



"Educating for Social Responsibility"



BIRMINGHAM
CITY SCHOOLS

Birmingham City Schools
Dr. Craig Witherspoon, Superintendent
Dr. Martha Barber, Chief Academic Office

VETERANS DAY



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Jacqueline Jackson, Program Specialist
Alicia Sims Bailey, Curriculum Support
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Social Sciences

Ms. Jacqueline Jackson, Program Specialist
Mrs. Alicia Sims Bailey, Curriculum Support

To: Social Studies Teachers

From: Alicia Sims Bailey

Re: *Veterans Day*

We have been given another opportunity to honor the veterans who have served in the United States Armed Forces. There are many ways to show our appreciation and support for those men and women who have graciously served us and our county. The Social Studies department is hopeful that the posted activities, lessons plans and ideas are beneficial to you and your students. Below are additional links that provides online enrichment activities.

Please let us know if additional important is needed. Thank you for all of your support.

Online games and activities: <http://www4.va.gov/kids/k-5/index.asp?intSiteID=2>

Arts and Crafts projects: <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/veterans/>

History about Veterans Day:

http://k6educators.about.com/gi/o.htm?zi=1/XJ&zTi=1&sdn=k6educators&cdn=education&tm=35&gps=173_813_970_582&f=00&su=p897.6.336.ip_&tt=2&bt=1&bts=0&zu=http%3A//www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday/

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ACTIVITIES for ALL AGES

1. Let's Say Thanks: <http://www.letsaythanks.com/Home1024.html>
 - a. Students will have a chance to create an online postcard
 - b. Generate a personal message
 - c. Immediately send to troops stationed overseas
2. <http://www.ourmilitary.mil/help.shtml> Identifies different agencies your class can partner with to support troops overseas
3. Send thank you cards to our elderly veterans who are in VA hospitals. You can address the cards to a Marine, Army, Air Force or Navy (National or Coast Guard) vet. In the thank you cards, students can provide a little history of that particular armed service and how it has been a tremendous benefactor to our freedoms.
 - a. Birmingham Vet Center, 1201 2nd Ave South, Birmingham, 35233
Phone: 205-212-3122
 - b. Central Alabama Veteran's Center, 215 Perry Hill Road, Montgomery, AL 36109-3798 Phone: 334-272-4670 or 800-214-8887
 - c. Huntsville Veteran Center, 301 Governor's Drive, SW, Huntsville, 35801
Phone: 256-535-3100
4. Adopt a Platoon. <http://www.adoptaplatoon.org/>
5. Sending military care packages:
<http://www.operationmilitarypride.org/packages.html>
6. Online games and activities: <http://www4.va.gov/kids/k-5/index.asp?intSiteID=2>
7. Arts and Crafts projects: <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/veterans/>

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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!](mailto:Mary.Cullinane.Cofone@birminghamcityschools.org)

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/ArtMemorialDayFlagDay4thofJulyPatrioticCollageAndStainedGlassWindowIdeaPK.htm>



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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.

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/printables/PSSMDVeteransInMyFamily-VetMemDayIdeaP12.htm>

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Title - Letters to Soldiers
By - Kevin Dooley
Primary Subject - Language Arts
Secondary Subjects - Social Studies
Grade Level - 6-12

Subject Matter:

- This lesson plan can be used for Veterans' Day or Memorial Day.
- Students will be writing a letter to soldiers, including autobiographical material, feelings, and thanks to soldiers.
- This letter will be halfway between a formal letter and an informal letter. It will be friendly and semi-casual, but more information has to be included than, say, a letter to someone who knows who's writing. Good for reviewing the difference between formal and informal language.
- This lesson also applies critical thinking about the subject of war.

Procedure:

- At the start of the class, students write about:
 - When is war ever good or justified?
What reasons are there for war?
If they were President, what circumstances would there be to declare war.
Answers are put on a transparency and discussed. Voted on?
 - How does a President declare war? (Social Studies link)
 - What are the consequences of war?
(Possible answers: death of soldiers, usually youth, on both sides, death of innocent civilians, cost)
 - How do they feel about the current war(s)? Why?
I have asked students how many know someone overseas, and the hands have increased in recent semesters.
 - Students also give their opinions on:
war movies - list them and give a theme, e.g. glory, bravery, heroism: do they glorify war?
war video games - are they right?

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David L. Williams, Chief Academic Officer

- (I struggle with having them draw a scene of war. I have shown them pictures of war - taking into consideration the grade level – and write about them.)
- Then we discuss the letter they are going to write:
 - They will write it twice. A first draft and the final letter.
 - In the letter they will include:
 - Name and grade. (Age need not be mentioned.)
 - The date
 - School, location, and class
 - Sign the letter
 - They write their ideas or feelings about:

School,
TV/movies
Sports
Music
Thoughts about family or neighborhood

- Ask the class what can we thank soldiers for or say to them: (Possible answers: for their service and what they're doing: their sacrifice, the risk, the fact that they're away from their family, hope they return safely, etc.)
- No bad words!
- Do not criticize the war in the letter! This is important. The theme of the letter is thanks, not politics.
- Then, I show them a model of a letter I have written:

Date, 2008

Dear Soldier,

My name is Mr. Dooley. I am a 7th and 8th grade teacher at Elizabeth Learning Center in Cudahy, California, which is about 10 miles south of downtown L.A.

As a writing assignment, I've had my class write to soldiers to thank you and celebrate your bravery.

I am 55 years old, married, have five kids, and six grandkids. Originally, I'm from New York. As a movie fan, I am looking forward to the new James Bond movie and "Star Trek" next year.

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Director of the Office of Academic Office

As part of the United States armed forces, you have a big, important job. I know it must be difficult to be so far away from your family. Thank you for doing what you're doing. We, as a nation, support you. Please take care of yourself and come home safe.

Yours,

Mr. Dooley
English Teacher

Additional Comments and Suggestions:

- Students cannot write to someone specifically; they should do that on their own.
- Students will not hear back from the soldiers; the soldiers are rather busy.
- Here is wonderful site to not only download a graphic upon which to write the finished letter, but they will accept the written letters and send them to soldiers overseas. <http://www.kidscelebrate.org/>
Students don't get the graphic until they have finished their draft and it is correct. They can decorate/color it.
- I do tell the students I will read every letter to make sure it is appropriate.
- Often I photocopy the letters and post them proudly on the classroom wall.
- IMPORTANT: get your Principal's and parents' permission! As I teach in a 99% Latino/a school, I send a bilingual letter home. Some students have even sent letters in Spanish. A student who does not get permission can still write the letter, it just won't be sent.

Lesson Follow-up:

- This lesson usually takes two days.
- At the end of it all, I have them write an essay called "A World of Peace": how to bring about world peace, how to bring a world without any wars. Major discussion and listing of solutions. It's essential, I think, to this lesson.

E-Mail [Kevin Dooley](mailto:Kevin.Dooley@birminghamcityschools.org)

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/printables/PLASSLettersToSoldiersAndTheTopicOfWar612.htm>

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Title - Pocket Poems
By - Brooke Walleck
Primary Subject - Language Arts
Grade Level - 10th



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This lesson is entitled Pocket Poems because it involves having the students work in groups to write poems and decorate them in order to send them to the soldiers in Iraq. Before writing the poems, I would have the students read the poem "If We Must Die" by Claude McKay, because this poem was given to British and American soldiers during World War II to carry in their pockets. Students should include an uplifting and appreciative message in their poems. They should use Claude McKay's poem as an example. Students will present their poems to the class, and then the poems will be mailed to various soldiers in Iraq. If any students in the class know someone fighting in Iraq, then they may personalize the poem and mail it to them.

Claude McKay: If We Must Die (1919)

*If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die, O let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!
O kinsmen we must meet the common foe!
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!*

Note from LessonPlansPage.com: Claude McKay, a Jamaican, originally wrote this poem in 1919 in response to the lynchings and race riots that assaulted black neighborhoods after the end of World War I. It was credited with inspiring the Harlem Renaissance. Winston Churchill used this poem in speeches to inspire both British and American people in World War II.

E-Mail [Brooke Walleck!](mailto:Brooke.Walleck)

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/printables/POLASSVeteransDayPocketPoemsIdea10.htm>

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Title - Adopt-A-Vet (AWESOME IDEA)
By - Charesse Hicks
Primary Subject - Social Studies
Secondary Subjects - Language Arts
Grade Level - any grade level

Second graders at Chapin Elementary adopt veterans, one per class, from the CW Tucker Nursing Center in Columbia, SC. Chosen are veterans who do not have family in the area, whose families are destitute and can't help them at all, or those who have few visitors, etc. Throughout the year, children make cards, collect toiletries, gifts such as candies, socks, pajamas, hats, radios, etc. and teachers deliver these items/cards to the veterans. In turn, the veterans, who are extremely excited to be remembered throughout the year, including on their birthdays, send our classes pictures of themselves, both during actual military service as well as current pictures, notes, etc. One family who was so very impressed with the work one class did for their veteran grandfather, actually moved from another state to Chapin and enrolled the children in our school. What an honor.

Another activity that we engaged in, until the veteran died, was invite a WWII vet to our class. He shared wartime relics and pictures. He talked about his "adventures" during his service as a foot soldier in the Infantry. Sgt. Ret. Branham visited second grade at Chapin Elementary for several years. His wife and children would always bring popsicles on one of the last days of school to share with the children, as a way of saying thank you for honoring Mr. Branham. He was killed in a car accident a few years ago. Many of the children wrote poems, prayers and sent cards to Mrs. Branham. One of the poems was read at his funeral.

These experiences have proven to be most beneficial in a number of ways to both our children, the veterans and their families.

E-Mail [Charesse Hicks!](mailto:Charesse.Hicks@bcs.k12.al.us)

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/SSLAVeteransDayAdoptAVetIdeaMO.htm>

ADDITIONAL WEBSITES

1. <http://www.lessonplanspage.com/VeteransDay.htm>
2. http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/Themes/Veterans_Day/index.shtml
3. <http://www.teachervision.fen.com/veterans-day/teacher-resources/6674.html>

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