

1. What is Remembrance?



Background: This lesson provides a way of introducing the topic of war memorials, and can be used alone or in conjunction with other lessons from War Memorials Trust. Pupils learn when and why Remembrance Day occurs and what happens so that they are aware of why so many communities have war memorials, what it is that is being remembered and is considered so important. While it is likely that many pupils will have prior knowledge of Remembrance Day and associated events, this is not assumed and teachers may therefore wish to adapt the lesson to include more challenging material for more able pupils – this could be done by combining elements of this lesson with War Memorials Trust’s lesson 2, ‘What are war memorials?’

Suitable for: Lower Key Stage 2 (could be adapted for KS1).

Learning objectives: Pupils will learn:

- When the First and Second World Wars took place
- Why November 11th is known as Remembrance Day and how it is marked

Learning outcomes: Pupils will be able to:

- Explain when the events being remembered on Remembrance Day happened
- Explain what happens on Remembrance Day and why this takes place around November 11th
- Give reasons why Remembrance Day occurs and is important to many people

Resources: Remembrance Day artefacts (e.g. poppies, order of service, photographs, video), ‘Teachers’ information on war memorials’ helpsheet, ‘What is Remembrance?’ PowerPoint, pictures or video footage from the World Wars.

Introduction

What is Remembrance Day?

- Slide 2: Discuss the meaning of ‘remembrance.’ Question pupils about the word, drawing out the link to the word remember, when they hear it used and what event it relates to.
- Slide 3: Establish link to Remembrance Day. Using the picture of a Remembrance service (you may wish to substitute this for one taken locally), ask pupils what we are remembering on and around Remembrance Day. Introduce the learning objectives.

Suggested teaching points and activities

When did the wars that we remember on Remembrance Day take place?

- Slide 6: Establish that Remembrance Day is about remembering people that died or were affected by war. Using the timeline provided to demonstrate the number of years between the First World War and the present day, explain the origins of Remembrance Day in the

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First World War, which ended with the Armistice on November 11th 1918, and that this is when Remembrance Day is still commemorated. Explain that subsequent conflicts are now also remembered on the same day and that this year is the start of the centenary of the First World War.

Why do we have Remembrance Day?

- Slide 7: Discuss why many people still mark Remembrance Day, and list reasons. Encourage pupils to think about the following (further information to help you lead this discussion is given in our 'Teachers' information about war memorials' primary helpsheet):
 - The numbers of people involved in the First World War and subsequent wars, the resulting feeling of loss and need to commemorate their sacrifice.
 - The feelings of people who have experienced the aftermath of a war.
 - Older pupils could discuss the nature of the First and Second World Wars as conflicts that affected civilians in ways that previous wars had not, and so had more far-reaching effects than previous conflicts.
 - Respect for those that made sacrifices during wars and the need to demonstrate that respect even after the conflict is part of living memory.
- Summarise the lesson so far, ensuring pupils understand the origins of and reasons for Remembrance Day.

What happens on Remembrance Day?

- Slide 8: Examine what happens on Remembrance Day using a video clip of a Remembrance service, a poppy, an order of service from a Remembrance service, photographs from a range of services from different years and statements from people involved in ceremonies (some photos are given on the PowerPoint and further present day and historical photos depicting services can be found in our war memorial gallery at www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org). Pupils should understand what the various symbols represent, why they think those words were chosen and why people are behaving the way they are during services.
- Pupils could examine each photo or artefact in turn in small groups, with specific questions for that object/image drawing out what it tells us about how people felt and what happens on Remembrance Day, and feedback their answers to the whole class, or this could be done with the whole class.

Conclusion

- Slides 9/10: Review what pupils understand about Remembrance and why November 11th is commemorated. You could show some pictures or film footage of the World Wars, or read and discuss extracts from some war poetry (e.g. *In Flanders Fields*), to show why most people believe these conflicts should continue to be remembered. Examples are given in the accompanying resources.

Support/extension:

The activities in this lesson plan are suggestions only, and teachers will need to adapt the lesson to take account of the needs of their class.

- It is important to realise that this lesson will introduce pupils to the subjects of war, death and loss, which may be distressing for some. Teachers will need to consider how appropriate it is

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to approach these subjects with their class, and be sensitive to the needs of individuals who may have direct experience of them.

- Younger or less able children may benefit from being able to hear words from Remembrance services and poetry being read out or listen to a recording, so they can appreciate their tone and meaning more.
- Older or more able children could extend their learning by finding out how Remembrance commemorations have changed over time or how they differ in different countries. Some information about these changes is given in War Memorials Trust's helpsheet for secondary teachers, 'Teachers' information about war memorials,' which can be downloaded from the Secondary section of our website.

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Ideas for further work:

This lesson is intended to be a general introduction to the concept of Remembrance, and the activities suggested above will give most pupils the knowledge and understanding they need in order to progress to subsequent lessons in this sequence from War Memorials Trust. However, there are many further opportunities to extend this lesson and link it with other areas of the curriculum:

- Art and design: Pupils could design their own symbol of remembrance or make their own poppy wreath, possibly to be used during a school's Act of Remembrance.
- Literacy: Attending a remembrance service could provide a meaningful context for report or recount writing, or looking at pictures/videos of wartime and reading war poetry could be used for the composition of poetry.
- Citizenship: Children could use role play or drama techniques to further examine the feelings experienced by different people on Remembrance Day, including veterans and young people who may have questions about the events. If possible, arrange for the children to take part in an Act of Remembrance or have a visitor to school to talk to them about it.
- RE: Examining what happens during Acts of Remembrance, the content of which often has religious elements, can lead into RE lessons on the importance of religion, ritual and worship in Remembrance commemorations, and discussions about special or sacred places and their importance to communities. The suggested pupil activity can also incorporate RE as pupils examine the use of religious symbols and words during a service and what they mean. They could compose their own epitaphs or prayers using the activity sheet in the Youth Group section of www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org.

Having learned about the importance of Remembrance Day, pupils will now have the knowledge required to find out in more depth about war memorials. War Memorials Trust's primary lesson 'What are war memorials?' gives further suggestions.

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