

A REMEMBRANCE DAY WITH COMMUNITY FLAVOUR!

Use the First World War Collections of the Elgin County Archives and the Elgin County Museum to Plan Remembrance Day in Your Classroom

As of the time of this writing in 2009, only one Canadian veteran of the First World War is still living but the stories, the photographs, the letters and postcards remain. Many of these primary source documents are part of treasured memorabilia belonging to individual families; however, an immense collection of these documents is also *readily* available to you through the Elgin County Archives and the Elgin County Museum. By going to the Elgin County Archives website www.elgin.ca, you and your students can read an actual letter from Private David Arnold Gill, written from the front lines in France a year before he was killed at Amiens. You can look at photographs taken on the June day in 1916 when 1,100 local men marched down Talbot Street to the railway station, where they boarded a train to begin their journey to the European front. One hundred, seventy-two of them died and many more were wounded serving their country. Every community, every neighbourhood in Elgin County was touched by personal tragedy during those years.

Students will gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of Remembrance Day. It is a time to honour the local men and women who served, a time to ponder the causes of war and to consider ways of finding peaceful resolutions to conflict. The digitized primary source documents presented in “Elgin’s Great War” will bring the years from 1914 to 1917 to life.

Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum expectations in Visual Art, Drama, Language (Writing, Reading, Oral and Visual Communication), and Social Studies from grades 1 to 8 can be met through this site. Detailed lesson plans, including handouts and rubrics, are available, along with dozens of ideas for lessons that you can plan for your class. All it takes is a click on www.elgin.ca.

What follows is a list, organized by grade, of curriculum strands in which archives and museum material has been used as a major part of the lesson. Language (including reading, writing, oral and visual communication), Social Studies, Visual Arts and Drama are the subject areas covered.

Feel free to adapt any of these ideas to fit the grade level of your class.

Grade One

Strand	Expectations	Archival Document	Lesson Idea
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read a variety of simple written materials • use phonics as an aid in learning new words 	<p>Elgin Remembers:</p> <p>Port Burwell Angel</p> <p>First World War Soldier Memorial at Elgin General Hospital</p>	<p>-do a shared reading of the memorial inscription below the angel and/or soldier memorial.</p>
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate ideas for specific purposes • produce short pieces of writing using simple forms 	<p>Ellis Sifton documents (includes photographs of Ellis as a boy, as a soldier, his Victoria Cross)</p>	<p>-have students view the photographs, tell the story of Ellis Sifton and then write a thank-you letter to him.</p>
		<p>A Sock to Remember Pte. D.A. Gill</p>	<p>-after viewing photographs of David Gill and of the sock pattern used, have students write a thank you to Pte. Gill on a sock-shaped piece of paper.</p>
Visual Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish between geometric and organic shapes and forms • identify the elements of design (e.g. colours, shapes used, forms found, etc.) 	Elgin Remembers	<p>-take the class on a virtual tour of the war memorials; talk about the elements of design as you go. Make a class wreath for one of the memorials or for a specific soldier.</p>

Oral and Visual Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> listen and react to stories and recount personal experiences; create some simple media works. 	A Sock to Remember Read Pte. D.A. Gill's thank-you letter and show it to students; view photograph of the two little girls in front of the loaded sled. Tell the story of the bundles.	-have students talk about a gift they received that they really needed -discuss what soldiers presently serving in Afghanistan might really need and have students think of things they can send, like good wishes, love, etc. This could make a great PowerPoint presentation for a Remembrance Day Assembly.
		Ellis Sifton View the photograph of Ellis as a boy with his pets and also his Victoria Cross, awarded posthumously.	-discuss bravery and have students share stories of times when they have been very brave.
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how and why relationships, rules and responsibilities may change over time, and in different places. 	Elgin Remembers, Ellis Sifton	-show images of war memorials, zeroing in on Ellis Sifton and tell his story; -discuss the purpose of the Remembrance Day Assembly and how the rules for behaviour on that day differ from the rules during other school assemblies or during gym class -students could draw a picture illustrating appropriate behaviour on these three different occasions.

Grade Two

Strand	Expectations	Archival Document	Lesson Idea
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produce short pieces of writing using simple forms 	The Sock Project View the photograph of the two little girls with loaded sled in winter and the thank you letter from Pte. D.A. Gill	-explain that the bundles in the photos are things that women in the community made for the soldiers overseas -have students in groups come up with a list of things that might be in the bundles -do a shared writing activity where a letter is written to Pte. Gill, thanking him for helping his country.
Oral and Visual Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> apply the rules of participating in a conversation and working with others; participate in group discussion, demonstrating a sense of when to speak, when to listen, and how much to say. 	Elgin Remembers View the photograph of the two little girls with loaded sled in winter.	-explain that the bundles in the photos are things that women in the community made for the soldiers overseas -have students in groups come up with a list of things that might be in the bundles and present their list to the class with reasons why the items were included.
Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify types of lines in art works (horizontal, diagonal, vertical); identify the elements of design in a variety of familiar objects (symmetrical forms) produce two and three dimensional works of art that communicate ideas for specific purposes and to familiar audiences. 	Elgin Remembers View a variety of war memorials and photographs of several soldiers who did not survive the First World War, including the photo of Ellis Sifton as a child.	-have students work in pairs or small groups to make a wreath for a specific soldier which could be laid at a nearby memorial -have students make their own drawings or paintings of one of the soldiers and decorate it with images of poppies, crosses, Canadian flags, etc.

		<p>91st Battalion View photographs of the soldiers of the 91st Battalion on parade as they walked down Talbot Street to the train station.</p>	<p>-observe the features of Talbot Street and discuss the differences they notice -have every student choose a person, place or thing to paint/draw, cut it out and complete a class mural to represent that day. Students could construct poppies to be used as a frame around the edges.</p>
<p>Social Studies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify ways in which heritage and traditions are passed on (e.g. stories; special days such as Remembrance Day) • explain the significant traditions and celebrations of families from a variety of cultural traditions. 	<p>Elgin Remembers View a variety of monuments and memorials from across Elgin County. Be sure to check out South Park Cemetery for this lesson.</p>	<p>-make a list of the various symbols that repeat themselves at these memorials to get a sense of how Canadians recognize Remembrance Day; -discuss which symbols were used most often on the memorials.</p>

Grade Three

Strand	Expectations	Archival Documents	Lessons
<p>Reading</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use familiar vocabulary and the context to determine the meaning of a passage containing unfamiliar words; • use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. 	<p>Ellis Sifton Photographs, including the one of him as boy; the historic plaque.</p>	<p>-as a shared reading activity, have students find the unfamiliar words and work together to decode them using a variety of strategies: context, breaking into syllables or other recognizable units, use a dictionary, use phonics).</p>

Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write materials that show a growing ability to express their points of view and to reflect on their own experiences. 	Ellis Sifton, A Sock to Remember View photos and letters from either of these and tell the students the stories regarding either one.	-have students write journal entries about what they have learned and how it has affected their opinion of Remembrance Day services.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produce pieces of writing using a variety of forms (e.g., letters, poems, stories). 	91st Battalion Photographs of the 91 st Battalion on Talbot Street heading towards the train station.	-have students choose a specific soldier who was killed during the First World War and have them compose a poem that is a series of questions.
		A Sock to Remember Dear Miss Lewis	-with students read excerpts of the Cooper letter to Miss Lewis and examine the sketch which he included in his letter to get a sense of the conditions at the front -write a cinquain about his experience or write a tribute to him in the form of a free verse poem.
Oral and Visual Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create a variety of simple media works; use appropriate volume, tone of voice, gestures, and stance when speaking, making a presentation, or reading aloud. 	Ellis Sifton, 91st Battalion, Elgin Remembers, A Sock to Remember Photographs, excerpts of letters, etc.	-create a PowerPoint Presentation as a class project on any one of these exhibits, or combine them with students composing short pieces of text and record their voices reading their texts as part of the presentation. -include student artwork as part of the presentation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use oral presentations to communicate information about urban and rural communities 	Elgin Remembers	<p>-prepare a class presentation for a Remembrance Day Assembly using large visual images of war memorials along with short explanations</p> <p>-could show how rural and urban communities contributed to war effort.</p> <p>(see A Sock to Remember).</p>
Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the importance of research in producing effective dramatizations (e.g., in portraying people in history). 	Ellis Sifton, 91st Battalion, A Sock to Remember	-after writing in role or creating a play or producing an interview, have students write a short account about how the primary document materials assisted them.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> represent and interpret main characters by speaking, moving and writing in role 	Ellis Sifton, A Sock to Remember (D.A. Gill)	-write and present a monologue.

Grade Four

Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produce pieces of writing using a variety of specific forms. 	Elgin Remembers	<p>-list on chart paper, words and phrases used on the memorials that could be used in student writing;</p> <p>-have students compose an acrostic poem using one of the words or phrases.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> begin to write for more complex purposes (e.g., to present and discuss their opinions and viewpoints) 	91st Battalion Newspaper article about the 91 st Battalion, photographs of young men killed in France	-have students write a journal entry giving their opinion of war and whether it is worth the sacrifice of so many lives

Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use a dictionary to expand their vocabulary. 	Ellis Sifton -historic plaque at St. Peter's Church at Tyrconnell, Ontario.	-have students read the plaque, locate unfamiliar words and find the meanings in the dictionary.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify root words and use them to determine the pronunciation and meaning of unfamiliar words. 	Ellis Sifton -historic plaque.	-as a shared reading activity have students find all the words with suffixes and prefixes, identify the root words and attempt to discern their meaning from context.
Oral and Visual Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create media works. 	Ellis Sifton, 91st Battalion, A Sock to Remember	-students could create a PowerPoint presentation on a number of topics related to the First World War using the collection.
Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the emotional quality of lines (e.g., smooth, flowing, horizontal lines create a feeling of peace and harmony; sharp, jagged, vertical lines create a feeling of energy and unease). 	Elgin Remembers	-design and create a poster for Remembrance Day incorporating one drawing of a war memorial and including other symbols of Remembrance Day.

Grade Five

Strand	Expectations	Archival Document	Lesson
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> begin to develop research skills (e.g., formulate questions, locate information, clarify their understanding of information through discussion). 	Ellis Sifton Photographs, newspaper articles, letters.	-as a class formulate questions re: Ellis Sifton and then have students, in pairs, use computers to locate information (go to www.elgin.ca and click on Explore...First World War.

<p>Reading</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify root words and use them to determine the pronunciation and meaning of unfamiliar words; • use a dictionary to expand their vocabulary. 	<p>Ellis Sifton Photograph of historic plaque.</p>	<p>-as a shared reading activity have students find all the words with suffixes and prefixes, identify the root words and attempt to discern their meaning from context -have students use a dictionary to find the meanings of unfamiliar words.</p>
<p>Writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce pieces of writing using a variety of specific forms. 	<p>Elgin Remembers</p>	<p>-while viewing the virtual tour of local war memorials have students pick out words and phrases that describe the sacrifice and bravery of the soldiers -compile a list of these and display for all students -have students choose one of the words or phrases and write an acrostic poem.</p>
<p>Writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce pieces of writing using a variety of specific forms. 	<p>Elgin Remembers</p>	<p>-have students choose their favourite memorial and write a journal entry about it, stating the reasons for their choice.</p>
<p>Writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce pieces of writing using a variety of forms (e.g., stories, poems, letters) 	<p>91st Battalion, (Five Senses and a Cinquain)</p>	<p>-have students take on the persona of a child from 1914 and write a letter to a peer, living in another city, describing the day the 91st Battalion shipped out -have students write a cinquain about the day the 91st Battalion ships out</p>

			<p>-have students in partners, write a short dialogue in which a parent tries to talk a son out of signing up for the 91st Battalion.</p> <p>-have students take on the persona of a parent writing a first letter to a son who has arrived at the front.</p>
Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate awareness of audience when writing in role and use the appropriate language, tone of voice, gestures, and body movements when speaking as a character in a drama. 	Ellis Sifton, 91st Battalion, A Sock to Remember	<p>-in role as a friend or family member write a letter in response to one of the actual letters in the collection.</p> <p>-produce an interview between one of the soldiers and a journalist</p>

Grade Six

Strand	Expectations	Archival Documents	Lessons
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicate ideas and information for a variety of purposes (to inform, explain). 	91st Battalion Newspaper article, Photographs	-write a report about the 91 st Battalion.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produce pieces of writing using a variety of forms. 	R. A. Brown Diary and photograph.	<p>-after reading the diary entries, have students make up journal entries for other dates in his diary that are blank.</p> <p>-have students write a diary entry the day before he was killed.</p>

Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> decide on a specific purpose for reading, and select the material that they need from a variety of appropriate sources. 	Ellis Sifton, A Sock to Remember, 91st Battalion	<p>-have students contribute one page including a drawing and a short bit of text about one aspect of Elgin County during the First World War</p> <p>-could be put into a PowerPoint presentation for a Remembrance Day assembly.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> summarize and explain the main idea in information materials and cite details that support the main idea. 	Ellis Sifton The historic plaque at St. Peter's Church in Tyrconnell.	-have students read the information on the plaque and write a summary.
Oral and Visual Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create a variety of media works. 	A Sock to Remember, Ellis Sifton, 91st Battalion, Elgin Remembers	-produce a PowerPoint presentation for a Remembrance Day Assembly.
Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate understanding of ways of sustaining the appropriate voice or character. 	A Sock to Remember, Ellis Sifton, 91st Battalion, Elgin Remembers	<p>-in role as a friend or family member write a letter in response to one of the actual letters in the collection.</p> <p>-produce an interview between one of the soldiers and a journalist.</p>

Grades Seven/Eight

Strand	Expectations	Archival Documents	Lesson
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use writing for various purposes (e.g., to jot down personal impressions). 	Ellis Sifton, 91st Battalion	-after viewing the documents about Ellis or learning about the 91 st Battalion, have students consider war and peace and write about their opinion as to whether war is justified when hundreds of thousands of people are killed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produce media texts using writing and materials from other media (e.g., a poster or brochure). 	A Sock to Remember, Ellis Sifton, 91st Battalion, Elgin Remembers	-after viewing, have students design a poster or a brochure for visiting veterans.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicate ideas and information for a variety of purposes (to outline an argument). 	Any of the exhibits	-explain why archival collections like the First World War collection should be readily available to Elgin Country residents. Does having access to these records and this information encourage war or peace?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produce pieces of writing using a variety of forms (poems). 	A Sock to Remember (Dear Miss Lewis)	-after reading the Cooper letter, have students compose a haiku about the conditions at the front.
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain their interpretation of a written work, supporting it with evidence from the work and from their own knowledge and experience. 	A Sock to Remember (I Remain, Pte, D.A. Gill)	-have students compile a list of facts and character traits they have inferred from reading the letter with explanations as to how they came to their conclusions.

<p>Oral and Visual Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a variety of media works (e.g., a radio documentary). 	<p>A Sock to Remember, Ellis Sifton, 91st Battalion</p>	<p>-have students produce a radio documentary about any of these topics, including interviews with relatives, friends, etc. Find music of the period to include in the presentation and also sound effects of shelling, other battlefield sounds, etc.</p>
<p>Visual Arts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain their preference for specific art works, with reference to the artist's intentional use of the elements and principles of design. • produce two and three-dimensional works of art 	<p>Elgin Remembers</p>	<p>-have students choose their favourite monument and give reasons -have students do a pencil sketch of their favourite monument.</p>
<p>Drama</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research and dramatize material from various sources. 	<p>91st Battalion, Ellis Sifton, A Sock to Remember</p>	<p>-choose a person from the archives collection and produce an interview between one of the soldiers and a journalist, or between a family member who lost a son and a journalist.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write in role in various forms, showing their understanding of the complexity of a dramatic situation. • identify ways of sustaining voice when writing in role. 	<p>91st Battalion, A Sock to Remember, Ellis Sifton</p>	<p>-have student respond to one of the letters in the archives as if they are a family member of the soldier -write a monologue from the perspective of Ellis Sifton after his death as he looks back on his life, relives it, considers the war and his death.</p>