



**WALKING WITH THE WOUNDED**

*Supporting Those Who Served*



Campaign partner



# Ideas, Resources and Activities for Lesson Planning

80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the D-Day Landings

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# Lesson Plan: Understanding D-Day and its Significance

*Objective: To explore and analyse the significance of D-Day and its role in the allied victory during World War II.*

This is a collection of ideas, resources and tasks that can be used to create a lesson plan based on the D-Day landings of 1944. Take and adapt to suit the needs and academic level of your students.

Depending on the class's prior knowledge, you can provide more historical context and delve deeper into specific aspects of D-Day.

WWTW do not claim any of the online resources, we are signposting online resources that may be helpful when planning a lesson on D-Day. We cannot vouch for the accuracy of all information.

Please ensure to review the content before presenting it to students as the content nature might be distressing for some children under certain circumstances.



# Historical Context



Imagery credit: [commandojoes.co.uk](http://commandojoes.co.uk)





# Wider Historical Context of WWII:

This slide is a general introduction to WWII; If students have already studied WWII this may be a good opportunity to recap on key points.

A suggested summary video:

[History KS2 | World War Two | Britain declares war on Germany | BBC Teach – YouTube](#)

(5 minutes animated overview. BBC Teach video available on YouTube and suggested for all Key Stages).

[A Brief Overview of World War II – YouTube](#)

(4-minute animated overview of WWII available on YouTube) **Trigger warning; suicide.**

Recommended for KS2 upwards as there is large amounts of information and reference to Hitler in his final moments.

[World War Two Facts for Kids | WW2 | Information about the Second World War – YouTube](#)

(A longer 11-minute clip available on YouTube.) **Trigger warning; includes war photography.**

Recommended for KS2 upwards due to large amounts of information and war photography.

For further WWII information presented in a child friendly format we would recommend the following YouTube channel: [Oversimplified – YouTube](#).

## Classroom tasks exploring WWII: (suggested for KS2 upwards)

With a partner or small groups discuss what you might already know about WWII.

- **Use textbook or computer resources to identify key points**

Identify the most crucial and influential aspects of World War II. Consider political, economic, social, and military factors.

- **Highlight key turning points and decisions that shaped the course of the war**

You could further this and put key points into chronological timeline including dates, locations, and brief descriptions of each event.

- **Visual Presentation of Key Events**

Create a visual aid to accompany your summary. This could be a poster, infographic, or a presentation. Images, maps, and other graphics should be encouraged to enhance understanding.

- **Summarise**

Focus on presenting a clear and coherent narrative, highlighting the causes, major battles, key figures, and the ultimate outcomes of the war.

- **Reflection**

Write a brief reflection on what you found most interesting or surprising about World War II. What questions do you have about WWII?





# Introduction to D-Day Task

## What do we already know about D-Day?

Encourage students to thought shower in small groups and share what they already know about D-Day.

Questions that may facilitate discussion:

- What was D-Day?
- Who was involved in D-Day?
- When was D-Day?
- What was the significance of D-Day?
- Who were the key leaders involved in D-Day?
- Where did the D-Day landings occur?

## D-Day Resources:

### **We recommend the following video**

- [D-Day - BBC Teach](#) (A four-minute animated overview of D-Day available on BBC Teach: suggested for all key stages)

The PowerPoint quiz included within the entry pack is based on this BBC Teach video.

Input this quiz into 'Kahoot' as a more interactive alternative.

Estimated quiz time: 10 minutes. The quiz covers: Timeline, Geography and significance of D-Day. Suggested for KS2 upwards.

### **Alternatively:**

Below are other summary videos helpful in understanding D-Day in the wider context of WWII. Suggested for KS2 upwards.

- [D-Day History For Kids - YouTube](#) ('Bed Time History for Kids': 10-minute summation of D-Day available on YouTube. TW: War Photography)
- [D-Day \(1944\) - YouTube](#) ('Simple History' 4-minute animation of D-Day available on youtube.TW: War Photography)
- [D-Day - Kids | Britannica Kids | Homework Help](#) (written online resource that includes planning Operation Overlord, the invasion, progress after D-Day and results. The map illustrated within this resource highlights the movement between American and British Forces.
- [D-Day: Facts on the Epic 1944 Invasion That Changed the Course of WWII | HISTORY](#) (written online resource covering facts on D-Day. accompanied with videos)



# Geographical Context



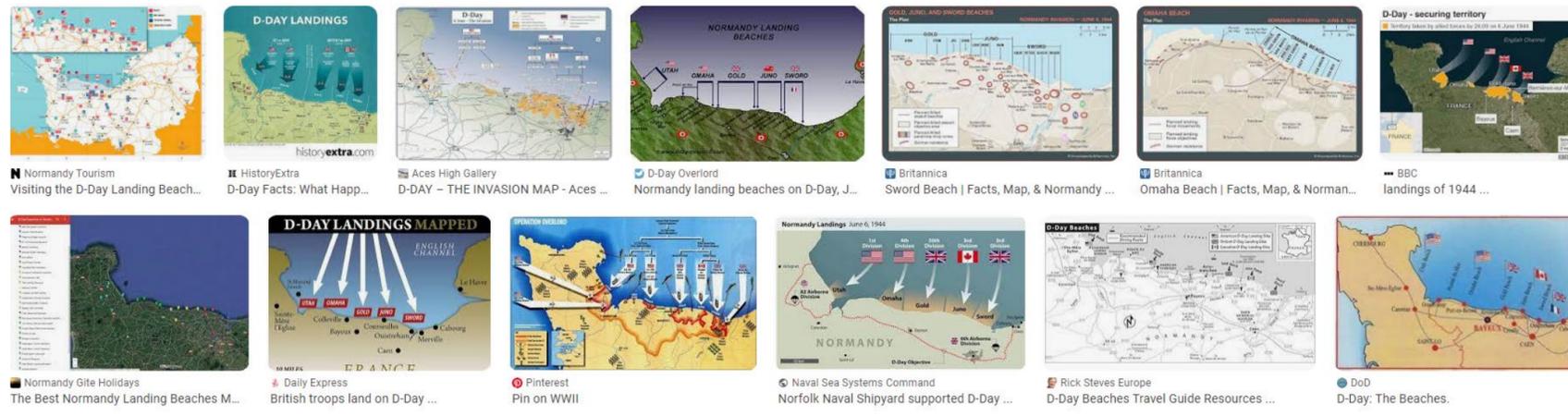
Imagery credit: [commandojoes.co.uk](http://commandojoes.co.uk)



# Geography

As well as the map available at [D-Day - Kids | Britannica Kids | Homework Help](#):

Online there are multiple different maps which show a geographical overview of the D-Day landings:



Depending on academic level choose an appropriate map and display to students. Take the time to discuss the five different landing sites, which countries covered which area and from what direction.

**Task:** Print and distribute a blank version of Normandy map and ask students to replicate.

**Extension:** The creation of the map can be accompanied with a timeline of events in correlation with the map.

At Sunset on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024 WWTW will have the honour of lighting **official commemoration beacons** on the five different beaches in France. Additionally, in the UK WWTW will also be lighting a beacon on the four highest peaks in the United Kingdom - Mount Snowdon, Ben Nevis, Slieve Donard and Scafell Pike to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day landings ([D-DAY 80 BEACONS](#) further information available at the end of the slides).

**Task:** Children to discuss in groups, what do you think the beacons symbolise?

Imagine you were visiting the beach and watching the beacons being lit, how might this make you feel?





# Higher level Geography task: Suggested for KS2 Upwards

## **Research:**

Gather information on the geography of the Normandy region in France through textbooks and online resources.

Identify the key beaches where the D-Day landings took place.

Explore the role of natural features such as cliffs, rivers, and terrain in the planning and execution of the invasion.

Explore the location and importance of Mulberry Harbours.

Explore the weather conditions on June 6, 1944, and their significance for the Allies.

## **Mapping:**

Create a map of the Normandy region, highlighting the beaches where the D-Day landings occurred (Omaha Beach, Utah Beach, Gold Beach, Juno Beach, and Sword Beach).

Include key geographical features such as rivers, towns, and the Atlantic Wall.

Mark the locations of important military objectives, like strategic points and airborne drop zones.

## **Analysis**

Analyse the choice of landing sites and their strategic importance.

Consider how the geography influenced both Allied and Axis military strategies.

Examine the challenges posed by the landscape and how the Allies overcame them.

Which beaches needed Mulberry Harbours and why?

## **Weather Impact:**

Research and discuss the weather conditions on leading up to and on D-Day and their effects on the invasion.

Explore how the weather influenced decision-making, troop movements, and the success of the operation.

## **Presentation:**

Compile your research, maps, and analysis into a presentation or report.

Clearly articulate the geographical factors that played a role in the D-Day landings.

Consider using maps, charts, and images to enhance your presentation.

# Impact



Imagery credit: [commandojoes.co.uk](http://commandojoes.co.uk)



## Useful online resources that illustrate the impact of D-Day: Recommended for KS2 upwards.

[D-Day | National Army Museum \(nam.ac.uk\)](https://www.nam.ac.uk) This 'National Army Museum Resource' has a statistics, timeline, pictures and an overview of the 'impact of D-Day'.

[Why D-Day Was So Important to Allied Victory | Imperial War Museums \(iwm.org.uk\)](https://www.iwm.org.uk) 'Why D-Day was so important to Allied Victory. Text and photographs that explore impact in wider context.

[D-Day for Kids: How to Teach Its History + 5 Activities \(kidskonnnect.com\)](https://www.kidskonnnect.com) Text that explores how to teach Dark periods of history to children followed with the 'significance of D-Day for kids'.

These resources can be utilised for the following tasks.

### **Different areas to explore when analysing the Impact of D-Day: challenging task suggested for KS2 upwards.**

#### **Impact on outcome of WWII:**

Analyse the strategic importance of D-Day in the context of the overall war effort. Consider how the success or failure of D-Day could have altered the outcome of World War II.

#### **Impact on Western Front:**

Examine how the success of D-Day impacted the Western Front. Explore the subsequent battles and campaigns that followed the Normandy landings.

#### **Role in Liberation of Western Europe:**

Investigate the role of D-Day in the liberation of Western Europe. Explore the timeline and key events that led to the Allied forces pushing the Axis powers out of France and beyond.

#### **Political and Diplomatic Impact:**

Examine the political and diplomatic impact of D-Day on the Allied and Axis powers. Consider how the success of D-Day influenced international relations and alliances.

#### **Historical Legacy:**

Reflect on the historical legacy of D-Day. Consider how it is remembered and commemorated today, and its significance in shaping the post-war world.

# The emotional impact of D-Day:

## Tasks that explore the emotional impact of D-Day (adaptable for each Key Stage)

### Tell a story or write a short paragraph:

- Write a short story or paragraph describing the events of D-Day from the perspective of:
  - a young person living in a town near the invasion site
  - a soldier approaching the beaches of Normandy on D-Day
  - a soldier reflecting on the events of D-Day many years after

Include **feelings**, **observations**, and the **impact** of the invasion on daily life.

The length and difficulty of task can be altered on this task depending on ability of students.

### Story time:

On the 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944 **Second Lieutenant Gilbert Jones** collected a handful of sand from Juno Beach as Operation Overload began. This token of respect was kept carefully in a small tin upon his return home to Merseyside. Eighty years to the minute later, **Dan Searson** Veteran and Ambassador for WWTW will be following his Grandfather's footsteps and returning the sand to Juno beach in tribute to those that fought for the freedom we all enjoy today. [The DDay Expedition](#)

**Task:** Why do you think Second Lieutenant Gilbert Jones might have scooped up a handful of sand?

### Create a Time Capsule:

- Pretend you are living in the 1940s. What would you put in a time capsule to remember D-Day?
- Draw or collect small items that represent the courage and determination of the people during this time.

### Paint a picture:

- Get creative: sketch, draw, paint, create a comic strip that represents a day in the life of someone your age during World War II. How did D-Day and WWII impact their everyday life?

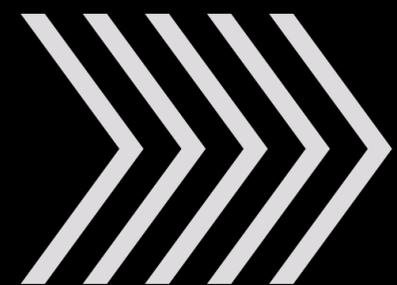


["Do Not Call Me Hero" - Harry Billinge MBE reads his favourite poem – YouTube](#)

This poem is an insight into the long-lasting emotional impact D-Day had upon those who lived through it.

This poem explores the notion of being called a 'hero' and reflects on the lives that were lost during WWII and D-Day.

**Task:** Can you discuss the use of the word 'Hero' in modern day language?



# Reflection



Imagery credit: [commandojoes.co.uk](http://commandojoes.co.uk)



# Reflection

What lessons can we learn from D-Day?

Some Questions that could be presented to students or developed into an extension task:

If you could talk to a veteran who participated in D-Day, what questions would you ask?

What sacrifices did families make during WWII?

What role did teamwork play in the success of D-Day? Can you give examples of how different groups worked together?

Can you find any stories or accounts of individual bravery from D-Day? How do these stories make you feel?

Why is it important to remember events like D-Day and how can we continue to remember in the future?

How does symbolism such as lighting a beacon, honour memory?

## Dan's Story:

**'I'd always known my grandfather had a couple of metal military boxes - he cleared one out and gave it to me when I went to Sandhurst,' remembers Dan, 47, from Liverpool. 'But I never knew what was in the second. Like many men of his generation, he was guarded about D-Day and the Normandy Campaign. He was a warm, loving man who cherished his children and grandchildren, he wasn't cold or secretive, he just didn't want to share it with us. I think he felt it was his burden, not ours'**

'So, I'll take his Juno Beach sand back for him and replace it at 06.30am on 6th June 2024, 80 years to the minute since the landings. It will be closure for my grandfather and his war service, closure for my own 30-year Army career and my last goodbye to him.'

There is a write up available including a powerful video summarizing the expedition. Available at:

[D-Day mission to keep grandad's 80-year promise: Army veteran will sail to Juno Beach to return a handful of sand scooped for luck by his late relative on the day of Normandy landings in 1944 | Daily Mail Online](#)



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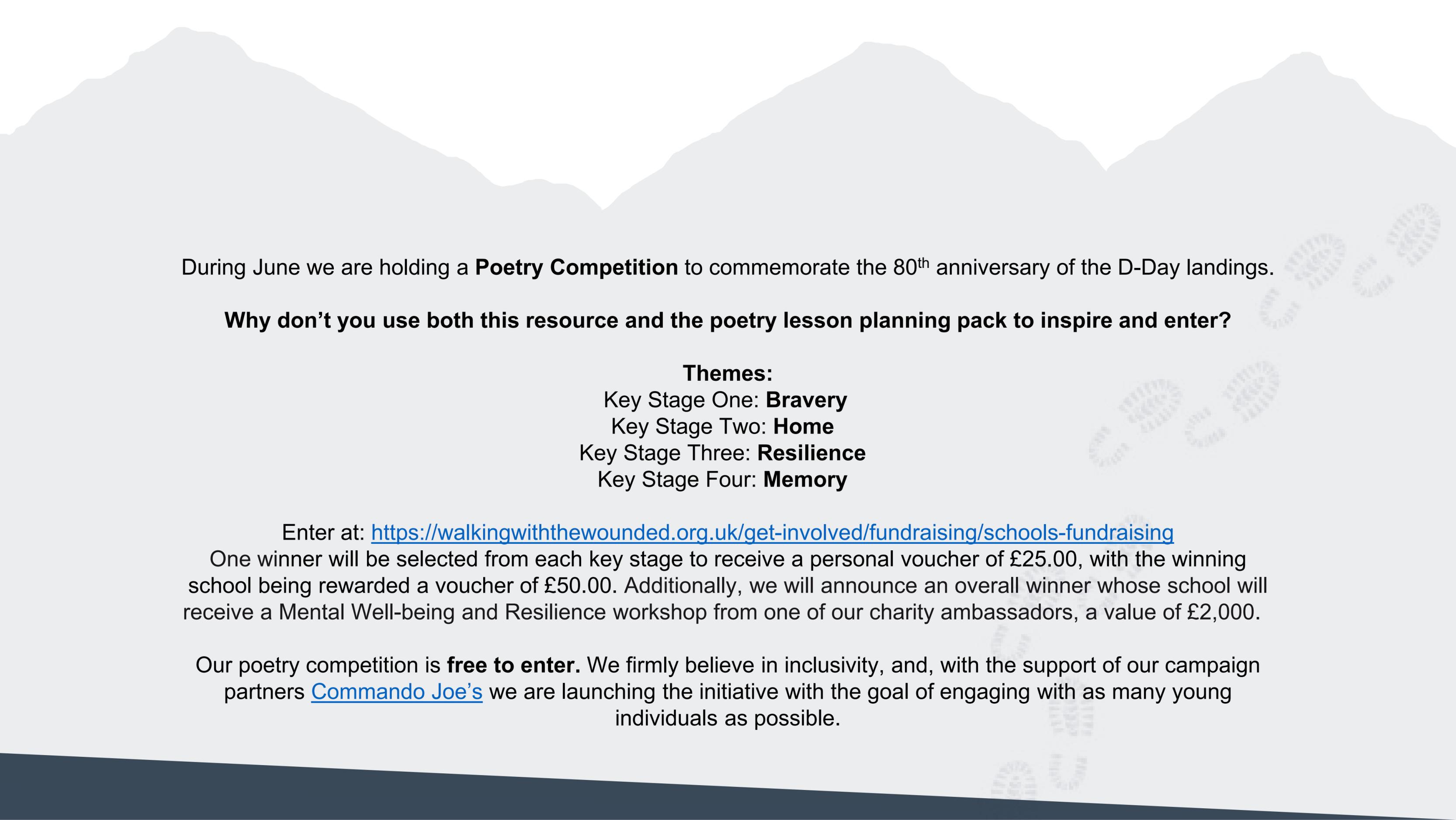


## Follow Walking With The Wounded's D-Day 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition

The Expedition team will then embark on a 4-day, 150km hike visiting all the Normandy Landing sites. The route will take in Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword beaches, lighting a Lamp Light of Peace on each of the 5 Normandy Beaches. American, Canadian, British and Australian representatives will attend their relevant beach to lead the tribute. It will be a fitting tribute to those that fought for the freedom we all enjoy today.

Challenge The Wild will support Walking With The Wounded as their expedition charity partner. For more information and to follow the challenge visit: [The DDay Expedition](#)





During June we are holding a **Poetry Competition** to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day landings.

**Why don't you use both this resource and the poetry lesson planning pack to inspire and enter?**

**Themes:**

Key Stage One: **Bravery**

Key Stage Two: **Home**

Key Stage Three: **Resilience**

Key Stage Four: **Memory**

Enter at: <https://walkingwiththewounded.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising/schools-fundraising>

One winner will be selected from each key stage to receive a personal voucher of £25.00, with the winning school being rewarded a voucher of £50.00. Additionally, we will announce an overall winner whose school will receive a Mental Well-being and Resilience workshop from one of our charity ambassadors, a value of £2,000.

Our poetry competition is **free to enter**. We firmly believe in inclusivity, and, with the support of our campaign partners [Commando Joe's](#) we are launching the initiative with the goal of engaging with as many young individuals as possible.



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