

# Wreaths Across America

## Lesson Plan

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 9th – 12th	Lesson: Memorial Day; “In Flanders Fields” Find a Way to Serve on Memorial Day in Honor of Our Fallen Heroes

<b>OBJECTIVES: NCSSS, 1. CULTURE</b> Through the study of culture and cultural diversity, learners understand how human beings create, learn, share, and adapt to culture, and appreciate the role of culture in shaping their lives and society, as well the lives and societies of others.		<b>STRATEGIES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Drawing/Coloring</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Writing</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Questions</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Think-Pair-Share</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Small Groups</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Large Group</li></ul> *Before conducting this lesson, make sure you are aware of students who may have parents deployed in the Military, or who may be Gold Star Children.	
<b>MATERIALS:</b>	Computer/laptop; internet (with access to YouTube); Smart Board; copies of “In Flanders Fields”/“We Shall Keep the Faith” poems; copies of the “In Flanders Fields”/“We Shall Keep the Faith” Worksheet; copies of the Acrostic Poem Worksheet		
<b>Engage:</b> Hook the students	Activity – Think-Pair-Share. On a piece of paper or in their Journal, ask students to write the following three questions: What is a memory? What is the happiest memory you have? What is the saddest memory you have? Allow the students a few minutes to reflect as this can be difficult for some students. When the students have finished, ask them to share with their partner as much as they are comfortable sharing. Play the History of Memorial Day Video, <a href="https://youtu.be/YChfpVD5xpk">https://youtu.be/YChfpVD5xpk</a>		
<b>Explore:</b> Students make sense of a concept through observations.	Play the Memorial Day PowerPoint located here <a href="#">Memorial Day PowerPoint</a> Read the background information about John McCrae and Moina Michaels aloud before students read the poems “In Flanders Fields” and “We Shall Keep the Faith.” Ask students to read the poems silently, and then read them aloud as a class.		
<b>Explain:</b> Teacher introduces formal vocabulary and language to students.	Decoration Day	armed forces	meter
	Memorial Day	Civil War	alliteration
	Red Poppies	World War I	symbols
<b>Elaborate:</b> Students apply what they have learned.	Students will read the poems “In Flanders Fields” and “We Shall Keep the Faith”; complete the “In Flanders Fields”/“We Shall Keep the Faith” Worksheet; students will create an Acrostic Poem on the meaning of Memorial Day based on the information they have learned in today’s lesson.		
<b>Evaluate:</b> assessment.	“In Flanders Fields”/“We Shall Keep the Faith” Worksheet; The Meaning of Memorial Day Acrostic Poem		
<b>Enrichment/Service-Learning Project</b>	Students can pick from many projects, placing small flags on the graves of fallen heroes at a local cemetery; make cards for veterans; or interview a veteran as a part of the Wreaths Across America Oral History Project.		

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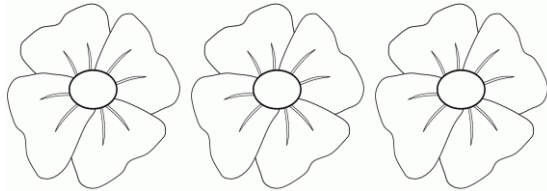
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### “In Flanders Fields” and “We Shall Keep the Faith”

#### About the Writer:

John McCrae, a Canadian poet, soldier, and physician, wrote “In Flanders Fields” in 1915- as a memorial to those who died in a World War I battle fought in a region of Belgium known as the Ypres Salient. McCrae himself treated many of the soldiers injured in that battle and was particularly moved by the death of a close friend, Alexis Helmer. The poem describes the tragedy of the soldiers' deaths, as well as the ongoing natural beauty that surrounds their graves. It also addresses the question of the next generation's responsibility to carry on the soldiers' battle.



#### “In Flanders Fields”

John McCrae, 1915

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.

#### “We Shall Keep the Faith”

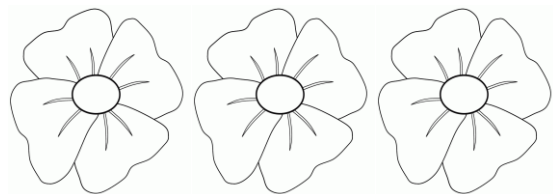
by Moina Michael, November 1918  
Oh! you who sleep in Flanders Fields,  
Sleep sweet - to rise anew!  
We caught the torch you threw  
And holding high, we keep the Faith  
With All who died.

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.

#### About the Writer:

In November 1918, Moina Michael came across the poem “*In Flanders Fields*” by John McCrae when reading a magazine. She was so moved by what she read that she made a personal pledge to “keep the faith”. She felt compelled to make a note of this pledge and hastily scribbled down a response entitled “We Shall Keep the Faith” on the back of a used envelope. From that day forward, she vowed to wear a red poppy as a sign of remembrance. She was instrumental in getting the Red Poppy recognized as the official flower of remembrance.



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### *“In Flanders Fields”* & “We Shall Keep the Faith” Questions

1. Who were the dead in the poem? How old do you think they were?
2. Why did McCrae choose to write the poem as if it were spoken by the fallen soldiers?
3. Who are the fallen soldiers speaking to?
4. How many syllables are there in each line of the poem?
5. Why did McCrae choose to have a different number of syllables in each line?
6. Look at the words at the end of each line. Which words rhyme?
7. Why do you think some lines do not rhyme with the others?
8. Why do you think McCrae wrote the poem in first-person plural?
9. Compare and contrast “In Flanders Fields” and “We Shall Keep the Faith.” How are they similar? How are they different? What does the torch symbolize?

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### Answer Key: “In Flanders Fields” & “We Shall Keep the Faith” Questions

1. Who were the dead in the poem? How old do you think they were?

Allied soldiers e.g., British (along with Canadians, New Zealander, etc.), plus the French, and the Russians, etc. They are mostly young men, in their late teens/early twenties.

2. Why did McCrae choose to write the poem as if it were spoken by the fallen soldiers?

The dead no longer have a voice. It was McCrae’s way of giving them a voice and asking the living to remember them.

3. Who are the fallen soldiers speaking to?

They are speaking to us (the living) and are telling us to never forget the horrors of war or they will never rest.

4. How many syllables are there in each line of the poem?

8 syllables in every line, except line 4 in stanza 2 and line 6 in stanza 3, which have only 4 syllables.

5. Why did McCrae choose to have a different number of syllables in each line?

The lines with fewer syllables are different, the intent was to make the reader stop, think, and remember.

6. Look at the words at the end of each line. Can you see any words that rhyme?

Stanza one: blow/row, sky/fly, below

Stanza two: ago/glow, lie, fields

Stanza three: foe/throw, high/die, grow fields

7. Why do you think some lines do not rhyme with the others?

The lines that do not rhyme break the pattern and make us stop, think, and remember.

8. Why do you think McCrae wrote the poem in first-person plural?

McCrae wrote the poem in first-person plural, using *our* and *we* to indicate that the speakers are the war dead.

9. Compare and contrast “In Flanders Fields” and “We Shall Keep the Faith.” How are they similar? How are they different? What does the torch symbolize? “We Shall Keep the Faith” is a response to “In Flanders Fields,” it is a promise to remember those who died in the war. The torch represents a responsibility that has been passed on from those who have died to those who live. It represents the blood of the soldiers. “you” means the dead soldiers and “we” are the people/survivors that will remember them.

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### Create an Acrostic Poem for Memorial Day

Using “In Flanders Fields” and “We Shall Keep the Faith” as references, create an acrostic poem about the meaning of Memorial Day.

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