

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

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PART A: LITERATURE CIRCLE ACTIVITY

Overview

Literature circles are a widely used reading response activity in current language arts classrooms. Divide students into discussion groups of three to five students. Assign each member of the group a specific role to fulfill during the discussion. For the activity, you should expect that students demonstrate they have fulfilled their roles. In this case students will be discussing the fictional component of *Highway of Heroes* (p. 4 –18).

Student Objectives

Students will:

- Discuss the story of the young boy in *Highway of Heroes*
- Organize, write, and present one of five discussion roles
- Respond to the presentations by fellow students during the discussion

Skills Attained

- Students will be able to:
- Read the text of *Highway of Heroes* and related readings closely
- Analyze *Highway of Heroes* in the broader context of the Canadian Forces' role in overseas conflicts and the home-front experience of those families whose loved ones are in areas of conflict.

Materials needed:

- Hard copies of all readings
- Literature circle role report sheets

THE LESSON

Anticipatory Set

Introduce students to the concept of a literature circle and the five roles, below, in this particular activity. You can do a practice run of a discussion if students are unsure of how to proceed.

Student Roles

1. Discussion Director
2. Passage Master
3. Illustrator
4. Recorder
5. Story Mapper

Procedures

1. Assign the reading passage.
2. Divide the class into circle groups.
3. Hold a literature circle activity immediately after students complete the reading assignment.
4. Collect the literature circle role report sheets following the activity.
5. Discuss the success of the project and how the process could improve.

Assessment

Literature Circle Rubric – See Rubric Sheet

Assign points based on the completed literature circle role report sheets following these guidelines (summary):

- Student completed the role as described in the job description.
- Student attended meeting.
- Student filled out his or her forms completely.
- Student participated in discussions and group activities.
- The content of the role report is of high quality.
- The report is neat and legible.
- The questions written or passages selected are meaningful to the discussion or activity.
- The role report represents the student's best effort.
- The connector provided relevant connections and explained them well.
- The recorder created a complete record of the group's activity.

Highway of Heroes Unit Literature Circle Activity

Discussion Director: Job Description and Report Form

Job Description: Develop a list of no more than three questions, which are thought-provoking and relevant to the reading assignment. These will be the basis of your portion of the group discussion. You may generate your own questions or select from the list your teacher provides. Your job is to make sure that all members of the group get to participate.

Name: _____ Circle Name: _____

Date of Discussion _____ Discussion # _____

Passage from the book: page ____ to page ____

List your discussion questions below:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

***Highway of Heroes* Unit Literature Circle Activity**

Passage Master: Job Description and Report Form

Job Description: Locate three short passages from the reading. Reread each passage for the group or ask for a volunteer to read it. Encourage the group to discuss and think about each passage.

Passages should contain important things for everyone to notice, remember, or respond to. Select passages that are important in some way. The following are examples of the kind of passages you might choose: selections that:

- Explore the reactions of the boy to the crowds gathered on the bridges;
- Evoke or describe emotion
- Are surprising/startling;
- Are confusing (something you wonder if other people "got");
- Use descriptive writing: figurative language, strong verbs, etc. (identify literary devices);
- Are important (maybe have a clue, foreshadowing?); or
- Contain a controversial event (elicit different opinions from group members).

Passage Master Worksheet

Name: _____ Circle Name: _____

Date of Discussion _____ Discussion # _____

Overall Passage from the book: page ____ to page ____

Passage # 1: page ____ to page ____

I selected this passage because: _____

Passage # 2: page ____ to page ____

I selected this passage because: _____

Passage # 3: page ____ to page ____

I selected this passage because: _____

Highway of Heroes Unit Literature Circle Activity

Recorder: Job Description and Report Form

Job Description: Your job is to record who attends the discussion and how they participate.

Name: _____ Circle Name: _____

Date of Discussion _____ Discussion # _____

Passage from the book: page ____ to page ____

Group Attendance: List which group members were in attendance at the discussion.

- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| 1. _____ | Role: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Role: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Role: _____ |
| 4. _____ | Role: _____ |
| 5. _____ | Role: _____ |

Record who responds to each discussion question. What did they have to say?

Question 1:

Question 2:

Question 3:

Record who responds to each passage. What did they have to say?

Passage 1:

Passage 2:

Passage 3:

***Highway of Heroes* Unit Literature Circle Activity**

Story Mapper: Job Description and Report Form

Job Description: Choose a story map or graphic organizer.

- Story Pyramid
- Story Web
- Venn Diagram (Before and After)

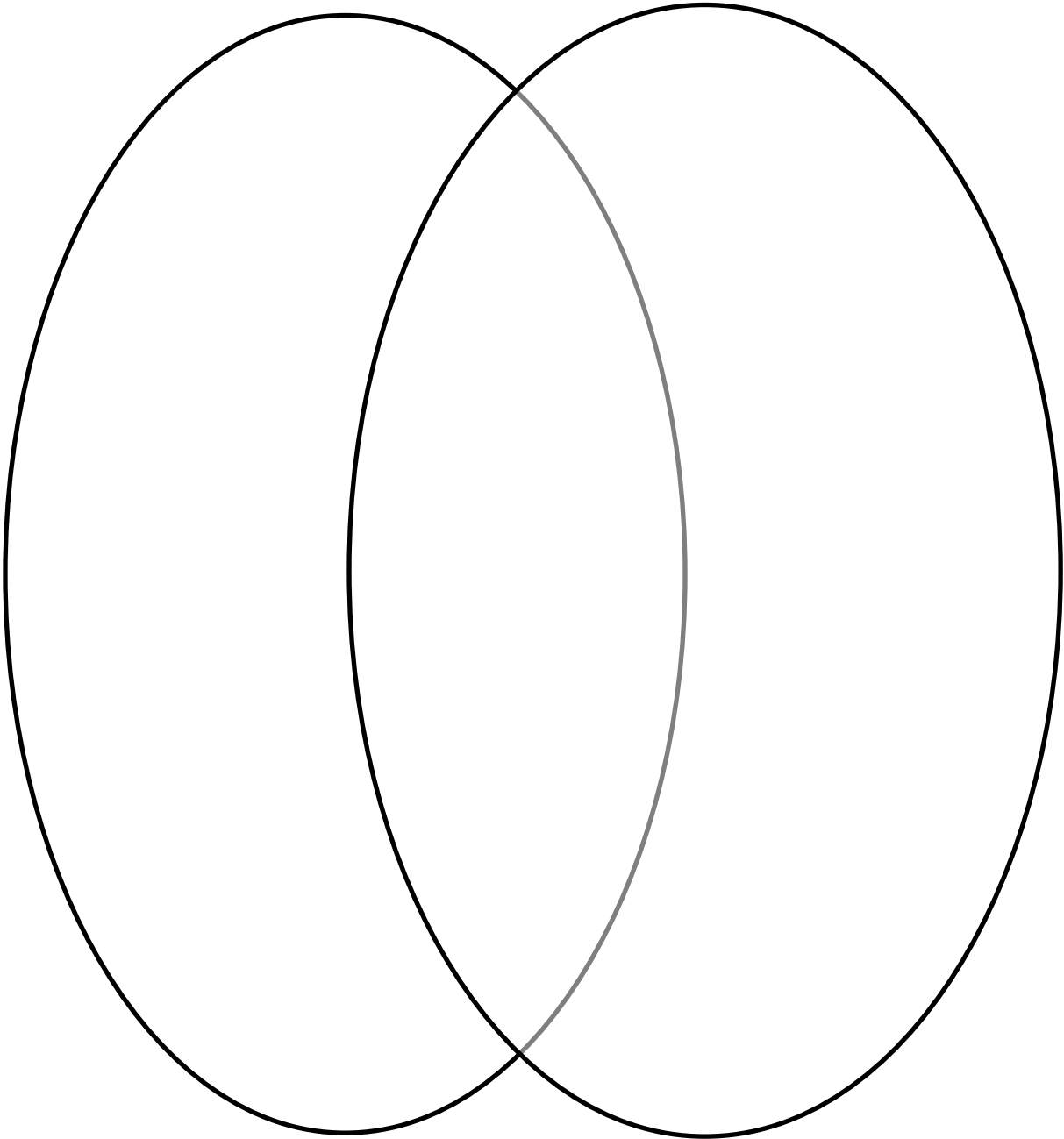
Use one or two of the graphic organizers or maps to analyze an element of the story.

Be prepared to explain the parts of the diagram(s) to your team. Tell why you chose the organizer(s) that you did. Discuss the results with your group and invite them to contribute their own ideas and ask questions.

VENN DIAGRAM

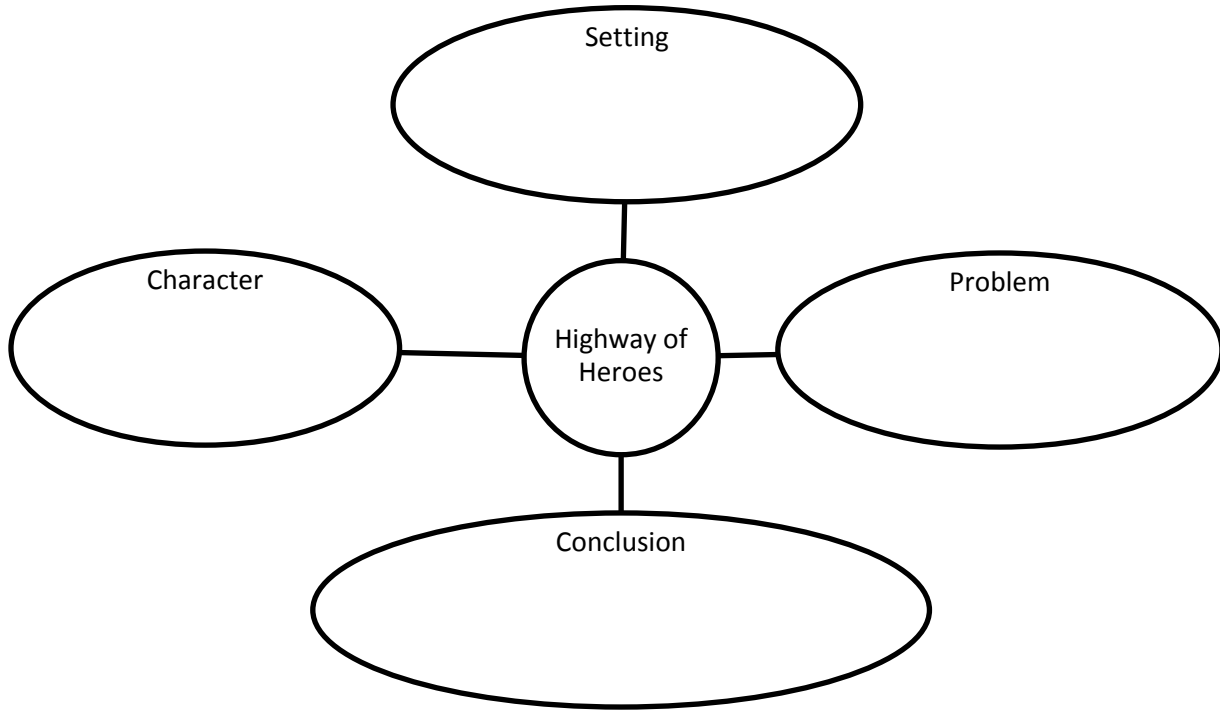
BEFORE

AFTER



STORY WEB

Use this web to describe what is happening in the story at the beginning of *Highway of Heroes*. Identify two symbols that represent something important in the story. Draw those symbols and explain their importance to the group.



A **symbol** is an object that holds extra meaning or significance for the character and/or the audience. It represents an important thought, idea or feeling.

Symbol 1:	Symbol 2:

STORY PYRAMID

One good way for a reader to respond to a book is by making a Story Pyramid. Think about the short story at the beginning of *Highway of Heroes*. To complete each line of the pyramid, follow the directions given below.

Line 1 – Identify the main character.

Line 2 – Write two words describing the main character.

Line 3 – Write three words describing the setting.

Line 4 – Write four words stating the story problem.

Line 5 – Write five words describing one event early in the story.

Line 6 – Write six words describing the next event.

Line 7 – Write seven words describing a third event.

Line 8 – Write eight words describing the way the story ends.

The form consists of eight horizontal lines arranged in a pyramid shape, with the longest line at the bottom and the shortest at the top. The lines are centered horizontally. Below the pyramid structure, there is a thick horizontal line that spans the width of the page.

***Highway of Heroes* Unit Literature Circle Activity**

Illustrator: Job Description and Report Form

Job Description: Choose a method to illustrate a key passage or theme from the book.

- A Dramatic Presentation: Pretend that you are one of the people in the story and tell your group about yourself. Discuss a key moment from the story. Then, in character, answer questions from the group.
- Storyboard Presentation: Sometimes stories can be made into short films or plays. When this happens, the editor, producer and director analyze the story so that the important parts are clear and in order. Using the storyboard handout, illustrate how you might visually tell the story from the point of view of someone *other than* the boy. (The mother, a bystander on a bridge, a police officer, a driver who is driving in the other direction, for example) Be prepared to discuss and answer questions about the choices you made regarding scene selection, dialogue selection, and what you drew.
- Poster Display: Create a poster advertising *Highway of Heroes*. Be sure to include all the important elements from the cover (title, author, illustrator). Look online for reviews of the book that you can quote (one or two lines) or create your own to grab the audience's attention. Be prepared to discuss your poster and answer questions from the group.
- Poem or Song Presentation: Write a poem or a song that captures an aspect of the story. It could be written from the perspective of one of the characters (the boy, his mother, his father, a person along the route). It could be written *for* one the characters. It could be a tribute piece for fallen soldiers or for their families. Explain why you chose to write the poem or song the way you did.

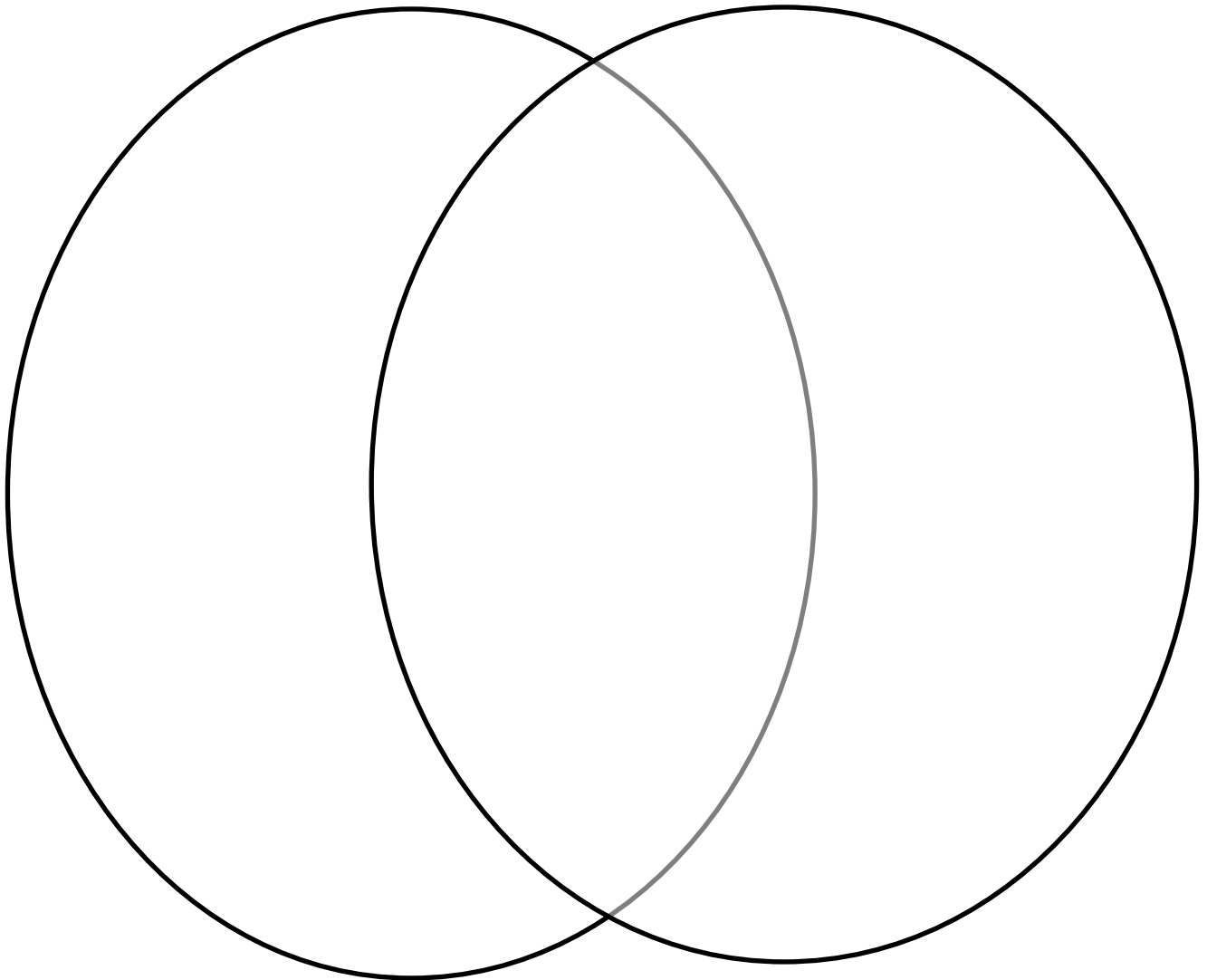
HIGHWAY OF HEROES STORYBOARD

Illustrate the story in the boxes below. Boxes are also provided for dialogue or for the characters' internal thoughts.

This story is told from the point of view of -

PART B: CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

1. **Comparing jobs:** Think about some of the jobs that the grown-ups in your life do every day. Perhaps your mother is a police officer or your father is a salesman. Perhaps you have an uncle in the military or a grandfather who is an electrician.
 - Go to the Canadian Forces website and research the various jobs that soldiers, sailors and air force men and women do. Choose one job to research in depth and present it to the class.
 - Using a Venn Diagram, choose a civilian job and compare it to the job of someone in the military. How are these jobs similar? How are they the different?



The **civilian** job I chose is

The **military** job I chose is

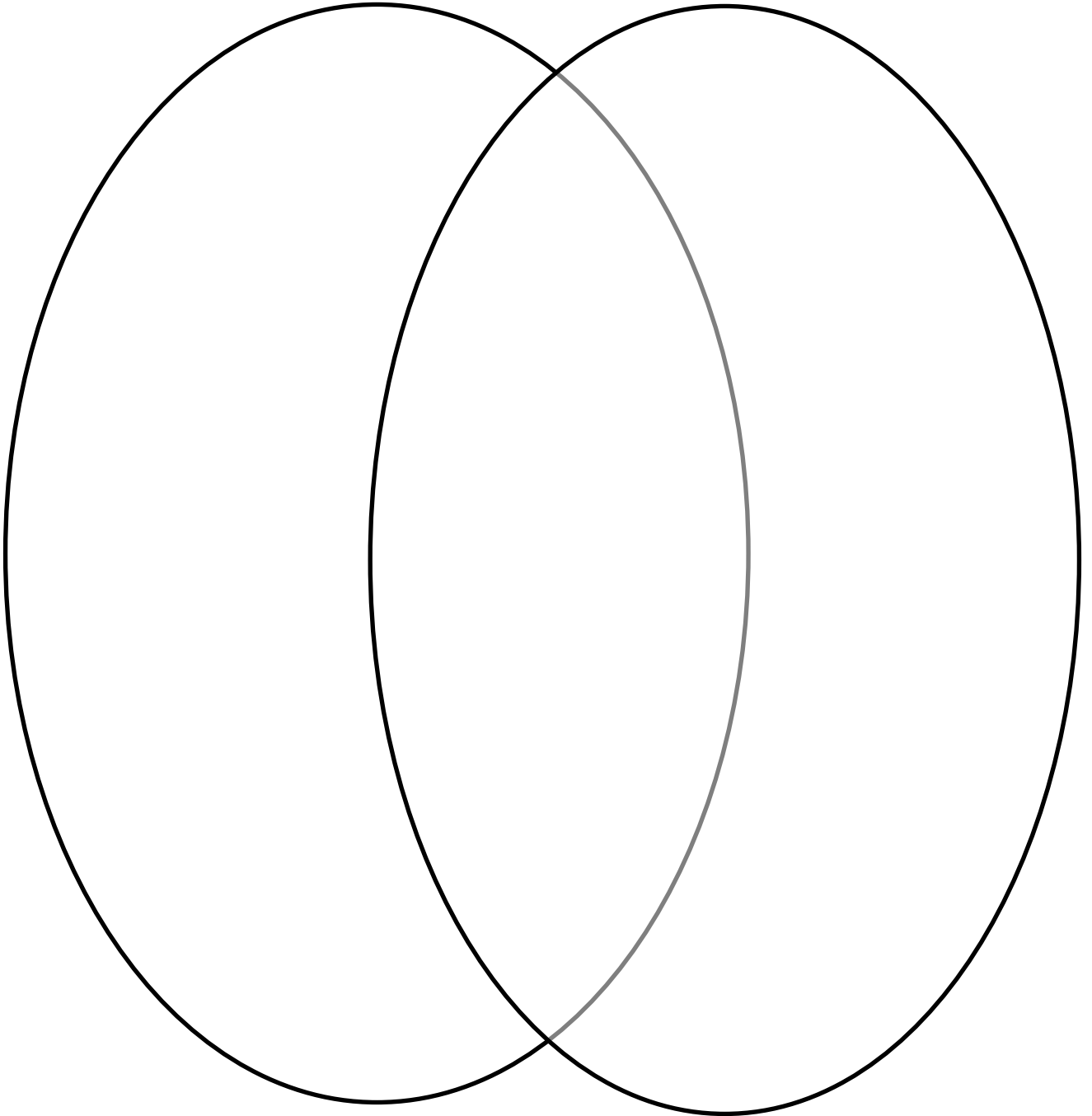
2. Where in the world is Afghanistan? Find Afghanistan on a map. Choose a region in Afghanistan where our Canadian troops have been stationed. How far away is that from your own hometown? Research the geography and climate of that region. Using a Venn Diagram, compare that region the area where you live. How are the two regions similar? Different? Now imagine that you are sending a “care package” to a soldier stationed in that region. What sorts of things would you put in your care package? What might a soldier miss, or need, or want?
3. Kathy Stinson mentions various agencies that help returning soldiers and their families. Research one of these agencies and present your findings to the class. You can find links to some of these agencies at the Highway of Heroes website:
www.fitzhenry.ca/highwayofheroes.ca
 - **Go Further:** Have a debate in the class and choose an agency to support. Then organize a fundraiser for that agency.
4. As a class, organize an assembly.
 - Decorate the hall/gym with the posters and/or flags that the students made.
 - Hand out yellow ribbons at the door (or poppies if it is near Remembrance Day)
 - Choose volunteers to present important things that they have learned about our men and women in the Canadian Forces and about the Highway of Heroes.
 - Invite a spokesperson from the Canadian Forces or your local Member of Parliament to speak to the school.
 - Read a poem or a tribute
 - If your class has chosen to support an organization, give a presentation about that organization
 - Present a slide show
 - Sing “O Canada”

VENN DIAGRAM (ACTIVITY 2)

CANADA

AFGHANISTAN

My town _____ In Afghanistan _____



PLACE MAT ACTIVITY

Place Mat involves groups of students working alone and together around a single piece of paper to simultaneously involve all members.

Assign each group a theme from the list below. Each member will fill in a box with 3 or 4 points about how that theme applies to *Highway of Heroes*.

Have each student circle or make a star beside the point that he or she believes it the most important one to consider. Students then take turns reading the list aloud. The group listens attentively in order to decide the most important issue. Each key idea is written in the circle in the middle. Continue in this manner until each student has had a turn. When the group is finished, one person acts as spokesperson. This person reads out the points in the middle box for the whole class.

The diagram shows a large rounded rectangle divided into four quadrants by a vertical and a horizontal line. In the center, where the lines intersect, is a smaller rounded rectangle shaded in gray. Each of the four quadrants contains four horizontal lines for writing. The central gray box also contains two horizontal lines for writing.

Themes: Honouring heroes; making a difference; patriotism; responsibility; sacrifice; generosity

ART CONNECTIONS

1. Design a poster or a banner that you could take to a bridge gathering. Consider the message that you want to convey and the way that you want to convey it. In your design, take into account the size and number of your elements. Will they be visible from a distance? Who is your intended audience? (Optional: Create your poster using bristol board, fabric, butcher/newspaper roll paper, etc.)
2. Design a bumper sticker or a button. What idea do you want to promote? What words and/or image will have the most impact? Write a paragraph to explain the choices you made.
3. Look at the various types of flags shown throughout the book. Imagine that you are part of a new school club that is committed to supporting Canadian troops. You are going with your group to stand on one of the bridges over the 401. Design a flag that would represent your school group that you could take with you.

Students may wish to take their artwork to a bridge ceremony. If this is not possible, consider taking a picture of their work and mailing it to fitzkids@fitzhenry.ca. We will post some of your photos on our *Highway of Heroes* website.

LITERACY CONNECTIONS

1. **Letter writing:** Write a letter to (a) a soldier who is serving in the Canadian Forces or (b) a family member a soldier who was killed overseas.
2. **Letter to the Editor:** Research various letters written to the editors of your local or national newspapers. Write your own letter to tell your community about the Highway of Heroes and offer your support to the families of fallen soldiers.
3. Follow this link to Pete Fisher's **newspaper article**:
<http://www.northumberlandtoday.com/ArticleDisplayGenContent.aspx?e=3532>
 - i. Write a letter to the editor replying to Pete Fisher's article
 - ii. Write your own article about the Highway of Heroes.

A PICTURE TELLS A STORY

Choose a photograph from *Highway of Heroes* that you found particularly interesting. What do you think the photographer was trying to capture in the image? Why do you think the author chose to use it in her book? Look at the colours, the lighting, the size, and the main subject(s). What mood or feeling does it suggest, and what about the picture makes you feel that way?

