



## In Flanders Fields

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.

John McCrae, May 1915



## Analysing 'In Flanders Fields'

Show children the title and the first line of the poem.

- What do children think the poem will be about?
- Where or what do they think Flanders fields are?
- What makes them think that?
- Does the reference to 'poppies' give any clues?

Read the poem to the class or have pupils read it aloud. Underline any unfamiliar words and discuss the meaning of these. What do they think the message of the poem is? Why is this poem still relevant today?

Look at the third stanza and consider the way language is being used. How is this different from the previous stanzas? Who does 'our' refer to? What does the 'torch' represent?

## Write a poem

Have children write their own poems on the theme of 'remembrance.' For younger children, talk about special memories and people and events which are significant to them. They could then write a poem where each line starts with 'I remember...'

Older children could be encouraged to end their poems with a similar 'call to action' as in the Flanders Fields poem.

## Techniques and analysing

**Discovery Education Espresso subscribers:** Select one of the other poems from our *First World War collection* (History 2), and listen to the audio as a class. Print the words and analyse the poem. What is the message of the poem? Which words and phrases stand out the most? What techniques have the writers used (alliteration, rhyme, similes, onomatopoeia, etc.) What effects do these have?