

Lesson Plan: For Teachers: A Soldier's Life during WWII

<http://www.cbc.ca/archives/teachers/lesson-plan/a-soldiers-life-during-wwii.html>

Type:

Assignment

Subjects:

History

Duration:

1 to 2 lessons

Purpose:

To identify and analyze the emotional impact of war on soldiers

Summary:

Students write diary entries, in role as soldiers, about the emotional impact of living through war.

Lesson Plan

Before Exploring

Ask students to describe how they feel when they are looking forward to a big event, then to describe how they feel during the event and once it is over. Encourage discussion about how they feel when the event and its aftermath result in feelings significantly different from what they expected.

Outline the Opportunity

Have students browse the topic **1939-1945: A Soldier's War** on the CBC Digital Archives website for instances that show the life of soldiers as they went to war, waited to enter into the battle, entered into combat, and participated in the surrender of Germany. Students should list the changes in mood or morale and categorize them according to positive and negative factors, answering the following questions to help them identify these factors:

- What indicators of excitement were present at the outset of the war?
- During the long wait in England, what things affected the day-to-day lives of the men?
- What were the primary emotions present during the fighting in Italy and France?
- How did the men feel about the final surrender?
- What was the value during the war of the traveling entertainment groups?

Once these questions have been answered, students should create a series of diary entries that chronicle the evolution of emotions throughout the war. Entries should be set in six-month increments from December 1939 to May 1945. The emotions and feelings of the soldiers should be clearly evident in these entries.

Revisit and Reflect

Have students share their entries. Is there a consistency in the entries over time? In discussion, have students analyze the stages of emotion of the soldiers and speculate why these changes occurred.

You might also want students to consider and explain to what extent their own perspective on living through a war has been changed as a result of writing these entries.

Extension

Present the following to students:

Through knowledge of history we have repeatedly learned of the horrors and savagery of war. Why, when a new war has begun, do people flock to the banner expecting honour and glory for all?