

VETERANS DAY

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY GUIDE:

Flag-Raising Ceremony

Weather permitting, outdoor flag-raising ceremonies highlight an activity that occurs daily at many schools, but often goes unnoticed. Such a ceremony, although brief, should include the Pledge of Allegiance and the playing of the National Anthem. A special guest may be invited to participate.



Department of Defense

Patriotic Groups

Local Veterans, historical or other patriotic organizations may enliven Veterans Day programs by providing period-uniformed flag bearers, fife and drum corps, and other marching and musical units. These organizations may also provide speakers with unique military experiences to share. One of the most popular activities among students is to meet with local Veterans during an assembly or in individual classrooms to hear Veterans share their experiences and answer questions. The Veterans can be relatives of students or members of local Veterans service organizations.

Messages for Veterans

One of the most personal and meaningful Veterans Day activities for students is to send notes or cards to hospitalized Veterans or those living in Veterans' homes. Students can design and send individual notes or cards or work together as a group to send an oversized card or poster signed by all of the students in a class. The cards and posters can then be mailed in one large envelope to the nearest VA medical center or state Veterans home.

Addresses for state Veterans homes and VA medical centers in your area can be found in the blue government pages of the telephone book.

There also is a search box to locate a VA facility on the VA Web site: www.va.gov/health/.

Envelopes sent to VA medical centers should be addressed to "Voluntary Service Director" and those sent to Veterans homes should be addressed to "Administrator."

School Newspaper

Veterans Day stories can be featured in school publications. Publish a roster of faculty members who are Veterans. Describe Veterans Day activities being held in classrooms throughout the school.

Library Activities

School or community libraries can prepare lists of recommended reading material suitable for Veterans Day. An appropriate display of book jackets or a special shelf containing selected publications can be used to call attention to the project. For more ideas, go to the Library of Congress Web site for children at www.americaslibrary.gov.

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Football Games

Veterans Day is observed at the time of year when schools and clubs are engaged in the football season. The presentation of the colors and playing of the National Anthem may be keyed to Veterans Day by an appropriate public address announcement. Halftime presentations by school bands afford an ideal opportunity to offer special patriotic selections and marching routines. Card section displays may also be used to spell out phrases such as "Thank You Veterans" or "Veterans Day" in stadium stands to visually recognize those who served in the military.

Uniforms and Emblems

The colorful and varied uniforms and emblems worn by members of the Armed Forces throughout our history offer students of all ages ideal subjects to draw and paint. Elementary school children enjoy opportunities to create and exhibit costume items. Making colored construction paper hats representing various military eras is a modest and effective way of gaining the interest of students in Veterans Day subjects. The official emblems and seals of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard can be portrayed by students in a variety of methods, such as mosaics, applique, decoupage, as well as the traditional painting and drawing approaches.

Movies and Documentaries

To introduce students to a particular war or period of service, show appropriately rated movies and documentaries as a starting point to discuss the history, politics and meaning behind each war. Consider bringing a Veteran into the classroom

to discuss his or her personal experience in the service and how it compares to the movies.

Poster Contest

The creative talents of students can be encouraged through a school-wide Veterans Day poster contest. Winners should be appropriately recognized. Local newspapers should be invited to photograph the winning entries.

Musical Program



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Veterans Day offers an exciting opportunity for school or community musical organizations to display their talents. A midday concert at the school or at a central location in the community may be dedicated to Veterans Day.

An innovative program might include selections known to have been popular during America's wars. Visit the Patriotic Melodies link at the Library of Congress Web site for a sample of patriotic music: www.loc.gov/performingarts/index.html.

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Students' Relatives



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Ask students to research and list known relatives who have served in the Armed Forces. With nearly a quarter of the United States population consisting of Veterans, their dependents and survivors, students may tap into a rich history going back as far as the Revolutionary and Civil Wars.

Writing Assignments

Veterans Day themes can be included in writing assignments. Assign students to write about accounts of military service told by local Veterans. Assign students to investigate the various benefits offered to Veterans by government agencies. Write about Veterans who are receiving educational benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Describe various Veterans memorials which may be located nearby.

School Cafeteria Activities

Patriotic decorations in school dining areas add a colorful reminder of Veterans Day. One could create special menu items such as decorated cupcakes or cookies. Download the 2011 Veterans Day poster from the Veterans Day Web site for placement in the cafeteria, in classrooms and on school bulletin boards.

Department of Veterans Affairs

Local VA facilities – medical centers, benefits offices and national cemeteries can serve as sources of information and speakers for Veterans Day programs. They can also provide contact with local Veterans service organizations and arrange visits, tours and other special programs for students.

To contact your local VA facilities, look under Department of Veterans Affairs in the federal government listings in the local telephone directory.

The following section provides resources, hand-outs and activities for students, which will help them better understand and appreciate Veterans Day. Please select resources that are appropriate for the grade level of your students and feel free to reproduce the following pages as necessary.