

**Task 1 – Reading and listening in pairs: Background to the poem**

**Student A:** Ask your partner the question below. Listen to their answer, and make notes in the space. Then change and take turns at asking and answering.

**1. Ask: Who was John McCrae?**

Write your answer:

**2. Tell your partner:**On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1915, a friend of John McCrae was killed in World War I.**3. Ask: What happened at his friend's funeral?**

Write your answer:

**4. Tell your partner:**

The day after the funeral, another soldier came to deliver post. He saw McCrae was sitting in an ambulance writing a poem and looking out over a field of graves.

**5. Ask: How did McCrae look as he wrote the poem? What was he looking at?**

Write your answer:

**6. Tell your partner:**

McCrae gave the finished poem to the soldier. He read it, and could see that the field in front of them was exactly the view described in the poem.

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**Student B:** Your partner will ask you a question. Tell your partner the answer by reading the text below, giving your partner time to make notes. Then ask your partner question 2. Take turns at asking and answering the rest of the questions.

**1. Tell your partner:**

John McCrae was a Canadian doctor who served during World War I.

**2. Ask: What happened on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 1915?**

Write your answer:

**3. Tell your partner:**

There was no priest at his friend's funeral, so McCrae said a few words he remembered from a church service as his friend was buried.

**4. Ask: Who came the next day? What was McCrae doing?**

Write your answer:

**5. Tell your partner:**

The soldier watched McCrae's tired face as he wrote the poem. McCrae's eyes kept turning to his friend's grave.

**6. Ask: What did McCrae do with the finished poem? What did the soldier see in the poem?**

Write your answer:



**Task 2 – Vocabulary in the poem**

a) *Work in pairs to match the words and their meaning.*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Flanders	fight/argument
lark	belief in someone/something
scarce	light that can be carried
dawn	bird that sings beautifully
sunset	Old English word, used for “you”
quarrel	part of Belgium where there was heaving fighting during World War I
foe	time when the sun comes up in the morning
torch	time when the sun goes down in the evening
ye	hardly at all
faith	enemy



**Soldiers' graves in Abbeville, France. February 1918. © IWM (Q 8467)**

b) *Complete the sentences using one of the words from the list above.*

1. The sky was beautiful this morning at \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Last summer, I heard \_\_\_\_\_ singing every day.
3. I'm a religious person, so I have \_\_\_\_\_ in God.
4. In battle, armies try to defeat their \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ region was the scene of terrible loss of life during the Great War.
6. Last night's \_\_\_\_\_ was incredible – the whole sky turned red and orange.
7. I had a \_\_\_\_\_ with my brother last week, but we are friends again now.
8. He passed the \_\_\_\_\_ to me so I could see the way.


**Task 3 – Running dictation: Stanza one**

*One by one, read and remember the lines of stanza one of the poem and report back to your group.*

*Write the lines here.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

*The soldier who watched McCrae writing the poem said that the poem was an exact description of the field in front of them. What can you “see” in the first stanza? Draw your idea of how the field looked:*



*Show your picture to your group and discuss what you have drawn. Compare it with other students' ideas. What were the main similarities and differences between your pictures?*

**Task 4 – Gap fill: Whole poem**

*Listen to the poem and complete the missing words.*

**In Flanders Fields**

In Flanders fields the \_\_\_\_\_ blow  
Between the \_\_\_\_\_, row on row,  
That mark our place: and in the \_\_\_\_\_  
The \_\_\_\_\_ still bravely singing fly  
Scarce heard amid the \_\_\_\_\_ below.

We are the \_\_\_\_\_: Short days ago,  
We lived, felt dawn, saw \_\_\_\_\_ glow,  
\_\_\_\_\_ and were loved: and now we lie  
In \_\_\_\_\_ fields!

Take up our \_\_\_\_\_ with the foe  
To you, from failing \_\_\_\_\_, we throw  
The \_\_\_\_\_: be yours to hold it high  
If ye break \_\_\_\_\_ with us who die,  
We shall not \_\_\_\_\_, though poppies grow  
In Flanders \_\_\_\_\_




**John McCrae**

*Working with your group, answer the following questions, then share your ideas with your class.*

1. Who were the dead in the poem? How old were they, do you think?
2. Why did McCrae choose to write the poem as if it were spoken by the dead?
3. Who are the dead speaking to? What if we forget what happened to them?
4. What do you like most about the poem? What was most interesting about it? Why?

**Task 5 – Structure of the poem: Rhyme and rhythm**

*Answer the following questions with a partner:*

1. How many syllables are there in each line of the poem? (Count them)
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2. Why did McCrae choose to have a different number of syllables in each line?
    - a) It sounds better.
    - b) The lines with fewer syllables are easier to understand.
    - c) The lines with fewer syllables are different from the other lines, so they make us stop, think and remember.
  3. Look at the words at the end of each line. Can you see any words that rhyme?
  4. Why do you think some lines do not rhyme with the others? (Choose one answer)
    - a) McCrae was too upset about his friend to think of other words that rhymed.
    - b) The lines that do not rhyme break the rhyme pattern and make us stop, think and remember.
    - c) Rhyme is not important to the meaning of the poem.
  5. Is poetry a good way to remember those who died? Why do / don't you think so? Discuss with your partner.