



Memorial Day: Soldiers are Heroes Each and Everyday

By: Jessica Shaffer

5th grade teacher; M.A. in Administration, Leadership, Georgian Court University, NJ

Holiday
Grades 3–5



Introduction

Memorial Day is a holiday that honors those soldiers that lost their lives while serving our country. Through this writing prompt, students (writers) will learn background information on Memorial Day in order to help support their reasons for being grateful for the United States soldiers. The requirements for the writing piece will follow the grade-level standards.

Learning Objectives

Students will research Memorial Day and develop an essay on why they are grateful for the soldiers, their service to our country, and their sacrifices.

Materials Needed

- [Pre-writing graphic organizer](#)
- [Writer's checklist](#)
- Additional activities
- Chromebook/tablet/computer

Procedure

1. Students will brainstorm what they already know about Memorial Day. The teacher will create an anchor chart.
2. Watch videos and read articles about Memorial Day.
 - Watch [Edpuzzle video on Memorial Day](#) and answer questions about the invention of the telephone.
 - Watch the [BrainPOP video on Memorial Day](#).
 - Complete the [related reading](#) on BrainPOP about Memorial Day.
 - Way Back When
 - Graphs, Stats, and Numbers
 - Sickness and Health
 - Real Life
 - In Depth
 - Quotables

Continued on page 2



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Continued from page 1

- Meaning of Memorial Day Article: [Time for Kids](#)
 - Memorial Day Article: [Britannica Kids](#)
 - Read through [“What is Memorial Day?”](#)
3. Show students a model essay and a sample of a good introduction, good supporting details, and a strong conclusion. Use student samples from previous years if you have them or create your own. This will help students to understand the expectations of the writing prompt..
 4. Have students fill in a graphic organizer to organize ideas and determine three reasons that they are grateful for our American soldiers.
 - Introduction: The writer’s viewpoint should be clearly stated and there should be a strong opening statement (hook).
 - Supporting Details: Have two to three (depending on grade level standards) facts to support your viewpoint. You must back these facts up. The teacher should model how to do this.
 - Conclusion: Make sure to restate your opinion and the supporting details.
 5. Students will create their essay during this task. Teachers will conference with students as they create their writing piece. Students will be given a checklist that they must have teacher initial when their writing has been checked. This will be done throughout the writing process for the essay. (*This checklist can be modified to meet grade level standards. For fifth grade, five paragraphs would be a requirement, but third and fourth grade would be three to four paragraphs. This checklist can also be modified for special education students to meet their IEP/504 requirements.*) This task is time consuming.
 6. When the rough draft of the essay is completed, students should have two peers edit the essay and make the appropriate changes before handing in the revised rough draft to the teacher for a final edit. (**You can modify this part and have just one peer editor if time is an issue.**)
 7. After the teacher makes final revisions and edits, students will complete the final draft of the essay and prepare for the Writer’s Celebration.

Assignment/Extension: The teacher should have two assignments/activities that correlate with Memorial Day for the early finishers or for those students waiting to conference. These should count as classwork grades. The assignments are valuable because they could give students ideas for writing, but also expand their knowledge the importance of Memorial Day!

Continued on page 3



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Continued from page 2

• Sample Assignments

- [Stories from Soldiers](#): Use the appropriate grade level video and picture prompt.
- [The Origins of Memorial Day \(Newsela\)](#): The convenient part about Newsela is you can print the articles, OR set up an account and assign the articles to your class (you can link this to Google Classroom).

Writer's Celebration/Sharing Circle: The final product should take around two weeks to complete (depending on the length of time you spend each day). At the completion of the essays, you can have a Writer's Celebration in your classroom (such as one in Writer's Workshop). Students will share their essays with the class. For early finishers, you can have those students create decorations for the Writer's Celebration that are red, white, and blue.

| Evaluation

You should use the writing rubric that your district requires to grade the writing.