

Grade 2 Social Studies

Heritage and Citizenship
• Traditions and Celebrations

Aboriginal Teaching Strategy

Social Celebrations – Remembrance Day

Students learn about the contributions of Aboriginal people to Canada's military since 1812.

Related Curriculum Policy

- *The Ontario Curriculum: Social Studies, Grades 1 to 6; History and Geography, Grades 7 and 8, 2004*

Specific Expectations

Application

- identify community celebrations that reflect their own heritage and/or their Canadian identity (e.g., Remembrance Day, Canada Day, Victoria Day, Aboriginal Solidarity Day, Chinese New Year)

Aboriginal Context

Canada's Aboriginal people have fought for this country on the front line of every major battle it has engaged in since the great warrior Tecumseh led the Six Nations in alliance with Canadian and British forces against those of the United States in the War of 1812.

During the South African, or Boer, War in 1899 First Nation people enlisted as soldiers in the military forces of Canada for the first time. They fought as Canadian soldiers, shoulder to shoulder with Britain and its allies.

This tradition of military service continued in the twentieth century. Although figures are hard to pinpoint, it is estimated that more than 7000 First Nation people served in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War, while an unknown number of Inuit and Métis also participated.

Teaching Strategies

- Discuss the importance of Remembrance Day.
Teacher prompts: Why is this day important? What are we remembering? Why are we remembering it? What do people do to remember this day?
- Explain that Canadians from all backgrounds chose to fight for their country and discuss with students why they did.
Teacher prompts: Why would someone want to be a soldier? Would you? Why? How would you describe someone who fought in a war?
- Ask students what characteristics soldiers have and record them on a chart.
- Tell students about several Aboriginal soldiers who served with the Canadian Forces (e.g., World War I – Tom Longboat; World War II – Dr. Gilbert Monture; Korean War – Tommy Prince). Include information about their lives before, during, and after the war.
- Ask students if they would add any characteristics to the list of soldiers' characteristics.
- Show students images of the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument and discuss its symbolism (see Resources).
- Ask students about the other ways we remember our soldiers (e.g., attending Remembrance Day assembly, wearing a poppy, observing two minutes of silence on November 11).
Teacher prompts: Why should we remember our Aboriginal soldiers? What could you do personally to remember (e.g., make a card of thanks to send to a local Aboriginal veteran; write a letter to local veterans; make a poppy, write the name of an Aboriginal soldier on each petal, and wear it)?

Resources

CBC News. *Aboriginals and the Canadian Military*. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/remembranceday/aboriginal-veterans.html>. A historical overview of the contribution of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis soldiers to the Canadian Forces since 1812.

Dicker, Katie. *Poppy Day*. London, UK: Hodder Wayland Childrens, October 2007.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. *Ontario's Aboriginal Veterans*. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/on/oav_e.html. Information about the contributions of Ontario's Aboriginal veterans.

National Capital Commission. National Aboriginal Veterans Monument. http://www.canadacapital.gc.ca/bins/ncc_web_content_page.asp?cid=1627-24563-24548-28835&lang=1. Image of and information about the monument.

Patterson, Heather. *A Poppy Is to Remember*. Richmond Hill, ON: Scholastic Canada, 2007.

Veterans Affairs Canada. *Native Soldiers, Foreign Battlefields*. <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=history/other/native>. Highlights the contributions of Canadian Aboriginal people in wars.

Making Community Connections

- Invite an Aboriginal veteran to speak with students on Remembrance Day. Contact your local Royal Canadian Legion for possible speakers.

ABOUT THE TEACHER'S TOOLKIT

This teaching strategy is one component of *Aboriginal Perspectives: The Teacher's Toolkit*, a collection of resources designed to help Ontario educators bring Aboriginal perspectives into the classroom. Based on the revised Ontario curriculum, the collection includes resources for educators at both the elementary and secondary levels. Other resources in this series can be found on the ministry website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

