

Lesson Plan
Veterans Day
Grades K-3

Objectives:

- ❖ Students will be able to define the terms *veteran*, *military* and *mission*, and name the date we celebrate Veterans Day.
- ❖ Students will learn the concept of fulfilling a mission in their own life and the importance of both teamwork and individual initiative to achieve goals or complete missions.
- ❖ Students will enhance their problem-solving skills by examining their daily missions and deciding how/if they can be better performed by adding more individual initiative or teamwork.
- ❖ Students will learn about their own family history and the history of the United States.
- ❖ Students will hone their writing skills as well as their critical thinking skills as they break up into groups and begin discussing the shared experiences and “common threads” for their group.

Classroom Activity:

Read aloud (or with the class) the book: “*Welcome Home Grandpa*” and/or “*My Mother Wears Combat Boots*”

Distribute the handout: “*Together or Alone*” and go over it with the class, reviewing the examples of individual and group accomplishment – and defining which is which, so that students can begin to recognize when each approach is applicable.

Distribute the handout: “*Fun with Words*” (there are two versions – one that ties to 'Grandpa' and one that ties to 'Combat Boots') and discuss with students how to fill it out, how to determine if this mission requires teamwork or individual initiative, and how to evaluate the success of their mission.

Assignments:

Ask the children to draw a picture of their favorite part of the book and discuss what they liked best about the story. Use the “flag kit guide” to help the children build their own American Flag, like the one Katie carried in the story.

Build a time line of the 20th Century and list major wars that America fought in. Talk to the students about when Vietnam occurred in the time line. Were their parents alive then? Their grandparents? Can they identify anything in their individual family histories that was happening in that time frame? Encourage them to go home and talk to their parents about something they can place on the time line. Or, you can, instead, document what was happening in Indiana during the Vietnam time frame. This will help the students

understand that everyday life goes on even when bad things are happening in other parts of the world.

Discussion Topics for Veterans Day:

1. What is a Veteran?

Answer: A Veteran is a man or woman who has served in a war or in the military. While they are serving, they are called “active duty” or GIs or “soldiers” (you can introduce the other names such as sailors and airmen, as well, or keep the definitions more simple, especially for K-2.)

2. What is the Military?

Answer: The Military is the name for the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines all together. Sometimes they are referred to as “the armed forces.” People in the military are kind of like policemen. Their job is to protect us from bad people. Sometimes they protect us right here in our country, the United States of America. Other times they must travel far away to protect us, just as Katie's Grandfather did when he flew airplanes in Vietnam – or as Pearl's mother is doing right now in *My Mother Wears Combat Boots*. (Discussion note: ask if anyone has a family member who is in the military right now.)

3. What is a “Mission”?

Answer: A mission is a job that must get done. Just as your teacher gives you tasks or assignments, people in the military are given “missions.” Some of the missions are very big – such as the “mission of the Army” or the “mission of the Air Force.” Some missions are smaller, but very important, such as a mission to rescue someone or a mission to bring supplies to soldiers. People in the military must work together to get the mission done. They know that by working together, they will get things done quicker and easier than if they try to do everything by themselves. (Discussion note: think of some examples in your own life of missions you must do. Is your homework a mission? What about helping your mother around the house? Just like the soldiers, you have a mission. And, just like the soldiers, your mission sometimes gets easier when you work with others (your friends, teacher, parents, brothers or sisters).

Suggest that the children write down several of their most important missions. How might they improve at those missions as individuals? How might they improve by using teamwork with other family members, friends or classmates? Refer to the “Together or Alone” handout and the “Fun with Words” handout.

Homework:

Go home and talk to your parents about Veterans Day. Ask them if any members of your family are veterans. Write down the name of the family member, the branch of the military they served in and when they served (specific years if possible). Any other information about this person would be helpful. Older students can be required to gather more details.

Classroom Follow-up:

During class, work with the children to draft a letter to each of their Veteran family members or friends. Help the children work together to find out who had Veterans in the military at the same time (i.e. group all the Vietnam veterans, Korea, WW II, together etc.). Urge them to share information about their Veterans' experiences, if possible. Have them write their letters as individuals but work as a group to come up with three sentences ("common threads") that are true about all the Veterans of their respective group (i.e. "They all fought in the Vietnam war." Or "they all served during the 1960s" or "they all served in the Army")

This not only helps them with history and English, but with the concept of teamwork. Depending on the age group, you may have to work closely with each group to come up with the common threads for the veterans. Older (grade 3) children will be able to designate someone in the group to write down statements and allow the group to determine which statements are true for everyone. Have each group present its findings to the whole class.

For grade 3 you can take this a step farther by having the students do extracurricular research on the war or era in which their Veteran group served. Have the student group present a report on that era or conflict by doing research and talking to their Veteran family members.

Finally, create a classroom time line showing where each student's Veteran falls in American history. Have the kids color and decorate the time line, even adding pictures of their Veterans, if available, at the appropriate spot on the time line.

Indiana Academic Standards:

History

- 1.1.5 Identify people and events observed in national celebrations and holidays.
- 1.1.8 Develop a simple time line of important events in the student's life.
- 2.1.5 Develop a simple time line of important events in the history of the school and/or community.
- 3.1.5 Create simple time lines that identify important events in various regions of the state.

Language Arts

- 1.4.1 Discuss ideas and select a focus for group stories or other writing.
- 1.4.3 Revise writing for others to read.
- 1.4.5 Identify a variety of sources of information (books, on-line sources, pictures, charts, tables of contents, diagrams) and document the sources (titles).
- 1.5.2 Write brief expository (informational) descriptions of a real object, person, place, or event, using sensory details.
- 1.5.4 Use descriptive words when writing.
- 1.6.1 Print legibly and space letters, words, and sentences appropriately.

- 1.6.2 Write in complete sentences.
- 1.6.6 Correctly use periods (*I am five.*), exclamation points (*Help!*), and question marks (*How old are you?*) at the end of sentences.
- 1.6.7 Capitalize the first word of a sentence, names of people, and the pronoun I.
- 2.4.2 Organize related ideas together to maintain a consistent focus.
- 2.4.5 Use a computer to draft, revise, and publish writing.
- 2.4.6 Review, evaluate, and revise writing for meaning and clarity.
- 2.4.7 Proofread one's own writing, as well as that of others, using an editing checklist or list of rules.
- 2.4.8 Revise original drafts to improve sequence (the order of events) or to provide more descriptive detail.
- 2.5.2 Write a brief description of a familiar object, person, place, or event that develops a main idea and uses details to support the main idea.
- 2.5.3 Write a friendly letter complete with the date, salutation (greeting, such as *Dear Mr. Smith*), body, closing, and signature.
- 2.6.7 Capitalize all proper nouns (names of specific people or things, such as *Mike, Indiana, Jeep*), words at the beginning of sentences and greetings, months and days of the week, and titles (*Dr., Mr., Mrs., Miss*) and initials in names.
- 3.2.7 Follow simple multiple-step written instructions.
- 3.4.9 Organize related ideas together within a paragraph to maintain a consistent focus.
- 3.4.4 Use various reference materials (such as a dictionary, thesaurus, atlas, encyclopedia, and online resources).
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- 3.4.6 Review, evaluate, and revise writing for meaning and clarity.
- 3.4.7 Proofread one's own writing, as well as that of others, using an editing checklist or list of rules.
- 3.4.8 Revise writing for others to read, improving the focus and progression of ideas.
- 3.5.6 Write persuasive pieces that ask for an action or response.
- 3.5.4 Use varied word choices to make writing interesting.
- 3.5.3 Write personal, persuasive, and formal letters, thank-you notes, and invitations that show awareness of the knowledge and interests of the audience; establish a purpose and context; include the date, proper salutation, body, closing, and signature.