

This fall we invite you to incorporate  
***White PEACE POPPIES***

...as well as the traditional red poppy in your teaching kit for  
**REMEMBRANCE DAY**

First introduced in Britain in 1933, the white poppy commemorates all victims of war, civilian and military, while encouraging us to challenge the beliefs, values and institutions that make war seem inevitable.



Summit Celebrates Young Activists



Civilian and Military Death Statistics - Compare WW1 and Present Conflicts



Challenging Militarism

## **BENEFITS OF EXPANDING OUR SCHOOLS' REMEMBRANCE DAY FOCUS:**

While respecting and honouring the sacrifice of soldiers, mixed poppy wreaths like those above also recognize the huge shift towards higher civilian casualties in recent conflicts. Civilian victims (including many children) now make up more than 90% of the total war dead.

The environmental impacts of war, its psychological toll on soldiers and civilians, and the lost potential of an estimated 50 million children whose education is disrupted by war are consequences our world cannot afford to accept.

By exploring the broader impacts of war, and better reflecting the experience of recent immigrants, teachers at all grade levels can help keep Remembrance Day relevant to students' lives and interests.

Vancouver Peace Poppies offers ideas and resource materials for secondary and primary teachers, plus [subsidized white lapel poppies](http://www.peacepoppies.ca) for use in schools.

We also co-host 'Let Peace be Their Memorial' a Remembrance Day wreath ceremony for overlooked victims of war. We'd welcome more teacher and student participation in that event.



# Expanding the Focus of Remembrance Day

## Some Ideas for Secondary School Students:

from *Vancouver Peace Poppies*

[www.peacepoppies.ca](http://www.peacepoppies.ca)

### Classroom Discussion Topics:

- Discuss the **history of red and white poppy symbols**.
- Ask students to think of how the **lives of kids their age are disrupted by war**.
- Talk about the white poppy controversy in Canada. Why do some people feel that it is offensive to veterans? Can they suggest ways to make it more accepted?
- Ask your students if they have **family stories of war and/or dislocation** they would be willing to share with classmates.
- Ask students to **share stories of peace making** from their own lives, in class or at an assembly. These can be in any form (written/drawn/spoken/acted/etc.).
- What are the effects of disrupted education and lost potential on the world's economy?
- What do they think are the most common causes of war. Fear? Desire for Justice? Anger? Greed? Political Gain? Hunger or Overcrowding?...
- What do they feel are some justifiable grounds for war? Unjustifiable?
- Is the 'Responsibility to Protect' a good doctrine? How might it be used or abused?
- Can war be an effective use of resources to achieve a desirable goal; if so when?
- What lessons – good or bad do soldiers learn in training for war?

### Student Research Topics:

- Have students **pick an issue they care about and research how it interconnects with issues of war & conflict**. For example a student interested in food sustainability could research war's effect on agriculture. Environmentalists could study DU contamination or the military's carbon 'Footprint'. Other possible topics are child soldiers, the effect of war on endangered species, life in a refugee camp, PTSD and other negative effects of war on soldiers, even if they are on the 'winning' side.

### Art Projects:

- Make a **mixed poppy wreath** to show the high percentage of civilian war victims or **a white poppy wreath** to commemorate civilians (or high school students) killed in wars.
- **Make a mural** or collage showing war scenes plus red and white poppies.
- Make a display of poppies whose centres are news photographs of the faces of victims of war.
- Hold a **play, poetry or other reading** on the issues of peace and war.

### Club or Class Presentations:

- Research how issues of War and Conflict relate to your clubs' purpose and make a short presentation to the Remembrance Day Assembly. For ideas see Student Research Topics above.

## Ideas for Secondary School Students cont. :

### Schoolwide Activities:

- Hold a **Peace Concert** in your school, just before Remembrance Day, involving students singing and speaking. Invite parents and school neighbors. If you encourage donations at this concert, the money raised can be donated to a peace-making charity of the students choosing.
- **Invite guests** into the class/school to speak about peace and their work to promote it.

### White Lapel Poppies for Classroom Use or School Assemblies

- Teachers or administrators can order subsidized 'peace' poppies from Vancouver Peace Poppies. We purchase these beautiful, paper-based, plastic-free, and ethically sourced lapel poppies from the British Peace Pledge Union and make them available to Canadian schools.
- See the document **Lapel Poppy Order Form**

### Student-Run White Lapel Poppy Campaigns

- Running their own White Poppy Campaign is a great way for high school students to promote peace in their school community. Campaigns can be sponsored by a Social Justice class or classes, a school club, or simply a group of friends.
- Since student groups can expect to recover their poppy costs through donations, Vancouver Peace Poppies doesn't provide subsidized poppies, but we can provide up to 100 poppies at cost. Use the document **Student Campaign Order Form**
- Larger quantities should be ordered directly from the Peace Pledge Union in Britain.  
<https://shop.ppu.org.uk/collections/frontpage/products/white-poppies-schools-pack>  
Vancouver Peace Poppies can give advice on ordering and shipping.  
We can also provide free posters and information cards to accompany your poppies.
- As a cost-saving option, students could download, print, and cut-out their own poppies, using the template **Printable Lapel Poppies**
- Students should be encouraged to do some research so they are prepared to answer questions and defend their position. We recommend greeting objections calmly and asking people to explain their reasons, rather than being confrontational or dismissive.
- Here's what one Ontario student had to say:

*I think we made a real splash here, though only 42 people had poppies, our message of peace definitely made its way down the high school grapevine. Which is really big accomplishment considering I live in a military community, with strong pro-war opinions.*

*In fact, there were a lot of cases when there were people who militantly disagreed with us, confronted us, and then after hearing our message of "If we really want to honour the memories of those who have fallen, wouldn't we want others not to suffer the same end?" actually changed their assessment of us, some actually taking a poppy themselves!*

*There were some teachers and staff who caused us a little hell, asking students to take the poppies off. However there were no major incidents, and no one was punished for wearing a poppy. This was a huge success in my opinion; I definitely want to be involved next year.*

~

Don't forget to **tell us about the your projects and ideas**, so we can share them with others and inspire more work in future years !!!!

## **Feedback from Schools participating in previous White Poppy campaigns:**

*The grade 7 & 8 students did a "Courageous Voices" presentation where they each stood up, wearing a white poppy, and quoted a famous person. All quotes were about peace. Students were placed throughout the audience so the voices came from all directions - it was very powerful. Also, our MCs did an explanation of the white peace poppy and its history during the ceremony. Our ceremony started with the theme of remembrance and, after the minute of silence, switched to the theme of peace and all participants switched their poppies from red to white at this time - it was amazing.*

Beth McEwan - John McCrae Public School – Guelph, ON

*The white poppies...were a huge hit. We ran a Remembrance Day Assembly for the school in which each class discussed a way they are working on solving everyday conflicts through non-violent means.*

Ellen Kellner - Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School – Toronto, ON

*Our school used the white poppies to reinforce our 'Look Both Ways' theme which encourages students to consider more than one side of complex social issues.*

Sheila MacLeod - Ruth Thompson Middle School – Mississauga, ON

## **Supportive words from Canadian Veterans:**

*I am a 95 year old veteran, who served in the Canadian Forces for almost 30 years, in 3 theaters of war...and with the UN in Korea. I wore the white poppy this year beside the respected red poppy because I wanted to honour non-military casualties, as well as the military casualties. As we have discovered, modern warfare is TOTAL. It makes no distinction between civilian and military. Weapons of destruction now target civilians every bit as much, if not more so than military formations and installations. It is time for all of us, including The Royal Canadian Legion to recognize this.*

WWII Veteran Lieut. Colonel Woodrow Coward

*I feel that a white poppy for civilians and a red poppy for veterans to commemorate those who died during war is appropriate, and should not be considered "disrespectful" and offensive to Veterans. I think the white poppy is appropriate for Remembrance Day, as the civilian casualties, are as great a loss, as those of the military personnel.*

Korean War Veteran David Laskey

*As a veteran of the First Gulf War and fifteen years in the Canadian Armed Forces, I was happy to discover the White Poppy Movement... the red poppy is also very important to me. It reminds me of the brothers and sisters in arms who gave their lives so that others could have peace. This is why I will proudly wear the white poppy of peace beside the red poppy of remembrance: to honour and remember those whose sacrifice helped to ensure my freedom to write this little note about peace.*

Gulf War Veteran

For more resources see the Vancouver Peace Poppies website <https://www.peacepoppies.ca/>

## **Some additional electronic peace resources for educators:**

1. Teaching For Peace - <http://www.zisman.ca/peace/>
2. Conscience Canada - Never Again: Peace Education and Remembrance Day  
[http://www.consciencecanada.ca/?page\\_id=244](http://www.consciencecanada.ca/?page_id=244)
1. Peace Pledge Union - Education (originators of the White Poppy - England 1933)  
<https://ppu.org.uk/education>