

On All Fronts
World War II and the NFB
Lesson plan for *Fields of Sacrifice*
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Overall Objective

Students will create a video or slide show presentation that answers the question “Why should we remember the sacrifices of World War II?”

Grade level

Advanced 9–12 and beyond. This unit can be adapted to younger grades and different courses of study in various Canadian provinces and territories.

Content Areas

History

Content items used

Fields of Sacrifice, 1964 (38 m 13 s)

Excerpt 1 (2 m 03 s – 6 m 53 s)

Excerpt 2 (17 m 57 s – 20 m 11 s)

Excerpt 3 (20 m 11 s – 23 m 08 s)

NB: Content items can be viewed online free of charge at <www.nfb.ca/ww2>.

Materials Required

For Activity 1:

Handout 1: Timeline of World War II

For Culminating Activity:

Access to a computer lab

Internet connection

Data projector

Video editing software (e.g., iMovie or MovieMaker) or PowerPoint

Digital microphone

Handout 2: Why should we remember World War II?

Summary

These two activities explore the main theme of *Fields of Sacrifice*: the collective memory of World War II. The first considers these battles as turning points. The second is an extended project to answer the focus question “Why should we remember World War II?” for a Remembrance Day ceremony.

ACTIVITY 1: Turning Points (30 to 40 minutes)

Objective:

- To identify turning points in the events of World War II.
- To explain why Ortona, the Normandy invasion and the liberation of the Netherlands were examples of turning points.

Step 1: Distribute **Handout 1: Timeline of World War II**, found in the appendix. Make sure students are familiar with the term “turning point.” Ask for examples. For instance, refer to turning points in a hockey game.

Step 2: Ask students to identify turning points in the list of events on the timeline. To help them focus, read out loud the events and have them star the turning points.

Step 3: Students should identify Ortona, the D-Day landing and the liberation of the Netherlands as turning points. Note that Ortona, although it was a strategic location and notable as one of the bloodiest battles that Canadians fought, might not be considered a decisive point of change, but the invasion of Sicily and Italy would be.

Discuss their answers.

ACTIVITY 2: Project for Remembrance Day (three hours)

The project is described in **Handout 2: Why Should We Remember World War II?** It could be done in video using an editing program like iMovie or MovieMaker or with PowerPoint. Visual materials with no copyright restriction are available online at the sites listed under Resources. If you wish students to use downloaded video and not just stills, you will also need screen capture software.

The computer room should be booked beforehand.

Step 1: Refer to the excerpts from *Fields of Sacrifice* to introduce the focus question and video project. The film refers frequently to memories ... of the dead friend by a veteran who returns to Ortona, by the people of Normandy and by the Dutch school children who visit the graves of the Canadian soldiers. However, the film was made less than twenty years after the war; why should we, more than sixty years later, remember WWII?

Step 2: Distribute **Handout 2** and go over the project description, establishing due dates. The NFB site Behind the Camera: Preparing to Film at <http://www.nfb.ca/enclasse/doclens/btc.php?DLshown=true&language=e> gives an explanation and model of a storyboard.

Step 3: Give students time in the computer lab to collect images and write a storyboard or script. Have them submit the script.

Step 4: Read and give feedback to students about their script.

Step 5: Allow more time for students to revise their script and make movies/slide shows in the lab.

Arrange for presentation of their presentations to other social studies/history classes or to the school Remembrance Day ceremony.

Check for Understanding

The most important check for the culminating project would be the submission of a storyboard/script.

Evaluation rubric

See appendix.

References and Resources

Canada at War for photos and video and background to WWII:

<http://wwii.ca/index.php>

“Faces of War” from Library and Archives Canada for photos and background to WWII:

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/faces-of-war/025014-2000-e.html>

Paintings from the Second World War from the Canadian War Museum Web site:

<http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/canvas/2/cwe1e.html>

Canadian War Museum for photos, audio clips, and background to the war, as well as ideas for Remembrance Day celebration activities:

<http://www.civilization.ca/cwm/ressource/remembrancee.html>

The Battle of Normandy, photos and information on the landing and battle:

<http://www.dday-overlord.com/PjunoBeng.htm>

Appendix

Handout 1 *Timeline of World War II*

Name: _____

September 1, **1939**: Germany invades Poland.

September 3, **1939**: Britain and France declare war on Germany.

September 10, **1939**: Canada declares war on Germany.

April **1940**: Germany invades Denmark and Norway.

May **1940**: Germany invades Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and France.

May-June **1940**: Evacuation of Dunkirk.

June 21, **1940**: The National Resources Mobilization Act was passed by Parliament. The Act enabled the government to requisition the property and services of Canadians for home defence.

June 22, **1940**: France surrenders to Hitler.

July **1940**: German air force begins “the Battle of Britain.”

1940-44: Battle of Atlantic is fought.

June 22, **1941**: Germany invades USSR.

December 7, **1941**: Japan bombs Pearl Harbor. Dec. 8 Japan attacks Hong Kong and on Dec. 10 the Philippines.

December 8, **1941**: U.S. and Britain declare war on Japan. Two days later China declares war on Japan.

December 25, **1941**: Canadian and other Commonwealth soldiers surrender to Japan at Hong Kong.

February **1942**: Japanese Canadians sent to internment camps.

April **1942**: Canadians vote in plebiscite to support conscription (but Quebec votes overwhelmingly against).

June **1942**: Mass murder of Jews by gassing begins at Auschwitz concentration camp.

August **1942**: Canada leads raid on French port of Dieppe.

1943-45: Allies bomb German cities.

February 2, **1943**: Germans surrender to Russians at Stalingrad in the first big defeat of Hitler's armies.

July **1943**: Canadian troops participate in invasion of Sicily and mainland Italy.

December **1943**: Canadians win the Battle of Ortona, Italy, allowing the Allies to continue the move northward to liberate Italy.

June 6, **1944**: D-Day; Canadian troops land at Juno beach as part of Allied invasion of Normandy in northern France.

August 4, **1944**: Anne Frank and family arrested by the Gestapo in Amsterdam, Holland, and sent to death camps.

November 22, **1944**: Under pressure, Prime Minister Mackenzie King agrees to send conscripts overseas and the first arrive in Europe on this day; many desert; some rebel.

Spring **1945**: Canadian troops help liberate the Netherlands.

May 7, **1945**: Germany surrenders.

June 26, **1945**: fifty nations met in San Francisco to sign the United Nations Charter; the U.N. officially came into existence on October 24, when the Charter had been ratified.

August 6, **1945**: U.S. drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima; three days later on Nagasaki.

August 15, **1945**: Japan surrenders.

Handout 2 *Why Should We Remember World War II?*

Assignment: Create a 2- to 3-minute video or PowerPoint presentation on World War II. Your audience will be the students of our school for Remembrance Day celebration. The presentation should tell the story of either the Battle of Ortona, the invasion of Normandy or the liberation of the Netherlands and explain why we should remember this story.

You are booked to be in the computer room on _____ for research. The script or storyboard outlining what you plan to show and say is due on _____. The room is also booked for _____ to complete your editing and the final project is due _____.

Your first steps will be (1) to choose images that will help tell your story, (2) organize them in a logical order, and (3) write a storyboard. This storyboard needs to explain both what happened at the battle and how and why we should remember it.

Why Remember?

Read the following and choose the one that best answers our focus question: Why should we remember World War II?

The past defines us: We are clearly tied to our military past because it is this tradition that has made us who we are now. Students in the Netherlands continue today, as they did when the film was made, to visit the Canadian cemeteries to light candles and lay flowers on the graves. They feel the connection to the past and so should Canadians. Ortona, Juno Beach and the liberation of the Netherlands should be part of the collective memory of all Canadians, young and old, native-born and recently arrived. The wars are part of Canada's heritage, a proud part. We must not forget the battlefields because too much of our blood was spilt there, too much of today's Canada was built there. On Remembrance Day we should pay tribute to our heritage and recognize our debt to those who gave so much for us.

The past is a source of lessons and models: According to historian Jack Granatstein, "To remember the causes and events of the wars is to realize the evil that men can do and the enormous courage with which ordinary men and women can face unimaginable horror and overcome fear for a good cause." Both the sacrifice and achievements of our soldiers on the battlefield and those of civilians on the home front clearly show that Canadians have that courage when a cause is just. Remembrance Day could be a time to teach lessons about the nature of evil and what is needed to resist it.

The past is not relevant to us today: This point of view does not accept the traditional stories described above. For example, with conscription WWII repeated the divisive political history of WW I and left us a legacy of bitter feelings. We entered the war with the promise of no conscription and when the government eventually did enact it, there was great resentment and resistance: at Terrace, B.C., for example, men in the defence corps seized an anti-tank weapon to defend themselves from officers who were trying to send them overseas. For many, especially in Quebec, breaking the promise to have no conscription was a betrayal.

The story of Canada's achievements on the battlefields of Europe, however heroic, may also have less importance for more recent Canadians whose war memories are from Asia, Africa or Latin America. The war was a long time ago; Canada and the world have changed. The film was made in the 1960s when memories were fresher than today.

(If you take this approach, be sure to be respectful, nonetheless, to the soldiers and civilians who sacrificed so much in the wars and to the many Canadians for whom Remembrance Day is a moving, powerful day.)

The past is important but we need to consider modern circumstances: For example, a Remembrance Day ceremony based on this approach might recognize the contribution of our veterans and the value of joining our allies in WWII to defeat Germany, Italy, and Japan, but argue that we should still be cautious in sending our troops to other foreign wars. World War Two may seem to have been a well-justified war, but the decision to go to war is usually much more complex.

One could also argue that the debt or obligation we owe those who sacrificed their lives in the wars should be honoured by doing all we can to ensure peace through the United Nations. The UN Charter says that countries must first seek to solve their differences by “peaceful means” (article 33)(1). If these fail, they should refer the matter to the Security Council, which recommends what measures should be taken.

Remembrance Day Project

Rubric for paper or storyboard

Name: _____

Criteria	developing	satisfactory	proficient	distinguished
Narration content: the story of the battle or battles	The story is either very confusing and/or inaccurate, or it omits important events/people. 0 10	Some relevant content is explained but it may be limited or inaccurate in places. 12 14	Most events and people are clearly and accurately explained. 15 17	The story is accurate, thorough, and coherent. 18 20
Visual content: the images used to support the narrative	Images appear to be randomly selected or do not support the narrative. 0 10	Visuals support the narrative in a few places, but are poorly connected in others. 12 14	On the whole, the visuals support the narrative, but some may not be relevant or may only illustrate the narration. 15 17	The visuals are carefully chosen and appropriate; they are skilfully used to support the narrative. 18 20
Explanation why we should remember	Ideas are superficial, irrelevant or unclear with few supporting examples or details; there may be inaccuracies; may be insensitive or offensive to audience. 0 10	Presentation identifies one or two ideas about why we should remember the war, although explanation and support are limited; tone is generally appropriate for the audience. 12 14	Narration clearly identifies and explains several ways that the past has meaning for us today; tone is appropriate for the audience. 15 17	Presentation clearly identifies and explains several ways that the past has meaning for us today; reasoning shows insight and originality; tone is appropriate for the audience. 18 20



Rubric for video elements or PowerPoint presentation

Criteria	Developing	Satisfactory	Proficient	Distinguished
Planning	Superficial outline or copied from handouts or textbook; may be missing required elements or have very unrealistic timing. 0-2	Most required elements are clearly developed; most ideas are connected; almost all writing is in student's own words; timing is generally realistic. 3	Almost all of the required elements are thoroughly planned; ideas are connected; timing is realistic. 4	All required elements are thoughtfully and thoroughly planned; coherent sequence; realistic timing. 5
Sound editing: the combination of all sound elements	Narration quality is poor; sound elements are inappropriate or highly distracting. 0 2	Pieces of narration might be missing; sounds might appear and end abruptly or drown out narration. 3	Most of the sound elements are clear, crisp, and suitable, but there may be distractions. 4	Narration & any other sound elements are well coordinated. Sound editing is crisp and clean. No distractions. 5
Visual editing: the combination of the images	Few images are used or they be unrelated to narration. 0 2	Timing is off on many images; some may be too long or too short. 3	The order and timing of the images work well with the narration. 4	Visuals flow well; they are well timed and fully support the narration. 5
Titles, credits, & effects	No titles and effects, or too many effects used to the point that they are distracting. 0 2	A few are used, but they may be inappropriate or do not fit the content. 3	There are several titles/credits/effects used; most are smooth and effective. 4	There is a title at the beginning, credits at the end, and transitions and effects where appropriate. 5

