

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.

John McCrae was a Canadian poet who served as a medical officer in the Boer War and World War I. This poem honours and commemorates the men who died in the horrific battles in Flanders. It is said that he was inspired to write this poem after seeing the blood red poppies grow on the graves of his friends around Flanders. The poppy has since become a symbol of veterans worldwide. This poem was published in December 1915.



Teaching Ideas for *In Flanders Fields*

- **Pronunciation** (Audio files of the poem read aloud are available at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/23900/23900-index.html>)
 - mark stress, intonation, thought groups
 - use a highlighter pen to mark initial and final consonant clusters (e.g. **Flanders**, **fields**)
 - recite / memorize the poem

- **Vocabulary**
 - identify archaic/ older forms (e.g. ye, be yours, scarce heard) and “translate” them into more modern forms; ask why the older forms were chosen
 - identify and quantify parts of speech; identify the ratio of content words (e.g. those with meaning) and functional words (e.g. those that support the grammar); ask why poetry is weighted towards content words

- **Themes and Comprehension**
 - draw a series of pictures or make a collage that captures the themes of the poem; compare and explain your selection
 - “translate” poem into a simple, narrative text
 - identify the symbols and write one sentence to describe what each one represents
 - brainstorm the ways in which we remember or honour people and events

- **Cross-cultural Comparison**
 - identify monuments, symbols and other ways of memorializing events in your country of origin
 - share with classmates

- **Critical Thinking**
 - discuss the act of remembering: is it important? why or why not?
 - identify which events and people are memorialized and which are not
 - ask, “who decides what is memorialized?”
 - create a memorial tribute (i.e. a symbol, a poem, an event) to a forgotten group or event



Postcard Writing Activity: Write a postcard to a veteran

Find this activity on the federal government website: <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/help/generalfaq/postpeace>

Learning outcomes:

- understand the significance of the sacrifices and achievements of Canada's Veterans or Canadian Forces members
- link with Veterans or Canadian Forces members in a personal way

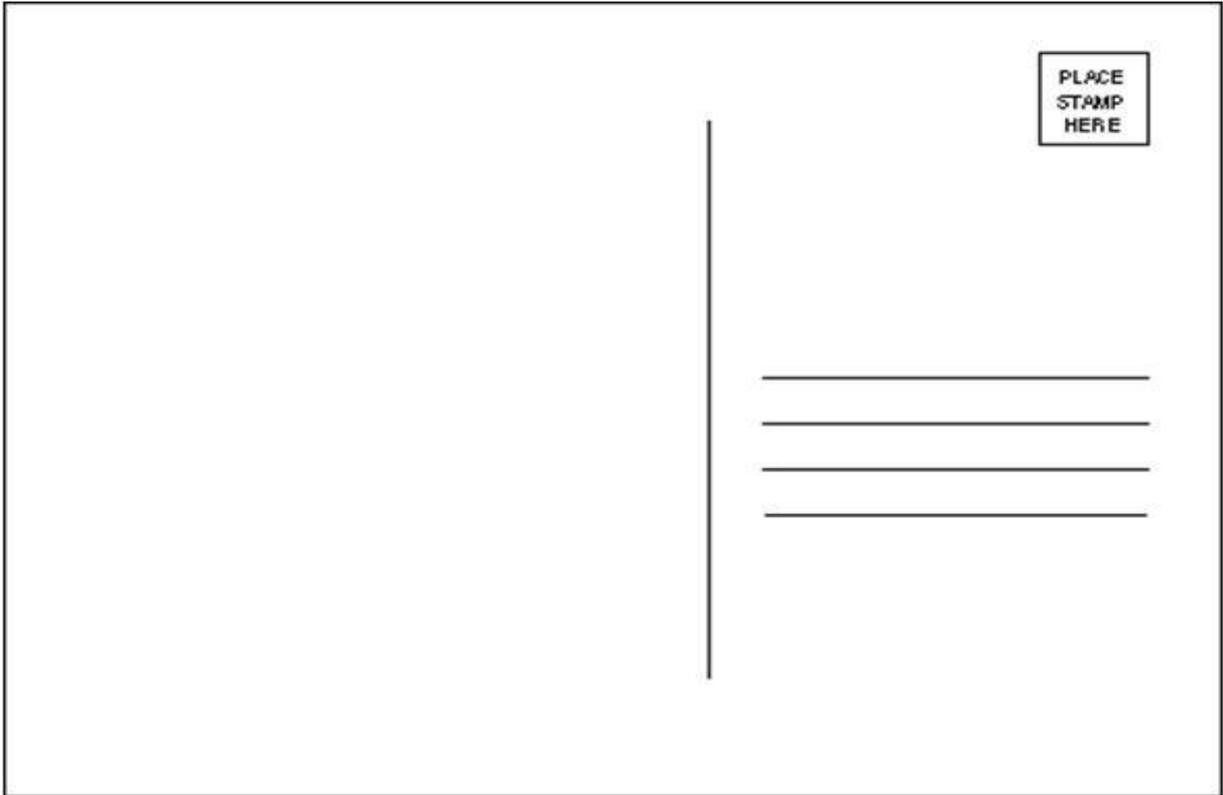
Activity components:

- [Listing of addresses](#) where postcards may be sent

Instructions

1. **Distribute** postcards to students. (or students can make their own)
2. **Explain** briefly who Veterans or Canadian Forces members are and the types of tasks they have been engaged in during the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean War and peace operations, domestic and foreign.
3. **Encourage** students to write a message of appreciation, or have them write how they will remember the sacrifices and achievements of Canadian Veterans or Canadian Forces members.
 - Thank you for keeping Canada safe.
 - Thank you for your sacrifices.
 - I will remember by wearing a poppy on my heart.
 - I will remember by going to a Remembrance Day ceremony.
4. **Collect** postcards:
 - Postcards destined for the same address must be grouped together in a single package.
 - Provide the name and address of your school or organization and the participating students' grade level(s).
 - Ensure that each postcard contains appropriate content before sending.
5. **Mail** your postcards to the address of your choice.





A postcard template with a vertical line on the right side. In the top right corner, there is a small box containing the text "PLACE STAMP HERE". Below this box, there are four horizontal lines for an address.



Song: Bryan Adams: Remembrance Day

Vancouver's artist-photographer, Bryan Adams created a moving tribute to the Canadian soldiers who died serving their country during The Great War, 1914-1918. This video comes with an on-line quiz.

http://www.eslvideo.com/esl_video_quiz_intermediate.php?id=2804



Make Crepe Paper Poppies (follow instructions)

<http://www.wikihow.com/index.php?title=Make-Tissue-Paper-Poppies&printable=yes>

Find out More

- Research Remembrance Day services in your community (For Metro Vancouver, try <http://www.miss604.com/2013/11/remembrance-day-ceremonies-around-vancouver.html>)
- Research and create a timeline of Canada's military events
- Research the numbers of Canadians who fought, were wounded or died in each of Canada's military events; practice saying large numbers

