

# 10.1 In Flanders Fields The Poppies Blow

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## Preparation

Ask a volunteer to read the poem 'In Flanders Fields'. Search and display an image of a poppy.



This/or last Sunday is/was a very important day in our country. Can anyone tell me what it is/was called? Last week we thought about events that take place now to remember events in the past. We thought about how bonfire night is celebrated across the UK. The 11th November is called Remembrance Day. But it is probably wrong to think of Remembrance Day as a celebration. Instead, we use a different word. 'Commemorate' means that we think something in the past is important, but it may be too sad to celebrate. Can anyone tell me what Remembrance Day commemorates? World Wars One and Two are important events that our country has been involved in. We may want to remember particular battles or specific soldiers and what they did. We commemorate or remember the events that took place, so that we can be thankful for those who gave their lives to protect us and as a reminder to work hard to avoid war in the future.

Can anyone tell me what sort of things we do to commemorate Remembrance Day?

- Remembrance Day Parades
- Brass bands may march in the Parades
- There is a festival of Remembrance
- There is a two-minute silence

- Church services are held to remember soldiers who fought in different wars
- Poppies are worn around the time of the 11th November
- Poppy wreaths are put in special places in villages, towns and cities all over the UK
- The Last Post is played
- **Mention if your school is or was involved in a Remembrance Day parade.**

This week we are going to explore why some of these are used to commemorate Remembrance Day. Poppies are worn at this time of year, but why do we wear them and what are they for? Before we answer these questions, we are going to hear a famous poem written during World War One.

### *In Flanders fields by John McCrae*

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*



*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.  
Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.*

Flanders is an area of Belgium known for fierce fighting in World War One. In the fields where battles had taken place and soldiers had been killed, the bright red flower of the poppy could be seen growing in large numbers. Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, a soldier in the Canadian Army noticed the poppies and he wrote the poem we just heard.

The poem was published in an English magazine called Punch in December 1915. The poem was very popular and was used to raise money to help the families of soldiers in Canada in 1917. The poem inspired an American lady called Moina Belle Michael and in 1920 the poppy became a symbol of an organisation in the USA helping American soldiers.

The first Poppy Appeal in the UK was held in 1921 by The Royal British Legion. Red silk poppies were sold raising £106,000 to help soldiers find jobs and housing after World War One. The following year, Major George Howson set up the Poppy Factory giving jobs to disabled soldiers. The factory in Aylesford in Kent makes millions of poppies each year.

The poppy has become an important symbol of Remembrance and hope and it is worn by millions of people across the world at this time of year. It is a symbol of Remembrance because it reminds us of the poppies that grew on the battle fields of World War One where many soldiers lost their lives. It is a symbol of hope because the beautiful flower grew quickly after the horrors of war. It is a reminder that good things happen after or even at the same time as really bad things.

## Time to reflect

- Why is the poppy a symbol of remembrance today?
- Why is the poppy a symbol of hope today?

### Reflection (Prayer)

*(Dear God)*

We know that Remembrance Day is the day we set aside to think of those who died in war. We are thankful for the relative peace we have enjoyed in the UK in the years after World War 2 up until now. We pray for peace in places around the world that are at war now. Help us all to learn the lessons from the actions of the past. Help us to change the bad and repeat that which is good. *(Amen)*



## 10.2 Two Minute Silence

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Ask the pupils what they think 'act of remembrance' means. The act of remembrance on either Remembrance Sunday or Remembrance Day involves a two-minute silence. The first Remembrance Day took place in 1919, the year after the end of World War One. The war ended on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month or 11am on the 11th November, 1918. An Australian Journalist, Edward George Honey suggested that the end of the war was remembered with a respectful silence. King George V agreed and called for a two-minute silence saying,

"All locomotion should cease, so that, in perfect stillness, the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead."

The 11th November 1919 was the first Remembrance Day. It was given the name 'armistice day'. The word 'armistice' means an agreement between two sides to stop fighting. The first Remembrance Sunday took place on the second Sunday in November 1919 and a two-minute silence has taken place at war memorials, cenotaphs

(where the names of soldiers who died during the World Wars One and Two are written) and church and religious services across the UK.

### Time to reflect

- Can you work out what King George V was saying?
- Does that still happen today?

### Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

May we remember during this time of remembrance the importance of silence. Help us to remember the cost of war. We ask that those in positions of power across the world strive for a real and lasting peace in areas of unrest and trouble. Help us also to act to bring about peace and understanding in our own communities. (Amen)



## 10.3 Why Silence?

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### Time to reflect

Listen to, think about and talk to a partner...

- The guns fell silent on the 11th November 1918.
- Imagine just how quiet it must have been compared to the noise of years of shelling, explosions and rifles firing.
- Imagine how a soldier on the front must have felt knowing the gunfire had come to a permanent end.
- The silence must have brought back a confidence in life; it meant the fear of death was over.
- Silence also gives us the opportunity to think about what is important. Silence must have seemed extremely important to the soldiers on that first Armistice Day.
- Today, we remember family or friends that are involved in the armed services (The Army, Navy and Air Force) or think about how important it is for us to live in a country without the constant fear of war.

- What would you think about in a two-minute silence?

### Reflection (Prayer)

*(Dear God)*

We are thankful for this time of year when we remember those that have fought in war. We think of those who lost their lives in war and for those that have fought so that we may live in relative peace. We ask that we may live lives that help bring an end to conflict and wars. *(Amen)*



## 10.4 The Last Post

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### Preparation

Play a web video of the Last Post.

Has anyone heard a piece of music called the Last Post? When would it normally be heard? The Last Post is used as part of the Act of Remembrance. The Last Post is played just before the two-minute silence at Remembrance services all around the world. But the Last Post hasn't always had such a sad role. Before watches and alarm clocks, soldiers would hear trumpet or bugle calls so they knew what time of the day it was and what they needed to be doing. There were many bugle calls and the first bugle call of the day was called the Reveille. What do you think the last bugle call was called? The Last Post was played in the evening after an officer had inspected the army camp to tell everyone that the camp was safe and closed until the morning. In the morning, the soldiers would hear the Reveille and so it would go on.

Around 160 years ago the Last Post started to be played over the graves of soldiers who had died overseas. The Last Post was used to mark the end of the day, but now it began to mark the end of a soldier's life. After a few moments of silent reflection and prayer, the Reveille would be heard. The Reveille was the morning call, but now it marked the soldier's new life in Heaven.

The Last Post and Reveille are used during Remembrance services around the world along with the following words:

*"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old,  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning  
We will remember them."*

### Time to reflect

- Why was/is the Reveille played?
- Why was/is the Last Post played?
- How does the Last Post make you feel?

### Reflection (Prayer)

*(Dear God)*

We are thankful for this time of year when we remember those that have fought in war. We think of those who lost their lives in war and for those that have fought so that we may live in relative peace. We ask that we may live lives that help bring an end to conflict and wars. *(Amen)*



## 10.5 Memorials

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The 'Commonwealth' is the name given to the countries that used to be part of the British Empire. Can anyone name a commonwealth country? There were many soldiers fighting on the side of the British during World Wars One and Two that came from commonwealth countries. 1,700,000 commonwealth men and women died during the two wars. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is an organisation that looks after cemeteries, burial plots and memorials for those who died in 154 countries across the world.

Before the 20th Century the traditional British way of commemorating a victory was to create a statue of the general or officer who won the battle. But at the beginning of the 1900's instead of making a statue, a monument was created listing the names of the soldiers who had died during the battle.

Many communities across the United Kingdom contributed to fund the building of a memorial or cenotaph to remember those that died during the World Wars. **Ask the pupils if they know where their local cenotaph is.** You can see these in most towns and cities and at this time each year poppy wreaths will be placed on them as

an act of remembrance. Memorials along with plaques in schools, churches and in community halls have the names of those who gave their lives during times of war. We have set aside this time in November to remember as a community, but the memorials stand as lasting reminders throughout the year. They remind us that we should be working for peace all year round, not just once a year.

### Time to reflect

- How can remembering make things better?
- How can we make remembrance last?

### Reflection (Prayer)

*(Dear God)*

At this time of remembrance, we remind ourselves of the importance of peace. We are reminded that it is our responsibility to make the world a better place. Help us to be thankful and continue to work for peace throughout the year. *(Amen)*

