

# Remembrance – Flanders Field

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Summary: A multi-disciplinary approach to remembering those who serve America in times of war.

Objective: To use poetry and an art project to enhance student understanding of those who served in World War I.

Event/Time Period: This lesson could be used toward the end of a unit on World War I or in conjunction with Veterans Day or Memorial Day.

Sunshine State Standards:

SS.8.A.1.7 View historic events through the eyes of those who were there as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.

SS.912.A.4.5 Examine causes, course, and consequences of United States involvement in World War I.

Materials: Collected Images to share with students (attached); A class set of the poem, *In Flanders Field*, by Dr. John McCrae(attached); Printout of information to share with students about Dr. McCrae from <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/flanders.htm>; a class set of directions on how to make a poppy (one version is attached; there are many versions available on the internet); a printed bookmark (attached – written by the American Legion) for each student explaining the significance of the poppy.

Art supplies: red tissue or crepe paper, green pipe cleaners, scissors, glue

## Day One:

1. Review basic facts related to World War I (when did it begin and end, what event triggered the outbreak of war, what countries fought on each side, who were major leaders, what type of warfare and technology was used in this war, why did the United States get involved, and so forth). Show images of soldiers in front of bombed out village and wearing gas masks.
2. The teacher and students may refer to World War I section in textbook or The Great War website, <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/index.htm>, gives a good overview.
3. Ask students if they have ever seen a poppy worn as a symbol of remembrance of soldiers lost in war. Many veterans groups distribute these. Show students images of poppies.
4. Explain that the poppy image relates back to Flanders' Field from World War I. Some of the bloodiest battles of World War I took place in the areas of northern France and southwest Belgium known as Flanders. The British front line was determined to keep the Germans from traversing Flanders and the Ypres river valley to reach the port of Calais. Show map image.
5. Distribute printed copies of the poem, *In Flanders Field* to students. Project image of the handwritten poem. Read aloud and discuss the first stanza. This stanza is about the battlefield... show images of the crosses indicating where the soldiers were buried.
6. Read and discuss the second stanza of the poem which personalizes the human aspect of those who died. Show again the images of WWI soldiers in front of bombed out village and wearing gas masks. What might be their ages? What might be their hopes and dreams? Why did they serve?

## Day Two

1. Redistribute class set of poem. Who wrote this poem? When was it written? Why did he write this poem? When was it published? Show images of McCrae. Share information from the Arlington Cemetery website.

2. Read and discuss the third stanza of the poem. This one is actually a message to us. What is the message? What is meant by “the torch”? If we do not carry the torch what would result? How might this message apply in today’s world? The point being that American soldiers should not die in vain and should be honored.
3. Distribute directions and supplies to students for creating poppies. Students create poppies.

#### Additional Sources

**Prose & Poetry - In Flanders Fields: The Making of the Poem.** More information on John McRae and the writing of the poem. <http://www.firstworldwar.com/poetsandprose/inflandersfields.htm>

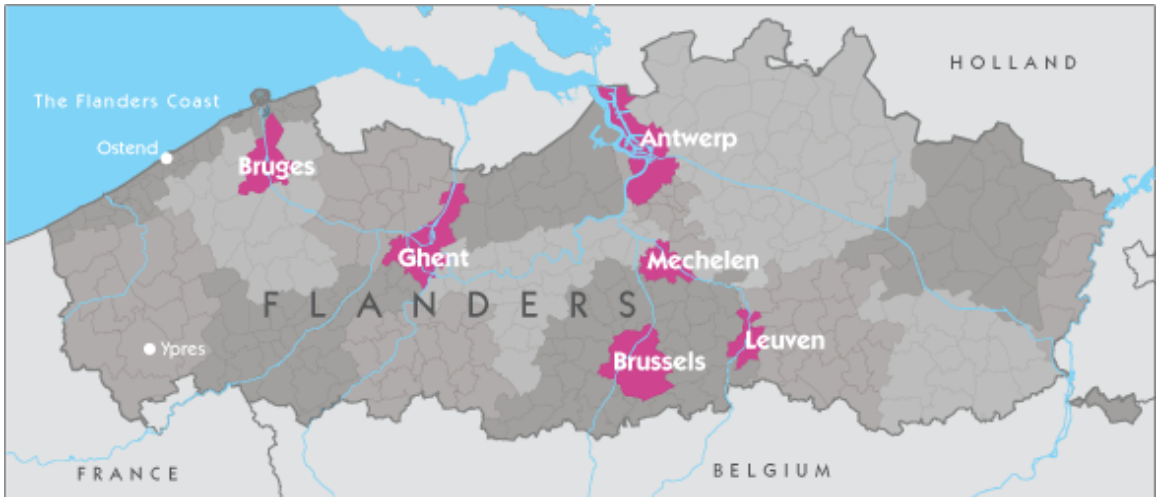
**In Flanders Fields Video.** Poem set to song and with images – very powerful.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WCd3lQY0o8>

**The History & Poetry of "In Flanders Fields"** Lesson plan written for high school students. Would be great to pair up with a language arts teacher’s poetry unit.  
<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/poetry/lesson-plan/3244.html>

**Battle in Flanders 1914.** A timeline of events.  
<http://history.sandiego.edu/GEN/ww1/1914h.html>

**Numbers of Americans Killed/Wounded, by Action.** Statistics of those killed and wounded in conflicts from the American Revolution to the War in Iraq. Would be great for graphing.  
<http://www.americanwarlibrary.com/allwars.htm>







# In Flanders' fields



By Lt. Col. John McCrae  
(of Guelph, Canada)  
Died January 28<sup>th</sup> 1918, while on  
active service in France.

**I**n 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 amidst 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.

**T**ake up our quarrel with the foe,  
To you from falling 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.

## In Flanders Fields

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Punch  
Dec 8, 1915

John M<sup>c</sup>Cre

