

ELA Assignment – Voices from the Forest

Assignment Title: Voices from the Forest – A Found Narrative

Overview

Using the Canadian History Ehx podcast episode about the Canadian Forestry Corps and one of Alfred Munnings' paintings, you will write a first-person creative narrative (400–600 words) from the perspective of a fictional Forestry Corps worker. Your task is to humanize a hidden historical voice while blending factual insight with imaginative storytelling.



Figure 1. Alfred Munnings, *Felling a Tree in the Vosges*, 1918, oil on canvas. Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa.

Essential Question

How can we use voice, character, and real evidence to bring hidden historical narratives to life?

Instructions

1. Listen to the podcast episode: [Canada Ehx](#)
2. Choose 1–2 Munnings paintings showing the Canadian Forestry Corps. (See Table Below)
3. Write a narrative from the point of view of a fictional Forestry Corps worker.

Your narrative must:

- Include 2+ details from the podcast
- Reference a specific Munnings painting
- Use sensory/emotional language
- Be historically accurate and plausible

4. Optional: Add an image with a caption or a short author's note (50 words) explaining your source use.

Suggested Paintings – Voices from the Forest Assignment

Choose one or more of the following Alfred Munnings paintings as inspiration for your creative narrative. Use the visual setting, mood, and details in your writing to reflect the experience of the Canadian Forestry Corps.

<i>Painting Title</i>	<i>Description / Narrative Focus</i>
<i>Log Hauling and Loading</i> (1918)	Massive timber operations are underway; horses strain under the weight, making them perfect for a story of endurance or teamwork.
<i>The Grey Team</i> (1918)	Draft horses working in snowy or muddy terrain—great for evoking harsh conditions or quiet determination.
<i>A Team of Blacks and a Mill</i> (1918)	Contrasts mechanical power with animal effort—ideal for exploring modernization and labour.
<i>The Black Team in the Jammer</i> (1918)	Set inside a lumber operation, rich with atmosphere, sound, and character potential.
<i>Felling a Tree in the Vosges</i> (1918)	Forestry workers mid-task, deep in woodland—ideal for quieter, reflective monologues.
<i>Four-Horse Team in the Forest</i> (1918)	Dynamic image of horses pulling logs—suitable for physicality, strain, and collaboration.
<i>An April Day in the Forest</i> (1918)	Gentler scene—useful for contrast between the beauty and the brutality of war labour.
<i>Building a Mill at Labergement</i> (1918)	Depicts construction and human ingenuity—ideal for a narrative grounded in resilience.



Suggested resources

Resources	Link
The Canadian Military Engineers Association	https://cmea-agmc.ca/publications/canadian-forestry-corps
The Canadian Encyclopedia	https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/no-8-company-canadian-forestry-corps
The Forest Products Association of Canada	https://www.fpac.ca/posts/paying-tribute-to-the-canadian-forestry-corps
Canadian Soldiers	https://www.canadiansoldiers.com/corpsbranches/forestrycorps.htm
The Government of Canada	https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/rememberance/people-and-stories/black-canadians?utm_source=chatgpt.com
Library and Archives Canada Blog	https://thediscoverblog.com/tag/no-2-construction-battalion-2021/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
Nº 2 Construction Battalion	https://parks.canada.ca/culture/designation/evenement-event/bataillon-de-la-construction-battalion

Curricular Connections (Alberta ELA 10–12)

Outcome Code	Description
2.1.2	Create texts with authentic voice, tone, and point of view.
2.3.3	Respond creatively to nonprint texts and historical materials.
3.3	Revise work to enhance clarity, emotional impact, and historical plausibility.

Rubric

Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Curricular Outcome: ELA 2.1.2 Voice, Tone, and Perspective	The voice is rich, authentic, and fully immersive; the tone supports emotional and historical depth.	Voice is consistent and appropriate; tone fits context	Voice and tone are present but lack depth or consistency	Limited voice; tone is unclear or inconsistent
Curricular Outcome: ELA 2.3.3 Creative Response to Historical Texts	Seamlessly integrates podcast and painting elements to build a vivid, fact-based world.	Integrates key podcast or visual details clearly and meaningfully	Some reference to the podcast or painting, but lacks full integration	Minimal or unclear connection to historical materials
Curricular Outcome: ELA 3.3 Structure, Clarity, and Revision	Strong structure, logical flow; refined through evident revision and editing	Clear structure with minor lapses; some revision is evident	Some organization; weak transitions or unclear progression	Lacks clear structure or revision; confusing sequence
Sensory and Emotional Language	Masterful use of imagery and emotion to evoke time, place, and character	Appropriate sensory and emotional details support the setting	Some description is present, but it lacks richness or impact	Sparse or ineffective description; lacks immersion
Mechanics and Conventions	Flawless grammar, punctuation, and spelling; professional presentation	Few errors; does not distract from the narrative	Noticeable mistakes in grammar or spelling; minor distraction	Frequent errors that hinder comprehension or clarity

Planning Template – Voice & Historical Context

Character Name: _____

Role in Forestry Corps (e.g., logger, farrier, cook): _____

Specific painting reference: _____

Setting (place, season, time of day): _____

Mood or emotional tone: _____

2 historical facts to include:

1. _____

2. _____

Sensory Detail (What do they hear, see, smell, feel?): _____