

**GREAT WAR
(1914-1918): ENGLAND:
ARMISTICE DAY 1918**



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Description

Students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the basic facts behind what happened in London and in Flanders in the last days of the Great War, the British public's reaction to the war, and the story behind Remembrance Day (Armistice Day) in England and around the world, not only in 1918 but also today.

Subjects

English / Language Arts, European History, World History, World Geography

Grade Level

11-12

Duration

90 minutes

Tour Links

- Big Ben
- Houses of Parliament
- Westminster Abbey
- Trafalgar Square
- Imperial War Museum, London
- Flanders, Belgium

Essential Questions

- What were the facts behind the signing of the armistice that ended the fighting on the Western Front in November 1918?
- Who was Wilfred Owen? Is his poem *Dulce Et Decorum Est* an accurate portrayal of the horrors of a gas attack on the Western Front?
- Who was Lt. Col. John McCrae? What inspired him to write the poem *In Flanders Fields*?
- How did Londoners react to the news of an armistice in 1918?
- What does the red poppy mean as a symbol for the British public today?

Academic Summary

Official Radio from Paris - 6:01 A.M., Nov. 11, 1918. Marshal Foch to the Commander-in-Chief.

1. Hostilities will be stopped on the entire front beginning at 11 o'clock, November 11th (French hour).
2. The Allied troops will not go beyond the line reached at that hour on that date until further orders.

[signed]

MARSHAL FOCH

5:45 A.M.

At 11:00 local time on 11 Nov 1918, after four long years facing the horror of trench warfare, soldiers in Flanders and across France fired their last shots with the coming of the cease fire. The carnage was over. Millions of men on all sides had given the ultimate sacrifice for ideas that most never really understood. Millions more would forever be scarred, both physically and mentally, by the horrors of war. In the end, the terrors of a new type of warfare: the trench system and gas attacks, unthinkable only a generation earlier, would permanently ingrain themselves on a collective British and European consciousness. During and after the war, new political, social and intellectual philosophies would arise to challenge old ideas. When it ended, Big Ben rang out for the first time since 1914. Citizens all over London, including women over 30 recently granted suffrage by the 1918 Representation of the People Act, flowed into the streets and paused for two minutes of silence in remembrance of those that had died before breaking into spontaneous celebrations that would ultimately last for days, a scene that would be repeated in various places across the British Empire. Poets such as British soldier Wilfred Owen and Canadian officer Lt. Col. John McCrae wrote works that would forever memorialize the deeds of British and empire soldiers who had served at the front. The simple red poppy, a delicate flower that seemed to spring up everywhere on the killing fields of Flanders, soon became a national and international symbol for those who had been lost in the war.

Students here will understand the basic facts behind what happened in London and in Flanders in the last days of the Great War, the British public's reaction to the war, and the story behind Remembrance Day (Armistice Day) in England and around the world, not only in 1918 but also today.

Objectives

1. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the events surrounding the armistice that ended the Great War in Nov 1918.
2. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the major literacy figures below and how their works sought to bring the war to the British public and to the world.
 - a. British soldier Wilfred Owen
 - b. Canadian officer Lt. Colonel John McCrae
3. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain how the British public, particularly Londoners, responded to the armistice.
4. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain how the British public today sees Remembrance Day and why the red poppy is a national symbol.

Procedure

I. Anticipatory Set

- Writing / Question: How are soldiers today remembered when they die overseas in war? Give concrete examples. (5 min)
- Handouts – Copies of the primary sources and readings from the websites listed above. (5 min)

II. Body of Lesson

- Lecture / PPT – Brief overview of the end of World War I and the Armistice of 1918. (20 min)
- Video – End of WWI (5 min)
- Video – In Flanders Fields (5 min)
- Independent Activity – students read the primary sources and articles on the opening of the Great War in England, taking notes as appropriate. (30 min)
- Suggestion: Have the students read some of these articles for homework the night before class to prepare for class discussion.
- Group Activity – Discussion on the ending of the Great War, how soldiers were memorialized by the poets selected and the use of the red poppy today as a symbol in Britain. (15 min)

III. Closure

- Assessment – Essay / DBQ: Explain how Londoners saw the armistice of 1918, the end of the war. What is the legacy of the armistice? Do Londoners still care about a war that ended almost 100 years ago?

Extension

On tour: Cenotaph, Whitehall London

While on tour, you will visit Westminster, Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament. A short distance away down Whitehall is the Cenotaph, a memorial to the British soldiers from both world wars and the site of the annual National Service of Remembrance, held at 11:00 AM on Remembrance Sunday, the closest Sunday to 11 November every year. Students will have the opportunity to see for themselves where Londoners have gathered for the last 90 years to remember their honored dead and where the monarch lays poppy wreaths every year. Remind them to look for the images of poppies everywhere in London.

Web Links

Lesson Plan Websites

- iwm.org.uk/centenary
“First World War Centenary” – Imperial War Museums. Articles, primary sources, films, photographs and podcasts on the Great War – great resource for teachers and students.
- firstworldwar.com/poetsandprose/owen.htm
“Prose and Poetry: Wilfred Owen” – Firstworldwar.com, a multimedia history of World War I.
- firstworldwar.com/poetsandprose/mccrae.htm
“Prose and Poetry: John McCrae” – Firstworldwar.com, a multimedia history of World War I.
- historylearningsite.co.uk/1918_representation_of_the_peopl.htm
“The 1918 Representation of the People Act” website on the History Learning Site authored by UK history teacher Chris Trueman
- warpoetry.co.uk/owen1.html
Dulce Et Decorum Est (poem by Wilfred Owen) at the War Poetry Website, David Roberts, editor
- edwardianpromenade.com/war/a-glimpse-of-armistice-day-in-london-1918/
A Glimpse of Armistice Day in London, 1918 (photographs) at edwardianpromenade.com website
- worldwar1.com/heritage/rpoppy.htm
Legends & Traditions of the Great War: The Red Poppy and McCrae’s poem In Flanders Fields
- greatwar.co.uk/article/remembrance-poppy.htm
The Great War (1914-1918) website: The Story behind the Remembrance Poppy
- veterans-uk.info/remembrance/cenoptaph.html
Veterans UK website on the Cenotaph, an empty tomb that memorializes the WWI soldiers in the UK
- teachingchannel.org/videos/choosing-primary-source-documents?fd=1
Reading Like a Historian: Primary Source Documents (video) – great 2 minute video on how to incorporate primary sources into the Common Core and history classes – from Shilpa Duvoor of Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City, CA – highly recommended for teachers
- youtube.com/watch?v=cLZhg8gPmFQ#t=15
“End of World War One, 1910s” – Film 41904 from the Huntley Film Archives – silent film showing Armistice Day in London, 1918
- youtube.com/watch?v=6e4jqTF6aks
“In Flanders Fields” (video)
- youtube.com/watch?v=pSol1JxSniU
“Remembrance Day at the Cenotaph 2010” (video – produced by the British Monarchy)

Background Information

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armistice_Day
Armistice Day – Wikipedia article
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Remembrance_Day
Remembrance Day – Wikipedia article
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_Flanders_Fields
In Flanders Fields – Wikipedia article

Other Relevant Passports Lesson Plans

- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/austria/great-war-austrian-ultimatum-to-serbia
Great War – Serbian Front: Austrian Ultimatum of 1914
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/england/england-and-the-great-war-causes-of-the-war-1914
Great War – Lights Going Out in 1914
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/england/england-and-the-great-war-wilfred-owen
England and the Great War – Wilfred Owen: Dulce et Decorum Est
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/france/great-war-clemenceau-views-at-versailles
Great War – France: Clemenceau's Aims at Versailles
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/france/great-war-battle-of-the-somme
Great War – Battle of the Somme 1916
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/france/battle-of-verdun-1916
Great War – Battle of Verdun
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/france/great-war-first-battle-of-the-marne-1914
Great War – First Battle of the Marne 1914
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/germany/great-war-schlieffen-plan
Great War – Germany: The Schlieffen Plan
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/russia/great-war-eastern-front-treaty-of-brest-litovsk-1918
Great War – Eastern Front: Treaty of Brest-Litovsk 1918

Key Terms

See above for key literary characters from the Great War.

- Armistice
- Belgium / Flanders
- British Empire
- Cenotaph
- Great War
- George V, King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions, 1911-1936
- Parliament
- Poppies

