



Language Arts
Grade 7, 8 and 9
Drama
Social Studies

Living
Respectfully

Developing
Self-Esteem

Remembrance


Contributors

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Objective

This lesson will provide students with a greater understanding of the sacrifices veterans made and the importance of Remembrance Day. Students write letters that appear to have been written during a war in which Canada was involved.

This lesson can also be part of a thematic unit that integrates related topics in social studies to bring an even broader perspective to issues relating to war and its causes. Drama teachers can also take excerpts from the story to recreate scenes or tableaux that could be used during a Remembrance Day ceremony at the school. Use a computer to generate a power point presentation and word process the letter.

 **Time** 3 to 4 class periods

Materials

- Student Handout 1 “To the Brother I Never Met . . .”
- Story “To the Brother I Never Met . . .but will never forget” Reprinted with permission Reader’s Digest, November, 1999

Getting Started

Knowledge Now

Previous classes explored the concept of war; how wars begin, the occurrence of atrocities and ways wars can be prevented in future. The purpose of this exploration was to help students gain an empathy for families who were affected by war—whether at home in Canada or abroad.

Ask students to respond to the following question: How would you feel going off to war or having a family member enlist?

Tell students that they will be encouraged to interview veterans and family members who have been involved in wars. Also ask them to bring in any artifacts that relate directly to the study on war. Ask them to begin to think about how war has changed humanity.

Engaging Interest

Because not all students will know a war veteran, it is important to invite a war veteran to school to share personal experiences and answer questions.

Ask students to bring artifacts such as letters, newspapers, medals, uniforms, etc. No weapons, please!

Visit interactive Websites such as www.vac-acc.gc.ca and www.virtualmemorial.gc.ca

Journal Reflection

Use the strategy Think, Pair, Share to generate ideas on the following question: How would it feel to lose something or someone that you love during a war?

Ask students to write their ideas in their journals.

Learning Activities

Ask the students to read the story “To the Brother I Never Met . . . but will never forget” and answer the questions on Student Handout 1.

Based on the discussion of the story, ask students to do the following writing assignment.

Assessment/Analysis

Write a Letter

Write a one page letter (in proper letter format) to someone in your family or to a friend. Assume that you are a soldier or a person who is working near the front lines. Base the letter on ideas from the story “To the Brother I Never Met. . . but will never forget” Create a fictional character or use a story based on a real life situation? For example, a letter could be from the Department of National Defense to Claire’s family informing them of their son’s death. It would highlight his contributions to Canada’s war effort.

Mention the limitations that soldiers had in letter writing. For example, soldiers couldn’t give a location or any specifics that might give away important information to the enemy.

Tell students to use the knowledge that they have gained from stories, class discussions, guest speakers and videos to make this letter realistic and authentic. Grade the letter according to applicable criteria.

Application

Write a postcard to a Canadian peacekeeper stationed overseas or to a veteran who has served his/her country. These “Postcards for Peace” are available through Veterans Affairs Canada.

Language Arts 7, 8 or 9 Learner Outcomes

Language Arts Grade 7

- 2.2 Respond to Texts - experience oral, print and other media texts from a variety of cultural traditions and genres, such as journals, nature programs, short stories, poetry, letters, CD-ROM programs, mysteries, historical fiction, drawings and prints
- 3.1 Plan and Focus - use note taking, outlining and representing to summarize important ideas and information in oral, print or other media texts

Language Arts Grade 8

- 2.2 Respond to Texts - write and represent narratives from other points of view
- 2.4 Create Original Texts - create oral, print a or other media texts related to issues encountered in texts and in own life

Language Arts Grade 9

- 2.2 Respond to Text - consider historical context when developing own points of view or interpretation of oral print or other media texts

Safe and Caring Topics and Concepts

Living Respectfully

Understanding Conflict, Peace, Justice and Violence

- Defining conflict, peace, justice and violence
- Understanding how violence affects individuals, families, schools and the community
- Identifying ways individuals have contributed to peace in our world

Developing Self-Esteem

Listening With Empathy to Understand the Other Person's Point of View

- Defining empathy
- Recognizing that other's perspectives are valid even if they differ from one's own

Teaching Strategies

Go to www.sacsc.ca for strategy descriptions	Cooperative Learning	Inquiry Learning	Direct Instruction
	• Think-Pair-Share		

Generalization and Transfer	Peer Teaching	Empathy/Affective Education	General Teaching Activities/Ideas
• Literature		• Journaling	

Supplementary Resources

- Gould, Pat. “To the Brother I Never Met . . . but will never forget,” *Reader’s Digest*, November, 1999.
- Websites
 - The TELUS Learning Connection www.2Learn.ca Enjoy pages: Remembrance
 - Veterans Affairs Canada www.vac-acc.gc.ca
 - The Canadian Virtual War Memorial www.virtualmemorial.gc.ca

To the Brother I Never Met . . . **Pat Gould**

Read the story “To the Brother I Never Met . . .” and answer these questions in full sentences.

1. Vocabulary Enrichment
 - fait accompli
 - tedium
 - bayonet
 - trench
 - postscript
 - chafed
 - furlough
 - conscription
2. Analyze the title of the story and predict what the story will be about.
3. Questions for Discussion
 - a. Why did Clare enlist in the Canadian Army? How old was he?
 - b. Who is the narrator of this story? Why is this story important to him?
 - c. How did the army try to prepare Clare for battle? What key component is left out of the soldiers' training?
 - d. What is Canada's reputation overseas then and now?
 - e. Explain what listening post duty and the suicide club were.
 - f. Give two specific phrases from the story, that illustrate the horrors of war.
 - g. Define irony, is this story ironic? Give a detailed explanation.
 - h. What is the lesson to be learned from the narrator's postscript?

To the Brother I Never Met . . .

but will never forget

Pat Gould

I never knew you, Clare. You died on a battlefield in France long before I was born. World War I was declared as you were about to begin training in the bank of a small Saskatchewan town. Your older brother Herbert, then 18, was among the first in Creelman to sign up. You must have envied him. I like to think that you lied about your age, without consulting your parents, then presented them with a fait accompli.

I know little of your short life. Indeed, I would know almost nothing if it were not for a small memorial booklet that our father wrote, plus a treasure trove of recently discovered letters you wrote from the front. Why this sudden interest, you might wonder? Perhaps it's because I am getting old and want now, before it is too late, to record this 20th century tragedy, so that my grandchildren might one day discover it. In time they might be curious about their martyred great-uncle, one of the 60,661 Canadians killed in that slaughter, but whose story has a heartbreaking twist. This is for them.

Father seldom spoke of World War I. His writings concerning the half-brother whom I would never know were largely ignored. It would be many years before I appreciated the depths of

We had covered half the distance to the German trench when I was nearly deafened by a volley of shots. I pitched headfirst into a ditch, and when I convinced myself that I was not

the black hell you endured, or the sorrow that lived in our father's heart.

You were eager to go. As a new recruit you chafed at the tedium of drill, the forced marches, bayonet practice, the foot-slogging and miserable routine designed to turn you into a soldier. But your time would come, just after your 17th birthday. *England: I've arrived. I am going to be put on as a signaller.*

Your first sight of London, on an overnight pass, must have compensated, briefly, for the endless drilling that kept you from the action—action that could end before you ever saw it. The war had already dragged on longer than anyone expected.

We went to the Lyceum Theatre. The Canadians have a good name in London. We hope to live up to our reputation when sent to the front. There is a draft of over 300 men to go to the front from our brigade. Volunteers have been called for. I put my name in but have been turned down as it will take at least a month more for me to qualify. I am constantly thinking of home and looking forward to my return, but hope to get to the front first.

How innocent you were. But the innocence would soon become . . . what? Horror? Disbelief? Rage?

hit, began to survey my position. Bullets were flying, but as we had fairly good covering, we were protected. The sergeant, however, was not so fortunate. He was lying where he had fallen, with a

April 27/May 1, 1915, Shorncliffe Camp: It is reported that the German fleet is bombarding Dunkirk. As you probably know, the Canadians suffered heavy losses in checking the German advance, and reinforcements were called for. I hope Mother won't take my departure too hard. In any case, we won't go to the firing line for some time yet but will finish our training in France. Good-bye for the present.

You wrote to your young sweetheart—Miss Del Quirt—as if you were much, much older than your years and she your contemporary. But then, you were much older than your years.

Late spring, 1915, France: Dearest Del, the war looks further from the end than ever. The other night, while on listening-post duty, I was wet through to the skin and half frozen. Upon returning to my dugout, where I had hoped to find comfort, I found it flooded, so I sat up all night. The next day I vented my spite on the Germans by throwing over into their trenches about 60 bombs. I have joined the "suicide club," as we are all called. It is our duty to blaze the way for the other fellows, and upon us falls much of the fighting of the severest nature.

You were a boy just turned 18 when you wrote those lines. *bullet through his head. The runner succeeded in working back into the trenches for help while I stayed with the wounded sergeant, expecting the Germans would come after us. I crawled*

over to where the poor fellow lay and took his revolver, as I had only one bomb left, and prepared to die fighting. It seemed an eternity before the stretcher bearers got to our post and carried him in, and I worked my way back to the trenches. The sergeant, however, died before they reached the trenches. And I went to get my issue of rum to steady my nerves.

An issue of rum. And yet you said in the same letter:

I wouldn't change places with those young fellows in Canada who are not wearing the King's uniform. I have the satisfaction that no matter what the outcome, I am at least doing my duty.

Ah, yes. Duty. Before ending the letter you added one line:

I hope to get a pass before long to go to England for a brief rest.

You did get a pass and returned to England, where a medical board pronounced you unfit to return to the front. In other words, you were burned out—a broken boy/man whom no issue of rum could help. After a period of rest you were to become an instructor.

You were able to reunite with Herbert, who was stationed nearby waiting to leave for France. Herbert would soon get to the front, and his own hell. But he would survive.

April 2, 1916. Shorncliffe Camp. Dear Father: It must be a relief for you to know that we are both in England. I intend to apply for a two-month furlough during my term of light duty.

freely given, that hope and beauty might not become extinct.

"You will return. Oh, not as you were shall we greet you. Though the words have healed,

To your surprise a furlough was granted. Two months! Maybe, just maybe, you could go home.

You didn't have enough money or the journey and sent this cable to Father:

Furlough granted. Cable funds quickly, Lloyd's Bank, Folkestone.

As speedily as a cable could reply, your father's response was sent. I can only imagine the joy with which your message was received at home.

But then came the heartbreaking twist of which I spoke. Father recorded this, and in his words I feel the sorrow that I now know stayed with him always:

"Day after day an anxious boy called at Lloyd's Bank looking for the expected reply and as often was told there was none for him."

You were right to be anxious. The war news worsened daily. Leaves were being canceled. Surely they would not recall you, on sick leave and with a furlough in your pocket. Still, you worried. You wrote:

May 11, 1916: I have not yet received the money. I may leave almost anytime. I regret that I was obliged to ask you for so much money, but it was either Canada or back to France sometime, so I decided to call on you. I hope to be able to return it soon.

"So much money." Did you not know that Father would have moved the earth itself to have you safely home?

"The manager of the bank looked into the matter and wrote we know that the scars remain—and those other, deeper scars of memory.

"You will remember your brother who will never return.

to a London bank to ask if an error had been made. They wired in the reply: 'Money ordered by us to be paid to Fitzpatrick, should have read Kirkpatrick.'" Four letters: F-I-T-Z. But for an unknown clerk's error, you would have lived.

Still, all was not yet lost. With your brother's help the money was somehow scraped together in time for your planned departure. Father continued:

"At last all obstacles to home were removed. A steamer would sail in two days. Many were the messages given him to carry to other loving hearts in Canada.

"At midnight that same night he was awakened by a sergeant who, acting without authority, ordered this boy—on sick leave, on furlough—back to the trenches and to be ready at six in the morning. He went without a murmur.

"And while friends at home daily scanned the list of arrivals by steamer, while a lieutenant's commission awaited him, and while a mother daily took up her stand at the window, fate struck her a blow. The War Office cabled: 'We regret to inform you, etc., that Pte. Clarence Victor Kirkpatrick, 81488, was killed in action on the night of June 3, 1916.'

The war ended. Father wrote to Herbert, who would soon be home:

"January 4, 1919. My Beloved Son, You have the glad privilege, my boy, of being in at the finish—surely a fitting reward for the years of service, noble and

Remember only the sweetness of his life and the glory of his transition. Let no thought of bitterness mar the beauty of that memory.

This is your story, dear brother. I add one postscript, which perhaps sheds a ray of hope for those of us alive today, and for our grandchildren:

A year ago I watched my eldest grandson as he competed on a rugby field for a place on Canada's team. He was newly 18, a university student, and a

talented scrummage halfback, who played his heart out on that cold, rainy day. He won a place on the team.

Some months later, he journeyed abroad with his mates to compete for his country—a proud moment in his young life. The days spent in combat with opposing teams of young

Germans was time of fierce rivalry in a no-holds-barred competition . . . and a time of forging lasting friendships.

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