

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Veterans Day

From Armistice Day to Veterans Day

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. World War I (WWI) took place in Europe from 1914 to 1918. The United States and countries like Great Britain and France fought against Germany and other countries. During the mid-1900s, WWI was called the Great War. At the time, no one knew that there would be another world war. New technologies like machine guns, tanks and chemical weapons were first used during WWI. More than 9 million soldiers were killed, and 21 million were hurt. Woodrow Wilson, the US president at the time, referred to WWI as “the war to end all wars.” It was such a big, destructive war that he thought it would be the last one.

Notes

2. An armistice is an agreement between the different sides of a war to stop fighting. An armistice doesn’t always mean that a war is over. It just means that the two sides have decided to stop fighting for a time so that they can figure out how to achieve peace. At 11 o’clock on November 11, 1918, the two sides fighting in WWI signed an armistice. In this case, the fighting did not start again. The war ended officially in June 1919.

Notes

3. In November 1919, President Woodrow Wilson declared November 11th Armistice Day. He said that every year in November on the day the armistice had been signed, Americans would honor and thank the veterans who fought in WWI. A veteran is someone who has served in the military. The idea was that the holiday would be a day for parades and marches. At 11am, the time the armistice was signed, people would also stop working for a little bit. Armistice Day became a federal holiday in 1938.

Notes

4. The Second World War, also known as World War II (WWII), began in 1939. WWII required more soldiers than any war before it. It lasted for six years and involved over 30 countries. About 70 million people died as a result of the war. After WWII, veteran service groups urged Congress to change the name of Armistice Day to Veterans Day. They felt that Armistice Day left people out. They wanted a holiday that honored all veterans from every war. In 1954, Congress changed the name of Armistice Day to Veterans Day. President Eisenhower signed the act that made it a holiday. Since then, Veterans Day has been a day to honor all American veterans for their patriotism, service and sacrifice.

Notes

5. The Veterans Day National Ceremony is held every year at Arlington Cemetery. The ceremony starts at 11 o'clock when a wreath is laid on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is a monument. It honors American veterans who died fighting but whose bodies were never found. The Veterans Day Ceremony also includes a parade and speeches by important figures. Across the country, people celebrate Veterans Day in different ways. Some schools and business close for the day or have a moment of silence at 11 o'clock. Groups may also organize parades.

Notes