

# Lesson Plan: For Teachers: Innovations for War

<http://www.cbc.ca/archives/teachers/lesson-plan/innovations-for-war.html>

**Type:**

Webquest

**Subjects:**

History, English Language Arts, Media Studies

**Duration:**

3 lessons

**Purpose:**

To investigate the innovations of weaponry developed during the First World War; to prepare and deliver an oral presentation

**Summary:**

Using a variety of web-based resources, students research the innovations of war that ended up making the First World War particularly horrific and prepare and deliver an oral presentation about one innovation and its impact.

---

## Lesson Plan

---

**Introduction**

The First World War was horrific for many reasons. Some of the experiences endured by soldiers of this war can be attributed to the innovations developed to do combat in a war of attrition where stalemates were the norm. Trench warfare, for example, was a direct result of the development of the machine gun as a weapon of war. Originally intended to protect soldiers from these dangerous guns, the trench systems that eventually emerged on the Western Front also served as "home" for soldiers who endured horrible conditions while waiting and preparing to go "over the top" into "no man's land," small pieces of land won and lost from the enemy many times over a period of months.

**The Task**

Students will complete in-depth research about innovations for the battlefields of the First World War. Specifically, students will choose one of the innovations listed below and will give a description of the innovation, explain how it was used during battle, and discuss its impact on Canadian soldiers as well as its impact on the outcome of the First World War. They will use their information to create and deliver an oral presentation that includes visuals.

mustard gas  
chlorine gas  
gas phosgene  
trench warfare  
trench mortars  
machine guns  
aircraft reconnaissance  
tanks  
U-boats  
zeppelin dirigibles

**The Process**

Students will work in groups and will divide the work equally. They should begin their research by listening to and viewing the clips "Gas! Gas!", "Battle of the Somme", and "Shot down by the Red Baron", including the Did You Know? sections, on the topic **The First World War: Canada Remembers** on the CBC Digital Archives website. As well, students should conduct research on other relevant sites. As they conduct research they should keep good notes and document sources consulted and cited.

**Assessment Tip**

Students can conduct peer assessments of their group's work, or groups can assess another group's work.

**Conclusion**

Students will deliver their presentations to the class, and leave any visuals on display. Encourage students to ask and answer questions about their presentations. After several presentations, ask students to consider how the innovations compare. Were some worse than others? Why? Do they see any positive aspects to any of the innovations?