
Holiday Facts & Fun: Veterans Day



Teacher's Guide

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Produced
by
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Table of Contents

	Page
Program Overview	3
Viewer Objectives	4
Suggested Lesson Plan	5
Description of Blackline Masters	6
Answer Key	6
Transcript of the Video	6
Web Resources	11

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HOLIDAY FACTS & FUN: VETERANS DAY

Grades 2-5

Viewing Time: 13:49

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Intended Audience and Uses

Holiday Facts & Fun: Veterans Day has been produced for students in grades 2-5. Its primary purposes are to help youngsters appreciate the sacrifices and contributions of our nation's veterans and to understand why and how Veterans Day is celebrated. It also can deepen student understanding of U.S. history in the 20th and 21st centuries. This video helps students achieve McREL Level II (Grades K-4) History Standard 1, Benchmark 5 ("Understands ...cultural heritage through...celebrations"); History Standard 4, Level I, Benchmark 7 ("Understands the reasons that Americans celebrate certain national holidays"); Level II, Benchmark 8 ("Understands the historical events...commemorated by major national holidays..."); and Level II, Benchmark 5 ("Knows how various American holidays reflect the shared values, principles and beliefs of Americans...").

Program Synopsis

The program is divided into three sections. The first shows the homecoming of a returning Air Force veteran, Bill Thompson, celebrated by family and friends, including his

nephew, Ben, and niece, Carley. The second part explains what a veteran is, and gives a brief history of Veterans Day. The third section tells how Veterans Day is celebrated and reviews various ways Americans support their troops. This program uses extensive archival footage, as well as contemporary video shot throughout the United States and in foreign countries, to give an accurate overview of the many sacrifices our military personnel have made through the years to protect our freedoms – and to show how Americans honor them on Veterans Day.

VIEWER OBJECTIVES

After viewing this video and participating in the suggested activities, viewers should be able to do the following:

1. Define the term “veteran.”
2. Briefly review this history of Veterans Day.
3. Name the five branches of America’s military.
4. Name at least three ways Veterans Day is celebrated and several ways students can support our military personnel overseas.

The producers encourage you to make adaptations and changes to the following lesson plan whenever you feel it will enhance your students’ learning experiences. Only by tailoring the material to your unique classroom situation will you be able to maximize the educational experience afforded by these materials.

SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

Viewing Strategies

Various strategies may be employed when showing ***Veterans Day*** to your class. If you wish to use the video as a way to give general information about this holiday, you may find it useful to show the entire program in one screening, then follow up with appropriate questions (see the ***Suggested Discussion Questions*** blackline master) and/or activities suggested in this guide. Alternately, the second section can be used as an overview of American military engagements from World War I through the Korean Conflict.

Introduce the Program

The producers encourage you to prescreen the program to familiarize yourself with its content.

Ask the class if anyone knows what a veteran is. Does anyone have a parent or relative in the armed forces? If so, ask what that person does. Why do we have soldiers, sailors, Marines, Air Force pilots? Has anyone ever thought why their jobs are so important? Tell the class they will see a video about veterans in a few minutes.

Pre-Viewing Activities

If you are showing the program prior to Veterans Day, ask the class if anyone knows about the holiday. If so, what? Are there any other holidays that honor a group of people? What about Mother's Day, Father's Day and Labor Day? Help your students understand that mothers, fathers and people who work are very important in our lives. The same can be said for veterans. Tell the class they will now see why.

Post-Viewing Activities

Discuss the program, using the *Suggested Discussion Questions* if you prefer. Finally, review the ways in which students shown in the program support America's military – listening to presentations given by present and former soldiers, visiting veterans in hospitals, gathering and sending small presents to military personnel overseas, participating in poster contests. What is your school's policy regarding those activities?

Description of Blackline Masters

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – Gives questions that may be asked after each segment is viewed.

WHICH SERVICE? – Reviews the five military services and their missions.

ANSWER KEY

Video Quiz: 1. True 2. c., The police. 3. b., The Navy protects us from seas and oceans. 4. 11th, 11th, 11th 5. a., Europe. 6. President Dwight D. Eisenhower 7. Go to Veterans Day Parades, visit war memorials, listen to soldiers give speeches, visit veterans in hospitals, make cards and posters, gather small gifts for military personnel overseas, attend ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery. 8. b., Arlington National Cemetery 9. 1938 10. c., both a. and b.

Which Service? (In order) Coast Guard, protects shores; Army, protects from land; Navy, protects from seas and oceans; Air Force, protects from sky; Marines, protects from land, sea and sky.

TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

Ben and Carley Thompson are busy preparing for a big event.

You see, their favorite relative – their Uncle Bill – is back home, and the Thompson family is having a welcome-home party for him.

Their uncle joined the Air Force 15 years ago, but will now be a police officer in their community.

On his last tour of duty, just completed, he was stationed in a foreign country for more than a year, which seemed like *forever* to Ben and Carley.

The children's parents are busy, also – preparing Uncle Bill's favorite foods.

Grandmother and Grandfather Thompson are just as eager as everyone else to see their son, and are happy to help with all the preparations – as are many other friends and relatives.

And now, after a very long time...

BEN: They're coming!

NARR: ...the big day has arrived!

A short time later, the family celebrates with a big meal.

Afterwards, Uncle Bill shows some pictures he took while overseas.

Then he tells everyone about some of his experiences during the past year.

Some of the stories are funny, but some are sad.

Uncle Bill is now a "veteran," a person who has been a member of our country's armed services.

Some veterans, like him, are former members of the Air Force, which protects our country from the sky.

Others have been in the Navy, which protects our country from the seas and oceans; or the Marines, which protects our country from the sea, air, and land; or the Army, which protects our country from the land.

And finally, some veterans have served in the Coast Guard, which protects our shores.

Their jobs are, of course, very important.

For the members of our armed services protect our people and our freedoms, such as the freedom to worship as we please, in churches, synagogues and mosques.

They also protect our freedom to write, read and say whatever we want, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone.

They help protect our freedom to choose our leaders in elections and to have a fair trial.

Ever since the first days of our country, it sometimes has been necessary to use the military to do the dangerous work of protecting our lands and freedoms.

Sometimes it has been necessary to send our soldiers to other countries to help them protect their freedoms and lands, also.

World War I, which began in 1914, is an example.

More than four million American soldiers fought overseas in that conflict.

An agreement to stop the fighting – an “armistice” – was signed in 1918 at 11 o'clock in the morning on the 11th day of the 11th month – November.

After the armistice was signed, there were many celebrations in the United States and in many other countries.

One year later, in our nation's capital, Washington, D.C.,

President Woodrow Wilson declared that November 11th would be called “Armistice Day,” to honor all the war's veterans and to remember the many sacrifices they made on the battlefield.

The holiday was celebrated every year after that, although it didn't become an official *federal* holiday until 1938.

By that time, everyone hoped that wars among nations would be a thing of the past.

But in 1939 another – and even worse – world war began far away, on the continent of Europe.

And so, soldiers left their families, homes and jobs to fight in distant places.

The men and women who fought for the United States in World War II made many sacrifices so that all Americans could live in freedom and safety in their homes and communities.

Finally, in 1945, a peace agreement was signed and the troops came home.

The United States and its friends won the war – and celebrated!

But another conflict came five years later, in Korea, a country on the continent of Asia.

Once more, our country's men and women in uniform found themselves far from home, far from their loved ones – wives, husbands and children.

Once again, they faced many hardships to help the world be a better, safer place.

When the fighting came to an end, in 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower changed the name of "Armistice Day" to "Veterans Day to honor *all* veterans – not just those who had served in World War I.

And so, special ceremonies are held every November 11th to honor the brave men and women who have done so much for our country.

On that day, a wreath is placed at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington, Virginia – a burial site where unknown soldiers from different wars are buried.

People also gather at war memorials to honor fallen heroes and heroines on Veterans Day.

The World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. and Vietnam War Memorial, also in Washington, are two of the most well known.

For the people who gather there, it's a time to honor and

remember the brave military men and women who lost their lives serving our country.

Many do so by making a tracing – or “rubbing” – of the name of a remembered comrade.

There are also Veterans Day parades in many places.

Patriotic music, floats and marching soldiers are seen at these events.

Of course, veterans participate, too.

And as you might expect, speeches are given.

SPEAKER: I encourage all Americans to recognize with appreciation the sacrifice and service of all our patriotic veterans.

NARR: Veterans Day events are found in both small and large cities all across America.

At almost all of them, veterans have an opportunity to meet old comrades, greet each other and to talk about their experiences when they were members of the military.

At veterans' hospitals – where injured or sick veterans receive medical help – something else takes place on or near November 11th.

That's when family members, friends and volunteers often make a special to visit those who have served in the armed forces.

Making hospital visits to veterans is still one more way to say “thank you” to the people who have helped preserve our freedom and safety.

At some schools, members of the armed services – or veterans groups – give speeches to students and their teachers as the holiday nears.

They often talk about their experiences to help everyone understand what it's like to be in the armed forces.

In times of war, students may take on special projects for Veterans Day, such as making cards to send to members of our military stationed overseas.

The cards often thank our men and women in uniform for their hard, dangerous work and show our support for them.

Gathering, packing and sending small presents to members of the military is another Veterans Day activity in which school children often participate when our country is at war.

And so are poster contests.

These posters are recent winners in a competition sponsored by a national veterans' organization.

Veterans Day, then, is a very special holiday during which we show our appreciation to the men and women who have done the difficult and dangerous work to protect our country and to preserve our precious freedoms.

It's a holiday we celebrate in many different ways to thank the brave people who have made certain that we live in the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Web Resources

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Day Home Page

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday/>

Pictures, historical data and more about Veterans Day

Kids Domain Salute to Veterans

http://www.kidsdomain.com/kids/links/Salute_to_Veterans.html

An excellent source of links to pertinent information on Veterans, conflicts and more.

The U.S. Army History of Veterans Day Page

<http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/faq/vetsday/vetshist.htm>

Gives key dates and explanations of Veterans Day history

Discussion Questions – Veterans Day

For Segment One

1. In which branch of the military did Uncle Bill serve? (Air Force)
2. What will be his new job? (Police officer)
3. What did the Thompson family do for Uncle Bill's return. (They gave him a party and served his favorite foods.)
4. How long did Uncle Bill serve on his last overseas assignment? (More than a year)

For Segment Two

1. What are the five branches of the military and what do they do? (Air Force protects our country from the sky; Navy protects us from the oceans and seas; Marines protect us from the sea, air and ground; Army protects us from the land; Coast Guard protects our country's shoreline.)
2. Why is our military so important? (The military protects our country and our freedoms.)
3. What freedoms do we enjoy in our country? (Freedom of religion; freedom to write, read and speak whatever we want, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone; freedom to elect our leaders in elections; right to a fair trial.)
4. What was Veterans Day first called? (Armistice Day)
5. Who declared that November 11th would be Armistice Day? (President Woodrow Wilson)
6. When did Armistice Day begin? (One year after World War I, in 1919)
7. When was the armistice signed that ended World War I? (On the 11th

day of the 11th month at 11 o'clock in the morning)

8. When did Armistice Day become an official federal holiday? (1938)
9. When and where did World War II begin? (In 1939, on the continent of Europe)
10. What conflict followed World War II? (The Korean Conflict)
11. Who changed the name of "Armistice Day" to "Veterans Day?" (President Dwight D. Eisenhower)
12. In what year was the name of the holiday changed? (1953)

For Segment Three

1. Name five activities commonly seen on or near Veterans Day? (soldiers speaking to youngsters in school, parades, visits to war memorials, ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery, speeches)
2. Name four things youngsters often do on or near Veterans Day. (Visit wounded veterans at Veterans hospitals; gather, pack and send small gifts to soldiers overseas, make cards, make posters)

Name _____

Which Service?

On the line below each picture, tell whether the person is in the Navy, Marines, Army, Coast Guard or Air Force. Then, on the back of this page, tell how each service protects our country.

