

Lesson Plan for Activity 1: Understanding the Mannequin & the Diary

Grade Level: Grades 8 -12

Subject: Social Studies, Canadian History, Remembrance Day Activities

Materials: Access to computer/ high-speed Internet

Outcomes:

- Students will understand and reflect upon the experience of ordinary Canadians during war.
- Students will be able to identify social implications of conflict.
- Students will be able to do basic research into the identity and background of individual WWI Canadian soldiers.

Instructions: Steps for self-guided questions for Videos 1-5:

Step 1: Watch Introductory Video.

Step 2: Select The Mannequin & the Diary story line.

Step 3: Watch Video 1 segment and answer questions.

Step 2: Repeat process with four other videos.

Step 3: Watch Video 6.

Students will need to visit the ‘Themes & Images’ on the website to answer some of the questions.

Video 1: Signing Up & Training

Fact

1. What happened in 1914 that caused Byron Cooper Sisler to stop working at his job with the bank?

Answer: Great Britain declared war on Germany and soon after Canada did as well.

2. What did Byron Cooper Sisler have to do to prepare for the battlefields of Europe?

Answer: He had to go to Camp Niagara in Ontario to receive training.

Interpretation

3. Why do you think Byron Cooper Sisler signed up for the war?

Answers may vary.

Research question

4. Look up Byron Cooper Sisler’s Attestation papers and find one piece of information about him that is not covered in the video.

- Step 1: Click on the link below.
- Step 2: Enter Byron Cooper Sisler’s name in the Search box.
- Step 3: Click on image of Attestation papers, there is both a front and back image to explore.

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx>

Answers: Regimental number, marital status, next of kin, religion, hair colour, height are all possible answers.

Video 2: Headed for Europe

Fact

1. In the opening scene, Lottie uses a map that identifies most of the countries involved in WWI. List the countries. Can you name any countries that are missing?

Answer: England, France, Belgium and Germany.

Countries that are missing: United States, Italy, Russia, Serbia, Japan etc.

2. Describe at least two characteristics of Sisler's day to day life while at training camp (meals, routine etc.).

Possible Answers: Had to sleep on floor, march in the rain, train in shooting and assembling machine guns, etc.

Interpretation

3. In his diary, Byron Cooper Sisler says that the soldiers were trained to assemble their guns while blind-folded. Why do you think this would be a useful skill?

Possible answer: Had to assemble gun in the dark or under duress in battle if gun jammed etc.

Research question

4. Byron Cooper Sisler crossed the Atlantic on the S.S. Lapland. Go to the Themes and Images section of this site to find out what famous ship had a connection with the S.S. Lapland.

Answer: The Titanic

Video 3: Far from Home

Fact

1. When at the training camp in Shorncliff in England, how close was Byron Cooper Sisler to the Western Front? What separated the training camp from the Western Front?

Answer: Sisler was close enough to hear the battle raging at the front. They were separated by the English Channel.

2. Who were the canaries and why did they get that nickname?

Answer: The canaries were the young women who worked in the munitions plants during the war. The nickname came from the yellow tinge to their skin caused by toxic jaundice through exposure to chemicals used in the munitions production.

Interpretation

3. How do you think things changed for Canadian women during the war?

Answers may vary; possible answers include greater independence, opportunity to work out of the home, increased skills etc.

Research

4. Women on the home front contributed in many ways to the war effort, but so did children. Visit the Themes and Images section for the 'Far From Home' video segment and identify two other ways children helped with the war effort.

Answers: Children raised money to buy important war-related equipment like the ambulances, they collected spare metal to be used in munitions production and participated in organizations like needle battalion, knitting and sewing clothing for soldier's overseas.

Video 4: Surviving the Trenches

Fact

1. Two trenches are mentioned by name in the video. What are the two names?

Answer: The Regina Trench and the Walker Trench.

2. Name one important difference between the two trenches?

Answer: The Walker trench is a communication trench.

Interpretation

3. Sisler writes in his diary that after the Battle for Regina Trench the soldiers had moved forward 150 yards. Do you think this is very far?

Answers may vary.

Research

4. Visit the 'Themes and Images' on the website for the "Surviving the Trenches" video segment and find out what the expression "going over the top" means.

Answer: 'Going over the top' is when the soldier leaves the trench and heads into battle.

Video 5 Going Home

Fact

1. Sisler spent the best part of the war in the army. What other branch of the Armed Forces did he try before the war ended?

Answer: The airforce.

2. Throughout the video, Sisler refers to 3 different battles that he fought in; name three of them.

Answers: Calonne Trench Raid, Vimy Ridge, Passchedaele.

Interpretation

3. In the lead up to the Calonne Trench raid, Sisler stops writing in his diary. Why was it important for the soldiers not to write in their diaries about this?

Possible answer: The planned trench raid was top secret; if a soldier was captured by the enemy and had his pocket diary with him, he could give away important information.

Research

4. Visit the 'Themes and Images' section for the "Going Home" video segment and find out what the symbols of the lion and the eagle represent on the 'Death Penny'.

Answers: The lion represents Imperial England, the dolphins the prowess of the British Navy and the eagle represents Germany.