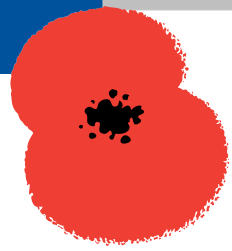


## A week learning and Remembering the First World War

Introduction – the five assemblies here can be used for the week before Remembrance Sunday. The poem currently listed as day 5 can be used on Armistice Day (11th November) if you wish. After the first days assembly the assemblies for days 2, 3, and 4 can in fact be used in any order.



## DAY 1: WEARING A POPPY

### In preparation:

- The Royal British Legion CD Rom, for pictures and poetry to project on the screen.
- Screen

### Start

*Show one of the pictures of a Poppy from the CD Rom – The pictures 'The Royal British Legion' has plenty. (And make sure you are wearing a Poppy!)*

### Script:

What is this a picture of? What am I wearing? Do you wear a Poppy?

The Poppy is a symbol of Remembrance – that means it helps us to remember something.

What does the Poppy helps us to remember?

The Poppy is a very special symbol that reminds of something very particular – it is the symbol of Remembrance Day. Remembrance Day is the day for us to remember all the people who have fought, been killed, injured or had their lives affected by war.

Do you know why the Poppy was chosen? Let me read you a poem:

*(show the Poem on the screen)*

### In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae

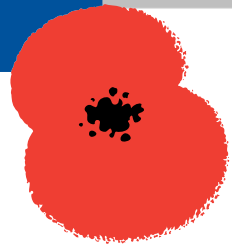
In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

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.

## A week learning and Remembering the First World War

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That poem was written during the First World War. It was written by a Canadian, John McCrae who was serving as a doctor in the First World War. After a long day of trying to save the lives of those who had been injured in battle, he saw the poppies growing. The poppies became a symbol for him.

Do you know when the First World War was?

It was 1914 to 1918. Do you know what day that war finished. It's why we are wearing a Poppy now?

It finished on 11 November. The War came to an end on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

So if it finished in 1918, how many years is it since the end of the First World War? 90 years since the end of the War.

If the War ended all those years ago, why do we still remember it? Well the events of that war changed what people thought about war for ever. The First World War was on such a large scale that many men of all ages were asked and then ordered to join up to fight. Boys from the ages of 16 into their thirties (and sometimes older) went to fight. Much of the fighting took place in Belgium and France (these countries were our Allies), but others fought in the Middle East, North Africa and elsewhere.

In the First World War 750,000 men from Britain were killed and approximately 10 million lives were lost from all around the world.

It also affected the lives of millions of other people – those people who lost sons, husbands, fathers and brothers. The women had to do the work that men had previously done. Many people had their lives changed forever.

After the First World War, people had to get on with their lives so the Poppy was adopted as a symbol to be worn on the anniversary of the day the war had finished - one day a year, so that all those people killed and affected by the war could remember and be remembered.

Since that war there have been other wars. Now we wear the Poppy **every** year to remember all the people who have fought and been affected by war.

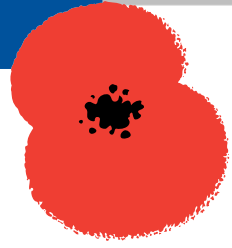
This year, because it is 90 years since the end of the First World War, the war that created Remembrance Day, we are going to learn about some of those people that were there and why the poppy became so special for us to wear.

### Moment of reflection

The Poppy is a symbol that we can all wear. It can help us all to remember the horrors of war, to think about and hope for those people who fight in them and those people who are affected by them. The Poppy can help us to remember how important peace is.

## A week learning and Remembering the First World War

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### Prayer or Poem:

Isaac Rosenberg was born in 1890 to a poor Jewish family in Britain. He grew up in East London and with help was able to get work as an artist and a poet. He joined the British Forces in October 1915 and was sent to France. He was killed in battle in April 1918.

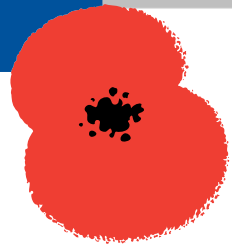
### In The Trenches

by Isaac Rosenberg (1916)

I snatched two poppies  
From the parapet's ledge,  
Two bright red poppies  
That winked on the ledge.  
Behind my ear  
I stuck one through,  
One blood red poppy  
I gave to you.  
The sandbags narrowed  
And screwed out our jest,  
And tore the poppy  
You had on your breast ...  
Down - a shell - O! Christ,  
I am choked ... safe ... dust blind, I  
See trench floor poppies  
Strewn. Smashed you lie.

## A week learning and Remembering the First World War

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## DAY 2: THE PEOPLE WE REMEMBER

### In preparation:

- Screen
- Royal British Legion DVD and CD Rom

### Start

*Show the film from the DVD (The Royal British Legion CD Rom) entitled "The Somme InThe Great War". (you may want to just show half of it and use the rest tomorrow)*

*Select one of the following testimonies from the CD Rom – divide it into 4 parts and ask 4 different pupils to read out the story either:*

- Captain Noel Chavasse
- Evelyn Henry Lintott
- John Abbot King
- George Butterworth
- James Leonard and the Brain Brothers

*Finish with* - this is the real story of one of those people that died in the First World War. Their graves are not near their families but their names are remembered on memorials both at home and where they fought.

### Moment of reflection

From 1914 to 1918 ordinary men from all around the UK went to fight in a foreign country for Britain. When we hear their stories and learn about their lives and actions, we are reminded that when we wear a poppy it is not wars that we remember but people who are affected by war.

### Prayer or Poem:

Rupert Brooke was born in 1887. He became an accomplished poet before serving in the British Navy and died as a consequence of the war in April 1915. His brother was also killed in June 1915 in France.

### The Soldier

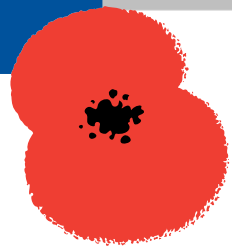
by Rupert Brooke (1914)

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England's, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;  
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

## A week learning and Remembering the First World War

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## DAY 3: THE PEOPLE WE REMEMBER

### In preparation:

- Show the picture from the CD Rom of Walter Tull – first as a footballer and then in uniform.
- Have the case study of Walter Tull ready to use.
- Option - Use the second half of the film entitled “The Somme In The Great War” on the Legion DVD

### Start

### Script

This is Walter Tull.

The people who fought for Britain in the First World War came from lots of different walks of life. This is a picture of Walter Tull. In 1914 when war broke out Walter was a footballer. He had already had a difficult life before he joined up, as someone who was black and British he had experienced a lot of racism. Despite that, he still chose to fight for his country and to challenge racism at the same time.

*Ask 3 – 4 pupils to read out the story of Walter Tull from the case study.*

Walter reminds us of the diversity of the people that fought for Britain in that war and all the wars the British forces fight in. In the First World War, people from lots of different ethnic backgrounds and religions fought for Britain and its interests. As well as people from different ethnic backgrounds from Britain itself fighting, we also relied on the support from what was then the Empire and Commonwealth. Men from India, African and the Caribbean all fought to save Britain and its interests. They fought for us even when we were not always fair to them.

### Moment of Reflection

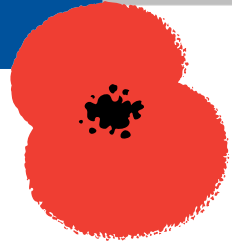
Walter Tull reminds us of the bravery of those who fought in the First World War. He also reminds us that those who fought came from lots of different ethnic backgrounds and religions. Some were Christians, others were Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and non- believers. But no matter what their background, in death they were all equal, and they all deserve to be remembered.

### Prayer or Poem:

Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967) was born into a wealthy family on 8 September 1886 in Kent. He survived the war having fought in many battles, but he lost many friends who he mourned for the rest of his life.

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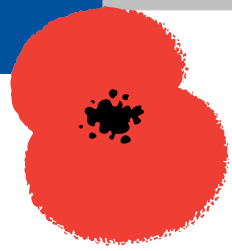
### Does it Matter?

by Siegfried Sassoon

Does it matter?—losing your legs?...  
For people will always be kind,  
And you need not show that you mind  
When the others come in after hunting  
To gobble their muffins and eggs.  
Does it matter ?—losing your sight?...  
There's such splendid work for the blind;  
And people will always be kind,  
As you sit on the terrace remembering  
And turning your face to the light.  
Do they matter?—those dreams from the pit?...  
You can drink and forget and be glad,  
And people won't say that you're mad;  
For they'll know you've fought for your country  
And no one will worry a bit.

## A week learning and Remembering the First World War

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## DAY 4: WOMEN AFFECTED BY CONFLICT AND EDITH CAVELL

### In preparation:

- The Royal British Legion CD Rom
- Screen
- Select a section of the DVD showing the Women's Land Army from the First World War
- Also have a picture of Edith Cavell and the case study of her life from the CD Rom ready

### Script

That film shows just one of the things that women did during the First World War. They did it again during the Second World War.

Because the First World War involved so many men going off to fight, women had to do the jobs that men had been used to doing. 90 years ago women didn't have the rights that they have today and lots of jobs were seen as being suitable only for men. But when the war came, women were needed to do that work. Without the Women's Land Army there would have been no food for people to eat. Without women working in the ammunition factories, there would have been no weapons for the men on the front line to use to fight.

The First World War was also the first war that women were allowed near the front line both as Nurses and Ambulance drivers.

Some women belonged to organisations such as the Red Cross as well. This is the story of one woman and how her actions in trying to help people during the war ended up with her being shot by the enemy.

*Use the case study of Edith Cavell and ask 3 – 4 pupils to read out sections of her story.*

### Moment of reflection

The story of Edith Cavell reminds us that it is not just those who fight that are affected by war. Women, children and elderly people are also caught up in those types of events. Edith's own words to "not have hatred or bitterness to anyone" remind us that when we wear a Poppy we should value peace and reflect on the importance of trying not to hate anyone enough to want to fight them.

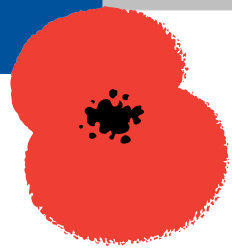
### Prayer or Poem:

Select any of the poems not already used.

Wilfred Owen was born in 1893 in Shropshire. He joined up in 1915 and published his poetry about what he saw and felt. He was involved with many battles and was killed on 4th November 1918. He is buried in France.

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### **Anthem for Doomed Youth** by Wilfred Owen

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?  
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.  
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle  
Can patter out their hasty orisons.  
No mockeries for them; no prayers nor bells,  
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, --  
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;  
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?  
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes  
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.  
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;  
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,  
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

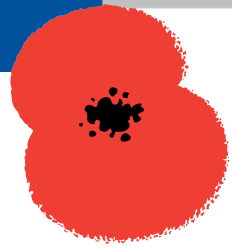
Or

### **Edith Cavell** by Laurence Binyon

She was binding the wounds of her enemies when they came --  
The lint in her hand unrolled.  
They battered the door with their rifle-butts, crashed it in:  
She faced them gentle and bold.  
They haled her before the judges where they sat  
In their places, helmet on head.  
With question and menace the judges assailed her, "Yes,  
I have broken your law," she said.  
"I have tended the hurt and hidden the hunted, have done  
As a sister does to a brother,  
Because of a law that is greater than you have made,  
Because I could do no other."  
"Deal as you will with me. This is my choice to the end,  
To live in the life I vowed."  
"She is self-confessed," they cried; "she is self-condemned.  
She shall die, that the rest may be cowed."  
In the terrible hour of the dawn, when the veins are cold,  
They led her forth to the wall.  
"I have loved my land," she said, "but it is not enough:  
Love requires of me all.  
"I will empty my heart of bitterness, hating none."  
And sweetness filled her brave  
With a vision of understanding beyond the hour  
That knelled to the waiting grave.

## A week learning and Remembering the First World War

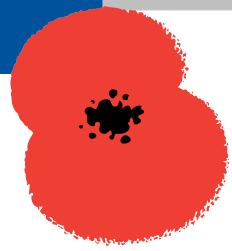
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They bound her eyes, but she stood as if she shone.  
The rifles it was that shook  
When the hoarse command rang out. They could not endure  
That last, that defenceless look.  
And the officer strode and pistoled her surely  
surely, ashamed  
That men, seasoned in blood,  
Should quail at a woman, only a woman, --  
As a flower stamped in the mud.  
And now that the deed was securely done, in the night  
When none had known her fate,  
They answered those that had striven for her, day by day:  
"It is over, you come too late."  
And with many words and sorrowful-phrased excuse  
Argued their German right  
To kill, most legally; hard though the duty be,  
The law must assert its might.  
Only a woman! yet she had pity on them,  
The victim offered slain  
To the gods of fear that they worship. Leave them there,  
Red hands, to clutch their gain.  
She bewailed not herself, and we will bewail her not,  
But with tears of pride rejoice  
That an English soul was found so crystal-clear  
To be the triumphant voice  
Of the human heart that dares adventure all  
But live to itself untrue,  
And beyond all laws sees love as the light in the night,  
As the star it must answer to.  
The hurts she healed, the thousands comforted -- these  
Make a fragrance of her fame.  
But because she stepped to her star right on through death  
It is Victory speaks her name.

## A week learning and Remembering the First World War

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## DAY 5: REMEMBRANCE DAY

### In preparation:

- The Royal British Legion CD Rom
- Decide whether to show a Remembrance service from the DVD or allow the pupils to have their own, in which case ask them to choose a reading or poem about the War in advance.

### Start

*Show a picture of the Cenotaph or your local war memorial*

### Script

This picture is a war memorial. There are war memorials all over the UK. Some have the names of those that fought, some just have the numbers.

It was important for those that survived the war to remember those that they had lost and these memorials are part of that Remembrance. But the victims of the war were not just those that were killed.

Many men returned from the fighting injured and some would never be able to work again. For the families that had lost someone, such as a husband or father, there was now one less person to work – and in those days there was no welfare state that would help people.

The Royal British Legion was created in 1921 to help the ex-Servicemen when they came home and to help the families of the ex-Servicemen. It is a charitable organisation and it raises funds through The Poppy Appeal to support that work.

It stills helps ex-Servicemen and women and their families today.

Because of that role and its adoption of the Poppy, The Legion also became the official custodian of Remembrance. That is, it has the responsibility to make sure that every year the people that we have learnt about and are affected by conflict are remembered.

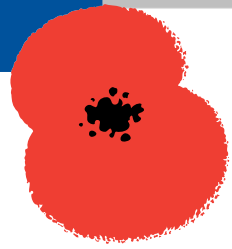
11 November is **always** Remembrance Day.

Each year on the Sunday nearest to 11 November (Remembrance Day), at 11 o'clock in the morning, a Remembrance Service is held at the Cenotaph. The service is to commemorate British and Commonwealth Service men and women who died in the two World Wars and later conflicts. HM The Queen, religious leaders, politicians, representatives of state and the armed and auxiliary forces, gather to pay respect to those who gave their lives defending others.

Now every year on 11 November at 11 o'clock there is A Two Minute Silence. This also takes place on the Sunday nearest to 11 November.

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*Option show a Remembrance service from the DVD or ask the pupils to have their own as follows:*

Select a poem from one of those on the CD Rom or ask the pupils to choose one they have heard this week.

Prepare the pupils that this is an important moment.

Read the selected poem.

Then have A Two Minute Silence (one minute is fine if the pupils are quite young)!  
Then ask a pupil to read the exhortation:

**“They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.”**

**(An extract from “For The Fallen” by Laurence Binyon)**

### **Moment of reflection**

Remembrance Day is a day of reflection. It allows us to remember or think about all those people who are affected by wars, both in the past and now. It allows us to think about all those people who suffer in wars all around the world. And it reminds us how important it is to work for peace.