

Scottish war poets challenge & In Flanders Fields challenge

Teacher's notes

The big question

How do conflicts affect communities?

Level

Third

Significant aspect of learning

Reading **LIT**

Experiences and outcomes

Using what I know about the features of different types of texts, I can independently select ideas and relevant information from a variety of sources, organise essential information or ideas and any supporting detail in a logical order, and use suitable vocabulary to communicate effectively with my audience. **LIT 3-06a, LIT 3-14a & LIT 3-26a**

I can:

- discuss and evaluate the structure, characterisation and/or setting using some supporting evidence;
- identify the main theme of the text and recognise the relevance this has to my own and others' experiences;
- identify and comment on aspects of the writer's style and other features appropriate to genre using some relevant evidence.

ENG 3-19a

Having explored the elements which writers use, I can create texts in different genres by:

- integrating the conventions of my chosen genre successfully; and/or
- using convincing and appropriate structures; and/or
- creating interesting and convincing characters; and/or
- building convincing settings which come to life.

ENG 3-31a

I can engage and/or influence readers through my use of language, style and tone as appropriate to genre. **ENG 3-27a**

I can explore and use the features of a variety of familiar and unfamiliar software to determine the most appropriate to solve problems or issues. **TCH 3-03a**

I enhance my learning by applying my ICT skills in different learning contexts across the curriculum. **TCH 3-04a**

I have used the skills I have developed in the expressive arts to contribute to a public presentation/performance. **EXA 3-01a**

While working through a design process in response to a design brief, I can develop and communicate imaginative design solutions. **EXA 3-06a**

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Learning in the social studies will enable me to engage in activities which encourage enterprising attitudes. **SOC OA**

When participating in an enterprise activity, I can explore ethical issues relating to business practice and gain an understanding of how businesses help to satisfy needs. **SOC 3-20a**

I can understand the necessity for budgeting and determine ways to manage finance, considering possible investment opportunities, savings, risks or borrowing needs. **SOC 3-21a**

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Your challenge

Task 1

Read and research Scottish war poets. Choose from the list of poets on the next page (are there any from your local area?)

Find at least one poem written by your chosen poet. Read it aloud with your class and then think about what it means.

Find out ten pieces of information about the poet and think of an interesting and colourful way to display this information.

- Where was your poet born?
- Who was in his/her family?
- What job did your poet do before the First World War started?
- What did your poet do in the war?
- What poems did your poet write?

Could your class do an assembly presentation on your poet in the week before Remembrance Sunday?

Are there any more Scottish poets from more recent wars?

List of some Scottish poets from the First World War

- John Buchan (born Perth, educated Glasgow)
- W.D Cocker (born Glasgow but wrote much about Stirlingshire - his mother's home)
- John MacDougall Hay (born Tarbet, Loch Fyne, Argyll, educated Glasgow. Worked in Ullapool and Stornaway as a teacher)
- Roderick Watson Kerr (born Edinburgh)
- Joe Lee (born Dundee)
- Hugh MacDiarmid (born as Christopher Murray Grieve in Langholm, Scottish Borders)
- Donald MacDonald (born Corunna, North Uist)
- James Pittendreigh MacGillivray (born Aberdeenshire, educated Glasgow)
- Ewart Alan MacKintosh (born Brighton. However, family from Alness, Easter Ross and joined Scottish Regiment in First World War- 5th Seaforth Highlanders)
- John Munro/Iain Rothatch (born Lewis, educated Nicolson Institute Stornaway and Aberdeen University)
- Murdo Murray (born Lewis, educated Nicolson Institute Stornaway and Aberdeen University)
- Neil Munro (born Inverary, Argyll)

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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 1862-1918

Further information on John McCrae and his poem

John McCrae had been a doctor in Canada who had shown an interest in the military and had an artistic side. Before the First World War broke out in 1914 he could not have been aware that his interests and talents would combine and he would write a poem which is remembered to this day.

Canada had joined the First World War on the side of the British and many Canadian troops were sent to fight against the Germans in the trenches that ran through France and Belgium. The line of trenches was called the Western Front. McCrae and his colleague were thousands of miles from home, in a foreign country zigzagged with trenches. Often the trenches filled with rain water and became muddy. Rats fed off food, dead bodies in no man's land, and often nibbled sleeping soldiers' faces.

McCrae was a field surgeon in the war and saw his fellow Canadians horrifically injured by machine gun and artillery fire. During the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915, some 6000 Canadians were killed or wounded in just two days of fighting.

McCrae was working at a field dressing station based at Essex Farm. Field dressing stations were where soldiers would have their wounds treated immediately before being sent back to a hospital many miles behind the lines. McCrae had been working for hours trying to save injured soldiers. McCrae was particularly affected by the death of his friend, Lieutenant Alexis Helmer, who was killed by a German artillery shell. McCrae was so tormented by his friend's death and by the numbers of his fellow soldiers who were being killed that he sat and wrote a poem in the back of an ambulance.

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As he looked over the fields he thought he could see a sea of blood. It was, however, poppies in the fields. Poppies grow on ground that has been churned up.

Poppies sprang up all along the Western Front after years of fighting, the digging of trenches and artillery shells exploding on the farm land.

Today, we use the poppy as a symbol to remember those who suffered in the First World War and in the many wars thereafter. Essex Farm is still there and you can today see the cemetery next to it and the remains of the bunkers in which the doctors worked in the field dressing station.

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Your challenge

Task 2

Research task

Write a biography on the life of John McCrae. What other facts can you find out about him? Where might be good places to look for information? How will you present your findings?

Imaginative writing

Imagine you were John McCrae working as a doctor in the trenches. Write a diary entry for him for a week during the Second Battle of Ypres 1915.

Imaginative writing 2

Imagine you are a soldier in the First World War. Write a letter home from the trenches. Try to find out about the following things in the trenches and then include them in your letter:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • no man's land | artillery bombardment |
| • duckboards | artillery shells |
| • going 'over the top' | shell shock |
| • dug-outs | blighty wounds |
| • mud | mines |
| • shell-holes | machine guns |
| • rats | gas |
| • lice | tanks |
| • trench-foot | barbed wire |
| • rations | rum |

Factual writing

Write a newspaper front page for the Second Battle of Ypres or any other First World War battle. Which other battles might you write about? What sort of things would a good newspaper front page have on it? What information would you include in your newspaper stories? Will you include any pictures?

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What progress have I made today?

Reading. **SAL LIT**

2nd level

I can use my knowledge of language to read a new poem with increasing fluency, understanding and expression for example, punctuation, layout etc

Some examples are...

3rd level

I can use my knowledge of language to read a new poem with increasing complexity, understanding and expression.

Some points are...

4th level

I can use my knowledge of language to read a wide range of increasingly complex texts with fluency, understanding and expression.

Some points are...

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Peer marking exercise / self-assessment

Tick all that apply

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