interment:

[The Japanese American Internment](#)

Assessment

Evaluate students on their research and the quality of their arguments in relation to the research.

Lesson Plan Source

Education World

Submitted By

Linda Starr

National Standards

[World History:](#)
[NSS-WH.5-12.8](#)

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Communicate With Us...

Let the Social Studies Department know what your classes or your school will do to celebrate Veterans Day! Collaboration and Sharing is the hallmark of a learning community. The Social Studies Department would like to recognize your efforts!

A simple note: Include-

School

Teacher(s)

Grade(s)

Project/Assignment/Program

Date(s)

