Historica Canada Education Portal

Write your own First World War Heritage Minute

Overview

Imagine you work for Historica Canada, and you have been tasked with writing the script for one of the popular Heritage Minutes.

Throughout your research (using the Lest We Forget project as a model), you have uncovered some interesting facts about someone from your own family/community who volunteered for Canada's Expeditionary Force in the First World War. This assignment has just gotten personal.

Your task, then is to use the information you've collected from this soldier's attestation papers and military service files to create a 1-2 minute Heritage Minute that tells some of his story.

Aims

1. Students to learn more about the First World War and the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

2. Students build skills in undertaking primary research.

3. Students given the opportunity to express their research in a visual format and practice their presentation skills.

Background

In Canadian history classrooms and on television, students have had the opportunity to view and analyze the Heritage Minutes series. They are aware of the structure and the intent of each vignette. Now, each student has been asked to research a member of his/her community who was a part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the First World War (if not possible, students can research a family member in the Second World War). They have also been asked to retrieve his/her soldier's attestation papers from Collections Canada and copies of soldiers' military service files. After completing the primary research, students will script a one- to two-minute event on their soldier's career which the student finds particularly poignant.

Activities

Procedures:

Students will work alone during the research phase of the project, but may work with partners when writing scripts.

1. Using the Heritage Minutes series as a visual guide, discuss how each vignette achieves its purpose of educating without making history appear too daunting.

2. Show the Heritage Minutes that depict scenes of Canadians at war to focus students' thoughts on the tone and mood of those vignettes.

3. As students research, make notes regarding which details would fit in a Heritage Minute and those which could be omitted. Bear in mind that the script should fill 1 to 2 minutes of time.

4. As you write, read the script with your writing partner to see if the words, phrases, and situations fit the assignment.

5. On the due date, submit a good copy of the script when satisfied and completed.

6. For the slightly more adroit/daring, students may submit a video version of their Heritage Minute, in the same style as those depicted on the DVD series.

7. Upon completion of student projects, scripts and videos shall be shared within the classroom.

Resources

The following materials will assist students in their task:

o Lest We Forget Project
o Attestation Papers
o Military Service Files
o The Canadian Encyclopedia
o Heritage Minutes