Canada at War – Tasks

**Pre-reading task:**

Search the web for information about Canada’s role in the two world wars, and how it has affected Canada today.

**Now read the poem** *In Flanders Fields* (maybe cry a little, as it is truly a gorgeous poem).

**Search the web for information about the poem’s author:**

* Who was John McCrae?
* The background for him writing the poem.
* How can the poem be interpreted?
* What role did the poppies mentioned in the poem come to play in war history and remembrance?
* How was the poem used at home in Canada during the war?

Textual analysis of the poem:

**Identify**:

* 1) The rhythm (stressed and unstressed syllables)
* 2) The rhyming scheme

3) Assonances and alliterations

What do these elements add to your immediate impression of the poem?

Who is the speaker of the poem, and what is he asking of you?

How does the mood of the poem change from stanza 1 and 2 to stanza 3?

Find all the contrasts in the poem (dead/lived). What do these contrasts suggest about the major themes of the poem?

Find all the metaphors in the poem. What do they each represent and how do they fit in with the themes you discussed above?

**Which of the following interpretations do you most agree with? Why?**

1. The poem is an anti-war poem, and the foe mentioned in stanza three is really the

government at home sending these young soldiers into futile battle.

1. The poem is a pro-war poem, begging the "you" of the poem to honour the soldiers

ultimate sacrifice, their lives, by keeping on fighting until the war has been won.