

Why Veterans Day Matters

Learning about service and saying thank you



By Bob LePage

A State & Nation book for elementary readers

Veterans Day is a time to honor people who have served in the United States military. In this book, we will discover why the day matters and how we can show appreciation.

A question in the classroom



Maya noticed a date on the classroom calendar. November 11 had a star beside it.

“Why is that day special?” she asked.

“It is Veterans Day,” said Ms. Lee. “We honor people who have served in our country’s military. We learn about their service and show that we appreciate them.”

Maya wanted to know more. A holiday could be much more than a day away from school.

Think and talk What does it mean to appreciate someone?

Who is a veteran



A veteran is a person who has served in the military. The military is a group of people trained to help defend our country.

Veterans can be young adults or older adults. They can be women or men. They come from many backgrounds.

A veteran might be your neighbor, teacher, coach, parent, or grandparent. You cannot always tell that someone is a veteran by looking at them.

Think and talk Could a veteran live in your community?

Many ways to serve



“Did every veteran fight in a war?” asked Maya.

“No,” said Ms. Lee. “Veterans have served during war and during peace.”

Military members do many jobs. Some care for sick people. Some fix machines, prepare meals, fly aircraft, or work with computers. Others help deliver supplies or rescue people.

People with different skills work together. Every team needs more than one kind of helper.

Think and talk Name two jobs that help a team.

Different branches work together



The United States military has six branches. A branch is one part of a larger group.

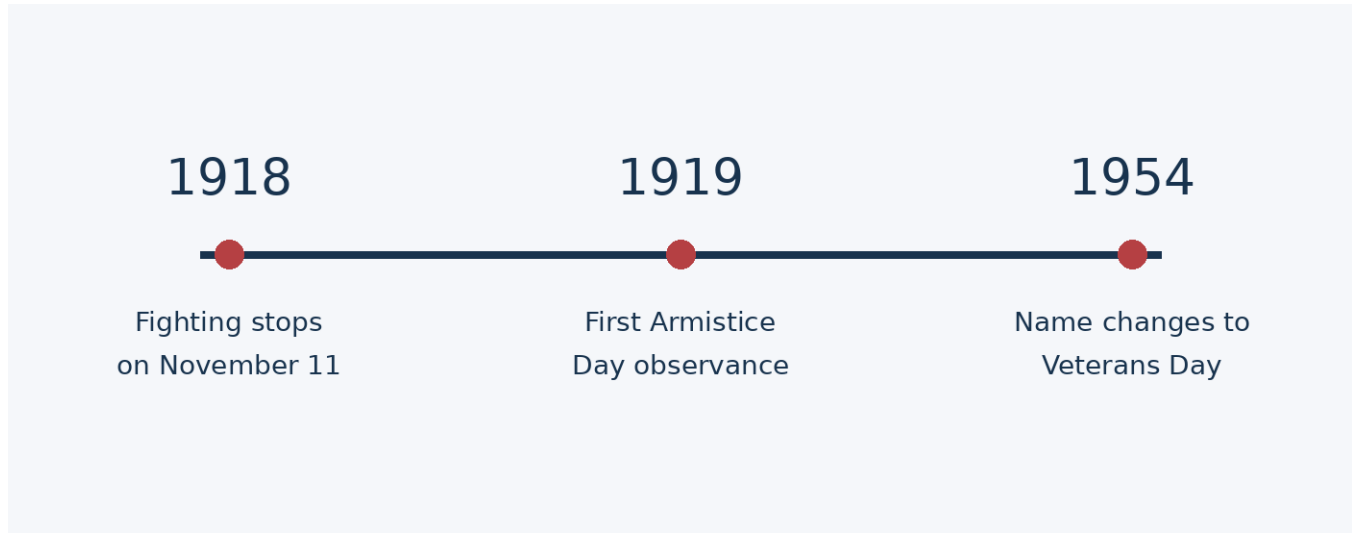
The Army mainly works on land. The Navy mainly works at sea. The Marine Corps can respond on land and from the sea.

The Air Force works in the air. The Space Force helps protect space systems, including satellites. The Coast Guard helps keep waterways safe and rescues people.

The branches work together to carry out their missions.

Think and talk Why might different branches need one another?

Why November 11 matters



Long ago, many countries fought in World War I. On November 11, 1918, at 11 in the morning, an agreement stopped fighting between Germany and the Allied countries.

The agreement was called an armistice. An armistice is an agreement to stop fighting. The peace treaty came later.

The United States first observed Armistice Day in 1919. People remembered service and hoped for peace.

Think and talk Say the new word slowly: ar mis tice.

A day for all veterans



More Americans later served in World War II and the Korean War.

In 1954, Congress changed the holiday's name to Veterans Day, and President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the law.

The holiday now honors all American veterans, including those who served in peacetime.

Veterans Day is November 11 each year. Its meaning stays the same: recognize military service and show appreciation.

Think and talk Who do we honor on Veterans Day?

Service can mean giving something up



Military service can be hard. Some people spend time far from home. They may miss birthdays, school plays, and meals with their families.

Some face danger. Some are hurt or need care after their service.

Giving up something important to help others is called sacrifice.

Every veteran has a different story. We can appreciate service without expecting every story to be the same.

Think and talk How might someone feel when far from home?

Two important holidays



Maya had another question. “Is Veterans Day the same as Memorial Day?”

“They are different,” said Ms. Lee.

Veterans Day, on November 11, honors everyone who served in the military. We especially thank living veterans.

Memorial Day, on the last Monday in May, remembers people who died while serving in the military.

Both days invite us to pause and think about other people.

Think and talk Which holiday honors all veterans?

Listening is a way to show respect



Ms. Lee invited a veteran named Mr. Rivera to visit the class. He had served in the Navy.

“What did you learn from your teammates?” Maya asked.

“I learned to listen and do my part,” he said.

The children listened carefully. They did not ask him to describe frightening experiences.

A person may choose what to share. Respect means accepting that choice and treating the person with care.

Think and talk What is a kind question you could ask?

A thank you with meaning



The class made thank you cards. Maya drew a picture and wrote a message.

“Thank you for serving our country. I learned that military members work together and may spend time away from their families.”

A thoughtful thank you tells someone what you appreciate.

With help from a trusted adult, children can share cards through a school or a local veterans organization. Small acts of kindness can matter.

Think and talk What would you write in a thank you card?

Our community can help



Appreciation can continue after November 11.

Schools can invite veterans to share stories if they wish. Neighbors can welcome veterans and their families. Adults can help veterans find services they need.

Children can include a classmate whose parent is away serving. They can help with an adult supervised community project.

Veterans are part of our communities. They deserve care and respect throughout the year.

Think and talk What is one helpful thing your class could do?

Remembering service and hoping for peace



On Veterans Day, Maya thought about the people behind the holiday. They were real people with families, jobs, and stories.

“Now I understand,” she said. “We take time to remember their service.”

We can honor veterans by learning, listening, and helping. We can also hope for a peaceful world.

On November 11, and on other days too, we can choose to treat people with kindness.

Think and talk Finish this sentence: Veterans Day matters because...

Words to know



Veteran: A person who has served in the military.

Military: People organized and trained to help defend a country.

Service: Work done to help others or carry out a duty.

Sacrifice: Giving up something important to help others.

Armistice: An agreement to stop fighting.

Respect: Treating people with care and recognizing their worth.

Peace: A time or condition without war or fighting.

Think and talk Choose one word and use it in a sentence.

Make a thoughtful thank you

Think about what you learned. Write or draw your answers.

One thing I learned about veterans is

I appreciate their service because

Dear veteran,

Thank you for _____

Draw something kind you would like to share.

For teachers and families

Suggested audience: ages 6 to 10. Read aloud with younger students; invite older students to read independently. Maya, Ms. Lee, and Mr. Rivera are fictional characters.

Learning goals: identify a veteran, explain why November 11 matters, distinguish Veterans Day from Memorial Day, and practice respectful appreciation.

Discussion: Why does service matter? How can listening show respect? Can people serve in different ways? Use the final activity to check understanding. Key answer: Veterans Day honors all veterans; Memorial Day remembers those who died while serving.

Welcome students from all family backgrounds. No child needs to identify a military relative or share a personal experience. Let visiting veterans choose what to discuss. Coordinate cards and service projects through trusted adults.

Sources for adults: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, History of Veterans Day and Veterans Day Facts and Information; U.S. Department of Defense, Our Forces. Historical facts checked October 2026.

department.va.gov/veterans-day/history-of-veterans-day/

department.va.gov/veterans-day/facts-and-information/

defense.gov/About/our-forces/