

Remembrance Day in the Classroom

A Teacher Resource Kit



INTRODUCTION

This toolkit has been created to help educate students about Remembrance Day. It introduces students to the importance of remembrance and provides guidance in planning a Remembrance Day event, whether in class or virtually. The central piece of the event is the participation of a Memory Project speaker. This toolkit encourages students and the public to reflect on what remembrance means to them, the history behind November 11, and the legacies of past wars and conflicts. It also provides educators with the opportunity to present oral history as a primary source and to incorporate firsthand accounts of these events.

This kit was produced by the Memory Project and Historica Canada with generous support from the Government of Canada. Historica Canada offers programs that you can use to explore, learn, and reflect on our history and what it means to be Canadian. Find us online at HistoricaCanada.ca. An initiative of Historica Canada, the Memory Project is a volunteer speakers bureau that arranges for veterans and active members of the Canadian Armed Forces to share their stories of military service at schools and community events across the country. Memory Project speakers have reached more than 3 million Canadians since 2001. Canadians can book a speaker — and access the Memory Project Archive of more than 2,800 testimonials and 10,000 images — at www.thememoryproject.com.

Due to the ongoing global pandemic, commemorating Remembrance Day will be different this year, as large in-person gatherings are currently not an option. Many organizations are opting to hold Remembrance Day ceremonies online. This resource kit was designed so that the learning activities can be completed either in the classroom or virtually, along with an in-person or virtual Remembrance Day ceremony.

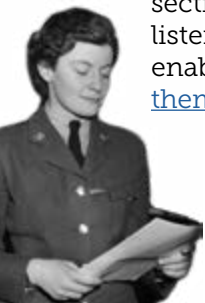
MESSAGE TO TEACHERS

This toolkit includes classroom activities that promote research and analysis, build critical thinking and communication skills, and explore Canada's history. This resource is designed to align with current Canadian curricula and has been produced for use in middle and high school classrooms. Teachers may wish to provide a more complete understanding of Canada's recent military history by including topics not covered in this kit. Please be aware that the experiences of one group or a particular veteran are not representative of everyone's, and many stories remain unexplored. The additional resources this toolkit provides, via website links, provide snapshots of the lives of veterans and servicepeople, not complete stories. We hope these resources will help you work with primary sources to teach military and oral history in your classroom, allow students to reflect on the significance of the act of remembrance, and provide a structure for you or your school to host your own Remembrance Day event.

Disclaimer: Students arrive in the classroom from many different backgrounds. Be sensitive to students who have connections to those who served in military conflicts, or who are refugees or immigrants from war zones or refugee camps and who may have experienced the trauma of war firsthand.

NOTE ON ACCESSIBILITY

Accommodations for Special Education, ELL, and ESL students are included under the appropriate sections and identified as "Differentiation." Certain activities in this resource kit require advanced listening comprehension skills. When viewing the video resources with ELL students, consider enabling subtitles or downloading interview transcripts from the Memory Project's website at thememoryproject.com/educator-resources/video-resources.



Memory Project speaker Svend Hansen. Photo by Eric Brunt (the Memory Project). >>

<< Corinne Kernan Sévigny speaking over CKCV Radio, Quebec City (courtesy Corinne Kernan Sévigny, the Memory Project).



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ONLINE RESOURCES

The following is a list of bilingual research resources to support educators and students. This list is not exhaustive, and you may choose to seek out supplementary resources.



EDUCATION
PORTAL

Worksheets complementing this education guide can be downloaded from the Historica Canada Education Portal.
education.historicacanada.ca



THE MEMORY
PROJECT
ARCHIVE

A collection of firsthand accounts and photographs of veterans.
thememoryproject.com/stories



THE CANADIAN
ENCYCLOPEDIA

An online resource for exploring a wide range of topics in Canadian history. Search for articles by their title.
thecanadianencyclopedia.ca



HERITAGE
MINUTES

A bilingual collection of 60-second short films, each depicting a significant person, event, or story in Canadian history.
historicacanada.ca/heritageminutes

WHAT IS REMEMBRANCE DAY?

Each year, Canadians stop for a moment of silence in remembrance of the people who have served — and those who continue to serve — Canada during times of peace, conflict, and war. Remembrance Day honours those who fought for Canada in the First World War (1914–1918), the Second World War (1939–1945), the Korean War (1950–1953), the Gulf War (1990–91), in Afghanistan (2001–2014), and in Peacekeeping Missions and Domestic Operations since. Remembrance Day is observed across Canada each year on November 11 — the anniversary of the Armistice of 1918 that ended the First World War.





ACTIVITY 1 – THINKING ABOUT REMEMBRANCE

1 Begin by discussing remembrance together as a class. Have your students consider the following:

- When you hear “remembrance,” what do you think of?
- What meaning does Remembrance Day have for you?
- Why do we have Remembrance Day?

2 Have your class read the [Remembrance Day](#) article on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

3 In pairs, have students discuss the article and make a list of reasons in point form why remembrance became an important event across Canada following the First World War.

4 Have a class discussion about why remembrance became an important event in Canada. Questions to consider:

- Have your thoughts about remembrance changed with this activity? What was it that changed the way you think about remembrance?
- How do you think Canadians today view remembrance compared with Canadians who lived through the First World War?
- How do you think conflicts today change the way we view Remembrance Day?

ONLINE LEARNING

If you are teaching online, have students use breakout chat rooms on an online platform to facilitate discussions.

✓ From left to right: Memory Project speaker Svend Hansen. Photo by Eric Brunt (the Memory Project). Charles Scot-Brown, Jim Parks, and Martin Maxwell at The Royal Canadian Military Institute, Toronto, May 21st, 2019. Photo by Mike Tjioe (the Memory Project). Lt. Col.(ret'd) Susan Beharriell speaks to students at St. Andrew's College, November 2018 (courtesy Susan Beharriell, the Memory Project).





ACTIVITY 2 – WRITING ABOUT REMEMBRANCE

In 1915, Lt. Alexis Hannum Helmer, a close friend and comrade of Lt. Col. John McCrae, was killed in the trenches near Ypres, Belgium, in an area traditionally called Flanders. McCrae saw wild poppies blooming between the crosses of the hastily built cemetery where his fallen comrades, including Lt. Helmer, were buried. Inspired, he wrote *In Flanders Fields*, which later became the most popular poem of the First World War in Canada. To this day, the red poppy remains a symbol of remembrance in Canada (and elsewhere). In this activity, students will write their own poems about Canadian military contributions and sacrifices.

1. Have your students learn about John McCrae and his poem *In Flanders Fields*.
 - a. Begin by showing the [John McCrae](#) Heritage Minute to your students and have a class discussion.
 - b. Next, have students individually read or listen to *In Flanders Fields* by John McCrae.
 - i. [Text of poem](#)
 - ii. [Audio of poem](#)
 - c. Have students learn more about John McCrae and the meaning behind his now-famous poem by reading the [In Flanders Fields](#) article from *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.
 - d. Next, have students listen to Cynthia Macleod's reading of her [father's memoir](#). Her father, Cyril L.C. Allinson, served with the same battalion as McCrae during the First World War and was present when McCrae wrote *In Flanders Fields* (testimony begins at 1:29).

Warning: This testimony contains graphic war descriptions. Listen to the clip and prepare your students ahead of initial listening.

2. Though it consists of just a few stanzas, *In Flanders Fields* was used to help call upon Canadians to enlist and was later used to encourage Canadians to buy Victory Bonds to support the war effort. Have a class discussion about how poems and other means of artistic memorialization can be used as messages or political statements.
3. Have students write their own poems. *In Flanders Fields* is a Rondeau poem. Students may choose to write in this style or another style to create a poem about remembrance.
 - a. While writing, students should think of remembrance in general, someone they know who has served, someone or something they read about in their research in Activity 1, or about what they learned in the class discussion.
 - b. Have students decide if they want to write from their own perspective, the perspective of Canada, a soldier, a sailor, an aviator, a nurse, etc. Encourage students to stay true to their chosen perspective while they write. Remind them that any historical information they include must be accurate.
 - c. Students should consider how they want the reader to feel while reading their poem. Do they want readers to be encouraged to take some type of action, or to feel a certain way?
 - d. Remind students to read their poem aloud a few times to hear how it flows and to ensure it is complete. They should make edits to their poem until it flows well and tells the full story, and that it elicits the response they seek. Encourage students to read their poem to family members, friends, and/or classmates to practice reading it aloud and to gather feedback.
 - e. Students should create a title for their poem.
4. Have students present their poems to the class. If you are hosting a Remembrance Day event, do this in advance. You could select a couple of student poems to include in the event.

Differentiation: Place students in small groups and have them write a poem together by each writing a stanza. Have them read the poem together by each reading the stanza they wrote.



ACTIVITY 3 – HOLDING YOUR OWN REMEMBRANCE DAY EVENT

Recognizing Remembrance Day by holding an event is an important way we can acknowledge the sacrifices of past and present members of the Canadian military and all who suffered the horrors of war. We have created an event outline to help organize a Remembrance Day event for your class, group, or school.

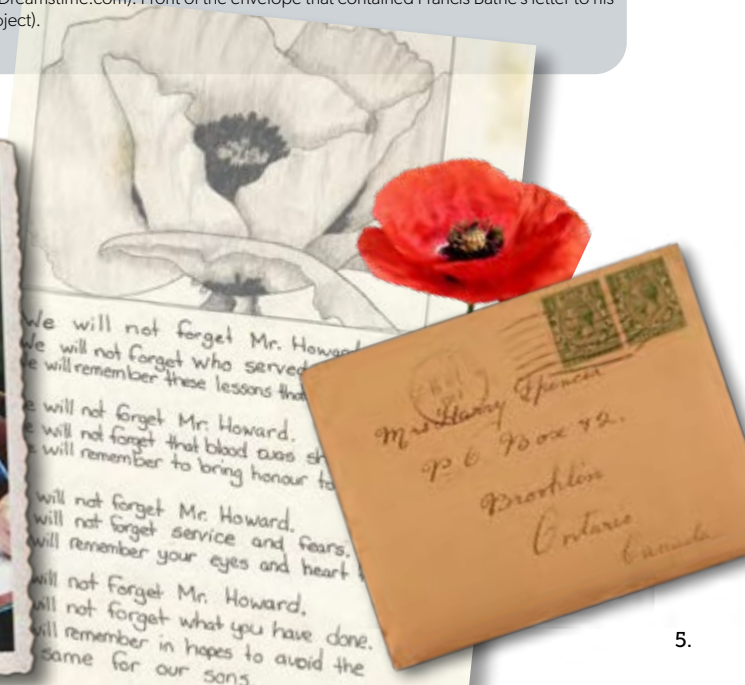
Thinking about previous Remembrance Day commemorations you attended in your school or community, or that you saw online or on television, create a schedule of events for a Remembrance Day assembly in your school that honours and reflects the purpose and act of remembrance.

Some important aspects to consider are the size of your audience, where you will be holding the event, and who will be your master of ceremonies (MC). Be sure to include students in the planning process as much as possible. Ask for volunteers to help introduce speakers, read poems, or be the MC.

KEY EVENT COMPONENTS

1. Welcome
2. O Canada
3. Last Post
4. 11 a.m. – 2 minutes of silence
5. Reveille/Rouse
6. Remarks
7. Videos
8. Memory Project Speaker
9. Poems
10. Wreath Laying
11. Close Event

From left to right: Mort Lightstone speaking at the Jack Cahan Memorial Lecture (courtesy Mort Lightstone, the Memory Project). Sandra Perron at a camp for displaced persons in Knin, Croatia, 1995 (courtesy Major (retired) Sandra Perron, the Memory Project). A poem that Percy Howard received from a young student in 2004 (courtesy Percy Howard, the Memory Project). Poppy flowers (courtesy Diavata/33102258/Dreamstime.com). Front of the envelope that contained Francis Bathe's letter to his sister (courtesy Francis Bathe, the Memory Project).



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THE MEMORY
PROJECT

IN-PERSON EVENT

1. Welcome

As a Remembrance Day event is a sombre commemoration, an opening address that sets the tone for the event is important. Once all participants have arrived, the MC should welcome them to the event.

Consider including a land acknowledgement with the welcoming address. A land acknowledgement recognizes a treaty territory or traditional territory of the Indigenous peoples where you are holding the ceremony. Invite an Indigenous Elder, a member of the local Indigenous community, or someone from a local Indigenous veteran's group to perform the land acknowledgement.

If you are unable to find an Indigenous Elder or community member, the MC may give the land acknowledgement.

2. O Canada

Consider playing the national anthem from a recording or have a student(s) perform the national anthem. Please asks your audience and guest(s) to remove hats and stand for the national anthem, if they are able.

English:

O Canada! Our home and native land!
True patriot love in all of us command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!

O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

3. Last Post

[The Last Post](#) was played in conflicts to symbolize the end of day or watch for soldiers. It is now played during Remembrance Day events to symbolize death. The Last Post should be played by a bugler, live or by pre-recorded audio. If no bugler or bugle recording is available, this part of the program should be omitted.

4. 11 a.m. – 2 minutes of silence

At 11 a.m., if possible, observe two minutes of silence to remember the sacrifices of those who have served on behalf of Canada. If you are unable to hold your ceremony in the morning, consider including the moment of silence anyway as part of your event. During the silence, no music or sound whatsoever should be played.

If technology allows for it, include this [2 Minutes of Silence](#) video from the Legion.

5. Reveille/Rouse

Following the two-minute period of silence, "[Rouse](#)" should be sounded.

6. Remarks

If guest speakers are to make remarks, have the MC introduce them to the audience. Connect with the guests in advance to make sure they know who the audience is and you know what they plan on discussing. Be sure to provide the audience with a warning if guests are to be discussing sensitive subjects.

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THE MEMORY
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7. Videos

Adding multimedia to your event is an effective way to educate your audience. It also allows you to hear stories from Canadian veterans from all over the country.

Consider tailoring media according to your guest speakers and their service. If you are hosting a Memory Project speaker, use the *Record of Service* [summary of conflict videos](#) to give students and guests context about your speaker's service. If you are unable to host a speaker, the Memory Project also offers videos with [veterans' testimonies](#) of their experiences, as well as a [Remembrance Day address](#).

Consider showing one or two Heritage Minutes from the list of [military-related Heritage Minutes](#) from [Historica Canada](#). Be sure to screen any media in advance to make sure the selection is appropriate for your event and does not contain any sensitive subjects.

8. Memory Project Speaker

Encourage students to take notes and/or pay close attention to the guest speaker(s) during the ceremony, as Activity 4 will have students reflect on the speaker's stories.

Inviting a Memory Project speaker to your event is a useful way to learn firsthand about the experiences of veterans or active military members. If you choose to include a speaker, be sure to connect with them before the event and ensure you have the technology they may need for their presentation. Once the speaker has finished, make sure the MC thanks them for their visit.

9. Poems

Have students or guest speakers participate in the ceremony by reading significant poems like *In Flanders Fields* or *Why Wear a Poppy*.

Teacher Tip: If you completed Activity 2 with your class, select a few students to read their own poems and/or reflections during the ceremony.

10. Wreath Laying

Consider laying a wreath during your Remembrance Day event. Wreath laying is a common part of the ceremonies held on November 11, as a way to pay tribute to the sacrifices made by Canadian veterans. A wreath laying is an important ceremony, with many practices to consider. Please follow [A Guide to Commemorative Services](#) by Veterans Affairs Canada to plan the wreath laying.

Order a wreath from your local Legion [HERE](#).

11. Close Event

Be sure to end the event by thanking your guests and allowing the audience to ask questions. Consider preparing questions in advance and allowing your speaker(s) to decide which ones they feel comfortable answering.

TEACHER TIPS

- i. Make sure to [Book a speaker](#) in advance.
- ii. Once the Memory Project team has connected you with a speaker, be sure to communicate with your speaker to ensure that they know what to expect from the visit. Obtain permission in advance of the visit if you plan to record the speaker or take photographs.
- iii. Ask your speaker about their service ahead of your event so you can prepare your students to ask thoughtful questions.
- iv. Once a speaker has been scheduled, as a class, come up with a list of interview questions to ask your speaker during their visit (if you plan to have a Q&A portion). You may want to use the [Host a Speaker Kit](#) on the Memory Project website to help formulate your questions.
- v. Encourage your students to listen carefully and respectfully to the speaker, as they will use the speaker's presentation for their activities.

ONLINE EVENT

Use our helpful [How to Host an Event Via Video Call toolkit](#) to convert an in-person event to an online event. If you are including outside guests or speakers, be sure to discuss the layout and required technologies with them before the event.

ACTIVITY 4 – CONTINUING THE ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

Based on your Remembrance Day event and the speaker's presentation, have students work individually to create their own editorial article about why Remembrance Day is an important commemoration. They should describe the speaker's experience. An editorial is an article that expresses an opinion on a topic and/or person. Editorials are like essays in that they inform the reader about a topic and persuade them to appreciate the author's opinion on it. For an example, see this [article from CBC](#).

If you were unable to host a Memory Project speaker, have students choose testimony from a veteran in the [Memory Project archive](#) to feature in their editorials, or use one of these recommended testimonies:

- [Iolanda "Vy" Connolly](#)
- [Victor Eric Wong](#)
- [Margaret Cooper](#)
- [Leonard Braithwaite](#)

Have students follow the steps below to complete the attached editorial outline [worksheet](#) (see page 10).

1. Introduction: Students begin their article with a strong attention-grabbing statement or question. Answer the following questions in the first paragraph so the reader knows what the article is about.

- Who is the speaker?
- What is their branch of service?
- Where did they serve?
- When did they serve?
- What was their role in the military?
- Why was their service significant?

2. Body: The next two or three paragraphs should provide a detailed description of the speaker's story. Students should review their notes and try to include a quote from the presentation. Remind students to write in the third person. Students should consider the following questions:

- What did their story teach you and the other students about remembrance?
- What part of their experience do you want to highlight? Why is it important?

3. Conclusion: Students should complete their article by considering the importance of listening to oral history and how it can shape someone's view of remembrance.

TEACHER TIP

If your school has its own newsletter, choose a student's article to feature in a post-Remembrance Day issue.

◀ Corinne Kernan Sévigny speaking over CKCV Radio, Quebec City
(courtesy Corinne Kernan Sévigny, the Memory Project).

Canadian Soldier at Cenotaph Remembrance Day Ceremony in Edmonton, November 11, 2014
(courtesy Lostafichuk/46782781/Dreamstime.com). ▶



ACTIVITY 5 – THANKING YOUR SPEAKER

Begin by having a class discussion with students, encouraging them to convey their favourite aspects of the Memory Project speaker's presentation.

1. During the discussion, encourage students to share personal reflections on the presentation.
2. On their own, have students consider the following:
 - How has the speaker changed your view of remembrance?
 - Did you learn any new information from them?
 - Do you want to thank them for something specific they did during their service?
3. Individually, students should write the speaker a letter to thank them and share with the speaker what remembrance means to them.
4. Feel free to share your students' letters and/or emails with us! We will be sure to forward them to the speaker. Contact us at:

Historica Canada
Attn: The Memory Project
2 Carlton Street, East Mezzanine
Toronto, ON, Canada M5B1J3
memory@historicacanada.ca

✓ From left to right: A veteran speaking to a group of students (courtesy Ron Green, the Memory Project). Charles Scot-Brown meeting a girl at The Royal Canadian Military Institute, Toronto. Photo by Mike Tjioe (the Memory Project).





ACTIVITY 4 – CONTINUING THE ACT OF REMEMBRANCE WORKSHEET

Use the worksheet below to write your editorial article.

<p>Introduction Sentence:</p> <p><i>Begin your article with a strong attention-grabbing statement or question.</i></p>	
<p>Introduction Paragraph:</p> <p><i>Make sure to answer the following questions: Who is the speaker? What is their branch of service? Where did they serve? When did they serve? How did they take part in their service?</i></p>	
<p>Body Paragraph 1:</p> <p><i>Provide a detailed description of the speaker's story. Consider the following questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>1. What was something surprising that you learned?</i><i>2. What part of their experience did you find interesting?</i>	
<p>Body Paragraph 2:</p>	
<p>Body Paragraph 3:</p>	
<p>Conclusion:</p> <p><i>Complete your article by considering the importance of listening to oral history and how it can shape someone's view of remembrance.</i></p>	