



Poppies, Poems and Planes

For the Teacher

What is the poetry plane? It's a Nieuport 17 replica biplane from WW1 and will take off from England with its special cargo of poems to be fluttered from the sky in July 2024 over North France where The First World War was fought.

The poems, written by schoolchildren (that's your class!) and inspired by themes connected to the First World War, will be delivered in such a way to French counterparts who in turn will write their own poems to be flown back in the spirit of friendship. The words written on seeded bio-degradable paper will allow their poems to grow into poppies, cornflowers, and forget-me-nots – the memorial flowers of Great Britain, France, and Germany. Children from around the world whose forbears fought in WW1 will be invited to join in as well and their poems dropped at their own Memorial Days.

Our aim is for the children (Yr 5 & 6) to understand the sacrifice of so many in World War 1, so that they recognise that the freedoms they enjoy today are founded on this sacrifice and they are inspired to work for peace and reconciliation in their lifetime.

This Lesson plan will provide a slideshow about WW1, a short video on writing a WW1 poem, and then leave it to you as to how organise your sessions. It should take no more than a morning. Reading the examples below out loud may help and I suggest the children are asked in return to read their efforts out loud before they are taken away in the plane to France.

The Powerpoint presentation Poems, Poppies and Planes from the Imperial War Museum is set up as a slide show and lasts 7 minutes. It should be shown first. You may wish to have [Barber's Adagio for Strings](#) playing in the background.

We recommend that you show the children Simon Mole's video on [writing a WW1 Poem](#) (also available to download) next and base the lesson on it. The trailer from Peter Jackson's '[They shall not grow old](#)' also gives good atmospherics as 100 year old film that has been digitised, coloured and voiced over from lip-readers.

We will bring sheets of bio-degradable paper impregnated with poppy, cornflower, and Forget-Me-Not seeds for our school visits. For those Schools doing the WW1 poem-writing remotely, the biodegradable paper in a pack of 10 A4 sheets (100 110*70mm) is available from the link on our website.

The first 100 schools to apply for the special paper will receive a discount from the Civil Aviation Authority. You should ask the children to put their name and school on the back. We will offer a small prize for the poem that you judge is the best from the school.

Once complete, please send your poems to WW1 Aviation Heritage Trust, 3 The Willows, North Warnborough, Hook, Hants, RG29 1DR. If you wish to retain some of the poems and start your own peace garden, not all your poems have to be forwarded to the Trust.



For the Children

What kind of poem should it be?

There are so many ways to write a poem and you can choose any form that suits you. Your poem needs to be reasonably brief, to fit on the paper available.

We are all going to use **themes of World War One, commemoration and reconciliation**. A poem is a marvellous way to express powerful emotions and feelings, often in a very few words. You need to end on reflections that the sacrifice of so many is not forgotten and is the spring board for hope in the future.

To create your own poem, take any of the pictures, ideas or themes that you saw in the presentations about the First World War:

- How did this war differ from other wars?
- Did anything or any event surprise you about the war?
- Why did so many volunteer to fight?
- What did you feel about the conditions?
- What do you feel about the courage and sacrifice of those involved, soldiers, sailors and airman?
- How did people back home cope?
- What do you think about the way the war is commemorated?
- How should their sacrifice be commemorated?
- How do different nations commemorate the fallen?
- What are your thoughts about the Christmas Truce in 1914?
- How important was the role of women during the war at a time when women were regarded as second-class citizens?
- What do you think about those people who refused to fight? Conscientious objectors.
- How should people work to avoid further war?

There are plenty of ideas here. You may have some other thoughts of your own.

Use alliteration or repetition to give your words a heartbeat. Or why not paint a picture with words. Your imagination could be seen as an **IMAGE**ination – creating *images* in your mind. Describe what it is you see in your mind so that others reading or listening to your poem can get the picture and delight in it.

You could go deeper with your ideas to explore the use of similes and metaphors. Think differently. Turn your ideas upside down as if they are doing the loop the loop. Surprise yourself! Feel that exhilaration of writing something original.

Make your words come alive! Be courageous with your ideas. Be brave, be dashing – dare to write something from the heart.

Cinquain is one form of poetry that suits some people and can be fun to write.

‘Cinq’ in French means five and this gives us a clue as to how many lines the poem has – 5!

The first line is also the title and has 2 syllables, the next line has 4 syllables, then 6, then 8 and then 2. Here are a few examples that may help:



As the terrified Soldiers continue to
run, the message is settled the war
has begun. All they can hear is the
shots of a gun whilst the others are
waiting for this to be done.
The rough smell of smoke lingered in
the sky, as the planes let their bombs
fall from up high.
When it was over they lie in their grave,
but it will never be forgotten how they were here.



Have a read of the poem(s) overleaf with their historical context for inspiration too and enjoy letting your imagination fly!

When you are happy with your poem, you can write it in pen on the special seeded paper– and it will grow into a flower. (But first, why not see if your cinquain can fly? Just write a copy on a paper aeroplane and soar it to the sky! We'd love to know whose flew the furthest – both metaphorically and in reality!)

The Poppies, Poems and Planes is a collaboration between the WW1 Aviation Heritage Trust and the Poetry Postie – delivering poetic inspiration to the Nation! To find out more visit

www.thepostalserviceofhappiness.com

www.ww1aviationheritagetrust.co.uk



A poem for Remembrance Day "The inquisitive mind of a child"



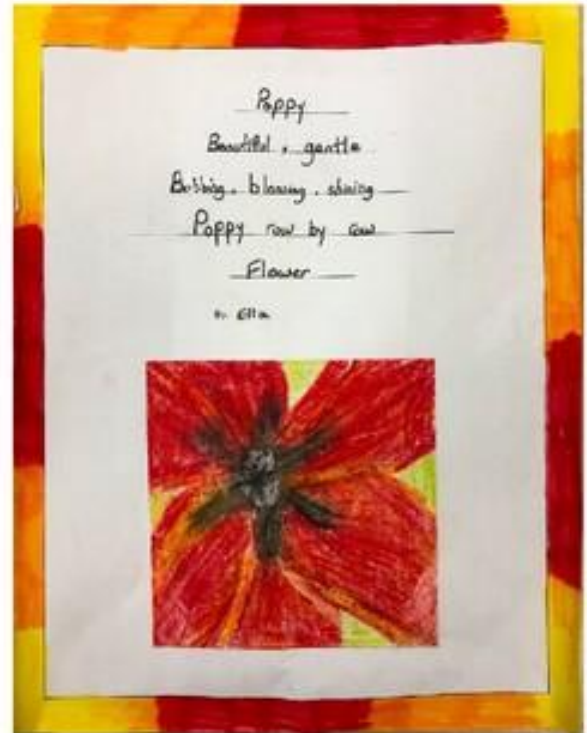
Why are they selling poppies, Mummy?
Selling poppies in town today.
The poppies, child, are flowers of love.
For the men who marched away.

But why have they chosen a poppy,
Mummy?
Why not a beautiful rose?
Because my child, men fought and
died
In the fields where the poppies grow.

But why are the poppies so red,
Mummy?
Why are the poppies so red?
Red is the colour of blood, my child.
The blood that our soldiers shed.

The heart of the poppy is black,
Mummy.
Why does it have to be black?
Black, my child, is the symbol of grief.
For the men who never came back.

But why, Mummy are you crying so?
Your tears are giving you pain.
My tears are my fears for you my child.
For the world is forgetting again.



Poppy
Beautiful, gentle,
Bobbing, blowing, shining,
Poppy, row by row,
Flower

I am Wearing a Poppy

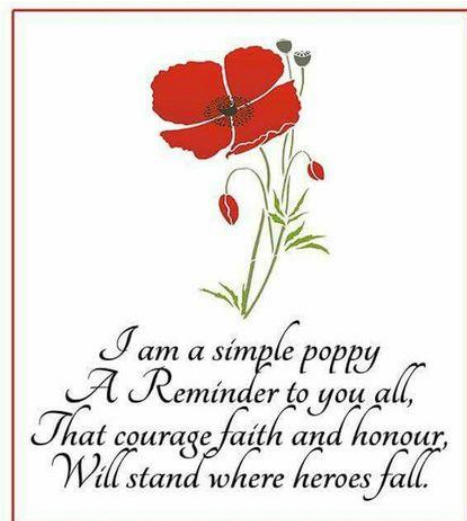


I am still.
I am calm.
I am quiet.
I am wearing a poppy today.

I am thinking of soldiers and families,
And of times they were far away.

I am still.
I am calm.
I am quiet.
I am wearing a poppy today.

I am thinking of all the fighting,
And the peace that we have today.



*I am a simple poppy
A Reminder to you all,
That courage faith and honour,
Will stand where heroes fall.*