

## LESSON 3: CANADIAN SOLDIERS IN BATTLE

This lesson focuses on three important battles fought by Canadian soldiers in World War I. These battles are covered on the spread titled “Focus on Canadian Soldiers in Battle.”

**Estimated Time Required:** 75 minutes

### Focus Question

Did Canada’s soldiers prove themselves in battle?

### Getting Ready

Photocopy worksheets.

- TLS Worksheet 1.1.6, Canadian Soldiers in Battle
- TLS Worksheet 1.1.7, A Sunny Subaltern Remembers

### Resources

*Canadian History: A Sense of Time*, pages 16–17

### Additional Resources

Berton, Pierre. *Vimy*. McClelland & Stewart, 1986.

An engrossing account of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

*If Ye Break Faith*. The War Amps, 1985.

A documentary that combines footage of the battles of Ypres, Passchendaele, the Somme, and Vimy Ridge with the recollections of veterans who lived through them.

*A Vimy Veteran Remembers*. The War Amps, 1987.

Veteran Perce Lemmon recalls what it was like for a young soldier in the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

### Assessment Activities

You may wish to assess students’ participation in a variety of activities. These may include

- completing TLS Worksheet 1.1.6, Canadian Soldiers in Battle
- participating in class discussions, including responding to the Show You Know questions
- contributing to the bulletin-board activity

### Prior Learning

Students will recall their knowledge of trench life. They will also need to be familiar with group work.

### Teaching and Learning Strategies

1. Divide the class into home groups of three for a jigsaw activity (see p. 24). This will help prepare students for the more extensive jigsaw activity in Lesson 4. Assign each student in the home group the number 1, 2, or 3 to identify the expert group he or she will join. Members of Group 1 will become experts on the Second Battle of Ypres; members of Group 2 will become experts on the Battle of the Somme; and members of Group 3 will become experts on the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

2. Distribute copies of TLS Worksheet 1.1.6, *Canadian Soldiers in Battle*, and review the information you expect students to record in point form under each heading on the chart.
  - Location and Date: The geographic location (country, town, etc.), and the date(s).
  - Goals: Offensive or defensive.
  - Combatants: Countries involved.
  - Battle Details: General information about the battle and strategies.
  - Results: Casualties, fatalities, and territory won or lost.
  - Consequences: Significance of the battle or its lasting impact on Canada in the world.

**Vocabulary Tip**

Take this opportunity to draw students' attention to the meaning of "casualties." Ensure that they understand that this term includes both those who are killed and those who are injured. When students list the results of battles, ensure that they use the term correctly.

3. Instruct members of each expert group to read their assigned section of the spread, discuss the information, and work together to ensure that everyone fills in complete and accurate information in the appropriate section of his or her chart. Remind them to check the visuals on the page for additional information.
4. Tell students to return to their home groups and share their information with their home-group members. As they do this, the other group members should record the information in the blank sections of their charts. By the end of this stage of the activity, all students' charts should be filled in completely. With the class, briefly review the information on the charts.
5. Draw students' attention to the Show You Know questions on page 17 and discuss the answers to these questions. Remind students that Question 2 is open-ended and that there is no wrong answer as long as their responses are well-thought-out and justified.
6. Remind students of the building block for this theme and provide time for them to check their criteria and decide whether they wish to add any of the events the class has discussed to their draft timeline. In addition, students may wish to record information on the bulletin board started earlier.

**More to the Story**

When the Germans surprised the Allies by releasing chlorine gas during the Second Battle of Ypres, Canadian troops were not equipped with gas masks. They fashioned their own primitive masks by urinating on a piece of cloth and holding this over their mouth and nose. The theory was that the ammonia in the urine would neutralize the chlorine as it passed through the cloth. This enabled the Canadians to breathe — and to hold their position.

**More to the Story**

During World War I, Newfoundland was not yet part of Canada. The soldiers of the Newfoundland Regiment ran out of khaki-coloured cloth to make puttees, the cloth that wrapped tightly around the calf of soldiers' legs. The Newfoundlanders used blue cloth instead — and became known as the “Blue Puttees.”

On July 1, the first day of the Battle of the Somme, about 800 Blue Puttees were ordered to attack at a place called Beaumont-Hamel. Most of the regiment was wiped out in the first hour of the battle. Only 69 were fit to answer the roll call the next day. A total of 255 died, 386 were wounded, and 91 were listed as missing. As a result, Newfoundlanders regard July 1 — Canada Day — as a day of sorrow and remembrance rather than celebration.

**Differentiating Instruction*****For Those Who Are Struggling***

1. Assign a partner to a student who has trouble writing. The two can fill in their charts together.

***For Those Who Wish to Explore Further***

1. Some students may wish to research and present information on other battles involving Canadians (e.g., Passchendaele, which was also known as the Third Battle of Ypres; Cambrai; Arras; and Beaumont-Hamel, which was part of the Battle of the Somme).
2. Distribute copies of TLS Worksheet 1.1.7, *A Sunny Subaltern Remembers*, and invite students to compare this letter with the one written by John McCrae (p. 16, *Canadian History: A Sense of Time*). How are the impressions of these two men different? Why do you think they are so different? Which letter do you think more accurately reflects the realities of war?

**Answers to Show You Know Questions**

1. Students should list the Second Battle of Ypres, the Battle of the Somme, and the Battle of Vimy Ridge. They are likely to say that the Second Battle of Ypres proved that Canadian troops could do the job when asked; the Battle of the Somme proved that Canadian troops could endure a long, harsh battle; and the Battle of Vimy Ridge gave new hope to the Allies and helped engender a sense of nationhood in Canadians.
2. When answering this question, revisit the criteria that were established for making Canada stronger and give students an opportunity to revise or add to the list of criteria. Encourage students to base their responses to this question on these criteria. Though many students are likely to identify Vimy Ridge as the battle with the most lasting effect on Canada because it gave Canadians a new sense of themselves as a nation, ask questions that help them realize that other battles were also important (e.g., If Canadian troops had not proved themselves trustworthy at Ypres, would they have been given other opportunities? If the sacrifice at the Somme had not been as terrible as it was, would the generals have changed their tactics?).