



# Maggie's Activity Pack

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Veterans Day

Holidays such as Memorial Day and Columbus Day are often celebrated on a Monday in the United States. This gives workers and schoolchildren a long weekend. But Veterans Day is different. It is now celebrated on the original day it was intended – November 11. That is because of the agreement for the fighting of World War I to end on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. This is November 11. Many people stop at 11:00 on the day to remember this war.

November 11 was first called Armistice Day. This was to encourage people to think about world peace. It was a day especially to think about those who fought in the First World War. But another war took place in the 1940s. Many people from all over the world were once again called into battle. Then, in the 1950s, many forces fought in Korea. Many veterans groups urged the United States Congress to change the name of Armistice Day to Veterans Day. This would honor all those who served their country.

The United States holds a special ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery to remember and thank those who served in the armed forces. This ceremony begins at 11:00 on Veterans Day. Usually the President of the United States and other officials lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Then there is a parade of colors and speeches. This special ceremony is shown on television, but many communities also have their own remembrances. Local organizations hold parades, special gatherings, and dinners for veterans.

It is important that we remember that Veterans Day is more than a day off of school or work. It is a day set aside to honor the men and women who served their country. Some schoolchildren make cards of thanks for local veterans. Other classes earn money to give to veterans' organizations. Is there something that you can do to say thank you to a veteran?

1. This is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of World War I. What special remembrances would you suggest be held to thank those who served in this war?

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2. Why do you think it is important to celebrate Veterans Day on November 11?

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3. If you know a veteran what will you do to say thank you this November 11? If you do not know a veteran, what could you do on this special day?

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Read about the special art at the Tower of London for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War I.

Dear Colleague,

I remember my grandmother calling Veterans Day Armistice Day. I always wondered why she used this name. She also used the phrase Decoration Day for Memorial Day. These old terms have special meaning and we believe it is important to remember the history of these important special days to honor our military personnel. I admit, that when writing this activity, I had to look up the correct use of the apostrophe in Veterans Day, as I wanted to put one in the name of this holiday. I went to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs website to determine there is no apostrophe as the day does “not belong to veterans, it is a day for honoring all veterans.” Those of you who study possessives might find this a good learning opportunity!

We hope you will visit this website [http://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetday\\_faq.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetday_faq.asp) as there are several resources that can help as you celebrate veterans in your classroom or school. We also suggest children find out more about ceremonies to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War I. Of particular note is the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* at the Tower of London where 888,245 ceramic red poppies are displayed to honor those British forces who gave their lives in this terrible war. Students can visit the Tower of London website <https://poppies.hrp.org.uk/about-the-installation> to read more about this special art. Extension activities could be writing a biography highlighting the artist who makes these poppies or even drawing a picture of this beautiful and touching art display. My cousin was fortunate enough to see this display in person and talks of the power of this art. Looking at pictures of it would be a good way for children to discover the message that art can convey.

Finally, we at Maggie’s Earth Adventures, think it is important we help our students respect holidays such as Veterans Day and Memorial Day. I once taught at an independent school where it had been decided it was more important to hold school on days such as Veterans Day. This helped children to think of it as a holiday with meaning, not just a day to stay home. The school held special events to honor veterans. We encourage you to integrate Veterans Day into your school day.

Happy teaching,  
Dr. Kathy

Answers will vary.

**Goals:**

Students will read informational text about Veterans Day. They will answer higher-order reading/thinking skills questions. Ideas for follow-up activities are suggested in the Dear Colleague letter. This activity is available on the emergent, primary, and intermediate levels and correlates with the National Social Studies Standards: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions and Power, Authority and with Governance Time, Continuity, and Change.