

## Artifact Handling

Valour Canada does not provide a formal plan or format for your artifact handling session. The presentation of artifacts is completely up to each individual museum and can be tailored by them for the audience that they receive. Most museums do these presentations already and understand how much the audience, especially youth, appreciate a knowledgeable facilitator alongside a “hands-on” component.

For the museums that have not presented artifacts in any capacity previously . . .

### Recommendations and Comments:

Foremost, is the “**hands-on**” component. Reading, listening, and observing are productive ways of learning, but tactile learning is not something that students get much experience with, aside from P.E., Art, and the vocational classes. Unfortunately, the tactile side of things is often neglected or forgotten. Thankfully, an artifact handling session will ensure an opportunity for the participants to really “see” the items.

**Time length: 30 minutes** seems ideal. Less than 30 is not enough time and more than 30 will entail more and more of the audience to lose focus.

**Format:** This is **open-ended**. Your museum can introduce a guest speaker who will present and then close with a “show and tell”-like discussion (followed by a facilitator’s “Thank you” and applause from the audience). Another option would be to have a museum volunteer, curator, or veteran, have 6-8 items and go through them one at a time, spending 3-5 minutes describing each.

Valour Canada has had a ton of success having active soldiers talk about their experience in the CAF before presenting the students with a series of artifacts that show change/improvements through time (e.g. WW1 helmet vs. WW2 helmet vs. modern helmet).

**Artifacts:** The weapons are the standouts for most students, so if it’s possible to include replicas or deactivated firearms, students will be very engaged. Having said that, it’s a good idea to check with the attending teacher beforehand to make sure that the items for presentation are approved by him/her. It’s also good practice to have this conversation with the teacher in case there is a sensitive student who might wish to sit out this portion of the day.

On another note and in the case of firearms, ensure that the facilitator explains safe-handling practices to the audience.

### **Political Environment:**

Valour Canada has heard a similar story from multiple museums: many teachers and stakeholders do not want to be associated with activities that “glorify war”. If your museum has not experienced this, we ask that you are cognizant that these perceptions and concerns are out there and are probably more prevalent than most think. With this in mind, the best practice is to make sure to communicate these concerns to any guest speaker that you invite. That way your museum is proactively heading off any potential future issues.

**Have fun with this!**

And remember: Artifact handling is the most memorable part of the day for the majority of the participants!