

Veterans Legacy Program Curricular Materials

The Greatest Sacrifice

Lesson Summary

Grade: 11th Grade

Number of Class Periods: 5-50 minute class periods

Unit Overview: Teaching social studies means showing how ordinary people have made a difference throughout history. Through this lesson plan on veterans, the educator will show students that these ordinary men made the ultimate sacrifice to fight and possibly die in the name of the United States of America. This lesson will help students to understand why we must remember, honor, and tell the individual stories of our veterans. Students will be analyzing several primary sources to understand this aspect of history. This lesson will develop students' historical thinking skills. This can be a stand-alone lesson or could part of a larger unit on World War I or II. Cemeteries are among the most fascinating, yet often one of the most neglected sources of historical information. Students can learn a lot from studying those interred in a specific cemetery. The symbols and inscriptions found on headstones can reflect religious and cultural beliefs. While the focus is on veterans interred in the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida, this lesson plan can be adapted for any national cemetery.

Driving Question: Why do ordinary citizens decide to serve in the military to fight for their country and how can we honor their sacrifice?

Florida State Social Studies Standards:

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) issued by the Florida Department of Education for Social Studies:

- [SS.912.A.1.2](#)-Utilize a variety of primary and secondary sources to identify author, historical significance, audience, and authenticity to understand a historical period.
- [SS.912.A.4.6](#)-Examine how the United States government prepared the nation for war with war measures.
- [SS.912.G.4.3](#)-Use spatial perspective and appropriate geographic terms and tools, including the Six Essential Elements, as organizational schema to describe any given place.
- [SS.912.A.1.3](#)-Utilize timelines to identify the time sequence of historical data.
- [SS.912.A.1.4](#)-Analyze how images, symbols, objects, cartoons, graphs, charts, maps, and artwork may be used to interpret the significance of time periods and events from the past.

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) issued by the Florida Department of Education for Language Arts:

- [LAFS.1112.RH.1.1](#)-Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- [LA.1112.RH.1.2](#)-Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

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Historical Context:

Deciding to serve in the military is a sacrifice that many made during World War I and II. It is often difficult for students to understand why a person would voluntarily choose to fight for their country. Some enlist due to a feeling of patriotism or a sense of duty to one's country. Others may join due to social or economic pressures. Some may even have wanted an adventure. People were also persuaded by the many propaganda posters depicting service as being a noble cause.

Lesson—The Greatest Sacrifice

During this lesson, the students will analyze biographies of veterans interred at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, FL. They will examine a veteran's history to understand their experiences. Students will create a small booklet to commemorate a specific veteran's life and contributions to society. Students will then recreate an appropriate epitaph for the veteran based on their study of the veteran. This lesson will culminate in writing a letter to the President regarding why citizens should study the lives of veterans. It may be helpful to reintroduce the concepts of the World War I or II. (Note: An additional day may be used for a field trip to the actual cemetery)

Lesson 1 - Materials

Primary Sources:

- Teacher's choice of biographies of veterans interred in the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, FL. Available at [here](#).
- Teachers can also access 16 packets that include the veteran bios and various primary documents about those veterans [here](#).
- For those looking to adapt these lessons for younger grade levels, some grade appropriate biographies can be found [here](#).

Worksheets/Graphic Organizers (direct links provided below)

- [Photograph Analysis Sheet](#)
- [Written Document Analysis Sheet](#)
- [Persuasive Graphic Organizer](#)

Procedure (Instruction and Assessment)

Activity 1: The teacher will remind the students about the basic events in World War I or II and the fact that we needed people to enlist and fight. Students will be shown pictures of the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, FL (or a field trip to the actual cemetery). Students will be introduced to several biographies of veterans interred at the cemetery and will be given document analysis sheets. Students will work in pairs to analyze the documents.

Activity 2: Students will continue analyzing the biographies and begin to create their booklets.

Activity 3: The teacher will explain epitaphs and show examples. Have students answer the following question: How should a person be remembered and memorialized? Discussion will follow about the importance of remembering a person's contributions no matter how big or small. Students will recreate an epitaph for the veterans they had been studying and analyzing. Students will finish their booklets.



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Activity 4: Students will present their booklets to the class.

Activity 5: Students will complete the culminating piece of this lesson by writing a letter to the President regarding why citizens should study the lives of veterans and the importance of doing this. (Optional Activity: Students can write a thank you letter to a veteran.)

Vocabulary

- Veteran
- Conscription
- Propaganda

Extension Project (optional)

The students will create a children's book that explains the veteran's life events. All books will be created by pairs of students. The students will be investigating and discovering the veteran assigned to them and will be presenting significant milestones and events in their veteran's life.

- The book will have an engaging and colorful cover.
- The book will have a minimum of 10 pages.
- All pictures must be hand drawn and not pasted from the print outs.
- Neatness and creativity are a requirement.