



Activity ideas based around the song *In Flanders Field*

This song is inspired by a poem of the same name, and you can find out more about it by watching [this video](#). It was written by John McCrae, a Canadian lieutenant colonel, after his friend was killed in battle. The poppy now represents the huge sacrifice made by those who fought and lost their lives in the World Wars. These activities are to commemorate Armistice Day, which marks the end of the First World War when fighting ceased on 11th November 1918.

Where is Flanders field? What happened there?

Flanders is a place which spans across Belgium and France and was a major battle site in the First World War. See if you can find it on a map and photos of what it looks like now.

Understanding the poem

Read through the poem (lyrics) a few times out loud and write down any words you don't know or are unsure of. Below are a few explanations to help.

Scarce - hardly there	Ye - an old word for you
Amid- surrounded by, or in the middle of	Quarrel - a disagreement or argument

The poem has 3 verses.

- The first verse sets the scene and places the reader in the fields.
- In verse two, the poem speaks of those that have recently been killed.
- The last verse is a call for the living to take up the fight against the foe (enemy) so that the dead can rest in Flanders fields.

Talk through these questions with someone.

- Who is the person writing it?
- How do you think they feel?
- What is the poet encouraging the reader to do at the end?
- What do you think the author means when he writes that the larks sing bravely?

Performance ideas

- Recite the poem making sure that your voice is clear and slow and that you express the meaning.

- If you know any Sign Language or Makaton, you could add that in too.
- To add movement to the song you could accompany it with some slow actions or some thoughtful, sensitive dance moves.

Poppy art and installations

Poppies were the first sign of life to appear on the devastated battlefields. People now wear poppies and donate to the British Legion's Poppy Appeal, in aid of those serving in the Armed Forces. The poppy remains a symbol of remembrance and hope.

To launch the 2017 Poppy Appeal, the Royal British Legion installed lines of the poem *In Flanders Fields* in iconic locations across the UK. Watch the [video](#) and see if you can name some of the places.

In 2014, artists Tom Piper and Paul Cummins created a public art installation entitled *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*. It was made up of 888,246 ceramic poppies and filled the Tower of London's moat. Each poppy represented someone who died during the war. Look at [photos here](#).

Create your own poppy art with paper or felt. You could plant poppy seeds, or wear some red and green clothes or you can use Sing Up's Poppy [Template](#). If you create wreaths, you might take them to your own local memorials or services.

WWI literature

War Horse written by Michael Morpurgo tells the story of Joey, a horse used for service in France in WW1. His previous owner young Albert tries desperately to bring him home safely. The book has been adapted into a film and an award winning play and [this clip](#) shows the incredible way that actors controlled life-size puppets of horses on stage and made them appear lifelike.

Music

Edward Elgar's wrote a piece of music called *The spirit of England* (and a part of it was called For the fallen) but it is his composition Nimrod (from *Enigma Variations*) that has become associated with services of remembrance. Have a listen [here](#) - do you recognise it?

Listen to the [Last Post call of a bugle](#) which was traditionally heard at the end of each day's battle and now used to remember the war dead. Can you compose your own 'Last Post' call on different instruments?