National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force

# The Poppy Project

*Remembrance is our mission*

# EDUCATOR RESOURCE

175 Bourne Avenue
Pooler, GA 31322

**This Classroom Resource comes with a presentation that can be accessed by clicking the link below.**

**CLICK HERE FOR PRESENTATION**

**If you have any issues, contact the Education Department at education@mightyeighth.org**

# Lesson Plan

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE

## GRADE

5TH - 8TH

## SUBJECTS

SOCIAL STUDIES | ENGLISH LANGAUGE 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 BELLE 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 WORKSHEETS

NOT PROVIDED
- ART SUPPLIES TO CREATE POPPIES

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

STUDENTS WILL
- GAIN KNOWLEDGE OF WORLD WAR I, JOHN MCCRAE, AND MOINA BELLE 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 THE POEM “IN FLANDERS FIELDS” ALOUD TWICE.
- ANALYZE THE POEM. MCCRAE SPEAKS TO THE READER AS A GROUP OF SOLDIERS WHO DIED AFTER A BATTLE. IN THE THIRD STANZA, HE CALLS THE READER TO TAKE UP “THE TORCH”.
- IN SMALL GROUPS OR AS A CLASS, READ THE POEM “WE SHALL KEEP THE FAITH” ALOUD TWICE. MICHAEL INTERPRETS “THE TORCH” AS REMEMBRANCE AND LEADS A MOVEMENT CHAMPIONING DECEASED SOLDIERS USING THE POPPY AS ITS SYMBOL. STUDENTS CAN DISCUSS WHETHER THEY AGREE WITH MICHAEL'S INTERPRETATION OF MCCRAE'S POEM.
- STUDENTS WILL DISCUSS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CARRYING “THE TORCH”.
- FINALLY, STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO MAKE A POPPY AS PART OF A CLASS POPPY DISPLAY.

## ASSESSMENT

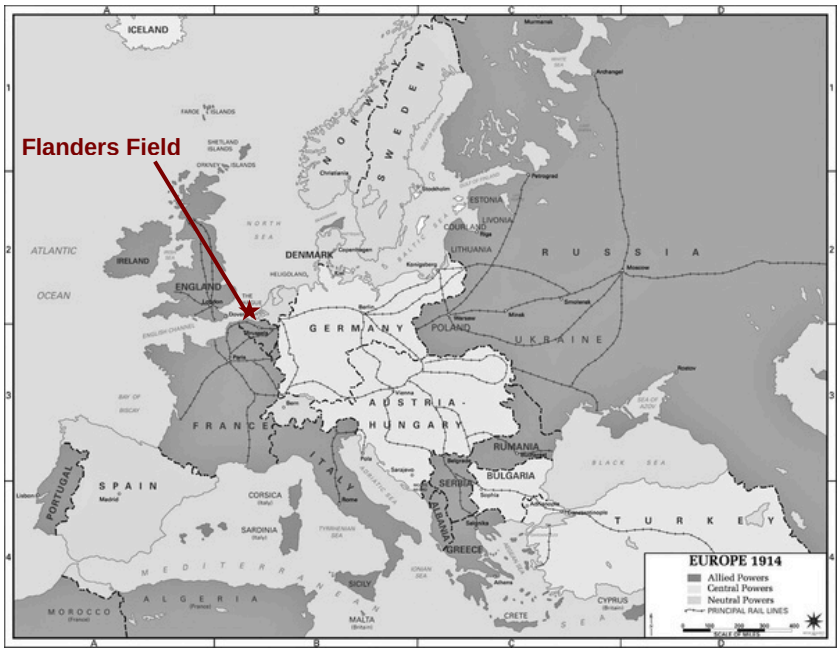
TEACHERS MAY HAVE STUDENTS TURN IN THE POEM ANALYSIS WORKSHEETS PROVIDED.

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 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 to 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 Fields” 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 Fields” 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 and meningitis in France on January 28, 1918.

# “In Flanders Fields”

## By Lt. Col. 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.

# THE POPPY: BECOMING A SYMBOL

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 Micheal** was born in 1869 in Walton, Georgia, on August 15, 1869. Moina's father fought on the side of the Confederacy during the Civil War (1861-1865), and she was raised in its aftermath. She attended a variety of schools and received a substantial education. By the age of 16, Michael became an educator whose career would span over two decades.

August 1914, Michael was visiting Germany when the country declared war on Russia, then France. Once the conflict began, Michael became one of thousands of tourists who were stuck in Europe. Michael volunteered as a "secretary" to help stranded tourists return home, before eventually returning to the United States.

The United States did not enter the war until 1917; later that year, Moina applied to work with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). In her autobiography, Micheal wrote about coming across the poem "We Shall Not Sleep". Just before Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, she was reading through an issue of *The Ladies' Home Journal*. The magazine had been left behind by a young soldier who visited her office. In it, she saw the "strikingly illustrated" poem with red poppies. Michael had found the poem that would later be named "In Flanders Fields". Michael said the final lines of the poem resonated most with her.

**"If ye break faith with us who die | We shall not sleep, though poppies grow | In Flanders fields."**

After reading, Michael vowed to herself to "always wear a red poppy…as a sign of remembrance." She wrote her own poem, "We Shall Keep the Faith," as a response to "In Flanders Fields" and went out searching for red poppies for her staff to wear in support. Michael led various campaigns after war demobilization for the poppy to be formally adopted by several veteran organizations: the American Legion, its Auxiliary, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Michael died in 1944. By the time of her death, poppy sales raised over 200 million for veterans' groups. 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 Belle Michael

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.

EDUCATOR'S RESOURCE

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE

# *"In Flanders Fields"* Primary Source Analysis Sheet




Complete the following worksheet using one of the "In Flanders Fields" primary source pages.

Guide students with the sample questions as they respond to the primary source. **Encourage them to go back and forth between columns; there is no correct order.**

*For more tips on using primary sources, go to http://www.loc.gov/teachers*

OBSERVE

**Have students identify and note details.**

What was the purpose of this text? · Who created it? · Who do you think was its audience? · Can you tell anything about what was important at the time it was made? What is the larger story or context within which this was printed? · What can you learn from examining this? · If someone created this today, what would be different?

REFLECT

**Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.**

What was the purpose of this text? · Who created it? · Who do you think was its audience? · Can you tell anything about what was important at the time it was made? What is the larger story or context within which this was printed? · What can you learn from examining this? · If someone created this today, what would be different?

QUESTIONS

**Have students ask questions to lead to more observations and reflections.**

What do you wonder about… who? · what? · when? · where? · why? · how?

FURTHER INVESTIGATION: *Some readers feel McCrae's poem supports the war effort, while others feel it denounces the conflict. Which do you think McCrae meant to inspire? Refer to specific lines in each poem to support your answer.*

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

NAME: _____

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE

# *"In Flanders Fields"* Analysis Sheet

1. Historical Context:

   List two important experiences that influenced the author's writing

   _____

   _____

   _____

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?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

# *"In Flanders Fields"* Analysis Sheet

4. Some readers feel McCrae's poem supports the war effort, while others feel it denounces the conflict. Which do you think McCrae meant to inspire? Refer to specific lines in each poem to support your answer.



# 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 printout of a four-petaled flower or creating a 3D collage using colored bits of paper.

There is no wrong way to make a poppy, but we have provided one popular method on the next page. If you need additional inspiration, please contact the Education Department at education@mightyeighth.org.

If you complete a poppy display in your school, please share your work at education@mightyeighth.org or share on social media with the @mighty8thmuseum. **Remembrance is our mission**!

We Remember

# POPPY CRAFT

## Create · Remember · Honor

A simple craft to recognize and thank our veterans



## SUPPLIES

(Per Poppy)



2 – 4 Red Paper on Circles or Cupcake Liners



1 Black Circle or Button



1 Green Pipe Cleaner, Straw or Craft Stick



Glue Stick or Tape

Thank you for helping us remember.

### STEP 1
STACK THE PETALS



Place 2–4 red pieces on top of aach other. Gently crinkle the edges to create petals.

### STEP 2
ADD THE CENTER



Put a small amount of glue in the middle of the red layers. Press the black cicrle or button in place. Hold for a few seconds to secure.

### STEP 3
ATTACH THE STEM



Turn the flower over. Add glue or tape to the back center. Press the green pipe cleaner, straw or stick onto the back. Hold for a few seconds until secure.

### STEP 4
FLUFF THE FLOWER



Gently lift and separate the red layers. Fluff the petals outward to create a full flower shape. Shape it however you like – each poppy is unique!



## FINISHED POPPY

**Your poppy is complete!**

Display it proudly, place it in a vase, or give it as a symbol of remembrance and gratitude for those who served.

## REMEMBER

There is no "perfect" poppy.

Each one is made with care and thankfulness.

Your time and effort help keep the memory alive.

**THANK YOU**

## 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: Barbara Elizabeth Walsh**. A children's book about Moina Michael and her work to remember veterans.
  - Read aloud https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wOC_y3mQnI
  - Available for purchase or through the local library.

National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force

# The Poppy Project

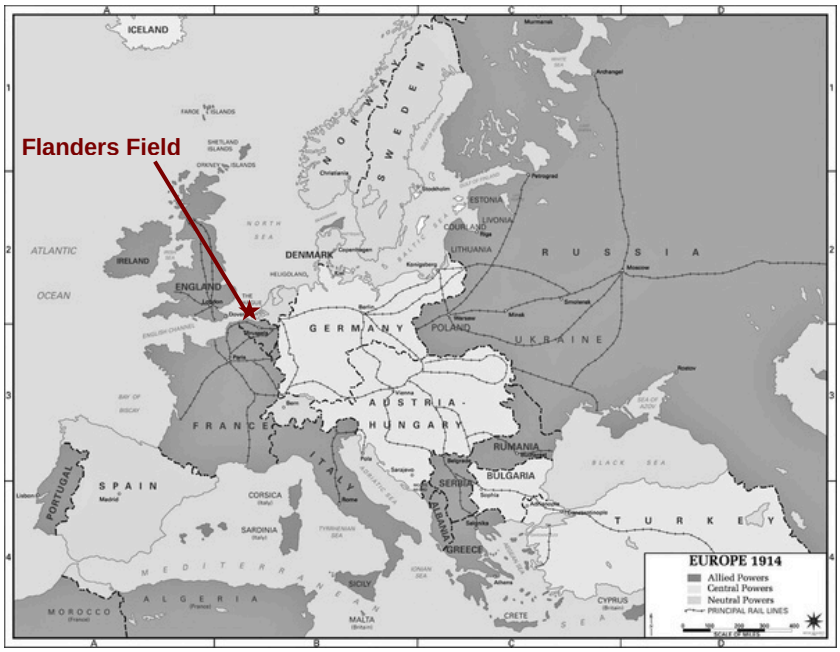
*Remembrance is our mission*

# STUDENT MATERIALS

175 Bourne Avenue
Pooler, GA 31322

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

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# 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 Fields” 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.



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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 Fields” 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 and meningitis in France on January 28, 1918.

# “In Flanders Fields”

## By Lt. Col. John McCrae

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THAT MARK OUR PLACE, AND IN THE SKY
THE LARKS, STILL BRAVELY SINGING, FLY,
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WE ARE THE DEAD. SHORT DAYS AGO
WE LIVED, FELT DAWN, SAW SUNSET GLOW,
LOVED AND WERE LOVED, AND NOW WE LIE
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TO YOU FROM FAILING HANDS WE THROW
THE TORCH; BE YOURS TO HOLD IT HIGH;
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August 1914, Michael was visiting Germany when the country declared war on Russia, then France. Once the conflict began, Michael became one of thousands of tourists who were stuck in Europe. Michael volunteered as a "secretary" to help stranded tourists return home, before eventually returning to the United States.

The United States did not enter the war until 1917; later that year, Moina applied to work with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). In her autobiography, Micheal wrote about coming across the poem "We Shall Not Sleep". Just before Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, she was reading through an issue of *The Ladies' Home Journal*. The magazine had been left behind by a young soldier who visited her office. In it, she saw the "strikingly illustrated" poem with red poppies. Michael had found the poem that would later be named "In Flanders Fields". Michael said the final lines of the poem resonated most with her.

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Michael died in 1944. By the time of her death, poppy sales raised over 200 million for veterans' groups. 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 Belle Michael

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SLEEP SWEET - TO RISE ANEW!
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AND HOLDING HIGH, WE KEEP THE FAITH
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THAT GROWS ON FIELDS WHERE VALOR LED;
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THAT BLOOD OF HEROES NEVER DIES,
BUT LENDS A LUSTRE TO THE RED
OF THE FLOWER THAT BLOOMS ABOVE THE DEAD
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AND NOW THE TORCH AND POPPY RED
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IN FLANDERS FIELDS.

NAME: _____

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE

# *"In Flanders Fields"* Primary Source Analysis Sheet




Complete the following worksheet using one of the "In Flanders Fields" primary source pages.

Guide students with the sample questions as they respond to the primary source. **Encourage them to go back and forth between columns; there is no correct order.**

*For more tips on using primary sources, go to http://www.loc.gov/teachers*

| OBSERVE | REFLECT | QUESTIONS |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

FURTHER INVESTIGATION: *Some readers feel McCrae's poem supports the war effort, while others feel it denounces the conflict. Which do you think McCrae meant to inspire? Refer to specific lines in each poem to support your answer.*

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

NAME: _____

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE

# *"In Flanders Fields"* Analysis Sheet

1. Historical Context:

   List two important experiences that influenced the author's writing

   _____

   _____

   _____

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

- **Personification** – giving human qualities to nonhuman things _____
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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?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

# *"In Flanders Fields"* Analysis Sheet

4. Some readers feel McCrae's poem supports the war effort, while others feel it denounces the conflict. Which do you think McCrae meant to inspire? Refer to specific lines in each poem to support your answer.

National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force

# Primary Source Set

National Museum of the
Mighty Eighth Air Force





## We Shall Not Sleep

"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 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.

Take 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."

Courtesy of G.P. Putnam's Sons

In behalf of the brave men who have enlisted in the fight of right against might we reprint the above lines by Col. McCrae.

As an inspiration to war giving and war sacrifice, it strikes a major note. There is no war appeal to which it is not applicable.

This beautiful lyric of the war was written by Lieutenant Colonel Dr. John McCrae of Montreal, Canada, while the second battle of Ypres was in progress.

The author's body now lies buried in Flanders fields.

Is it conceivable that we shall "break faith with those who die for us?

Contributed toward the Winning of the War by

BAUER & BLACK Makers of Surgical Dressings, etc. Chicago New York Toronto

Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae. *We Shall Not Sleep*. November 1918. *The Ladies' Home Journal 35.11* 56. AP 2 .L135

https://net.lib.byu.edu/english/wwi/main/lhj1918.html



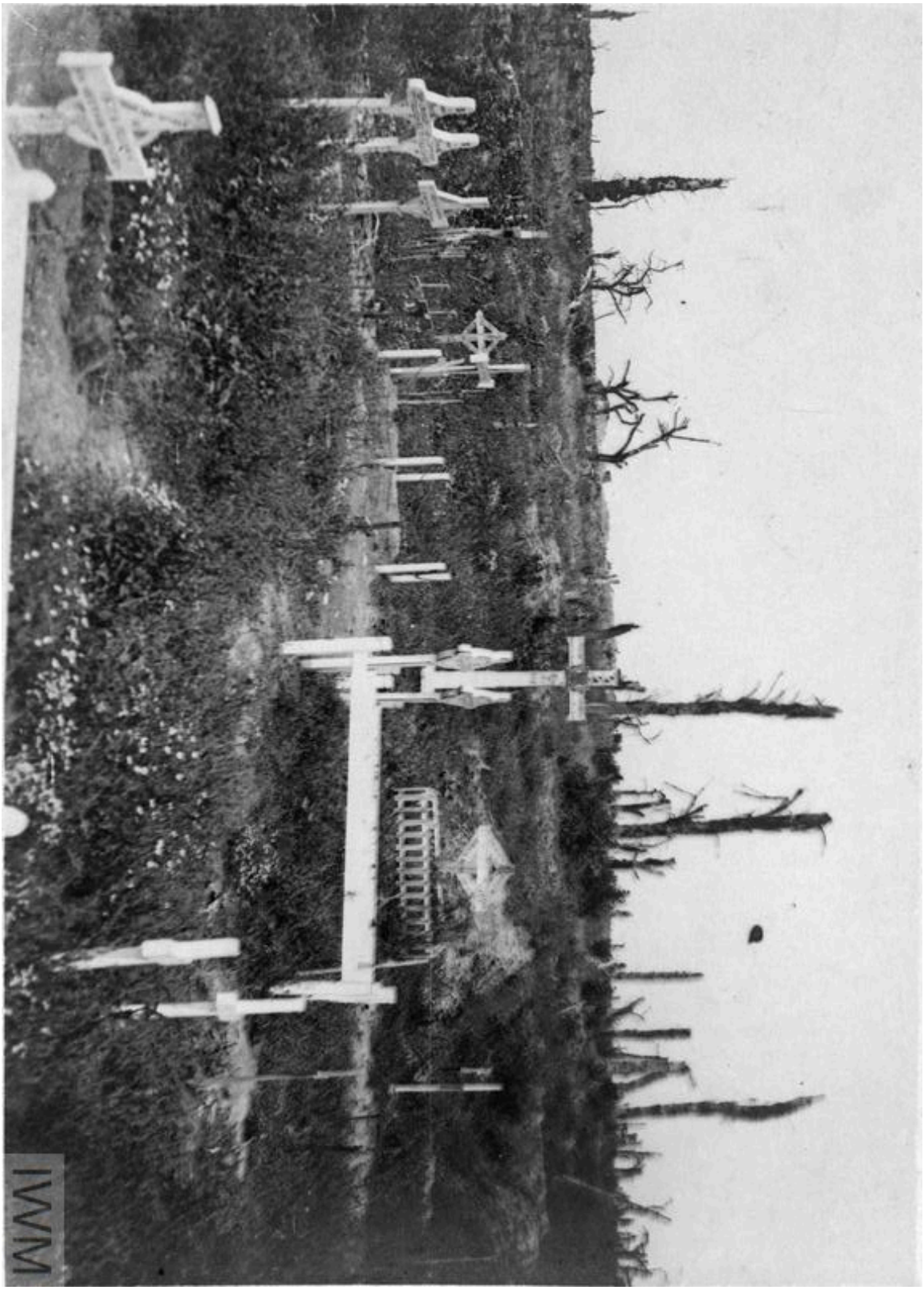

Lieutnant-Colonel John McCrae. *In Flanders Fields*. 1918. The Heliotype Co. Ltd. From the Beaverbrook Collection of War Art Canadian War Museum. 20060073-001.

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.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205024173



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

https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205323231



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

https://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/objects-and-photos/decorations-and-memorials/commemorative-items/early-poppy/