

The Character of our Canadian Military History Program

D-Day: Operation NEPTUNE and Planning an Invasion

- Second World War -

Learning Objectives:

- ✚ Determine the location of the D-Day invasion and describe why it was chosen.
- ✚ Describe at least 3 of the challenges faced by the Allies on D-Day.
- ✚ Create a solution that would facilitate a successful amphibious landing in France.
- ✚ Demonstrate the traits: communication; cooperation; courage; resilience; responsibility; thoughtfulness.

Character Traits Explored:

Communication, Cooperation, Courage, Resilience, Responsibility, Thoughtfulness, (+Patience)

**VALOUR
CANADA**

**CONNECTING
CANADIANS
TO THEIR MILITARY
HERITAGE**

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- Valour Canada



D-Day: Operation NEPTUNE and Planning an Invasion

Overview: D-Day will be situated within a brief description of the Second World War before being described more completely. Then the participants, already divided into groups, will work together to design their own amphibious invasion plan using logic and reason.

History Learning Objectives

- + Determine the location of the D-Day invasion and describe why it was chosen.
- + Describe at least 3 of the challenges faced by the Allies on D-Day.
- + Create a thought-out solution that would facilitate a successful amphibious landing in France.
- + Demonstrate the traits: communication; cooperation; courage; resilience; responsibility; thoughtfulness.

Character Trait Development:

Communication, Cooperation, Courage, Resilience, Responsibility, Thoughtfulness, (+Patience)

Total Time: 60-75 min.

Group Size: 4-6

Age: 13 +

Space: small, indoors with tables for each group

Materials (per group):

Part A: Presentation using laptop with internet and projector

- Video : “D-Day Presentation” (42m:28) [LINK](#)

Part B: Activity using laptop with internet and projector

- Video : “D-Day Activity” (20m:21) [LINK](#)
- pencils (one for each group)
- 1 copy of “D-Day – Hint Sheet” (1 page: p. 4 of this document)
- 1 copy of “D-Day – Handout” (3 pages: 1 map & 1 double-sided worksheet)

Key Vocabulary

Airborne: soldier or group of soldiers that parachutes into enemy-held areas

Infrastructure: roads, water, telephone, rail, etc. systems

Naval mine: an explosive device in water; often below the surface to make invisible to enemy ships

U.S.S.R.: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Amphibious: able to operate in water and on land

Casualty: a soldier who is removed from the fight due to injury or death

Reconnaissance: scouting an area

Deception: a trick designed to mislead

Preparation (for the presentation and activity):

- For POWERPOINT presentation:

Setup laptop and projector and in one browser tab prepare to play the “D-Day Presentation” video. In a separate tab prepare to play the “D-Day Activity” video.

- For the ACTIVITY:

1. Prior to the presentation, setup the space. Find a working space where a station (table and chairs) can be setup for each group. Group stations should be separated as much as possible so that the groups cannot overhear discussions within other groups.

- Second, print one copy of the following for each group “D-Day - Handout” and “D-Day - HINT Sheet”. (Colour printing will get a much better response from the participants.).
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Directions for Presenting the Module

PowerPoint Instructions:

(Total 60 - 75 min)

- Present the video: “D-Day Presentation”. In that video, at the point where it asks you to open a new tab and play the “D-Day Activity” video, pause the presentation video and select the browser tab with the *Activity* video.
 - Play the “D-Day Activity” video and once it has finished playing in the new tab (and the students have completed the activity), return to the “D-Day Presentation” video tab and finish playing it.
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Options for increasing/decreasing difficulty:

- This activity is aimed at Gr. 8+ but stronger groups may not require the “D-Day - HINT Sheet”.
 - It may be important to pause the video at times and highlight key points for the audience as well as to monitor group discussions and give more hints where necessary, e.g., the comparatively smaller Dieppe invasion force; the enemy’s over-confidence in their defensive capabilities (i.e., Atlantic Wall); etc.
 - The facilitator should walk around and observe the groups as they work through the questions and the problem solving. If a group is stuck or struggling, the facilitator can provide help through prompting questions, hints, or analogies.
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Debrief

Questions and Prompts: Note: There is one main debrief within this presentation.

(5 min)

Debrief Key Idea: Operation NEPTUNE

To build the participants’ understanding of the extensive challenges faced by Allies in the matter of successfully landing thousands of soldiers, materiel, and vehicles in Normandy.

- *Ask: Thinking about D-Day and the challenges faced by the Allies, which of the six characteristic traits do you feel were most important for their success? Are they the same as those needed by your group to complete this exercise successfully?*

<ALL TRAITS can be explored here>
- *Ask: Do you think that modern communications (texting, email, etc.) would make D-Day planning and coordination easier or more difficult? Why?*

<Thoughtfulness, Communication can be explored here>
- *Ask: Which parts of the activity had the biggest impact on you and why?*

<ALL TRAITS can be explored here>

D-DAY, 6 June 1944: Activity # 1 HINT SHEET

First, as a group read “YOUR MISSION” on the Handout, completely and carefully, aloud if necessary.

Second, review the following information (again, aloud if necessary):

Hints for choosing a time and location for your invasion:

Recall these lessons learned from the failure of the Dieppe Raid in 1942:

- Surprise, Secrecy, and Deception will increase the chances for success
- Solid ground (packed sand is ok) is required to unload machines onto the land
- “Fortress Europe” and the “Atlantic Wall” ensure heavy enemy defences in all coastal areas

Other points to consider when choosing a time and location:

- “Topography”: the lay of the land. Which locations best allow huge #'s of soldiers and equipment to land?
- “Aspect”: Will your soldiers be looking into the sun as they attack?
- Time of attack: During daylight, darkness, dawn/dusk? Which is best for your attack?
- Distance from England: your naval (boat speed and cover) and aircraft range (fuel capacity)
- Distance from enemy reinforcements and the quantity available to them
- Naval minefields are not hard barriers (they can be traveled through or neutralized, but it is dangerous)
- If Day 1 is successful, does your invasion force have options on Day 2, Day 3, etc.? How easily will you be able to resupply your invading force?

**!! Look at the provided map very carefully
 and talk through your ideas as a group !!**

(Don't forget to look at the Title, Date, and Key! Scale 1 mile = 1.6 km)



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