




NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE  
MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE

# The Poppy Project

*Remembrance is our mission*



175 Bourne Avenue  
Pooler, GA 31322

# Lesson Plan

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE  
MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE

## GRADE

5TH - 8TH

## SUBJECTS

SOCIAL STUDIES  
| ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS | FINE ARTS

## TOPIC

READ THE 1915 POEM "IN FLANDERS FIELDS" WRITTEN BY LT. COLONEL JOHN MCCRAE. ANALYZE THE TEXT OF THE POEM. READ THE 1918 POEM "WE SHALL KEEP THE FAITH" BY MOINA MICHAEL. CREATE A POPPY AS PART OF A CLASS REMEMBRANCE PROJECT.

## LESSON FOCUS AND GOALS

- IN SMALL GROUPS OR AS A CLASS READ ALOUD THE POEM "IN FLANDERS FIELDS" AND ANALYZE THE RONDEAU. MCCRAE'S POEM SPEAKS TO THE READER AS A GROUP OF SOLDIERS WHO DIED AFTER A BATTLE AND IN THE THIRD STANZA CALLS FOR THE READER TO TAKE UP "THE TORCH".
- IN "WE SHALL KEEP THE FAITH" MOINA MICHAEL INTERPRETS "THE TORCH" AS REMEMBRANCE AND LEADS A MOVEMENT FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF DECEASED SOLDIERS WITH THE POPPY AS ITS SYMBOL.
- FINALLY, STUDENTS WILL ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF THE NEXT GENERATION'S RESPONSIBILITY

## MATERIALS NEEDED

### PROVIDED

- "IN FLANDERS FIELDS" BY JOHN MCCRAE
- "WE SHALL KEEP THE FAITH" BY MOINA MICHAEL
- POEM ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

### NOT PROVIDED

- ART SUPPLIES TO CREATE POPPIES

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

### STUDENTS WILL

- GAIN KNOWLEDGE OF WORLD WAR I, JOHN MCCRAE, AND MOINA MICHAEL
- IMPROVE COMPREHENSION AND ANALYSIS OF COMPLEX TEXTS (POEMS)
- CREATE 2D OR 3D ART INSPIRED BY THE LESSON

## STRUCTURE / ACTIVITY

- IN SMALL GROUPS OR AS A CLASS READ ALOUD THE POEM "IN FLANDERS FIELDS"
- ANALYZE THE RONDEAU. MCCRAE'S POEM SPEAKS TO THE READER AS A GROUP OF SOLDIERS WHO DIED AFTER A BATTLE AND IN THE THIRD STANZA CALLS FOR THE READER TO TAKE UP "THE TORCH".
- IN SMALL GROUPS OR AS A CLASS READ ALOUD THE POEM "WE SHALL KEEP THE FAITH" MOINA MICHAEL. MICHAEL INTERPRETS "THE TORCH" AS REMEMBRANCE AND LEADS A MOVEMENT FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF DECEASED SOLDIERS WITH THE POPPY AS ITS SYMBOL. STUDENTS CAN DISCUSS IF THEY AGREE WITH MICHAEL'S INTERPRETATION.
- STUDENTS WILL ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF THE NEXT GENERATION'S RESPONSIBILITY IN CARRYING "THE TORCH". FINALLY STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO MAKE A POPPY AS PART OF A REMEMBRANCE PROJECT.

## ASSESSMENT

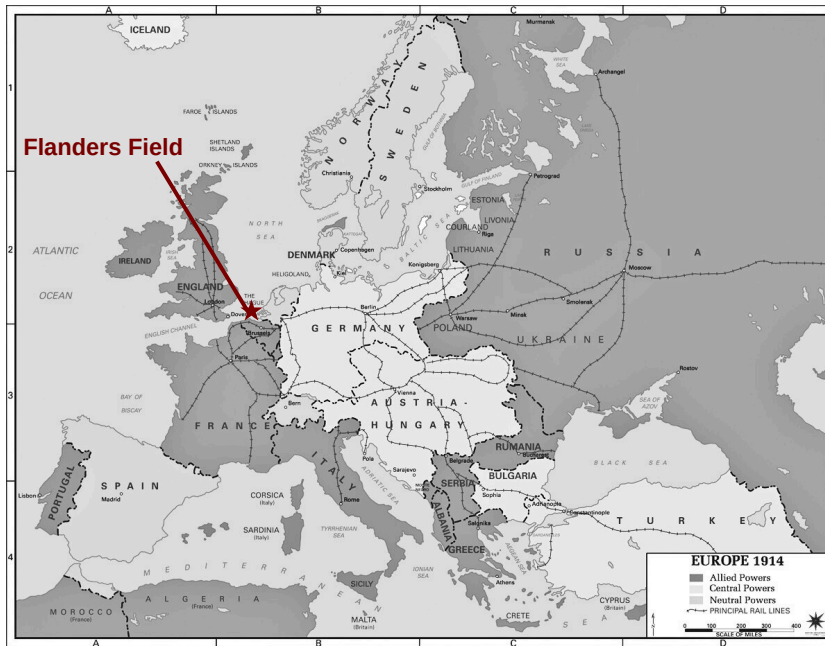
TEACHERS MAY HAVE STUDENTS TURN IN THE POEM ANALYSIS WORKSHEETS PROVIDED.

STUDENTS HAVE COMPLETED THE POPPY PROJECT BY PLACING DISPLAYS IN THEIR SCHOOLS AND CLASSROOMS. STUDENTS HAVE PRESENTED AT VETERANS' MEMORIAL EVENTS AND EVEN MADE VIDEOS ON THE COMPLETION OF THIS PROJECT.

CONTACT THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AT [EDUCATION@MIGHTYEIGHTH.ORG](mailto:education@mightyeighth.org)  
FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING THE POPPY PROJECT

## BRIEF HISTORY OF WORLD WAR I (1914-1918)

On June 28, 1914, the heir to the Austria-Hungary throne, **Archduke Franz Ferdinand** was assassinated in Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip. His death triggered a series of secret alliances and commitments that resulted in mass military mobilization by major European powers.



Other countries entered into the conflict including Canada in August of 1914 and the United States in 1917, both siding the Allied Powers.

On the Western Front both sides settled into a defensive stalemate. Trenches, a network of long narrow ditches, were filled with soldiers, machine guns, and artillery. Trenches provided little protection from the dangers of opposing forces. They were also filled with mud, disease, rodents, and the bodies of the dead.

Trench warfare was designed allow opposing sides to launch an offensive attack and quickly overrun the enemy. Instead, trench warfare kept soldiers in poor conditions until hundreds of men were called to go “over the top”.

Soldiers climbed out of their trenches hoping to enter, overpower, and occupy the enemy's trenches. Many men would be wounded or killed a few feet from where they exited the trench. Machine guns and artillery, new war machines, did much of the damage during the battles.

## LT. COL. JOHN MCCRAE

**John McCrae** was a native of Guelph, Ontario, and a veteran of the South African War (1899-1902). **McCrae** began World War I as a surgeon with the Canadian Field Artillery. By mid-April **McCrae** was in Ypres, a town in the Belgian province of West Flanders.

On May 2, 1915, 22-year-old Lieutenant **Alexis Helmer**, was killed at the Second Battle of Ypres. **Helmer** was a good friend of **McCrae** and his tragic death by artillery was devastating. The next day, **McCrae**, who had previously published poetry, completed *In Flanders Fields*.

**McCrae** wrote *In Flanders Field* inspired by the new fields of red poppies that grew around the battlefields and cemeteries. Seeds need light to grow. Explosions, trench digging, and gravesites moved the soil and allowed the poppy seeds to come to the surface. This caused poppies to appear in most places with a military presence on the Western Front.



COURTESY OF GUELPH MUSEUMS,  
MCCRAE HOUSE, M1968X.354.1.1

Once published in December 1915, *In Flanders Fields* immediately gained popularity amongst the soldiers in the trenches. In the words of one writer, *In Flanders Field* is “an eternal motif, part of the collective memory of the war.” **Lt. Col. John McCrae** continued to serve as a medical officer until he died of pneumonia at Wimereux, France on January 28, 1918.

# *In Flanders Fields*

**By Lt. Col. John McCrae**

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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.



## THE POPPY: BECOMING A SYMBOL

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The poppy's status as a recognizable symbol of Remembrance and its use as a fundraising tool began after World War I. This was driven by the work of two women, **Anna Guerin** and **Moina Michael**.

**Anna Guerin**, nicknamed 'the Poppy Lady from France' set up a network of French war widows who made artificial flowers from silk to raise funds for various causes. By 1920 her work had resulted in the American Legion and the Major Veterans Association in the USA adopting the poppy as a symbol of Remembrance. After this success, Guerin traveled to Britain in hopes of gaining more support.

In August 1921, **Guerin** went to Britain to meet with the British Legion to persuade them to adopt selling artificial poppies. She was quickly backed by the Legion. On November 11, 1921, the anniversary of the end of the war, the first-ever Poppy Day was arranged in Britain.



**Moina Belle Michael**, a Georgia educator, was greatly inspired by *In Flanders Fields*. In her autobiography, **Michael** described her inspiration to make the poppy a "messenger of remembrance." Just before Armistice, November 11, 1918, she was reading through an issue of *The Ladies Home Journal*. She saw the "strikingly illustrated" poem with red poppies. **Michael** had found the poem, *In Flanders Fields*.

The poem referenced two battlegrounds in France and Belgium and the poem concluded with a verse that resonated with Michael.

*"We shall not sleep, though poppies grow In Flanders fields."*

Later that day she bought artificial poppies and distributed them for people to wear as a symbol of remembrance. She also wrote her poem, *We Shall Keep the Faith* as a response to *In Flanders Fields*.

Poppy sales would raise generous sums for veterans' groups in the years that followed. In the early 1920s, she represented the Flanders Fields Red Poppy movement, which garnered formal adoptions by several veterans' groups: the American Legion, its Auxiliary, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. As the 1920s continued, however, Americans lost interest in the war, and remembrance activities decreased in number. The poppy while still a symbol of remembrance in the United States never gained the traction that it did in Canada and the United Kingdom.

# ***We Shall Keep the Faith***

**By Moina Michael**

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OH! YOU WHO SLEEP IN FLANDERS FIELDS,  
SLEEP SWEET - TO RISE ANEW!  
WE CAUGHT THE TORCH YOU THREW  
AND HOLDING HIGH, WE KEEP THE FAITH  
WITH ALL WHO DIED.

WE CHERISH, TOO, THE POPPY RED  
THAT GROWS ON FIELDS WHERE VALOR LED;  
IT SEEMS TO SIGNAL TO THE SKIES  
THAT BLOOD OF HEROES NEVER DIES,  
BUT LENDS A LUSTRE TO THE RED  
OF THE FLOWER THAT BLOOMS ABOVE THE DEAD  
IN FLANDERS FIELDS.

AND NOW THE TORCH AND POPPY RED  
WE WEAR IN HONOR OF OUR DEAD.  
FEAR NOT THAT YE HAVE DIED FOR NAUGHT;  
WE'LL TEACH THE LESSON THAT YE WROUGHT  
IN FLANDERS FIELDS.

# *In Flanders Fields* Analysis Sheet

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1. Historical Context:

List two important experiences that influenced the author's writing

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2. Read the entire poem. Note the usage of poetic devices in the poem's message.

- **Personification** – giving human qualities to nonhuman things \_\_\_\_\_
- **Tone** – what emotion do the speakers use \_\_\_\_\_
- **Point of view** - who is telling the poem \_\_\_\_\_
- **Imagery** – creating pictures with words \_\_\_\_\_
- **Alliteration** – repeating the same letter or words \_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you think the poem means?

- Who is the subject of the poem? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are they talking about? \_\_\_\_\_
- When is the poem happening? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where is the poem happening? \_\_\_\_\_
- Why do you think the author wrote the poem? \_\_\_\_\_

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# *In Flanders Fields* Analysis Sheet

4. Read the third stanza. The speakers are asking the reader to “take up our quarrel with the foe:” Readers are left to decide whether the speakers are asking them to join the war or work to stop it. In your own words, write what you think the speakers are encouraging the reader to do. Why would the speakers want to end the war or see it continue? Do you agree with the speakers?

[illegible]





# The Poppy Project

*Remembrance is our mission*

The National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force encourages schools to create poppy memorials in their classrooms. This can be as simple as coloring a cutout image of a four-petaled flower or creating a collage image using colored bits of paper.

If you are looking for inspiration please contact the Education Department at [education@mightyeighth.org](mailto:education@mightyeighth.org).

If you complete a poppy display in your school please share your work. Remembrance is our mission!

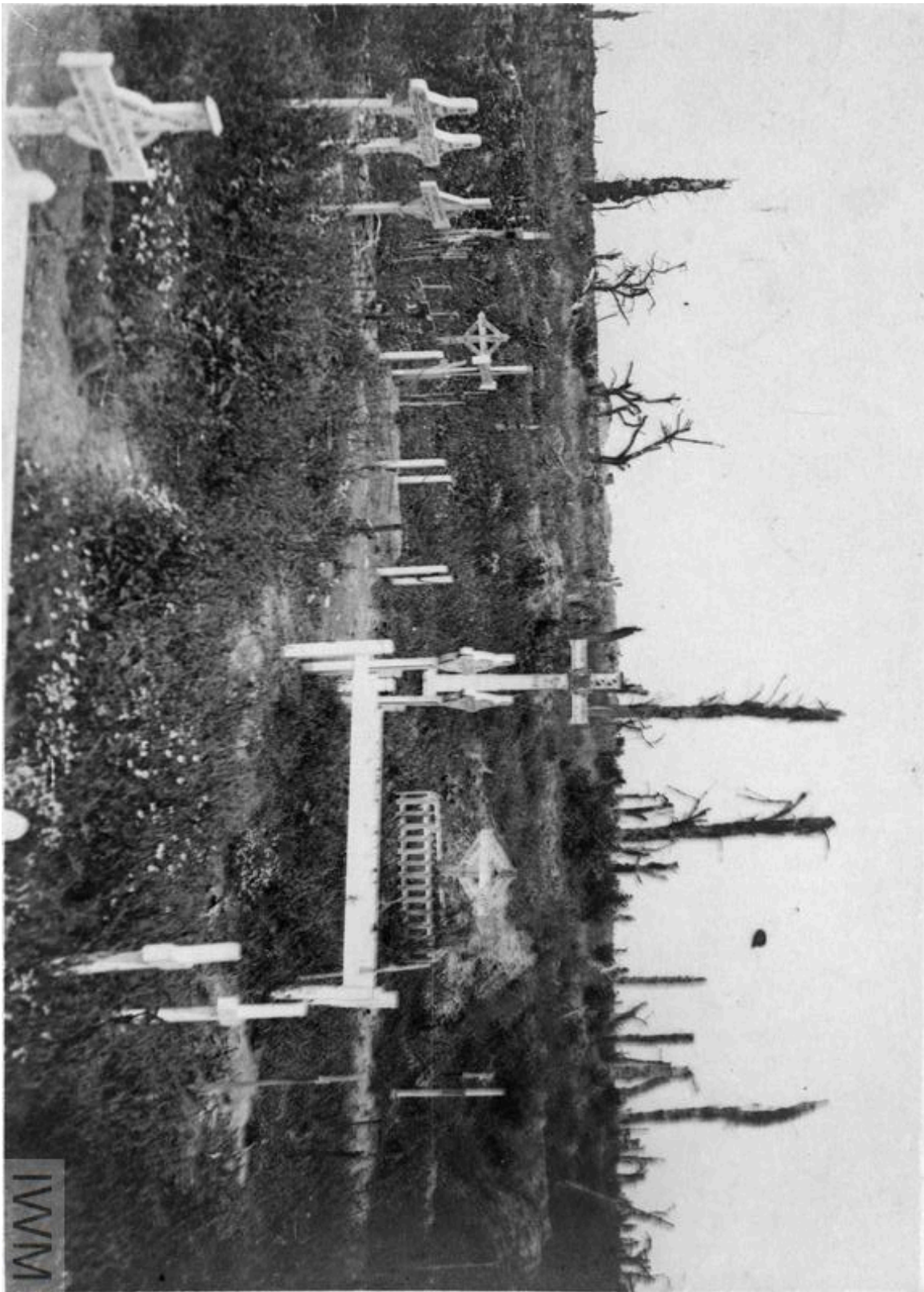


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# Primary Source Set







French Official Photographer. *A British war cemetery at Ginchy*. Photograph. 7/3/1917. From the French First War Official Exchange Collection. 205323231.

<https://www.warmuseum.ca/collections/artifact/1926083>



Robert Cotton Money. *In the Trench Preparing for a Gas Attack*. 5/20/1915. Photograph. From the MONEY ROBERT COTTON (MAJOR) COLLECTION. 1915-05-20.

<https://www.warmuseum.ca/collections/artifact/1926083>





By Lt. Col. John Mc Crae  
(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.

Copyright Canada 1918, The Heliotype Co., Ltd., Ottawa.

Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae. *In Flanders' Fields* Print. 1918. The Heliotype Co. Ltd. From the Beaverbrook Collection of War Art Canadian War Museum. 20060073-001.





Unknown. Early *Poppy*. 1918. mixed media. From the Canadian War Museum. 19800618-014.

<https://www.warmuseum.ca/collections/artifact/1926083>

### Optional Secondary Sources

- Library of Congress **World War I Timeline**
  - <https://www.loc.gov/collections/stars-and-stripes/articles-and-essays/a-world-at-war/timeline-1914-1921/>
- 15th Battalion C.E.F. Memorial Project. Scroll down to find the **Ypres Salient 1915** Map Collection. This series of maps shows the day-to-day progress and loss of territory at the Second Battle of Ypres.
  - <https://15thbattalioncef.ca/actions/gravenstafel-ridge/>
- **The History of Remembrance Day Poppies video.** A 10-minute video from the Imperial War Museum discussing the history of the poppy, as well as its successes and controversies.
  - <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/why-we-wear-poppies-on-remembrance-day#:~:text=In%201918%2C%20in%20response%20to,had%20died%20in%20the%20war.>
- **The Poppy Lady: Moina Belle Michael and Her Tribute To Veterans By: Babara Elizabeth Walsh.** A children's book about Moina Michael and her work to remember veterans.
  - Read a loud [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wOC\\_y3mQnI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wOC_y3mQnI)
  - Available for purchase or through the local library.