

UCF Veterans Legacy Program Curricular Materials



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration



**Department
of History**



Lesson Title	The Forgotten Heroes
Grade(s)	4th Grade (Can be adapted for any grade level)
Time (Minutes/ Days)	1 Quarter-9 Weeks.

Lesson Overview

Students will first create a biography of a WWII Veteran. Students will then work with a group and create a Google Slides/PowerPoint presentation for the class. If possible students will visit a National Cemetery and do headstone rubbings on the Veteran they researched. Another optional enrichment is to learn about Native American ledger art. Students can make ledger art on rocks and place them on their headstones.

This lesson plan can be used for any grade from upper elementary through high school. It is ideal for 4th graders going to St. Augustine for their field trip. The below standards are for 4th grade, but others for various grade levels likely apply. The National Cemetery, conflict, and Veterans researched can be tailored to fit individual teacher and classroom needs.

Essential Questions

How does learning about the past teach us about our present?
Why is learning about the past important?
Why are Veterans important to our history?
How do Veterans contribute to our communities through their service in the military and after?

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Florida State Standards

SS.4.A.1.2 Synthesize information related to Florida history through print and electronic media.

SS.4.A.1.1 Analyze primary and secondary resources to identify significant individuals and events throughout Florida history.

ELA.4.R.3.3 Compare and contrast accounts of the same event using primary and/or secondary sources.

ELA.4.R.2.1 Explain how text features contribute to the meaning and identify the text structures of problem/solution, sequence, and description in texts.

ELA.4.C.1.4 Write expository texts about a topic, using multiple sources, elaboration, and an organizational structure with transitions.

Required Materials

- [UCF VLP Source Packets](#)
 - To view source packets, scroll down and select Veteran Primary Source Packets (By Conflict)
- Printer, if printing source packets and planning pages
- Digital platform to get packet to students (i.e. Canvas) if not printing
- Laptops
- Project Planning Sheet (See Below)
- [Writing a Biography PowerPoint](#)
- Sample Biography (See Below)
- [Sample Biography PowerPoint](#)

Optional activities will need some additional supplies. You may want to reach out to parents to see if they can make donations. Suggested supplies are linked below.

For Optional Native American Ledger Art Activity

- [Flat River Rocks](#)
- [Acrylic Paint Pens](#)
- Please note that you could ask individual students to each bring in their own rock. Also, sharpies can be used in place of paints or paint pens.

For Optional Headstone Rubbing Activity

- [Interfacing](#)
- [Wax](#) (we suggest black not red)
- [Painters Tape](#)

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Learning Objectives

- Students will understand what a Veteran is and how they serve our country
- Students will understand what a biography is and write a biography of a Veteran
- Students will be able to analyze primary and secondary sources and use them to write a biography
- Students will understand the significance of National Cemeteries in memorializing our Veterans

Procedure

Day 1-2 Go over what a biography is and what might be included.

Explain to students that they are going to be writing a biography, a history of a person's life, and creating a PowerPoint about an individual Veteran. A Veteran biography is slightly different from a traditional biography, as it should include their early life, military service, and legacy.

[Writing a Biography PowerPoint](#)

[Sample Biography PowerPoint: Dillon Brooke](#)

Explain that a Veteran is someone who has served in one of the branches of the U.S. military.

[UCF VLP Military Branches PowerPoint](#)

Do an overview of the conflict(s) the students' Veterans served in. Included here is WWII.

[Kids Explain History](#) or [WWII Overview](#)

Explain what a National Cemetery is and how it is different from a community cemetery. Explain that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) honors Veterans and eligible family members by giving them burial opportunities in a cemetery reserved for them due to their service to the United States.

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Day 3-4 Introduce source packets to students.

Go over the types of sources they may see in them, such as census records, newspapers, draft cards, etc.

[UCF VLP Primary Sources PowerPoint](#)

Break students into groups of 3 or 4. Students will be assigned 1 Veteran per group, from the preselected UCF Source Packets. You can use any conflict, but WWII information and Veterans are provided in this lesson plan. It will probably be easier if all Veterans are from the same conflict. If doing the enrichment Field Trip, Veterans should also be from the same National Cemetery.

You may select source packets from the UCF VLP collection here [UCF VLP Source Packets](#) (to view source packets, scroll down and select Veteran Primary Source Packets) or choose from the selected links below, already tested in a 4th grade classroom:

- [Lawrence Bowden](#)
- [Joseph Bunting](#)
- [John Carves](#)
- [George Downings Jr.](#)
- [Michael Freije](#)
- [Beatrice Gaster](#)
- [Catherine Hayes](#)
- [Meredith Mills](#)
- [Clarence Patterson](#)
- [Fred Wimbush](#)
- [Willie Zeigler](#)

Day 5-10 Allow students to mine through their sources and complete planning pages with their group.

Either print out the source packets or put them on a platform such as Canvas, so all students can access their Veteran information. Students can use blank lined paper and create their own planning page or they can be given a Planning Page Template (included at the end of this lesson plan). The planning pages can be printed out or put on an online platform, like the source packets. Once students are done with planning pages they can begin writing their independent biographies. The time needed can vary per student/group.

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Day 11-20 Write biographies.

Make sure each student includes the early life, military service and post-service life/legacy for their Veteran. Post-service life is appropriate if you select Veterans who survive their military service and go on to contribute to their communities for many years. Legacy is appropriate if you select Veterans who paid the ultimate price and died in service. You may wish to have students learn about [Gold Star Families](#) as well. Assist students as needed. Allow students to peer review to make sure all information is clear and concise. Students should be using the sources they are provided to write the biography and it should be in their own words. They should not use outside sources, other than their UCF VLP source packets. At the end of this lesson plan is a sample biography written by a 4th grade student.

Day 21-45 Students will work with their group on their Google Slides/PowerPoint presentations.

When complete, students will begin sharing with the class. They can practice presenting together in their small group. All presentations should follow the format of the biography. Students should see that a slide isn't filled with text. The slide should have minimal text and include text features of what they will discuss, but students should be the focus of the bulk of the information received from the presentation to the class.

[Sample Biography PowerPoint for 4th Grade](#) (Dillon Brooke)

[Sample Biography PowerPoint for High School](#) (Christian Williams)

Taking Students to a National Cemetery

An optional activity is to take students on a field trip to a National Cemetery such as St. Augustine National Cemetery. Make sure to go over protocols and etiquette with students prior to entering the cemetery.

[Field Trip to a National Cemetery](#)

Please reach out to Dr. Amelia Lyons (amelia.lyons@ucf.edu) who will help you to connect to the National Cemetery Administration staff. She will work with them to be sure the staff knows you are coming. The staff must know well in advance that you are taking students to a national cemetery. Most National Cemeteries in Florida have active burials and we do not want to surprise a family who is burying their loved one. Our work shows respect to and honors Veterans; be

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sure you have gone through channels before taking students to a national cemetery. In addition, the cemetery staff meticulously cares for the grounds. You want to be sure the lawn mowing and watering do not take place in the middle of your field trip. Dr. Lyons from UCF can help you connect to and be sure your field trip takes place with the support of the cemetery staff.

Students can complete headstone rubbings on their Veteran while visiting a National Cemetery. If you do this, make sure all the Veterans you use are buried in the SAME cemetery you plan to visit. The UCF VLP website has a lot of information about St. Augustine National Cemetery. It will be helpful to hand out maps of the cemetery.

[St. Augustine National Cemetery Map.](#)

To do the headstone rubbings, you will need to purchase interfacing, painter's tape, and wax. The interfacing is taped over the front of the headstone. Students will rub the wax from left to right (be sure to only rub in one direction to avoid ripping the interfacing) until they have a complete imprint of the engraved information on the headstone for their Veteran. Please remove the tape and take the rubbings with you. Please only use blue painters tape. Be sure interfacing is large enough to cover the front and sides of the headstone. This way students cannot leave errant black marks on the marble headstones. We cannot leave any tape or residue on headstones in a national cemetery.

Links to purchase items for headstone rubbings (see photos below):

- [Interfacing](#)
- [Wax](#)
- [Painters Tape](#)

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Native American Ledger Art

Another option is for students to learn about Ledger Art in Native American cultures. This topic is specific to St. Augustine National Cemetery, where Native Americans who were imprisoned in Fort Marion and forced to serve in the military are buried.

[Ledger Art Video](#)

Students can paint stones ahead of time and place them on and around Native American headstones when they visit the cemetery. It is best to use 2-3 inch flat river rocks and acrylic paint. Stones sustain against the natural elements of the environment.

See photos below of painted stones. One set can be used for any Veterans, the other are for the Native Americans buried in St. Augustine National Cemetery.

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Links to purchase items for ledger art activity:

- [Flat River Rocks](#)
- [Acrylic Paint Pens](#)

***If you are not able to visit St. Augustine National Cemetery, there are a variety of mini tours on the UCF VLP website to choose from for your class. These tours can also help provide background history on the conflict(s) you are covering in your class.

[UCF VLP Mini Tours](#) (to view mini tours, scroll down and select K-12 Mini Themed Tours of St. Augustine National Cemetery)