

# VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM CURRICULAR MATERIALS

[vlp.cah.ucf.edu](http://vlp.cah.ucf.edu)

**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
National Cemetery Administration



**Department  
of History**

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA





# Veterans Poetry

Recognizing and Understanding Veterans through Poems



# Day 1: Learn about Veterans

Read here and answer the questions on the next slide!

- <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/veteran/>

- What is a Veteran?
- What are the five branches of the U.S. Armed Forces?
- When is Veterans Day?
- What does it celebrate?
- Which department helps Veterans and their families when they return home?

## Answers:

- What is a Veteran? a person who has served their country in a military capacity
- What are the five branches of the U.S. Armed Forces? Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard
- When is Veterans Day? November 11
- What does it celebrate? the sacrifice and dedication of all U.S. Veterans who served
- Which department helps Veterans and their families when they return home? The Department of Veterans Affairs

## Day 2: Learn about National Cemeteries

Read here and answer the questions on the next slide!

- <https://vlp.cah.ucf.edu/instructionalmaterials/UCF-VLP-MiniToursClassroomIntro.pdf>.

- What is a national cemetery?
- How many national cemeteries are there in the U.S.?
- Can a spouse (husband or wife) of a Veteran be buried in a national cemetery?
- When is the earliest known burial in St. Augustine National Cemetery?
- What is believed to be the oldest memorial in any national cemetery?

## Answers:

- What is a national cemetery? a cemetery where Veterans and their families can be buried, where they are honored and memorialized
- How many national cemeteries are there in the U.S.? 155
- Can a spouse (husband or wife) of a Veteran be buried in a national cemetery? yes
- When is the earliest known burial in St. Augustine National Cemetery? 1828
- What is believed to be the oldest memorial in any national cemetery? The Dade Pyramids



## Day 3: Read Poetry about Veterans

Read the following poem and answer the questions. Be sure to think about the meaning behind the poem and the reason that it was written!

# In Flanders Fields

by John McCrae

What is the rhyme scheme of this stanza?

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.

Is this poem  
1st or 3rd  
person point  
of view?

(continued)

# In Flanders Fields

by John McCrae

AABBA

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.

First Person;  
“mark our  
place,” in line  
3 helps us  
know.

(continued)

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.

What is the setting of this poem?

How does this stanza help us to understand the perspective of the speaker?

(continued)

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.

We can understand that the speaker has died and is remembering life before.

The setting of the poem is Flanders Fields. We can infer that this is a cemetery.

(continued)

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.

What is the meaning of the last three lines?

What does the phrase, "we throw the torch" mean?

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.

The speaker wants us to remember those who died in war, so that they can rest in peace.

They are passing on the responsibility to continue their fight.

## Day 4: Read Poetry about Veterans

Read the following poem and answer the questions. Be sure to think about the meaning behind the poem and the reason that it was written!



# You Are A Soldier

by Lewis Peterson

It is time,  
The war has started.  
Your skills are needed,  
Don't forget to be careful.

You are our hope for the future,  
You protect what really matters.

You are a soldier,  
You fight for our freedom.

What is the speaker's perspective of soldiers?

What is the rhyme scheme of this poem?

(continued)

# You Are A Soldier

## by Lewis Peterson

It is time,  
The war has started.  
Your skills are needed,  
Don't forget to be careful.

no rhyme  
scheme;  
this is a free  
verse  
poem.

The speaker  
respects  
soldiers and  
what they  
fight for.

You are our hope for the future,  
You protect what really matters.  
You are a soldier,  
You fight for our freedom.

(continued)

Not all of the enemies are bad,  
Some are confused.  
Remember that you can't tell,  
So don't feel bad if they are in your line of fire.

What does stanza three suggest that soldiers may feel as they fight?

How does the free verse structure contribute to the meaning of the poem?

Soldier, raise up!  
It is time for war!  
It is time to fight for the U.S.A!  
Believe in it, go for it

(continued)

Not all of the enemies are bad,  
Some are confused.  
Remember that you can't tell,  
So don't feel bad if they are in your line of fire.

It suggests  
that  
soldiers  
may feel  
guilt as they  
go into  
battle.

The free  
verse allows  
the poet to  
express  
themselves  
without the  
restrictions of  
rhyme.

Soldier, raise up!  
It is time for war!  
It is time to fight for the U.S.A!  
Believe in it, go for it

(continued)

Remember back here you are loved,

Back here you are cherished.

Back here a home is waiting for you,

Back here you have family.

You are fight[ing] to protect them,

Keep it up, don't quit now!

You are a soldier,

Protect us soldier.

Where can  
we infer  
“back here”  
might be?

What is the  
theme of this  
poem?

Remember back here you are loved,

Back here you are cherished.

Back here a home is waiting for you,

Back here you have family.

You are fight[ing] to protect them,

Keep it up, don't quit now!

You are a soldier,

Protect us soldier.

gratitude and  
encouragement  
for soldiers  
protecting us

“Back here”  
is the  
soldier’s  
home or  
country.  
Many  
soldiers  
leave their  
country to  
fight!

## Day 5: Read Poetry about Veterans

Read the following poem and answer the questions. Be sure to think about the meaning behind the poem and the reason that it was written!

# Garlands

by Amos Russel Wells

What are the garlands we lay on the graves?

Heapings of blossoms that loveliest are?

Beauty supreme for the bravest of braves?

Yes, and an offering holier far.

What clues from stanza 1 can help us to understand the meaning of the word garlands?

How does stanza 2 contribute to the meaning of the poem?

Here are the garlands of memories clear,  
Thoughts of the partings the desperate frays,  
Marches and prisons and hospitals drear,  
Triumphs and woes of those terrible days.

(continued)



# Garlands

## by Amos Russel Wells

What are the garlands we lay on the graves?

Heapings of blossoms that loveliest are?

Beauty supreme for the bravest of braves?

Yes, and an offering holier far.

“Heapings of blossoms”  
and “Beauty supreme”  
help us understand that  
garlands are beautiful  
plants/flowers.

This stanza helps us to  
picture the memories  
of the Veterans in the  
graves (good and bad).

Here are the garlands of memories clear,  
Thoughts of the partings the desperate frays,  
Marches and prisons and hospitals drear,  
Triumphs and woes of those terrible days.

(continued)

Garlands of gratitude fadeless and fair  
Lie on the graves of our glorious dead, –  
Grateful for freedom that breathes in the air,  
Grateful for union that floats overhead.

What  
“types” of  
garlands  
does the  
author write  
about in  
these two  
stanzas?

What point of  
view is this  
poem told  
from? How  
do you know?

Garlands of love from the children and wives,  
Garlands of hope for the nation to day,  
Garlands of offered and consecrate lives,  
These on the graves of our heroes we lay.

(continued)

Garlands of gratitude fadeless and fair  
Lie on the graves of our glorious dead, –  
Grateful for freedom that breathes in the air,  
Grateful for union that floats overhead.

-of gratitude  
-of love  
-of hope  
-of lives

1st person  
POV; “our  
heroes” in  
the last line  
here is the  
clue.

Garlands of love from the children and wives,  
Garlands of hope for the nation to day,  
Garlands of offered and consecrate lives,  
These on the graves of our heroes we lay.

(continued)

What is the  
rhyme  
scheme of  
this poem?

Roses and lilies and violets blue,  
Daffodils, tulips, and all of the rest, –  
Ah, dear departed, brave patriots true,  
We know what garlands will please you the best!

Who is the  
speaker  
referring to as  
“you” in the  
last line of  
the poem?

ABAB

Roses and lilies and violets blue,  
Daffodils, tulips, and all of the rest, –  
Ah, dear departed, brave patriots true,  
We know what garlands will please you the best!

the Veterans  
that have  
died and are  
buried; they  
are the ones  
receiving the  
garlands!

## Day 6: Poetry Brainstorming

Soon, you will be writing your own Veteran poem(s)!  
Let's review some of the types of poems that you can write. Decide which type you want to try for your poem as well as your topic/focus.

- **Rhymed Verse Poem**
  - 1 or more stanzas
  - Intentional rhyme throughout
  - Often includes figurative language
  - “In Flanders Fields” and “Garlands” are both rhymed verse poems.
- **Free Verse Poem**
  - 1 or more stanzas
  - No intentional rhyme
  - Allows for more freedom when choosing words and phrases
  - “You Are A Soldier” is a free verse poem.

- Acrostic Poem
  - Uses a word or name to determine the number of lines.
  - Does not need to rhyme.
  - Uses the letters of the word/name to start each line.

Example using “soldier”:

S trong  
O utstanding  
L oyal  
D efender  
I nspirational  
E nduring  
R isk taker

Other ideas for Acrostic words:  
“Veteran”, branches of the Armed Forces,  
or names of Veterans you know



- Cinquain

- 5 lines
- ABABB or ABAAB rhyme scheme

- Haiku

- 3 lines
- 1st line: 5 syllables
- 2nd line: 7 syllables
- 3rd line: 5 syllables
- Often about or including references to nature

- Some suggested topics for your poems:
  - Gratitude (thanks)
  - Respect
  - In memoriam
  - Family/friends who have served
  - Inspiration
  - Freedom
  - Courage/Bravery

## Day 7: It's Writing Time!

Let your creative juices flow and write your poem(s) for/about Veterans! Remember to keep them respectful and appropriate.