

## **Why History Matters Teacher Guide**

This program focuses on the historiography of the Great War – how we perceive historical events, how this has changed, and how different groups remember it differently, and how it changed us and shaped who we are and why things are the way they are.

The program begins with a 1-hour gallery tour (available online here: <http://www.usask.ca/diefenbaker/virtual-exhibits/deo-et-patriae/deo-et-patriae---for-god-and-country-the-university-of-saskatchewan-and-the-great-war.php>) The battle of Vimy Ridge is also an important piece in the historiography discussion, if time permits this can be explored here: <http://www.warmuseum.ca/the-battle-of-vimy-ridge/#tabs> .

Materials:

- Newspaper Template – print off front and back cover and 5 story sheets (3 different story sheet layouts are included – some will have to be duplicates, or you can print off 5 of the same type. They are designed to be legal sized).
- Handouts – There are handouts with images and other primary sources for each of the 5 groups.
- Worksheets – There is a worksheet for each group with questions and information.
- Powerpoint – Introduces the activity and historiography (associated information below).

The educational program should focus mainly on the activity, but is framed by a discussion at the beginning, based on the PowerPoint:

### **What is history?**

- Ask the students what they think of when they think of history. Is it just a list of dates and facts?
- While these are important, there are many other crucial aspects, such as:
  - The ideas and beliefs held by people in the past
  - Interpretation of the meaning and importance of past events
  - How do we perceive historical events now (what are our attitudes toward how people in the past viewed historical events? We should realize that we are looking at historical events through our own lenses – what our learned attitudes and understandings are today — and that people in the future may look at our perceptions of history like we view people in the past today)
  - We need to look at different perspectives from which past peoples understood and viewed their world
  - How did/do Aboriginal people and minorities view history? How were/are their attitudes different from ours?

### **Why does history matter?**

- History situates events in their social context
- History explains WHY things are the way they are

- History helps us understand human nature
  - What aspects of our identity are universal, and what aspects are temporally-specific?
- History informs modern issues
- History helps us to understand who we are in the present day – in what ways are we different from the people of the past?
- History helps us explain how people interact and relate to one another across time

*Be careful playing the “learn from past mistakes” game!*

- No situation in history is ever exactly the same
- Our attitudes are impacted by earlier history
- This attitude suggests histories that aren’t mistakes don’t matter

### **The History of the First World War**

- Why was/is the First World War also referred to as “The War” and “The Great War?”
  - “The War” or “The Great War” was looked upon as “The War to end all wars.”
  - There was no World War before it.
- Why does studying the First World War matter?
  - The First World War brought about key institutional changes in Canadian political and economic life
  - The First World War marked a shift in people’s attitudes about war and about their country
  - The First World War affected demographics and human migration (both nationally and internationally)
- How has the First World War affected your life? What are some examples you see today that came from the First World War?

### **Activity**

- In 5 groups, we are going to look at the ways The Great War changed us in Saskatchewan, Canada, and the world.
- We will make a newspaper about how the War and History affect us today – just like “The Sheaf”, the student newspaper at the University of Saskatchewan that published many pieces about the War.
- The students can look back at the online exhibit as needed.
- They will get a package with materials and four questions – the first three questions are to guide their thinking and understanding of the history and the final one is to bring it all together into an article. They can just do jot notes for the first three, but the fourth should be answered in their article, including information learned from their package and the first three questions.

**Group A – Attitudes Towards War**

- Using a newspaper article, propaganda posters, a poem, and information from the gallery, you will discover how opinions about war changed from the start to the end of the war, and to today.

**Group B – Scientific/Weapons Development**

- Using documents and photos, students will assess which inventions were positive, which were negative, and how our opinions about the have changed

**Group C – Women’s Suffrage and Changing Roles**

- Using propaganda, a newspaper article, and new information, you will write about how The War changed women’s rights.

**Group D – Attitudes Toward Aboriginal Peoples and Immigrants**

- Using propaganda, photos, and new information, you will assess how attitudes towards Aboriginal people and immigrants has changed, and the ways it stayed the same

**Group E – Vimy Ridge and Memorials**

- Using photos and letters sent from France during The War, you will look at how we remember The Great War and how it affects us still.