



Canada at War
1914-1919 | 1939-1945

How We Remember

///Senior Learning Tool///



A project of



HISTORICA
CANADA

with support from

Canada

////How We Remember////

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Note to educators:

Accommodations for special education, ELL and ESL students are included under the appropriate sections and identified as “Modification.”

“It is logical that artists should be a part of the organization for total war, whether to provide inspiration, information or comment on the glory or the stupidity of war.”

— A. Y. JACKSON, CANADIAN
FIRST WORLD WAR ARTIST



How We Remember is part of Historica Canada’s educational campaign on the First and Second World Wars. Educational guides, learning tools with additional activities, and other resources are available to assist students and teachers during the creative process and to supplement classroom learning.

This learning tool explores the themes of commemoration and remembrance as they relate to the First and Second World Wars. We challenge students to reflect on how the past has been commemorated and invite them to use their creative writing and visual art skills to create an original work centered on these themes.

Historica Canada is the country’s largest organization dedicated to enhancing awareness of Canada’s history and citizenship. For more information, visit HistoricaCanada.ca.

This learning tool was produced with the generous support of the Government of Canada.

WHAT TO CONSIDER?

There are many things to consider when thinking about commemorating the past. Imagine you are part of a team or group that has accomplished something great. How would you want to be portrayed in a photo or article describing your achievement? Would you paint a mural or leave something behind to show your accomplishment?

- What details would you want highlighted?
- What details would you want left out?
- What details are relevant to the article or portrait?

These are exactly the kinds of questions that writers, artists and historians must address when deciding how to commemorate the past.

///The Contest: How We Remember///

Students in grades 4 – 12 (grade 4 – secondary 5 in Québec) are invited to submit a written piece or visual artwork to the How We Remember contest.

This contest challenges students to create a piece around the theme of remembrance of either the First or Second World War. How to commemorate an armed conflict raises many challenging questions — questions such as what should we remember? Whose experiences should be commemorated and how? What are the ethical dimensions of remembrance? Should heroism, sacrifice and injustice all be commemorated in the same way?

These are some of the questions artists and authors should consider in their piece.

Modification: Define terms such as *commemoration*, *ethics* and *heroism* and brainstorm examples of the ethical dimensions of remembrance with your class. Identify a *hero* and an *injustice* that has been studied and ask students to discuss the different ways they have been remembered.

Entries will be reviewed by a contest jury, and winners will be selected from three grade categories:

- Elementary (grades 4 – 6)
- Junior (grades 7 – 9, or secondary 1 – 3 in Québec)
- Senior (grades 10 – 12, or secondary 4 – 5 in Québec)

A classroom prize will also be awarded to a group entry from a grade 4 – 11 class (grade 4 – secondary 5 in Québec) with six or more participants. Each entry must include a written artist or author statement (max. 300 words).

There will be a first-, second- and third-place prize for each category.

Please see the contest [guidelines](#) for the rules, regulations and deadline.

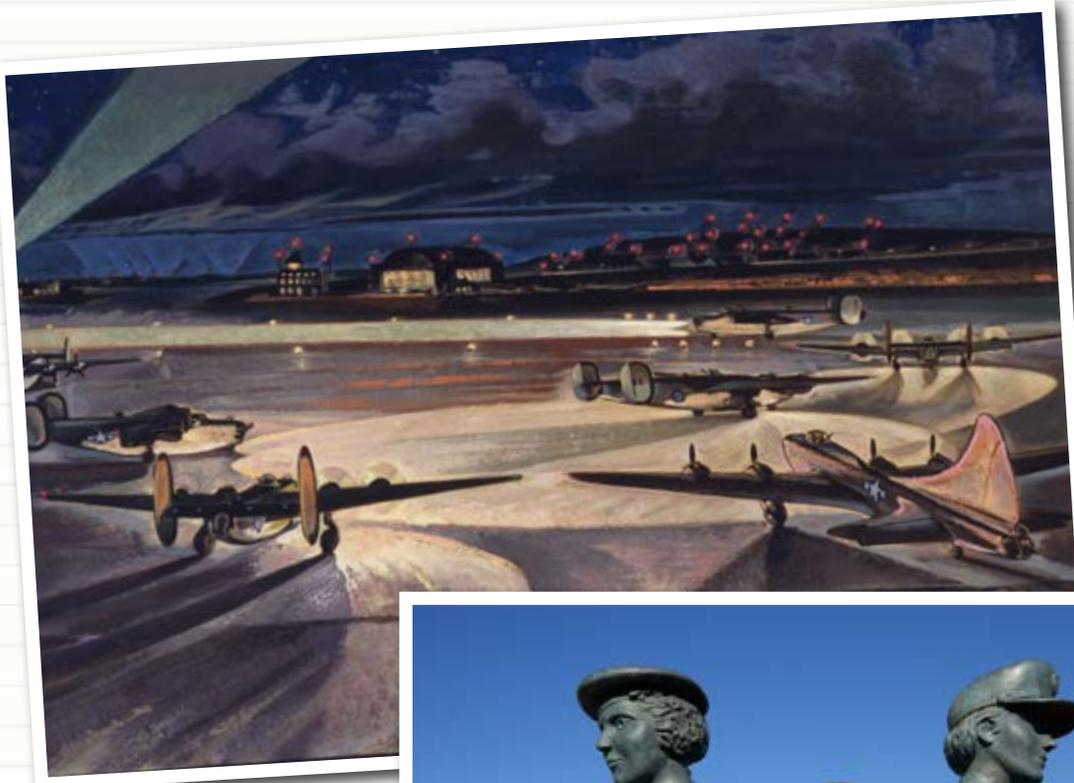
Modification: Ask students to consider the following questions while they are creating their own work: What events, people or places do your examples commemorate? What messages are they trying to send and why? What evidence is available to support your answer?

Cover image: *Infantry near Nijmegen, Holland* by Alex Colville, 1946 (courtesy Canadian War Museum/19710261-2079).

//// Visual Art Possibilities ////

While we often think of memorials as statues or monuments, there are many other ways to visually commemorate the past. While contest entries must be two-dimensional, the design possibilities are limitless. Ask yourself, “What historical details would I like to represent? How can I incorporate my own voice or point of view?” Here are some options to think about:

- Create a piece of art — a painting or drawing, for example — on a theme related to the First or Second World War.
- Design a poster, textile, mural, medal or sculpture.
- Create a museum exhibit or other commemorative space.
- Design a monument. Where would it stand and what would it look like?



Night Traffic, Gander Newfoundland by Albert Cloutier, 1945
(courtesy Canadian War Museum/19710261-1797).

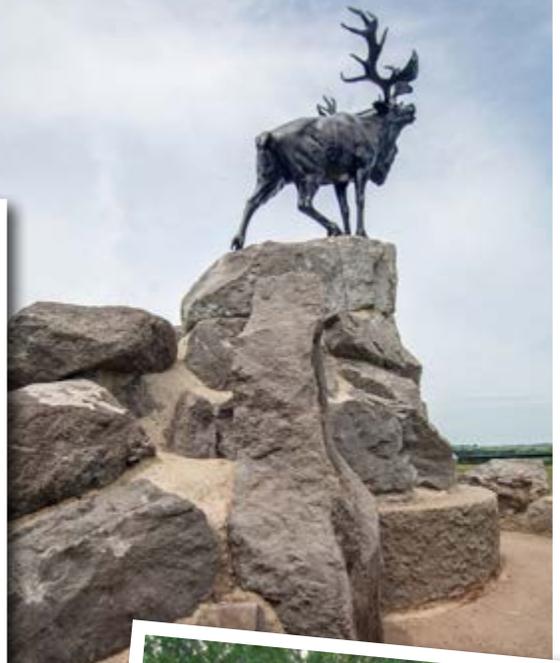
Women soldiers: tribute to the women of the British Commonwealth who served in the armed forces during the First and Second World Wars. Located on Winnipeg's Memorial Boulevard (courtesy Radharc Images/Alamy/C6D9AD).



“I remember one night sitting in the control tower of a station on the Canadian east coast watching [large numbers of] bombers take off for the European theatre. Not only could I see them take off, but I could hear [the pilots’] voices — young, brash, frightened and confident. Their voices told a story that was an important part of what I was seeing.”

— ALBERT CLOUTIER, OFFICIAL WAR ARTIST, SECOND WORLD WAR

Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial, France. Dedicated to Newfoundlanders who fought in the First World War (courtesy Alamy/DYE489).



The Canadian National Vimy Memorial is a memorial site in France dedicated to the memory of Canadian Expeditionary Force members killed during the First World War, unveiled in 1936 (courtesy CWGC).

The National War Memorial, Ottawa, unveiled in 1939 (courtesy City of Ottawa).



Note to educators: Encourage students to “think-pair-share” (think to themselves, share with a friend, share with the class) when developing their writing or art commemoration.



Ukrainian Canadian internment plaque in Alberta, includes map showing the locations of internment camps across Canada, placed in 2002 (courtesy Mpirie).

////Writing Possibilities////

Writers can make the past come to life through both fiction and non-fiction writing for a wide variety of audiences. Consider the following formats:

- Create a plaque commemorating a person, place or event.
- Compose a poem or song.
- Write a short story or a play. For inspiration, think of a play or skit you have seen performed at a Remembrance Day ceremony in your community.
- Write an essay arguing why a specific site should be named after an important figure or event — for example, a road, public building, park, mountain, school or airport.

RESOURCES

The Memory Project, Historica Canada:

Visit thememoryproject.com to listen to veterans speaking about their time in the service.

The Canadian Encyclopedia:

Visit thecanadianencyclopedia.ca to research Canadian historical figures and events.

Parks Canada, National Historic Sites:

Look up criteria for designating historic sites.

Canadian War Museum Website

National Film Board

Veterans Affairs Canada:

Diaries, letters, stories and poems.

Local or provincial archives



Mike Mountain Horse story robe, from the Esplanade Museum, Medicine Hat, Alberta (courtesy Esplanade Museum).

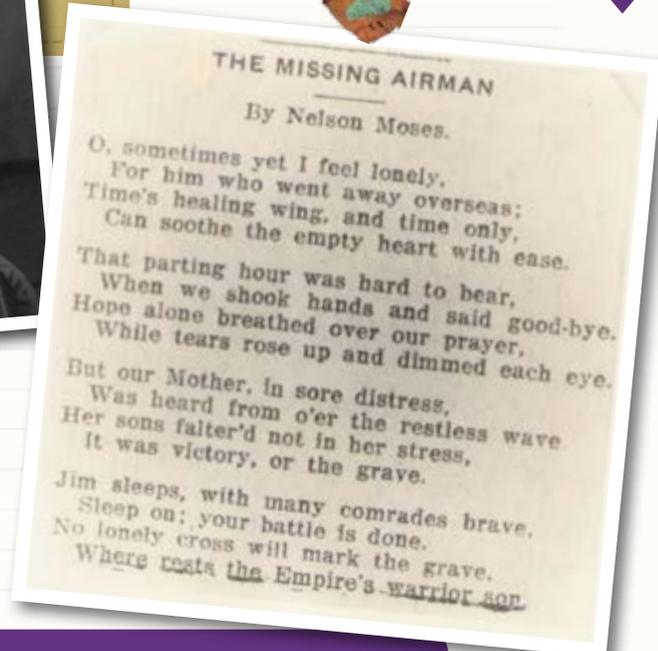
Poem: "The Missing Airman" by Nelson Moses, written April 1918 (courtesy John Moses).

Lt James Moses was reported missing on 1 April 1918 while serving with the Royal Air Force. His father Nelson wrote this poem after receiving the missing-in-action telegram.



Mike Mountain Horse, 5 March 1959 (Courtesy Glenbow Archives/NB-44-92).

Mike Mountain Horse enlisted in 1916 to fight in the First World War. He was a member of the Blood Tribe and served for two years in the Canadian Army. Using a calfskin robe as his canvas, Mountain Horse recorded his war experience in the way of the Blackfoot people.



//// Select Your Evidence ////

Use the list of resources above to learn more about possible topics related to the First and Second World Wars. Your piece can tell a story about the entire war, a specific event or place, one individual or a group of people.

Narrow your focus to something you're interested in and for which you have enough evidence.

Look for stories in your own community — What do elders know? What are your family stories? Are there stories that haven't been told before? Are there local plaques, monuments or public artworks that could be reimagined?

Conduct research and examine the **primary-source evidence** on your chosen topic. Consult the above websites to access these materials.

Modification: Define **primary source** and provide some examples of where primary sources can be found. Further, prompt students to develop their own list of primary sources material.

Primary-source evidence can be anything that people used or created in the period being studied. Letters, diaries, photographs, news articles, artwork or artifacts from a time of war can all reveal much about how people thought, felt or acted during that time.

Plaque located in front of the Six Nations Veterans Association building in Ohsweken on the Six Nations reserve near Brantford, Ontario, dedicated to the memory of the warriors who were killed in the First World War. Unveiled in 1919 (courtesy John Moses).



Poem: "In Flanders Fields" by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, printed in 1918 (courtesy Canadian War Museum/20060073-001).



For more information on teaching the ethical dimensions of history, please refer to historicalthinking.ca.

Note to educators: Narrow down the options by providing more direct guidance. Provide direction to appropriate resources such as shorter articles and text-reading software.

The Man with Two Hats, Ottawa, unveiled in 2002. A twin statue stands in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, symbolizing the friendship and partnership between Canada and the Netherlands during the Second World War (courtesy Marshall Ikonography/Alamy/BNC8Y2).



///Draft Your Ideas///

Think about how you will portray or commemorate your historical figure, event or location. Consider the following questions on the ethical dimensions of history:

- What is important to include in my feature on this person's story or event? What can I leave out?
- What information is important to include when telling the story of this person or event? Is there any sensitive information and, if so, how will I address it?
- If the person or people involved have living family members, how would they react to my memorial or commemoration? Is it historically accurate and respectful of the past?
- How does my memorial educate the public? Will people pay attention to it? What details do they need to know to understand it?
- Who is my audience? How could my piece impact them?

Infantry near Nijmegen, Holland by Alex Colville, 1946 (courtesy Canadian War Museum/19710261-2079).



Modification: Create a handout for students based on the "Select Your Evidence" and "Draft Your Ideas" sections and include resources. Encourage students to take notes while you explain the assignment.

///Gather Feedback///

Get feedback from your peers, teachers, parents and other members of your community. Ask yourself and others:

- What parts of my piece have a strong impact?
- Does it move my audience with a clear message?
- What parts can be improved?
- Have I included accurate historical details?
- How is my piece of value to my community?

Modification: Some questions may need to be rephrased for students. This checklist should be submitted with completed answers for feedback.



Women Making Shells by Mabel May, 1919 (courtesy Canadian War Museum/19710261-0389).



////Finalize////

Use the feedback to finalize your written or artistic project.

Keep these questions in mind: Who is the audience? What is the purpose of your memorial? Is it respectful? Does it use the evidence to support your point of view?

Once you have completed your written piece or work of art, enter your project into the **How We Remember** contest here! Canada1914-1945.ca

Returning to the Reconquered Land by George Clausen, 1919 (courtesy Canadian War Museum/19710261-0121).

This painting is one of eight large canvases depicting scenes of war that hang in the Senate of Canada. This one shows the people of France returning home to their farms after the armistice was signed on 11 November 1918. The paintings remind lawmakers of Canada of the consequences of war.