

Forrest Pass

CANADA AT WAR

Forrest Pass is an historian at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Quebec. Originally from British Columbia, he holds a doctorate in Canadian history from the University of Western Ontario. He has published widely on Canadian history and identity for both scholarly and popular audiences.

LISTENING

- Go to www.lru.dk/crosscountrycanada, and watch the videos with historian Forrest Pass. Take notes on what you learn about Canada's role in the two world wars, and how it has affected Canada today.

INDIVIDUAL WORK

- Go to the blackboard and, individually, write down one keyword from each of the video presentations on Canada and her role in the two world wars.
- Look at all your classmates' words on the blackboard. Elicit an explanation for words about which you are uncertain.
- Write a summary of Canada's role in the two world wars – based on the videos you have just seen – in exactly 150 words, using at least seven of the words from the blackboard.

CLASS DISCUSSION

- Listen to at least three summaries in class, and discuss which aspects of Canada at war have been included.
- Also discuss which aspects should be included in the summaries, and which could be left out and why.

Field of poppies

John McCrae

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

1915

WHILE READING

- Read the poem many times, and see if you can learn the first stanza by heart.

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.

*'poppy (subst) – valmue
scarce (adv) – knapt
amid (prep) – mellem
quarrel (subst) – skænderi
foe (subst) – fjende
torch (subst) – fakkel
ye (pron) – gammel form
of you*

WORKING WITH THE TEXT IN CLASS

CLASS PRESENTATIONS

- Can anyone recite the first stanza? How does the recitation and knowing the poem by heart affect your understanding of the poem?

CHOOSE YOUR PREFERRED WORKING METHOD

Either work individually on researching the poem

- Search the Internet for information about "In Flanders Fields". Find out...
 - who John McCrae was.
 - the background for John McCrae writing the poem.
 - how the poem can be interpreted.
 - what role the poppy in the poem came to play in war history and remembrance.
 - how the poem was used at home in Canada during the war.

Or work on a textual analysis of the poem in a classroom discussion

- Identify the rhythm (with stressed and unstressed syllables), the rhyme scheme, and alliterations and assonances of the poem. What do these elements add to your immediate impression of the poem?
- Who is the speaker of the poem, and what is the speaker asking of "you"?
- How does the mood of the poem change from stanza one and two to stanza three?
- Find all the contrasts in the poem (e.g. "dead"-"lived"). What do these contrasts suggest about the major themes of the poem?
- Find all metaphors and symbols in the poem. What do they each represent, and how do they fit in with the major themes you discussed before?
- Below are two possible interpretations of the poem. Half of you will now have to argue for one, and the other half for the other interpretation. Spend a few minutes collecting your evidence, and then engage in a discussion in which you present your arguments.
 - 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.
 - 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.

CLASS DISCUSSION

Get together in small groups of two or three in which there is at least one representative who has worked on the assignment for individual research, and one who has been involved in the textual analysis of the poem.

- Help each other fill out the form below which will also function as notes from this lesson.

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
Who was John McCrae, and why did he write "In Flanders Fields"?	
What role does the poppy play in the poem, and how has this symbol become a part of remembrance?	
How was this poem used at home in Canada during the war, and how can this be seen in connection with the speaker and the "you" of the poem?	
Is the poem pro-war or anti-war?	

LISTEN

In a moment, you will listen to "In Flanders Fields" set to music by the composer Anthony Hutchcroft in 2006.

- Discuss with your neighbour what the tone and mood of the song will be like. Why do you think it will be like this?
- Discuss with your neighbour the possible musical instruments found in the song, and why you believe these instruments will be used.
- Go to www.youtube.com. Type "In Flanders Fields Anthony Hutchcroft" in the search field, and choose the top film.
- While watching the video, consider in what ways the song and video convey the interpretations of the poem you have discussed earlier.
- Sum up in class: How did the video and the music convey the interpretations of the poem that you discussed earlier? Did they add new ideas to the interpretations that you hadn't considered?