

VIMY 100 IN THE CLASSROOM

THE VIMY FOUNDATION
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With the support from
Tim Hortons

MAPS

GREATEST WEAPONS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Today, thanks to satellite technology, maps are a normal part of our everyday lives. They are immediately accessible through our laptops and smart phones and we often take their availability and accuracy for granted. During the First World War maps were crucial not just for an army's success, but also for a soldier's very survival.



CONNECT-EXTEND-CHALLENGE

Begin this activity by watching the short [video](#) entitled "Maps: Greatest Weapons of the First World War." Now go through the following thinking routine:

Connect: Write down a few things from the video that connect with ideas or content that you have already explored or considered in your First World War studies or in your experience with maps in previous courses.

Extend: Now, identify ways that the video broadened or expanded your thinking specifically about maps, or generally about the First World War.

Challenge: Consider challenges and ideas that may have emerged after exploring this new way of thinking about the importance of maps during the First World War.

Photo: Two officers on the battlefields, Oct. 1916. Canada. Dept. of National Defence / Library and Archives Canada / PA-000770 (modified from the original)

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5a - Why? How? What?

Individually or in a group of three, create a concept map that explores different topics related to mapping in the First World War. Place the topic “First World War Maps” in a circle at the centre of your map. Now draw three circles off your main topic and label them: **Why, How, What**.

You will no doubt need to do some research to complete the next step. Helpful articles and website can be found below.

In the “**Why**” circle, note:

- why maps were particularly important during trench warfare in the First World War; and
- why mapping techniques improved during the First World War. Consider other technological changes that would have had an impact on mapmaking at that time.

In the “**How**” circle, note:

- techniques used to make more detailed maps such as flash-spotting and sound-ranging, as well as moving from hachures to topographic maps; and
- how maps were reproduced to make them easily available at the front. Explore techniques such as tracing, hand lithographic presses and sun-printing.

In the “**What**” circle, note:

- different types of maps produced and their uses;
- different symbols used to assist soldiers during the war; and
- important marginal information found on maps.

Sources:

- [Canadian Geographic: First World War Maps](#)
- [McMaster University: Evolution of Mapping on the Western Front](#)
- [McMaster University: Symbols Used on the Maps](#)
- [McMaster University: Interpreting Marginal Information](#)
- [National Library of Scotland: British First World War Trench Maps, 1915-1918](#)
- [National Library of Scotland: Guide to Symbols](#)