

LEARNING GUIDE

POPPIES & ARMISTICE

FINDING OUT

You may recall seeing RSL members in shopping centres and public spaces selling small red artificial flowers at certain times of year. These are remembrance poppies. Ask an older person what they know about this tradition.

Poppies have had an important role in human culture since ancient times, as a medicinal and edible plant. If you are familiar with the story of The Wizard of Oz, you may remember Dorothy and her companions falling asleep in a magical field of poppies. Investigate other historical references to the poppy (papaver) in medicine, culture, art and literature.

Find out what you can about the history of the remembrance poppy. It may help to start your search with a poem called 'In Flanders Fields' by John McCrae. The Australian War Memorial (awm.gov.au/commemoration/customs-and-ceremony/poppies) and Australian Army (army.gov.au/our-history/traditions/the-red-poppy) websites are reliable sources of information.

SORTING OUT

As you view the video (rsleducation.com.au/Themes/Commemoration/years-7---10/Poppies), think about how the significance of the red poppy changed since the signing of the Armistice after World War I.

Why do people continue to practise this tradition?

After viewing, list some open-ended questions that occur to you. Aim for questions that do not have a simple, factual answer but require evidence to discuss. Use "How" and "Why" starters. You may also choose one or both of the questions below to develop and enhance.

- What do different colours or species of poppies symbolise? Do poppies have any practical uses today?
- The red poppy was sold by the RSL and the Red Cross in Australia after WW1. Research the Australian Red Cross and develop a presentation on its role in WW1.

Related content:

- Australian War Memorial website awm.gov.au/commemoration/customs-and-ceremony/poppies
- Australian Army website army.gov.au/our-history/traditions/the-red-poppy
- Video rsleducation.com.au/Themes/Commemoration/years-7---10/Poppies



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View the video a second time and note key dates and factual information. What historical sources are used? Are these primary or secondary sources?

TAKING ACTION

Find out what you can about:

- Moina Michael
- John McRae
- Anna Guérin.

Think about how these people shaped the way we commemorate Remembrance Day today. How might our remembrance symbols be different today if they had not made this effort?

Choose one of your rich questions to investigate. Identify a range of sources that may inform your inquiry.

Write or record a paragraph explaining the history of the poppy as a symbol of remembrance.

Create a response to the poem 'In Flanders Fields' by John McRae. You might choose one of these ideas:

- Create a collage or painting to illustrate the poem
- Write your own poem in response to the information and stimulus presented
- Create a background music track for the poem, using real or digital instruments
- Create a slide show or video to present the poem, using photos or drawings.

