

# SAVVAS



# True Heroes

## The History Behind Veterans Day

### **Hook & Inspire! Connections to Today**

Ignite students' interest by sharing these resources, which demonstrate connections between the past and present. Please be sure to preview all resources.

# Veterans Day

A trip to Arlington National Cemetery creates an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the individuals who have fought for our American freedoms. The rows of white monuments can never replace the loss of a fallen soldier, nor does it truly represent them, but it commemorates their legacy. Veterans Day became a national holiday established in 1938, to honor our military men and women. We celebrate Veterans Day on this day, November 11, with parades, speeches, and services for veterans. Veterans from all over the United States, even those living abroad, travel free of cost, to represent veterans in Washington, D.C. with the president and other government officials. Schools often arrange times for veterans to visit with students and teachers. Although one day cannot possibly give Americans enough time to show support to our veterans, it is a perfect opportunity for Americans to say thank you to our brave service members.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### 1). Armistice Day was celebrated prior to Veterans Day. Why did the government decide to change the name of this day?

Student answers may vary depending on students' prior knowledge. Armistice Day was originally established as a way to commemorate the end of World War I and all of its fallen soldiers. The name of Armistice Day was changed to Veterans Day in the United States and to Remembrance Day in many other countries in order to broaden the commemoration to include soldiers from additional conflicts and wars. Armistice Day is also known as "poppy day" in which individuals wear a poppy flower.

### 2). Why is it important to have a day set aside to honor our veterans?

Student answers may vary depending on students' prior knowledge. Prior to having a day of recognition for veterans, the United States had a remembrance day on Memorial Day each year, to honor those who had died in the nation's wars. Many felt it was important to give living veterans a day of recognition. The day has since become a day of celebration as well. Many businesses also give discounts or free meals to veterans. It is important to show gratitude for all the sacrifices our military service men and women have given to us because their efforts and sacrifices are necessary to uphold our freedoms.

### 3). What is the "National Veterans Award" and why was it created?

Student answers may vary depending on background knowledge. The National Veterans Award is given to an outstanding veteran from any branch of the armed forces. The first award was given to Congressman Rees for his work on making Veterans Day a national holiday. Now it is given each year on Veterans Day to honor a specific veteran. See [this website](#) to learn more.

### 4). What is the difference between Veterans Day and Memorial Day?

Student answers may vary depending on background knowledge. Veterans Day celebrates all veterans, living and nonliving. It's a remembrance day, but also a day to make living veterans feel special and appreciated. Memorial Day is a day of remembrance for service men and women who gave their lives for our freedom.

### 5). "Armistice Day has become Veterans' Day. Armistice Day was sacred. Veterans' Day is not. So I will throw Veterans' Day over my shoulder. Armistice Day I will keep. I don't want to throw away any sacred things. What else is sacred? Oh, Romeo and Juliet, for instance. And all music is." - Kurt Vonnegut. Why do you think Mr. Vonnegut was so frustrated about the different remembrance and celebration days?

Student answers may vary depending on background knowledge. Armistice Day was created to remember World War I, then was replaced by Veterans Day. If you fought in World War I or knew someone who fought, you would probably have mixed emotions about changing the name or meaning behind the holiday. See a graphic of the Kurt Vonnegut quote [here](#).

**Share the online resources below with your class to stimulate discussion on these questions. Be sure to preview the clips before showing or sharing them in class to ensure the content is appropriate for your students.**

## LINKS TO RESOURCES

### Videos

- 1). [Veterans Day - How it started and why we honor it](#); This video includes information and history of Veterans Day.
- 2). [Veterans Day Facts for Kids](#); This video gives details about Veterans Day and specifics about who a veteran is and the branches of the military.
- 3). [History of the Holidays: History of Veterans Day](#); This video gives details about the history of Veterans Day and even controversy behind changing the day.
- 4). [Veteran returns to Omaha Beach for first time in 75 years](#); This video documents the return of a veteran to Normandy. Very emotional!
- 5). [Kid President Talks to Tom Hanks about Heroes!](#); This video is about why we celebrate our heroes.

### Media

- 1). [Behind the Doodle: Veterans Day 2018 #VeteransVoices](#); This is a quick video from 2018, showing how Google changed their logo to honor veterans.
- 2). [Census.Gov: Veterans Day](#); This map shows the percentage of veterans living in the United States, by state.
- 3). [What is the difference between Memorial Day and Veterans Day?](#); This article includes a picture of Arlington National Cemetery, and others across the country, look like on Veterans Day. The source also has some information about Memorial Day and Veterans Day.
- 4). [Operation Gratitude - Thanking All Who Serve](#); This organization provides special gifts and funds for veterans and active service members.
- 5). [Veterans: Heroes in Our Neighborhood: Valerie Pfundstein, Aaron Anderson](#); This is an influential book for showing younger students who Veterans are in our community.

### Websites

- 1). [History of Veterans Day - Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs](#); This website gives a detailed description of the history of Veterans Day. It also includes the actual script from the law that was enacted in 1938.
- 2). [Veterans Day 2021](#); This website gives information concerning Veterans Day. It also discusses Armistice Day and the history of this day.
- 3). [Veterans Day Facts](#); This website gives information concerning Veterans Day. It also provides a few quotes from veterans.
- 4). [5 Facts to Know About Veterans Day](#); This website provides information about Veterans Day in quick facts.
- 5). [Veterans Day 2021](#); This website provides information about Veterans Day along with benefits for veterans.



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