



TEACHER ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

For Student Activity: *Analyze Oral History Interviews*

Photo credit: Drazen Zigic



Overview

Students will use historical thinking strategies to listen to and analyze oral history interviews from the *In Their Own Voices* website. They will explore how war and military service affect Canadian veterans, their loved ones, and Canada long after military service ends.

Using an activity sheet and in-class discussions, students will practice observing details, sharing their thoughts, and listening to one another. This activity is not a complete overview of a historical period or military conflict, nor does it focus on the specific time interviewees were in the military. Instead, this activity will provide insights and a human connection that will help facilitate learning about these events and the effects they've had on the people involved.

Grade Levels

Recommended for Secondary School

Estimated Time

1 class period (without discussion); 2 class periods (with group and class discussion)

Curriculum Connections

English (media studies, language), social studies (history), arts (media arts, visual arts)

Historical Thinking Concepts

- **Evaluating Evidence:** What can we learn about Canadian history by listening to the oral history interviews of those who lived through it? What questions remain?
- **Historical Significance:** How do we decide which and whose stories to tell? What evidence do we use? What evidence do we leave out?
- **Cause and Consequence:** What were the actions, beliefs, and circumstances from the period? What consequences ensued and why?
- **Ethical Dimensions:** How do we, in the present, judge the actors and different circumstances of the past? How do their ethical views compare to our ethical views today?

Activity Learning Objectives

- Develop skills to analyze oral history interviews and draw meaningful inferences from primary (and secondary) source evidence.
- Learn about the impacts of Canadian military history on veterans, their loved ones, communities, and Canada through personal stories.
- Contextualize personal stories within a broader historical narrative.

Materials Required

- Clips from *In Their Own Voices*, and their transcripts.
 - See “Selecting a clip” below in “How to Use the *In Their Own Voices* Website”.
- A device (or multiple devices) on which to listen to the interview(s).
- Copies of the [Student Activity — Analyze Oral History Interviews](#) (available as a fillable PDF).
- Access to the relevant Interviewee(s) Profile page(s) and Historical Overview(s).
- Teaching resource: [Tips for Facilitating Group Conversations about Difficult History](#).

How to Use the *In Their Own Voices* Website

1. Selecting a clip

From the [In Their Own Voices](#) home page, you can access interview clips in three different ways:

- **Browse by quote** to discover the unique perspectives of individual interviewees, featuring significant moments from their clips. On the right-hand side, you can scroll through images of different people and read their words on the screen.
- **Launch a playlist of oral history clips** to experience a guided journey by themes. On the home page, you can explore four main concepts: Becoming a Veteran, Civilian Life and Community, Reflections, and Impacts of Service. These main concepts group the 12 curated themes from the interviews, offering a guided and structured experience.
- **Search all stories:** You can select this option from the bottom of the page or from the menu options to access and browse all stories. On the Search Stories page, you can use the search bar or search filters to choose an interview clip that corresponds to your needs and interests.

For this activity, we recommend that you invite your students to use the **Search Stories** page and apply search filters to personalize their experience and to align with your learning objectives. There are three categories of filters:

- **Themes:** Explore 12 themes curated according to topics discussed in the interviews.
- **Conflicts and Experiences:** Filter by specific historical events and military experiences.
- **Perspectives and Representation:** Amplify under-represented voices and highlight diverse experiences.

When a filter is selected, its description is available at the top right of the [Search Stories](#) page.

Tips:

- Make sure the clip has an accompanying Historical Overview (see "History" tab for each clip). Provide any additional historical context that you feel is relevant for your classroom needs.
- Avoid sharing stories that involve harm to children to support students' psychological safety. In one interview clip, veteran March Dauphin mentions harm to children. This clip comes with a content warning.
- Set yourself, and your students (!) up for success by reviewing the [Tips for Facilitating Group Conversations about Difficult History](#).

2. Exploring a clip

Each clip includes contextual information, which can be explored by navigating the menu on the left-hand side of a clip's page. The menu items include:

- **About Clip:** A brief description of the clip's content.
- **Profile:** Specific biographical information and link to the interviewee's profile page, where you can learn more about the person's life and time in the military.
- **Transcript:** Option to download the clip transcript directly or access the full interview transcript through the Museum's online collection.
- **Theme:** Description of the themes found in this clip and links to other related clips.
- **History:** Brief historical overview, and links to historical backgrounders, where available.

