

LESSON PLANS & STUDENT ACTIVITIES

GENERAL SIR ARTHUR CURRIE



Image credit: Library and Archives Canada, MIKAN 3268658

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Students will:
 - Find and evaluate historical evidence
 - Use evidence to form a conclusion

ACTIVITIES:

- Watch the Monumental Canadians Sir [Arthur Currie video clip](#) as a group. It is recommended that groups watch the extended 8m:52s version.
- As the video plays, encourage students to jot down notes in response to the *Initial Video Questions* below. Discuss as a group.

- Read and discuss the information in the *Interpretation & Evidence* section below as a group.
- Invite students individually or in partners to choose a battle that Currie was a part of and then research online or with physical sources (books, etc.) from which to find evidence about whether or not Currie lived up to the conclusions presented in the video.
- Have the students combine as a large group and share their findings. Consider recording information on a whiteboard or chart paper.
- Carefully evaluate the quality (accuracy and relevancy) of the evidence provided by the students. Discuss the sources used and how students evaluated the quality of these sources. If students cited historical interpretations as evidence, discuss the difference between a fact and an opinion.
- After evaluating the evidence collected, encourage students to collectively or individually make a judgement about whether Currie was an effective leader and Canada's greatest general.
- Accept that students may have differing interpretations but emphasize that interpretations lacking solid evidence are not valid.

Objectives:

Our Intention is to educate Canadian Citizens so that they:

- » *Appreciate the role of our military heritage in protecting Canadian interests, values and beliefs.*
- » *Understand the role our military history has had in shaping our country and the world.*
- » *Are inspired to be engaged and well-informed participatory citizens of Canada.*

Historical Era:
First World War

** Activity can easily be modified for most grades and ability levels.*

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- Currie video (4m:06s): <http://valourcanada.ca/video-documentaries/general-sir-arthur-currie-gcmb-kcb/> (or <https://www.youtube.com/embed/84ZljSOUYW8> 8m:52s)
- Paper, pen, and activity sheet below



(Credit: Library and Archives Canada MIKAN 3214436)



Arthur Currie and British Field Marshal Douglas Haig (Credit: Library and Archives Canada MIKAN 3404878)



Pinning a medal on a soldier (Credit: Library and Archives Canada MIKAN 3362394)

GENERAL SIR ARTHUR CURRIE: INTERPRETING EVIDENCE

Initial Video Questions:

Note potential answers to the following questions while watching the following video: Currie [8m:52s clip](#) or Currie [4m:06s clip](#)

1. Why was Currie an “unlikely hero”?
2. What made Currie an effective leader?
3. Why is Currie Canada’s greatest general?

Evidence and Interpretation:

Despite Currie’s many successes during the First World War, he faced backlash for decisions he made both before and during the War. Minister of Militia and Defence Sam Hughes in particular accused Currie of poor judgement and sacrificing Canadian lives for his own personal gain. The Monumental Canadians video produced by Valour Canada takes a very different opinion and sees Currie as a hero, an effective leader, and Canada’s greatest general.



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All history is an interpretation of events and people in the past. Reasonable people can come to differing historical conclusions. That said, it is important to realize that not all possible conclusions about a historical event or figure are equally valid. Only conclusions that can be backed up by evidence are reliable. Even then, it is important to consider whether the presented evidence has been accurately interpreted and whether enough evidence has been collected to make a reliable conclusion about the evidence.

Activity

Research Currie’s role in one or more of the following battles to find evidence for or against the conclusion expressed in the video that **Currie was an effective leader and Canada’s greatest general.**

- Vimy Ridge
- Hill 70
- Passchendaele
- Last Hundred Days

Use a table modeled after the one provided below to help organize your research.

Evidence FOR :	Evidence AGAINST :
•	•

Share your evidence for and against the conclusion noted in bold above with your peers. **Discuss and decide** which collected evidence was most convincing. Why was this the case?

How do you know that the evidence you collected is accurate?

After discussing with the group, do you feel you have enough evidence to make an accurate judgement about the conclusion? Why or why not?

Your own personal conclusion:

My judgement on the question of whether Currie was an effective leader and Canada’s greatest general:

My top three reasons for this judgement:
