

Why are there poppies around ANZAC day?

Level 3 Reading and Comprehension activity

The red poppy has become a symbol of war remembrance the world over. People in many countries wear the poppy to remember those who died in war or who still serve. In many countries, the poppy is worn around Armistice Day (11 November), but in New Zealand it is most commonly seen around Anzac Day, 25 April.

The red or Flanders poppy has been linked with battlefield deaths since the time of the Great War (1914–18). The plant was one of the first to grow and bloom in the mud and soil of Flanders in Belgium. The connection was made, most famously, by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae in his poem *'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.**



In New Zealand the poppy is most often worn around Anzac Day. Since 1927 Poppy Day itself has been marked on the Friday before Anzac Day (unless it falls on a Good Friday) with the appeal going through to 25 April. Poppies still symbolise remembrance, and New Zealanders want to show this at other times as well as on Anzac Day. At big commemorative events, at military funerals and at war graves and cemeteries in New Zealand and around the world, the red poppy can be seen. Real poppies are hard to supply in the amounts needed for a whole country, so most of the poppies we see are the paper and plastic ones that raise funds for the RSA (The Royal New Zealand **R**eturned and **S**ervices **A**ssociation).

Why are there poppies around ANZAC day?

Comprehension:

(You are allowed to re-read the story)

1. During which war did they start remembering fallen soldiers with poppies?

2. In which country is 'Flanders' (*Not* the Simpsons character!)

3. Was the poet who wrote 'In Flanders Fields' a soldier? Yes / No How do you know? _____
4. In the poem it mentions a 'quarrel'. Find a definition for the word quarrel:

5. Where in the World is Belgium? (You can use an atlas to find it)

6. What is an Armistice?

7. What is another name for the 'red poppy'?

8. How do you think John McCrae felt when he wrote his poem?

9. Why do you think the RSA want to raise money from poppies?

10. Higher level thinking: If you could choose another symbol to remember the ANZAC soldiers, what would it be?

Why? _____



Extra Fact: Poppy Day has been a part of the New Zealand calendar since 1922, making it one of the oldest nationwide appeals.