

## **“Over the Top” Digital Game - Student Activity**

(<http://www.warmuseum.ca/overthetop/>)

### **Introduction:**

The game is based on the real-life experiences of Canadians who lived and died in the trenches during the First World War. Part history and part adventure story, Over the Top is divided into sections. It allows you to experience life in the trenches during the First World War. As a young Canadian soldier stationed somewhere along the Western Front in the late Fall of 1916, you will live through some of the excitement, despair, brutality and sheer horror of trench warfare. Your goal in Over the Top is the same as that of thousands of Canadians who served in the trenches during the First World War: merely to survive. This will often depend on cunning, attention to detail and just plain common sense on your part. A fair amount of good luck doesn't hurt either. (from the Over the Top website)



### **Pre-Game - Minds On:**

1. Do you think above-average wages and a “chance to travel” are good incentives to fight in the war? Would it convince YOU to fight in the war?

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2. How do you think the soldiers on the “enemy” side felt during the war? Were they frightened? Were they any different from the soldiers on the “ally” side?

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3. What were some of the events that led to World War 1? Try to check more than one online resource, and feel free to discuss with your peers.

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### **During the Game - Action:**

Go to <http://www.warmuseum.ca/overthetop/> and click “Begin Your Adventure”. It will allow you to input your name, friend’s name, and the city you live in to make it more personal. The War Museum will not do anything with your name and location, but feel free to use a nickname instead and to choose a city close to yours. Click “Begin Your Adventure” again and the story will start.

The story happens in sections, you can either read through them or use headphones and listen to the narrator. You can click on any war-specific terms that are underlined, a small page will explain what that word means. When you are finished reading each section click the arrow to the right of the image. If you would like to repeat the same section, click the curved arrow underneath the image. If you would like to return to a section from before, click the arrow on the left of the image **\*Note: Once you have made a choice, you cannot return\***.

The space below is optional to fill out, and can be used to take note of each time you died. Life in the trenches was dangerous, you may be surprised how many things could go wrong.

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The following questions can be answered as you progress through the story.

1. When describing how much they were paying you in the army, it says you were being paid \$1.10 a day, which was “good” pay. What is the minimum wage you must be paid nowadays? How much do you think you should be paid to be a soldier today?

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2. What was living in the trenches like? Using a combination of your opinion as well as online resources, describe any issues you may have had while living in the trenches.

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3. Do you think it would be better to have friends when fighting in the war?

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4. With how dangerous it was to enter No Man’s Land; do you think it was worth it? Why would either side want to risk their lives by entering No Man’s Land?

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### Fill in the Blanks

Use the words in the boxes below to fill in the blanks as you progress through your journey. Not all words in the boxes are used, so think carefully!

"At Ease"	Parapet	Trench
Tick	No Man's Land	Artillery
"Stand Down"	Dugout	The Warzone
Explosives	Poison Gas	Lice
Western Front	Platoon	Squadron

1. The area of military operations during the First World War which ran from Belgium, through northern France, and to the Swiss border. \_\_\_\_\_
2. A weapon used to fire very large projectiles. Mortars are a type of this weapon.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. The narrow, muddy, treeless stretch of land, characterized by numerous shell holes, that separated German and Allied trenches during the First World War. \_\_\_\_\_
4. A poisonous vapour, designed to kill, injure or disable a soldier by inhalation or contact.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Shelter dug on the side of a trench, in the ground, used as living quarters, for storage of supplies or for protection. \_\_\_\_\_
6. A small, flat, wingless insect that lives off the blood of its host. \_\_\_\_\_
7. A unit of soldiers, normally consisting of 50 men. \_\_\_\_\_
8. The area of military operations during the First World War which ran from Belgium, through northern France, and to the Swiss border. \_\_\_\_\_
9. A long, deep and narrow hole in the ground, with the earth thrown up in front, dug to protect soldiers from bullets and other projectiles. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Permission given to soldiers to leave their defensive positions when an attack by the enemy is deemed unlikely. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Post-Game - Extension Questions**

The following questions can be used to further reflect on your experience.

1. War seems like it may have been emotionally demanding as well as physically demanding. Using a combination of your opinion and online resources, what do you think are some of the side-effects of war?
2. Do you think that your country takes the appropriate measures to ensure soldiers old and new are taken care of?
3. Why was trench warfare the chosen way of fighting during World War 1?
4. How were battles fought before trench warfare? What do you think would be best?
5. Is trench warfare an offensive or defensive style of battle? Was it back and forth?
6. In the first World War, who were the “Allies” and who were the “Central Powers”?
7. What battle changed the direction of WW1 to favour the Allies?
8. What would a World War look like nowadays? Look online for how war has evolved over time and compare it to modern technology. Would there be as many soldiers on-foot?