

TEACHERS' NOTES

POPPIES & ARMISTICE

FINDING OUT

Poppies have held a special significance since World War I as a link to Defence service, war time and remembrance. Today, red poppies are worn to Remembrance services in many countries throughout the world as a mark of respect for those who have fallen during Defence service and to all those who have served. Australians wear poppies to Remembrance Day events.

Before students view the video, you may wish to explore the red poppy as a symbol of remembrance in the following ways:

- Have students read about the history of the red poppy on the Australian War Memorial (awm.gov.au/commemoration/customs-and-ceremony/poppies) and or Australian Army (army.gov.au/our-history/traditions/the-red-poppy) websites. Discuss: Prior to WWI, how was the poppy interpreted in film and artwork? How and why did its significance change following WWI? Why did the tradition of wearing a poppy develop a following? How and why has this tradition contributed to Australian identity?
- Present students with the poem 'In Flanders Fields' by John McCrae. Discuss the context of this poem and McCrae's inspiration for writing it. Explore the point of view, values and attitudes revealed in this source.
- Have students generate questions about the history of the remembrance poppy. For example:
 - Why are red poppies still worn today, even by young people and those with no firsthand memory of WWI?
 - Which other countries wear red poppies for remembrance events?
 - How is this tradition similar or different in other countries?

This resource supports the following Humanities and Social Sciences (History) Content Descriptions and General Capability:

- ACDSEH097 The commemoration of World War I, including debates about the nature and significance of the ANZAC legend.
- ACHHS207 Identify a range of questions about the past to inform a historical inquiry.
- ACHHS156 Develop texts, particularly descriptions and explanations that use evidence from a range of sources that are acknowledged.
- ACHHS166 Identify and select different kinds of questions about the past to inform historical inquiry.
- ACHHS190 Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past.
- ACHHS192 Develop texts, particularly descriptions and discussions that use evidence from a range of sources that are referenced.



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- Separate students' questions into that can easily be searched via the internet and those that cannot. Identify and develop the types of questions which require historical argument. Model a process of evaluating and enhancing students' questions. Some may be extended or modified to inform historical inquiry.
- Provide quality paper and water colours and engage students to paint some poppies. Students may wish to highlight the symbolic and realistic colours of the poppy or take a more abstract approach and creatively reinterpret a poppy landscape.

SORTING OUT

During viewing you may wish to support students' engagement with the video in the following ways:

- Provide students with a retrieval chart or template which they may use as a guide to record relevant information.
- Have students complete a "See / Think / Wonder" graphic organiser, based on the content of the video.
- Revisit students' list of questions about poppies. Which questions can be answered by the video content? Which questions can be investigated using reference materials and the internet? Allow some time for investigation, via independent, guided or teacher-modelled searches.
- Encourage students to generate further questions that may have been inspired by the video to add to the list. Encourage rich, open questions which encourage historical inquiry.
- Any remaining questions which are not easily searchable can be directed to your school's local RSL Sub Branch. Consider inviting an RSL member to respond — in person during a visit to the school, via a Skype or phone conversation, or as a written response.

Related content:

- Video rsleducation.com.au/Themes/Commemoration/years7-11/Poppies
- Australian War Memorial website awm.gov.au/commemoration/customs-and-ceremony/poppies
- Australian Army website army.gov.au/our-history/traditions/the-red-poppy
- Google Earth dva.gov.au/commemorations-memorials-and-war-graves/office-australian-war-graves
- Contact a RSL Sub-branch rslqld.org/Contact-Us/Sub-Branches



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TAKING ACTION

After viewing the video, you may wish to extend students' knowledge and understanding in the following ways:

- Use Google Earth to view WWI battlefields and war cemeteries where Australians are buried. The Office of Australian War Graves (dva.gov.au/commemorations-memorials-and-war-graves/office-australian-war-graves) has published a list of significant sites on their website. Discuss: What evidence can you find of the suffering and sacrifice that occurred during the world wars in these places? What significance might these sites have for people who lost a family member during war? Most of the graves are unmarked. What impact might this have on those who mourn the fallen?
- Have students research one of the following key figures in the history of the remembrance poppy:
 - Moina Michael
 - John McRae
 - Anna Guérin.
- Guide students in a modelled writing exercise to describe and explain the history of the poppy as a symbol of remembrance. Outline the significance of McRae's poem and the actions of Michael and Guérin, providing reasons for support of the idea and referring to relevant evidence. Ensure sources are acknowledged.
- Display photos of red poppies growing wild on the battlefields of France and Belgium. Have students present a response to their research and reflection in one of the following ways:
 - Create a collage or painting of poppies on a WWI battlefield.
 - Design or model a memorial to the fallen that includes the poppy and other symbols.
 - Write a poem or guided reflection about the sacrifice made by Defence personnel who have served and the families who support them at home.
 - Compose a reflective music track to be used at a Remembrance Ceremony or Defence funeral.

