

LESSON PLANS & STUDENT ACTIVITIES

D-DAY: VIDEO ANALYSIS (3 Activities)

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Students will:
 - engage in textual analysis of a visual source
 - further their understanding of D-Day and Canada's role in D-Day

ACTIVITIES:

Encourage students to observe carefully and engage in disciplined thinking by having them complete one or more of the following activities, all of which are easily modifiable for any group of students.

Activity 1: Observing a Visual Source

- Play the video clip of Canadian soldiers disembarking from a landing craft on D-Day found here: <https://valourcanada.ca/video-documentaries/d-day-footage-of-juno-beach/>. If possible, play the clip on a loop, or repeat it several times over.
- As it plays, have students either record any thoughts that come to mind individually on paper or shout these out to a recorder for the class. Alternatively, students could record their thoughts on sticky notes, stick them to a white board, and then organize them to seek patterns and determine significance.
- Invite students to think both deeply and broadly about what they see and remind them that all observations are welcome. Direct students as needed to notice elements as diverse as the comradery evident between the men, the Czech Hedgehogs and the Atlantic Wall fortifications, the kit the soldiers are wearing and equipment they are using and carrying, the state of the beach they are landing on, the weather, the opposition (or lack of it) on the beach, etc. Encourage them to ask relevant questions about who is shown (or not shown) in the video, what they are doing, when, why and how. Do not feel that it is necessary as an instructor to have answers to any or all of these questions. Simply acknowledge the questions and encourage the asking of relevant and rich questions that could guide further inquiry.
- Have students share their observations with each other in partners, small groups or as a class, then watch the video again so that they can see the details pointed out by other students that they may have missed the first time.



Canadians disembarking at Bernières-sur-Mer on D-Day, June 6, 1944

(Credit: Sergeant Bill Grant)

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:
Second World War

Intended Student Body:
Grades 6 – 12

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

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- D-Day video clip: (<https://valourcanada.ca/video-documentaries/d-day-footage-of-juno-beach/>)
- Stationery supplies (see activity)

Activity 2: KWL

- Individually, in pairs, small groups, or as class, complete a K-W-L chart. Students can complete the first two columns upon watching the video clip. The third column can be completed at regular intervals throughout the lesson, or at the end of the lesson.

What I <u>K</u> NOW:	What I <u>W</u> ANT TO KNOW:	What I <u>L</u> EARNED
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- Let students explore one or more of the topics in their “Want to Know” category. Have them determine how they might explore this topic (a phone call to the Legion, an email to an expert, a visit to the library, an Internet search, etc.) and then do so. Create the parameters and the final product expected for this assignment based on age, ability and other classroom factors. This could be as simple as a short answer to a question that is then shared with the larger group, or it might be a full-fledged research project.

Activity 3: D-Day and the Crossword Puzzle Mystery

- To provide students more background information on D-Day before or after Activity 2, consider having them watch the Valour Canada video called *D-Day June 6, 1944 (10m:06)* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWcOMC6czH8>) and complete the related crossword puzzle assignment found here: <https://valourcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/D-Day-LP.pdf>.

Further information about the D-Day Footage of Juno Beach:

June 6, 1944: Thousands of Allied soldiers raced across the English Channel in open-topped landing crafts towards the five Normandy beaches, each heavily defended by elements of Hitler's Atlantic Wall. One of these beaches, codenamed "Juno", was the sole responsibility of one young country: Canada.

Fourteen thousand Canadians of the 3rd Infantry Division stormed onto Juno Beach throughout that day. The fact that many of them had never seen combat did not hinder their performance, for by the end of the day, Canadian troops were farther inland than any of the British and American elements.

While all of the soldiers carried the standard-issue weapons, armour, and equipment, one of them decided to wield a different instrument of history: a 35mm video camera. Sergeant Bill Grant, of the Canadian Army Film and Photo Unit, was with 'A' Company of the North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment when he recorded the approach and disembarkation of his Landing Craft - Assault (LCA) at Bernières-sur-Mer, providing a first-person perspective of what it was like for tens of thousands of Canadians on that day. Although the video lacks audio, imagine the crash of the surf upon the beach, the hum of the landing craft's engine, the scraping of the craft's bottom on the sand, the splash of the landing ramp into the water, and, above all, the supersonic crack of Nazi bullets flying past one's ears.

Sgt. Grant's footage was one of the first to be seen by the Allied high command, including Eisenhower and Churchill, and remains the only known film of the assault from such a perspective to have survived.

For more details on the origins and background of Sgt. Grant's video, please see "[The Riddle of the D-Day Footage](#)".

To read about what the Commanders thought about the outcome, please see "[The Technique of the Assault: The Canadian Army on D-Day: After-Action Reports by Commanders](#)".