

Remembrance Day

Why Do We Have Remembrance Day?

Remembrance Day helps us to remember what happened during the First World War and any subsequent wars; we remember the soldiers who have fought and died for our country.

The First World War

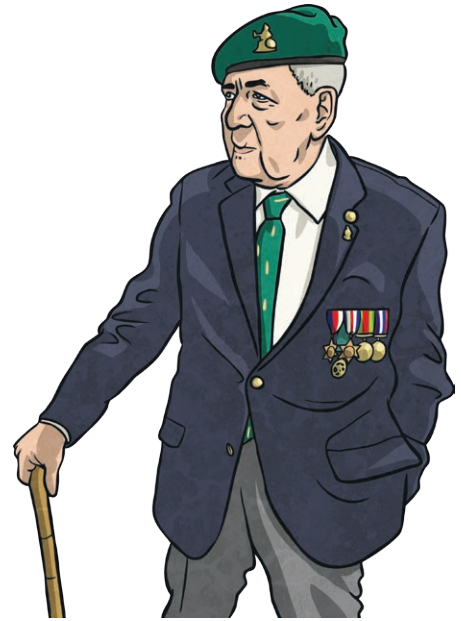
The war took place between 1914 and 1918, in Belgium, France, Africa and the Middle East. All fit and healthy men of a young age were expected to join the army and fight for their country and over 10 million soldiers died; many were as young as 16 and 17.

What Is Armistice?

The Armistice was when the war ended in 1918; it officially ended at the eleventh hour, on the eleventh day, of the eleventh month (so 11am, 11th November 1918).

What Happens on Remembrance Day?

At 11 o'clock on Remembrance Day (or Armistice Day), we have 2 minutes of silence. Many towns also have a parade to show they remember. This usually ends at a war memorial or cenotaph.



Wreaths



There is a cenotaph in Whitehall, London where the Queen and other important people pay their respects. The Queen lays the first wreath at the Cenotaph and other wreaths are then laid by the armed forces. At other war memorials around the country, wreaths are laid by companies, clubs and societies. People also leave small wooden crosses by the memorials in remembrance of family members who died in war.

Why Do We Wear Poppies and have two-minutes of silence?

After the war, only poppies grew on the damaged earth of the battlefields in France and Belgium. They were also mentioned in the famous poem of the time 'In Flanders' Fields', which was written by a John McCrae (Doctor and Poet) serving in the war, after they grew around the graves of those that died in battle.



Wearing poppies helps us show our respect for those who have died and buying them raises money for charities to help wounded soldiers and their families.

Great Britain still believes strongly in remembering those who fought, not only in World Wars, but the more than 12 000 British servicemen and women killed or injured since 1945. The Royal British Legion supports silences observed during Remembrance Sunday services and on 11th November, Armistice Day, itself.

The First Two-Minute Silence

The first two-minute silence in London (11th November 1919) as reported in the Manchester Guardian, 12th November 1919...



- 'The first stroke of eleven produced a magical effect.'
- 'The tram cars glided into stillness, motors ceased to cough and fume, and stopped dead, and the mighty-limbed dray horses hunched back upon their loads and stopped also, seeming to do it of their own volition.'
- 'Someone took off his hat, and with a nervous hesitancy the rest of the men bowed their heads also. Here and there an old soldier could be detected slipping unconsciously into the posture of 'attention'. An elderly woman, not far away, wiped her eyes, and the man beside her looked white and stern.'
- 'Everyone stood very still ... The hush deepened. It had spread over the whole city and become so pronounced as to impress one with a sense of audibility. It was a silence which was almost pain ... And the spirit of memory brooded over it all.'

Questions

Answer the questions below in full sentences.

1. When is Remembrance Day held each year?

2. Why is it held on this date?

3. Find another word for 'war memorial'.

4. Why do you think the Queen lays the first wreath?

5. When was the first two-minute silence observed?

6. What is another name for Remembrance Day? _____

Why is this name also used?

7. Read about 'The First Two-Minute Silence' again. Why do you think the author describes the first stroke of eleven as producing a 'magical effect'?

Answers

1. When is Remembrance Day held each year?

November 11th (at 11am).

2. Why is it held on this date?

World War One officially ended at the eleventh hour, on the eleventh day, of the eleventh month (so 11am, 11th November 1918).

3. Find another word for 'war memorial'.

cenotaph

4. Why do you think the Queen lays the first wreath?

Accept any reasonable explanation, e.g. because she is the head of our country and it is important for her to show respect so that her nation follows.

5. When was the first two-minute silence observed?

11th November 1919

6. What is another name for Remembrance Day? **Armistice Day**

Why is this name also used?

The Armistice was when the war ended in 1918.

7. Read about 'The First Two-Minute Silence' again. Why do you think the author describes the first stroke of eleven as producing a 'magical effect'?

Accept any relevant description that links to the text, e.g. because everything seemed to stop with relevant examples.

Extension

Have you ever attended a Remembrance service or parade? Describe your experience below.

Accept any relevant description.