



## **Veterans Day Lesson**

**History of Veterans Day** – November 11<sup>th</sup> is an important date in U.S. History, as well as the history of the World. On November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, the fighting in World War One (known as “The Great War” at the time) came to an end at 11am. This was the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month in 1918. A year later, in November 1919, President Wilson declared that November 11<sup>th</sup> would be a national holiday known as “Armistice Day” to commemorate the ending of the Great War and the peace that followed. The word “armistice” means an end to fighting, or a truce. This was a day that was dedicated to those who had fought in World War One.

After World War Two ended in 1945 and the Korean War ended in 1953, there was a need to recognize our veterans of those two wars as well. In 1954, President Eisenhower and the Congress changed the name of the holiday to “Veterans Day” to honor all veterans of the United States’ military. Today, Veterans Day is a day that we should honor the service and sacrifice of all who have served our nation as members of the United States Armed Forces.

**Full Text of President Wilson's Statement** - The White House, November 11, 1919.

A year ago today our enemies laid down their arms in accordance with an armistice which rendered them impotent to renew hostilities, and gave to the world an assured opportunity to reconstruct its shattered order and to work out in peace a new and just set of international relations. The soldiers and people of the European Allies had fought and endured for more than four years to uphold the barrier of civilization against the aggressions of armed force. We ourselves had been in the conflict something more than a year and a half.

With splendid forgetfulness of mere personal concerns, we remodeled our industries, concentrated our financial resources, increased our agricultural output, and assembled a great army, so that at the last our power was a decisive factor in the victory. We were able to bring the vast resources, material and moral, of a great and free people to the assistance of our associates in Europe who had suffered and sacrificed without limit in the cause for which we fought.

Out of this victory there arose new possibilities of political freedom and economic concert. The war showed us the strength of great nations acting together for high purposes, and the victory of arms foretells the enduring conquests which can be made in peace when nations act justly and in furtherance of the common interests of men.

To us in America the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service, and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of nations – Woodrow Wilson

**Questions – Please use the text of the Wilson Speech to answer the following questions.**

1. When was the document written? Where was it written?
2. How long did the United States fight in World War One?
3. How did the United States help to win the war?
4. What are 2 new possibilities that are available at the time of this document?
5. How should we reflect on Armistice Day, according to President Wilson?

**Additional Questions or Ideas for your classroom**

1. Ask students to research a family member or friend of their family who served in the military and tell the class about them. If they do not have a family member who has served, they could look up a member of the military on our website at [www.veteransregisterofhonor.com](http://www.veteransregisterofhonor.com) or research a veteran on line . Possible questions could be..
  1. What does it mean to be a veteran?
  2. Who was the veteran that you researched? Are they related to you in some way?
  3. When and where did they serve?
  4. Any stories from their service?
  5. What do you think is an appropriate way to thank them for their service?
2. Students could invite a veteran into the classroom or connect via virtual meeting.
3. The classroom could adopt part of a local cemetery and make sure the graves of the veterans are kept up and decorated on patriotic dates.

4. Have the class write thank you letters to veterans or to veteran hospitals.
5. Your students could add a veteran to our Register of Honor, which is housed at the American Village and is a visual and interactive experience where people can come and pay tribute to our veterans. The information is also available online on our database.

To include a veteran honoree in the Register of Honor, please visit

[www.veteransregisterofhonor.com](http://www.veteransregisterofhonor.com)

Also, please click on the following link for a document to help you gather information to put on the Veterans Register.

[http://www.americanvillage.org/site/DocServer/how\\_to\\_register\\_a\\_veteran\\_REV1029web.pdf?docID=761](http://www.americanvillage.org/site/DocServer/how_to_register_a_veteran_REV1029web.pdf?docID=761)