



Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell

"We're in the Army Now"



Overview

This lesson focuses upon using primary evidence and sources to establish a timeline of events. It introduces the historical thinking process of cause & consequence, by examining prevailing conditions and human actions around the Second World War. All of the templates, images, and archival sources used in this lesson plan can be found on the Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell [introductory page](#).

Cause and Consequence

What are the **causes** that are hidden from view? (Seixas & Morton, 2013)

Grade Level: 9

Estimated Time: 3 -4 class periods

Materials Required:

- Internet access to Canadian War Museum web site: [Canada and the Second World War](#), as well as Veterans Affairs Canada [Medals and Decoration Information](#);
- Textbook: [Canadian Identity \(2006\)](#);
- Coloured markers;
- Whiteboard or mural paper and mounting tape;
- Photocopies of (or computer access to) primary archival source documents (as listed on introductory page);
- Photocopies of (or computer access to) scaffolding worksheets (as listed on introductory page);
- Large colour print image of Sybil Beatteay Mitchell's war medals (as listed on introductory page) and Veterans Affairs Canada [Medals and Decoration Information](#);
- (if possible) similar looking military medals for students to handle and examine;
- **Additional Internet resources:** [Veterans Affairs Canada Information for Educators](#), [On All Fronts: World War II and the National Film Board](#), [Canadian Newspapers and the Second World War](#), The Historical Thinking Project (<http://historicalthinking.ca/>).



Lesson:

Part A - Introduction:

Begin the unit by surveying how the Second World War started, and what countries were involved, using the [Canada and the Second World War](#), as well as [Chronology of the Second World War](#) web sites, (or textbook) as a resource.

Think:

(Template: Cause & Consequence Web)

1. As a class, encourage students to break events down into “theaters of war,” mapping out cause and effect as a complex web of global conditions, and indicating Canada’s role in each conflict as a nation. Create a classroom cause and consequence web similar to the template provided.

Additional Internet resources:

- [On All Fronts: World War II and the National Film Board;](#)
- [Canadian Newspapers and the Second World War.](#)

Part B - Piecing Together Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell’s Story:

Pair:

2. Working in groups, provide each group with a portion of mural paper. Now encourage students to examine the archival and artefact records of Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell—creating a group timeline of significant events in her life.

(Template: Interpreting Artefacts)

Begin by showing students two images associated with Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell: one of her posing in a speedskating stance (PHF83.5-2), the other of her 1926 speedskating medal (HF2014.2-015-front & back). Using the interpreting artefacts template as a guide, demonstrate historical thinking by asking questions such as:

- What is it?
- Where and when was the source created?
- Who created it?
- Why (do you think)?



- What does it say?
- What clues can you draw from these two sources about Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell?

Encourage students to record their notes on their interpreting artefacts template.

3. Next ask students to work in groups to sift through the sources of evidence contained within the artefact and archival records (1926 speedskating medal artefact accession record, birth certificate, marriage certificate, 1940 census return, military personnel records WWII), as well as images, about Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell—adding to their group timeline of significant events in her life. Remind students to make note of where they found their evidence.

Additional Resources:

- [Lest We Forget Second World War Student Information Package](#)
(These information sheets will help to interpret the documents found in the service files of the Canadian Expeditionary Force – including those of Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell. Please disregard the password request.)
- [Cursive Letter Writing Guide](#)

Part C – Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell and Women in the Second World War :

Share:

4. Commence by displaying the CWAC recruiting poster "[Shoulder to Shoulder](#)" (CWM 19880069-860). Returning to the classroom cause and consequence web, encourage each student-group to contribute specific details relating to Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell's life:

- What was going on in Sybil's life when the Second World War began?
- How does her life correlate with events taking place during the war? (Add these life events to the web, using a different coloured marker).

5. Expand the discussion about women in the Second World War by showing [National Film Board](#) footage about women's' war experiences.



Pair:

(Template: Interpreting Artefacts)



6. Working in groups, encourage students to carefully examine the artefact source—Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell's military medals (H.F.2015.2-001)—and record their evidence using the interpreting artefacts template. Explain that they will be asking similar questions as was demonstrated with the previous archival sources:

- What is it?
- Where and when was it created?
- Who created it?
- Why (do you think)?

- What does this mean?
- What clues can you draw from this artefact source about Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell?

Internet resource:

- Veterans Affairs Canada [Medals and decorations information](#)

7. Continuing with the interpreting artefacts template, now provide students with additional information, handing out the military medals artefact accession record. What more information can the students discover asking the same questions:

- What is it?
- Where and when was it created?
- Who created it?
- Why (do you think)?
- What does this mean?
- What more clues can you draw from the artefact source about Sybil Beatteay?

Have students add the evidence that they have collected to their group timeline about Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell's life. Conclude with a classroom discussion:

- What is the significance of these medals?
- What more information about who used them (and why) can you pull from the museum's accession records?
- Where does this evidence connect with other events in Sybil's life?

Part D –Establishing Historical Significance and Perspective:

Share:

8. Summarise students' findings as a class by adding their' suggestions (relating to Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell's life) to the classroom cause and consequence web. Questions to ask:

- What does this reveal about Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell's speedskating career?
- What more can be add to the classroom web now (including events prior to 1939 in order to examine events in her life prior to the war)?

- What conditions (do you think) led Sybil to enlist with the Canadian Women’s Army Corp?
- What were the results of this decision?
- What other actions could she have taken?

Part E –Formative Assessment:

Think aloud:

9. Wrap-up: Using a "think aloud" strategy, prepare students for writing a biography by modelling how to use criteria of [historical significance](#) and [historical perspective](#) to create a storyline about Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell (using the classroom cause and consequence web). Questions to ask:

- From the perspective of Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell, how was the Second World War significant to her?
- What events, people, or developments resulted in change for her?
- What are the less obvious causes for her decision to join the war effort?
- In writing a biography of *Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell*, what events, people, or developments would be most important to **your** story about her life?
- What parts on the timeline would you leave out? Why?

10. In preparation for the assignment, encourage students to draft a short outline of their story about Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell, framing it around the topic:

Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell – “We’re in the Army Now”

(As part of the assignment, provide students with an assessment rubric to guide their writing. You may also wish that students first prepare a draft—and have the class work as a group to edit each other’s drafts—before submitting the final copy for marking)

Student Writing Assignment: Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell – “We’re in the Army Now”

Due date:

Based upon discussions in class, and evidence that you have gathered from primary sources examined in class, write a biography about Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell. How do you think that her life was altered by the Second World War? Was it for the better or the worse? What evidence do you have to support your claims?

Assessment Rubric:

Criteria for Historical Thinking about Significance	Very well	To some extent	To a limited degree	Not at all
Student begins the paragraph with a statement as to whether the Second World War shaped Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell’s actions in a positive or negative way.	3	2	1	0
As the paragraph continues, student reveals evidence from primary sources to support this claim.	3	2	1	0
Student makes more than three references to comparative evidence .	4	3	2	0
Student explains how Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell’s life was changed by the Second World War	3	2	1	0
Student makes reference to at least three specific events (during the Second World War) that relate to Sybil (Beatteay) Mitchell’s war experience.	3	2	1	0
Student clearly identifies the significance of the term "C.W.A.C."	3	2	1	0

Student ends the paragraph with a summary statement of what the evidence tells them about their response to the assignment question.	3	2	1	0
Student includes a bibliography of primary and secondary sources.	3	2	1	0