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For the Fallen

by Laurence Binyon

Printable text • Modelling slides Photocopiable text and questions • pages 74 to 77

This unit continues the theme of World War I begun in Unit 5. Laurence Binyon wrote this affecting tribute during the first days of the war, when reports of casualties reached Britain. Many children will recognise the fourth verse from Remembrance services, but few will have experienced the poem in full.

1 Get ready

Discuss the Key vocabulary identified in the Language toolkit and then complete the vocabulary activities as desired. Please note that the selected vocabulary is a guide. Depending on the needs of your cohort, additional vocabulary discussion may be beneficial before, during and after reading. Next, display the text (pages 74 to 75) so the children can see the title and any illustrations, and encourage the children to discuss the following questions before reading.

- 1 What do you know about World War I? What books have you read about it? Answers will vary depending on prior knowledge. Much of the children's knowledge may be gleaned from previous Remembrance Day activities depending on how your school has addressed this beforehand. Encourage them to think of texts from a range of genres, offering your own suggestions if necessary.
- 2 World War I was also called the Great War. Why do you think this name was used? Answers will vary but should relate to the size or scale of the conflict and the difference between the meanings of the word 'great'. Depending on the children's knowledge of the war, you could spend some time discussing how many countries and people were involved.
- 3 How would you feel if your father or brother was fighting at the front in World War I? Answers will vary and will depend on the children's understanding of the war. Images and film clips (see Reading list) may support their responses to this question. You could give them some options of contrasting feelings to discuss in groups (e.g. proud; joyful; anxious). Care should be taken with this question if any of your cohort have family members serving in the armed forces.

Language toolkit

Key vocabulary

august	comrades	condemn
desolation	foe	immortal spheres
innermost	mourns	profound
solemn	staunch	well-spring

Vocabulary discussion questions

- What football team are you a staunch supporter of?
- Are you more likely to be friendly with a comrade or friendly with a foe? Why?
- If a book has a profound effect on you, are you likely to remember it for a long time or forget it straightaway?

Vocabulary activities

- Show the children a picture of a Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery (e.g. Tyne Cot Cemetery). Ask how they would feel if they visited. Elicit words such as 'sombre' and 'melancholy', and discuss synonyms, making links to the words above (e.g. mourns; solemn; desolation; profound; innermost).
- How many synonynms for profound can the children find?
- Explain that august has two different meanings: it can be used as an adjective or a noun. Read aloud two sentences that demonstrate this (e.g. 'The soldiers fought bravely during August'; 'The august soldiers' medals shone in the sunlight').

2 First steps

Read the text together and then encourage the children to discuss the following questions.

- 1 How did the poem make you feel? Why? Answers will vary depending on the children's feelings about the text. They should be able to justify their response, but the quality of their justification will be dependent on their understanding of the topic (e.g. The poem made me feel upset because I thought about all the people who were killed and their families who missed them).
- 2 From whose point of view is the poem written? The children should recognise that the narrator is not just one person. However, this is a tricky question and you may need to spend additional time discussing this, pointing out the poet's use of the pronouns 'we' and 'our'.
- 3 What is the message of the poem? Answers will vary depending on the children's understanding of the poem's themes. However, they should all be able to comment on the theme of remembrance (e.g. The poem is about remembering the soldiers who have died for England during the war). Some children may be able to discuss the contrasting feelings discussed in the poem (e.g. pride and pain).
- 4 Did you enjoy the poem? Why? Why not? Answers will vary depending on the children's feelings about the text. They should be able to justify their response (e.g. I liked the poem because it told me about how the soldiers acted).

3 Explore

- Discuss the features of the poem (e.g. verses; rhyme; alliteration; personification). Can the children point out each of these features? Answers will vary (e.g. There are seven verses and each one has four lines. The second and fourth lines rhyme with each other. The poet uses alliteration such as 'They fell with their faces to the foe'. The poet personifies ideas such as death and night by turning them into proper nouns, and describes the country of England as if it were a woman.). If necessary, spend some additional time recapping the features encountered in this text.
- Discuss how this poem is used at commemorations such as Remembrance Sunday. Why do the children think this poem is chosen? Answers will vary depending on their personal opinions (e.g. I think the poem is chosen because although it is upsetting, the words make you feel like the soldiers have gone to a better place and will never be forgotten by our country).

4 Skills focus

See pages 72 to 73

Use the information from the Skills guide and the relevant Skills graphic to introduce the skill of word meaning.

- 1 Model the skill using the Unit 6 Modelling slides and the Modelling word meaning guidance on page 72.
- 2 The children can then attempt the Inference questions on page 76.
- 3 Finally, the Mix it up! questions on page 77 offer practice in a range of comprehension skills.

Answers and marking guidance for all questions are included on pages 72 to 73.

5 Where next?

- Speaking and listening task: Play the children a video clip of the poem being performed (see Reading list). Discuss the speakers' performance (e.g. their tone of voice; how they hold the audience's attention). The children could then create a film featuring their own reading of the poem alongside images from World War I.
- Writing task: The children could write their own final verse for the poem using some of the features used by Binyon, perhaps focusing on how, over 100 years later, we still remember World War I. They could generate ideas in small groups before they start.

Reading list

- Fiction
- One Boy's War by Lynn Huggins-Cooper
  - War Game by Michael Foreman
  - War Horse by Michael Morpurgo (Linked text: Unit 5)
- Class reads
- Armistice Runner by Tom Palmer
- Non-fiction
- Dear Jelly by Sarah Ridley
  - Line of Fire by Barroux
- Films
- They Shall Not Grow Old (BBC/Warner Bros. Pictures, 2018) (Please note that this has a Certificate 15 rating and clips should be chosen carefully.)
- Websites
- The BBC Bitesize website provides a reading of 'For the Fallen' by Laurence Binyon.



Modelling word meaning

See Unit 6 Modelling slides

Use the Skills guide (see pages 14 to 15) and the downloadable Skills graphic to support your modelling.

1 The poet describes the men as *flesh of her flesh* and *spirit of her spirit* when talking about England and the soldiers. What does this tell you about how England felt about the men?

The soldiers were like parts of England because they were so important to her.

Read the question together. Model using the locator and finding the key words identified in the question. You may wish to spend some time discussing the meaning of the two target phrases. Some children may make reference to the soldiers being England’s children. If so, explain that this is partly correct, but that when the poem says ‘flesh of her flesh’ it means that the soldiers are an actual part of her, just like her own flesh and limbs, and therefore they are important.

2 There is music in the midst of desolation. What does the word *desolation* mean in this line?

bareness/sadness

Read the question together and use the locator to find the correct part of the text. Encourage the children to help you identify key words in the question (e.g. ‘mean’). Some children may already know the meaning of the word ‘desolation’. However, it is important to model relating that understanding back to the text. There are two possible correct responses here, as both ‘bareness’ and ‘sadness’ suit the meaning of the poem. You may wish to discuss the differences between the two interpretations.

3 They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted. Which word most closely matches the meaning of *staunch* in this line? Tick one.

dedicated ☒ unhappy ☐ cowardly ☐ wild ☐

Read the question together. Model using the locator and finding the key words identified in the question. This is a tricky sentence as it contains lots of challenging vocabulary. You could model removing the least probable responses first to make the challenge easier (e.g. Think aloud: *We know ‘cowardly’ cannot be correct as the poem talks about how brave the soldiers always were*).

4 Look at the third verse. Find and copy one word that tells you that the soldiers in the poem are dead or wounded.

fell

Read the question together. Model using the locator and finding the key words identified in the question. Remind the children that you are not only searching for words that mean ‘dead’ or ‘wounded’ but also words that imply it. You may wish to recap the rules of ‘find and copy’ questions and model an incorrect example to elicit a discussion about the correct method.

Word meaning questions mark scheme

See page 76

Answer	Guidance
1 Proud means you feel pleased or happy when someone manages to do something tricky.	Some children may struggle with this question and focus on the mother’s feelings towards her children. In this case, you may wish to discuss when the children have felt proud of themselves or another – why did they feel that way? <b>Award 1 mark for any reference to feeling pleasure about what someone has done or how they have behaved.</b>
2 tire <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Some children may choose ‘sicken’ as they may relate being ‘weary’ to being ‘sick’. You could point out that ‘weary’ is used as a verb and not an adjective in the poem. <b>Award 1 mark for the correct answer ticked.</b>

Answer	Guidance
3 condemn	Do not accept any other word choice or the answer accompanied by any other words (e.g. ‘The word is condemn’; ‘to condemn’). <b>Award 1 mark for the correct answer.</b>
4 The soldiers were friendly and had a good time together (even though they were fighting).	Some children may focus on ‘laughing’ or ‘comrades’ only (e.g. ‘They had fun and told jokes’). Responses that refer to only one of the two words highlighted should not be awarded a mark. <b>Award 1 mark for any reference to the positive relationship between the men and their lighthearted behaviour.</b>
5 The poet means that the soldiers are dead OR they are beyond the sea OR they are abroad/away from England OR they can never come back home.	Some children may interpret ‘sleep’ literally. If so, you could spend some time discussing the meaning of this line. <b>Award 1 mark for each correct answer, up to a maximum of 2 marks.</b>

Mix it up! questions mark scheme



See page 77

Answer	Guidance
1 She is their mother. OR The soldiers are England’s sons/children.	Some children may answer that she cares for them, protects or remembers them. If so, refocus them on the key word ‘relationship’ – what relationships do we have in our families? <b>Award 1 mark for the correct answer. Skill: Retrieval.</b>
2 <i>Impression:</i> happy <i>Evidence:</i> ‘They went with songs’/The text says they were singing and people are usually happy when they are singing. <i>Impression:</i> determined <i>Evidence:</i> They were ‘staunch to the end’/The soldiers did not stop trying to beatthe enemy.	Although the children should now be comfortable answering questions in this format, you could recap the steps required to respond if they find deciding on an impression challenging. <b>Award 1 mark for an appropriate impression. Award 2 marks for one impression plus supporting evidence. Award 3 marks for two impressions plus at least one piece of supporting evidence. Skill: Inference.</b>
3 The writer uses repetition to emphasise the fact that the soldiers will be remembered to the very end of time/ that they will never be forgotten.	Some children may provide a vague response (e.g. ‘It gives emphasis’). Do not accept answers that only refer to the repetition giving emphasis without any explanation. <b>Award 1 mark for any reference to emphasis and a suitable explanation. Skill: Word choice.</b>
4 <div><div>Verse 1</div><div>Verse 2</div><div>Verse 3</div><div>Verse 4</div><div>Even though we are sad we can still be proud.</div><div>We will not forget them.</div><div>The men were happy to go and brave until the end.</div><div>The country is in mourning for its fallen soldiers.</div></div>	The children need a good understanding of the whole text to answer this question. You could support less fluent readers by attempting this question in a small group, with the children discussing each option in turn. <b>Award 1 mark for three pairs correctly matched. Award 2 marks for all pairs correctly matched. Skill: Summarising.</b>
5 The message of the poem is that these soldiers died for us and so we should never forget them.	You may wish to provide additional challenge for some children by extending the necessary response to 2 marks. <b>Award 1 mark for an answer that refers to one of the themes of remembrance/thankfulness/pride. Skill: Relationship.</b>



## For the Fallen, by Laurence Binyon

This is a famous poem about World War I. The fourth verse is often recited at Remembrance Day services in November. The poet, Laurence Binyon, worked as a volunteer in hospitals during the war.

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,  
England mourns for her dead across the sea.  
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,  
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal  
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.  
There is music in the midst of desolation  
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.  
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,  
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;  
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;  
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;  
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,  
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,  
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known  
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,  
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,  
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,  
To the end, to the end, they remain.





Word meaning

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children.  
What does the word *proud* mean in this line?

1 mark

- 2 Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
Which word is closest in meaning to *weary* in this line? Tick **one**.

injure

disgust

sicken

tire

1 mark

- 3 Look at the fourth verse. Find and copy **one** word that means the same as ‘punish’.

1 mark

- 4 The poet uses the words *laughing comrades* to describe the soldiers.  
Give **two** things that these words tell you about the soldiers.

1 mark

- 5 What does the poet mean when he says the soldiers *sleep beyond England’s foam*?

2 marks

Mix it up!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 According to the first verse, what relationship does England have to her soldiers?

1 mark

- 2 Look at the third verse. What impressions do you get of the fallen soldiers at this point? Give **two** impressions, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

Impression	Evidence
<div></div>	<div></div>
<div></div>	<div></div>

3 marks

- 3 To the end, to the end, they remain.  
What is the effect of using repetition in this line?

1 mark

- 4 Match each verse to its main idea. One has been done for you.

Verse 1

Even though we are sad we can still be proud.

Verse 2

We will not forget them.

Verse 3

The men were happy to go and brave until the end.

Verse 4

The country is in mourning for its fallen soldiers.

2 marks

- 5 What is the main message of the poem?

1 mark