

# Historica Canada Education Portal

## Valour Road

### Overview

This lesson is based on viewing the Heritage Minute, "Valour Road." By coincidence, 3 of the 69 Canadian men who were awarded the Victoria Cross in the First World War had grown up on the same street in Winnipeg. This street was renamed Valour Road in their honour.

### Aims

The ["Valour Road" Heritage Minute](#) is a good starting place for students to learn about the horrors of war and consider the great personal sacrifices that soldiers made.

By coming up with their own film treatments and planning a Remembrance Day ceremony, students will decide how the First World War should be depicted and commemorated.

### Activities

#### 1. Heroes of war

Each of the men from Pine Street was a hero in his own way. Watch the

Minute and read their stories to come up with some ideas about heroism on the battlefield.

Discuss each of the stories. Analyze each story by asking, "What did the person risk by his actions?" Then ask students why they think the hero took that risk. Why is it important that such heroes be honoured with medals like the Victoria Cross and remembered after their deaths?

Using the students' answers, create a definition of a hero. What kinds of heroic actions can people perform in war? If students are not familiar with the stories of those who helped save Jews or escaping prisoners of war during the Second World War, you might speak about them. For all of the examples that students know, reinforce the concepts of personal risk and the reasons for their actions.

## **2. Art of the war**

Canadian war artists painted some powerful images of the First World War. Though they were sent to create propaganda pictures for the war effort, many of them painted the harsh realities of life and death in the trenches.

Find books or slides of Canadian war paintings from the First World War. Show them to the class and discuss what the artist might be saying about the war.

Some of the paintings were not shown during the war. Have students pretend that they are on the government War Art Committee. They must decide which paintings should be shown (perhaps to help recruit volunteers) and which should be kept from public view back in Canada. They must justify their decisions.

### **3. Looking closely at the Minute**

Whenever filmmakers dramatize history, they make choices that give events a point of view and a message. Part of looking critically at television is recognizing such choices.

In small groups, have students discuss the stories. If they were to make a film (or films) from these stories, what choices would they make? Have them generate some ideas about how they would tell the stories on film. What would they include or omit? What incidents and characters would they focus on? How would they cast the characters? How would they reveal the characters' emotions?

Once they have fleshed out their own film "treatments," have them analyze their work. What would their films show about the war and about the heroism of the men? How would it be different from the Heritage Minute? What might be similar?

Have student groups compare their treatments, then discuss some of the attitudes toward military heroism and warfare that the students' ideas imply.

Students can apply what they have learned to other war films, looking for implied messages and attitudes in the films.

### **4. Remembering the war**

Every year, the end of the First World War is commemorated at "the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month," the time the armistice was signed. We call this Remembrance Day now, and it has

become a day of tribute to those who died serving in all wars.

Schools often hold assemblies for Remembrance Day. Sometimes teachers organize them, but often students plan the ceremonies. In small groups, have students plan their own Remembrance Day assemblies. First, students must clarify what messages they want to get across, then they should script their ceremonies. What specific music, images, or film would they use? What would they say? Would they use words at all?

Have the students share their ideas. Discuss the effectiveness of them. If they are serious about the assignment, some students might volunteer to conduct the next Remembrance Day assembly.

## **Resources**

- [Heritage Minute: Valour Road](#)

- [The Memory Project Archives](#)

- [The Canadian Encyclopedia: Victoria Cross](#)
- [Heritage Minute: Tommy Prince](#)

- [Heritage Minute: John McCrae](#)

- [Heritage Minute: Home from the Wars](#)

- [The Canadian Encyclopedia: Monuments of the First and Second World Wars](#)