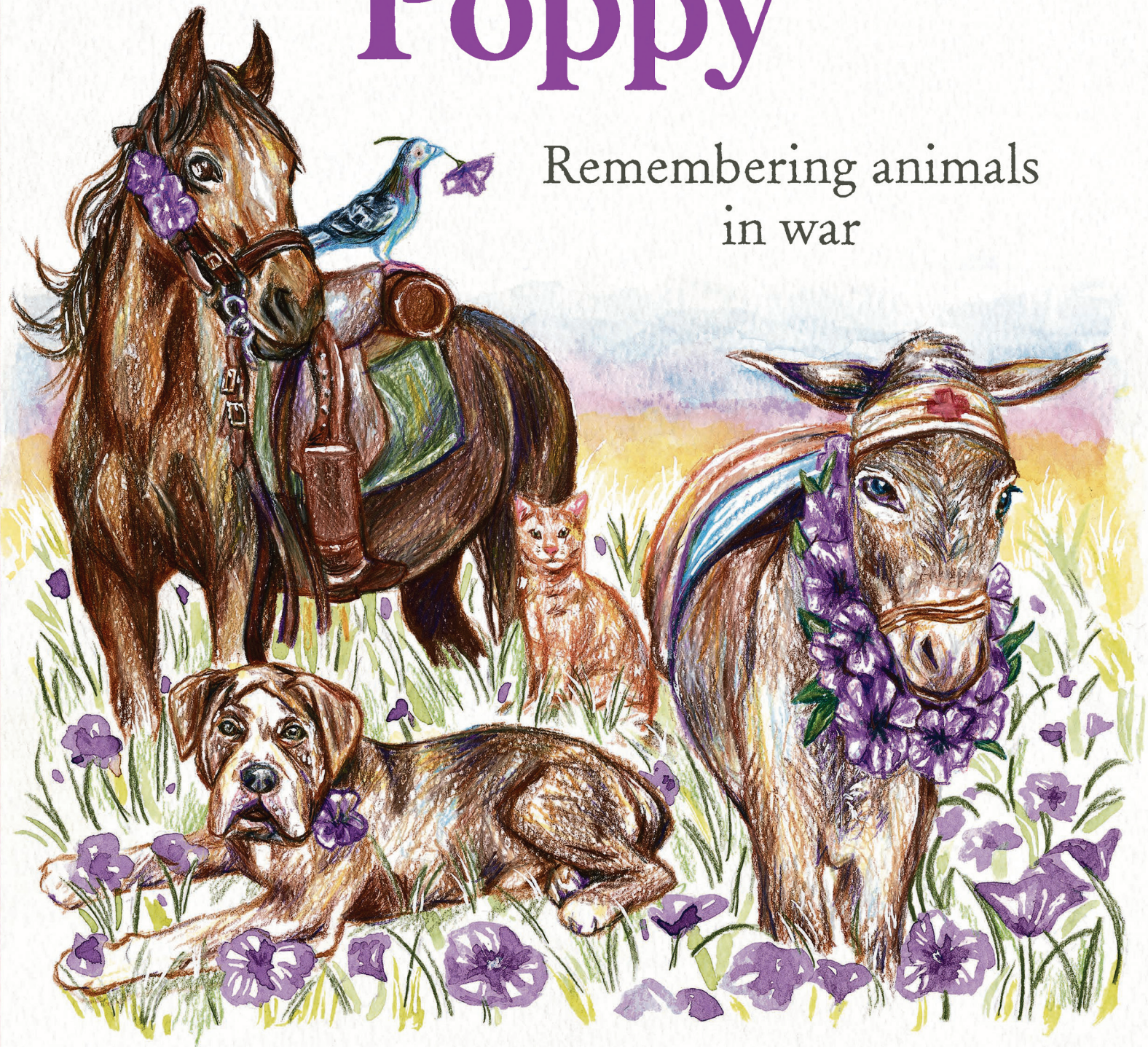


Wear a Purple Poppy

Remembering animals
in war



WRITTEN BY FIONA WHITE • ILLUSTRATED BY KATHLEEN O'HAGAN

TEACHERS RESOURCES

Wear a Purple Poppy

WRITTEN BY FIONA WHITE
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Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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INTRODUCTION

Lest we forget, our four-legged diggers served too . . . This is a heart-warming, beautifully illustrated tribute to the animals that served alongside our diggers in war and peacetime. *Wear a Purple Poppy* honours their courage and dedication and captures the spirit and importance of wearing a purple poppy on the National Day for War Animals.

It is a little remembered fact that not only soldiers went to war; many animals were taken too. The purple poppy that we wear on the National Day for War Animals was created to honour animals like Simpson's donkey for their courage and fortitude, and the comfort they gave to soldiers.

Wear A Purple Poppy combines a poetic tribute with non-fiction text to inform young readers of the loyal work of these animals. From the donkeys, horses, mules and dogs to the elephants, pigeons, cats and camels who took on roles as mascots, trackers and messengers, we wear a purple poppy for you.

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes are covered in this book which might be related to the Australian Curriculum, including:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>>

ANIMALS IN WAR

Discussion Point: Research Australian animals (including birds) in war. [See: *Australian War Animal Memorial Organisation (AWAMO)* <http://awamo.org.au/>] Discuss some of the facts you have gleaned from your research.

Discussion Point: Research animals that have served in other countries' forces.

Discussion Point: This book canvasses the roles played in war by horses, mules, donkeys, camels, dogs, pigeons, elephants and cats. Research these roles and some examples of their service.

Discussion Point: The text mentions the role of animals, particularly dogs, as mascots in war. What kind of role do you think a mascot would have for soldiers? You might want to research other animals who served as mascots in war.

Activity: Choose one of the animal recipients of the PDSA Dickin Medal, RSPCA Purple Cross or the Blue Cross and create an illustrated report detailing the animal's contributions and life. As a class, gather all your reports and create a tribute wall.

Activity: Research animal war memorials. Where are they located? Why do you think those sites were chosen? Why do you think these memorials are important?

Activity: Use Google Earth to study then draw a bird's eye view map of the animal memorial at Pozières in France.

Activity: Use Google Earth, or an atlas, to study the topography of Papua New Guinea and the

Kokoda Track. Why do you think donkeys, mules and pigeons were so important here during World War II?

Discussion Point: Research the purple poppy and the National Day for War Animals. On 24 February, gather as a class and wear purple poppies (or purple poppy pins) to commemorate the day. [See **Bibliography**] How does the wearing of the purple poppy help animals today?

Discussion Point: The bravery of military animals is honoured in this book. How has society's views of the treatment of animals in military arenas changed over the years? [See **Bibliography**.] Fiona White says that: 'From a societal and cultural point of view there has been a shift in awareness of the use of animals in war. Historically, calls for memorials, and concern for the animals left behind after wars were over, did not receive the widespread attention or focus it does now. The determination to acknowledge and pay homage to the contributions and sacrifices animals made – especially in the light of the restrictions placed on bringing them home afterwards – gained a lot more momentum as time went on. This acknowledgement through memorials and traditions, such as wearing the purple poppy, helps – along with changes to military practices – to maintain awareness of the fate of animals affected by or involved in war.'

Discussion Point: Why do you think people's views changed over time? How do you think the advances in technology have affected the use of animals in war and peace time? Research and discuss this topic.

Discussion Point: As well as injury and trauma experienced on front lines, animals can unfortunately suffer during war in other ways too. For example, there has been displacement and abandonment of animals during the conflict in Ukraine. As a class, research this issue and the efforts made by organisations to save these animals. Discuss how this reflects on changes in society's views over time.

How do you think social media influences the fate of animals affected by war today?

Discussion Point: The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps became known as the Anzacs after the Gallipoli Landing in 1915. Many of those soldiers then rode together in the Charge of Beersheba on horses shipped from Australia and New Zealand. Discuss why this Anzac bond remains significant today.

AUSTRALIANS IN OVERSEAS CONFLICTS

Discussion Point: Australian and New Zealand students might be aware of the Anzacs' desperate plight at the battle of Gallipoli, and of the Charge of the 4th Light Horse Regiment at Beersheba. Fiona White notes that: 'The regiment included a squadron from the NZ Otago Mounted Rifles. Many of the soldiers in the regiment also fought at Gallipoli (without their horses) and then mostly served in Egypt and the Middle East. There's a lot within this history that can be explored by students, such as the Australian General in command of The Anzac Mounted Division, Major General Harry Chauvel, and Commander William Grant, who led the 4th Brigade.' Discuss these conflicts and the role played by animals within them.

Discussion Point: Students may not be aware of some of the other conflicts mentioned in this book, nor of the places where they occurred. Choose one of the conflicts and research it. On a map, find the location of that place, e.g. Pozières.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>>

Activity: The book opens with a poem. Invite students to write their own poem paying tribute to

animals in war.

Activity: In the text, the author mentions that animals ‘lifted the hearts of the soldiers who ... served alongside them’. What do you think she means by this? How do animals help people feel happy and calm in society today?

Activity: Test your students’ **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written and visual text. [See also **Author’s Notes** below.]

Activity: Read other picture books and junior fictions about animals at war, such as *M is for Mates: Animals in Wartime from Ajax to Zep*, and compare them to *Wear a Purple Poppy*. [See **Bibliography**.]

Activity: Write a story about an animal at war that you have come across in your picture book and junior fiction reading.

VISUAL LITERACY

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>>_

Activity: The **cover** of a book is an important part of its message. *Wear a Purple Poppy* depicts a number of animals, wearing purple poppy accessories, in a field of purple poppies. What message does the cover of this book convey? Design your own cover depicting an animal or animals at war.

Activity: The **endpapers** depict purple poppies. This is a beautifully rendered image. Encourage students to create a similar image. [See also **Worksheet 3**.]

Activity: The **medium and styles** employed are drawing in lead pencil, coloured pencil and Japanese watercolour. [See **Illustrator’s Notes** below.] The **colours** used in this book are primarily sombre shades of brown, charcoal and purple. Experiment with the techniques described by Kathleen O’Hagan in her **Illustrator’s Notes**.

Activity: Invite students to draw, paint or create a collage of a scene to accompany the story they wrote above. Then collect and display each student’s artwork in the classroom. [See also **Worksheet 1** below.]

Activity: Create a graphic novel/comic version of a scene in this book. [See **Bibliography**.] [See also **Worksheet 4**.]

CREATIVE ARTS

Several creative activities are suggested by this text:

1. **Make a purple poppy brooch.** [See **Worksheet 1**.]

2. **Create a polymer clay model** of a particular war animal you admire, based on photos you have seen of the animal. See: ‘Easy Clay Animals for beginners #2/5 in 1 Polymer Clay Tutorial’, *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cicQUYpRV8t>

3. **Create a purple poppy wreath.** [See **Worksheet 2**.]

4. **Create a poster** to advertise this book.

5. **Create a book trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography**.]

FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- Students might research the contents of this book while reading other picture books and fictions such as *M is for Mates* (2009) and others listed in the **Bibliography**.
- Investigate any other topic not covered in these notes which you consider is suggested by the text in *Wear a Purple Poppy*.

CONCLUSION

This book combines poetry and non-fiction to pay a moving and informative tribute to animals at war.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Fiona White

As an animal lover and someone who is interested in history, I was deeply moved when I discovered the existence of the purple poppy while visiting the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. I bought some for myself, as well as my family and friends, to wear with the red poppy on days of commemoration throughout the year, such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. As a primary school teacher, I had many students asking me about the purple poppy. It was through those discussions that the poem grew. This was then followed with lots of research to find out the facts. Whenever I have big feelings about something, I write them down. I had read several books over the years about individual animals who'd gone to war and helped the soldiers in lots of different ways, but I wanted to pay tribute to all the animals – the horses, mules, donkeys, dogs, elephants, pigeons, cats and camels. I wanted to acknowledge that wearing the purple poppy is a way of honouring them for their bravery, and making sure that part of our history is not forgotten.

ILLUSTRATOR'S NOTES

Kathleen O'Hagan

As an illustrator, I love the first moment of reading an author's text and the flood of visual possibilities that race through my mind. In illustrating *Wear a Purple Poppy*, I made sure to research a wide variety of historical images and sources to inform my artwork. I started each illustrated spread with reference images (e.g., for historical uniforms, landscapes and poses) and roughly sketched a series of compositions with lead pencil. Once I was happy with one or two frames, I drew these larger and with more detail as thumbnail sketches.

Once the drawings were finalised in black-and-white, I moved onto colouring! To make multiple copies of the same sketch – the old-fashioned way – I used a light box to trace my original drawing onto a new page. This way I was not afraid to make a mistake and could experiment with different colours and textures. I felt it was important to bring vibrant colour to historical accounts we often only see through black-and-white photography.

To bring life into my illustrations, I use a mix of coloured pencils and Japanese solid watercolours. Coloured pencils are great for specific details, such as the texture of a dog's fur. In contrast, Japanese watercolours give tonal washes that build up atmosphere in the background and add subtle shadow and light to both figures and animals. I also found watercolour was perfect for depicting the semi-translucent petals of the purple poppy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fiona White is a primary school teacher with a lifelong love of horses and animals. She lives in the Macedon Ranges with her two badly behaved but extremely lovable dogs. The greatest love of her childhood was her horse Nimbus; a feisty, head shy pony who survived the Ash Wednesday fires and lived to be 35 years old. *Wear a Purple Poppy: Remembering Animals in War* is her first book.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

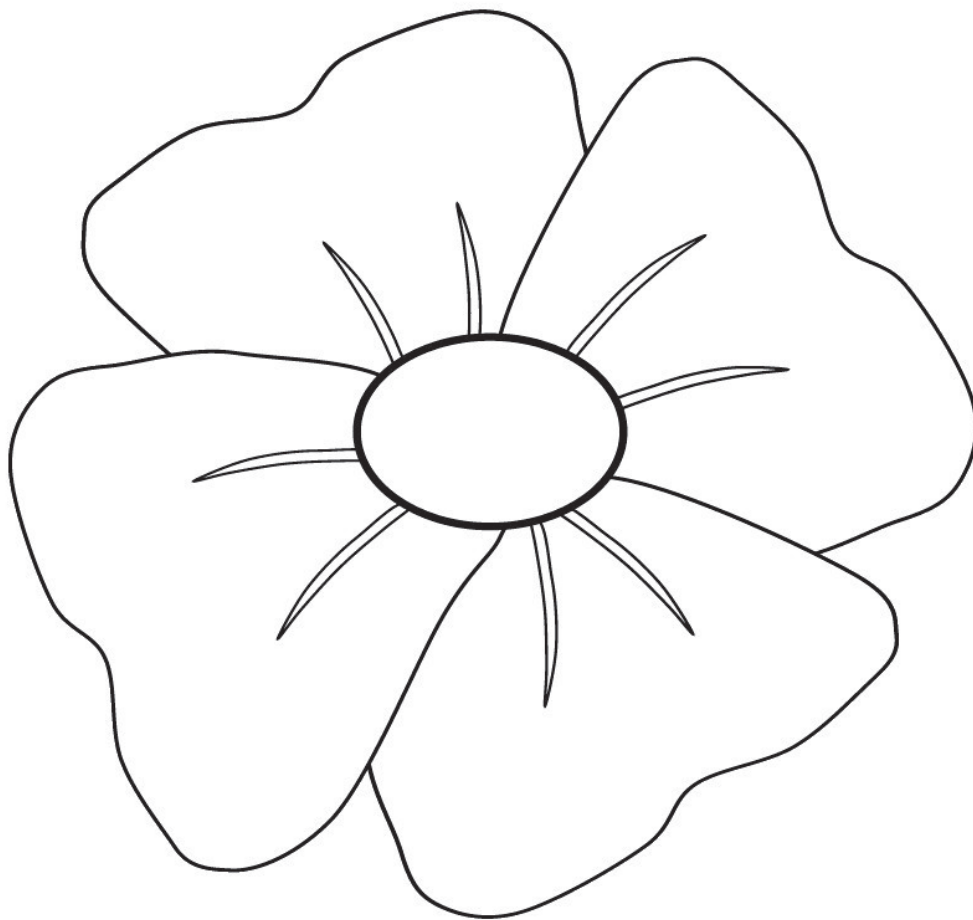
Kathleen O'Hagan is an emerging Meanjin-based artist, educator and arts worker. Her work has been displayed in numerous exhibitions and art prizes across Australia. Her debut children's book, *Colourful Memories*, was illustrated in the spare hours during her final year of school. In 2021, she completed a Bachelor of Visual Art (First Class Honours) at the Queensland College of Art and was awarded the University Medal.

She is passionate about illustration's ability to give life to unique stories, voices and histories. You will often find her tucked away in her small studio – head down at her drafting table, flipping through her art book collection, or working paint-smeared by her easel. See: <https://www.kathleenohaganart.com/>

WORKSHEETS

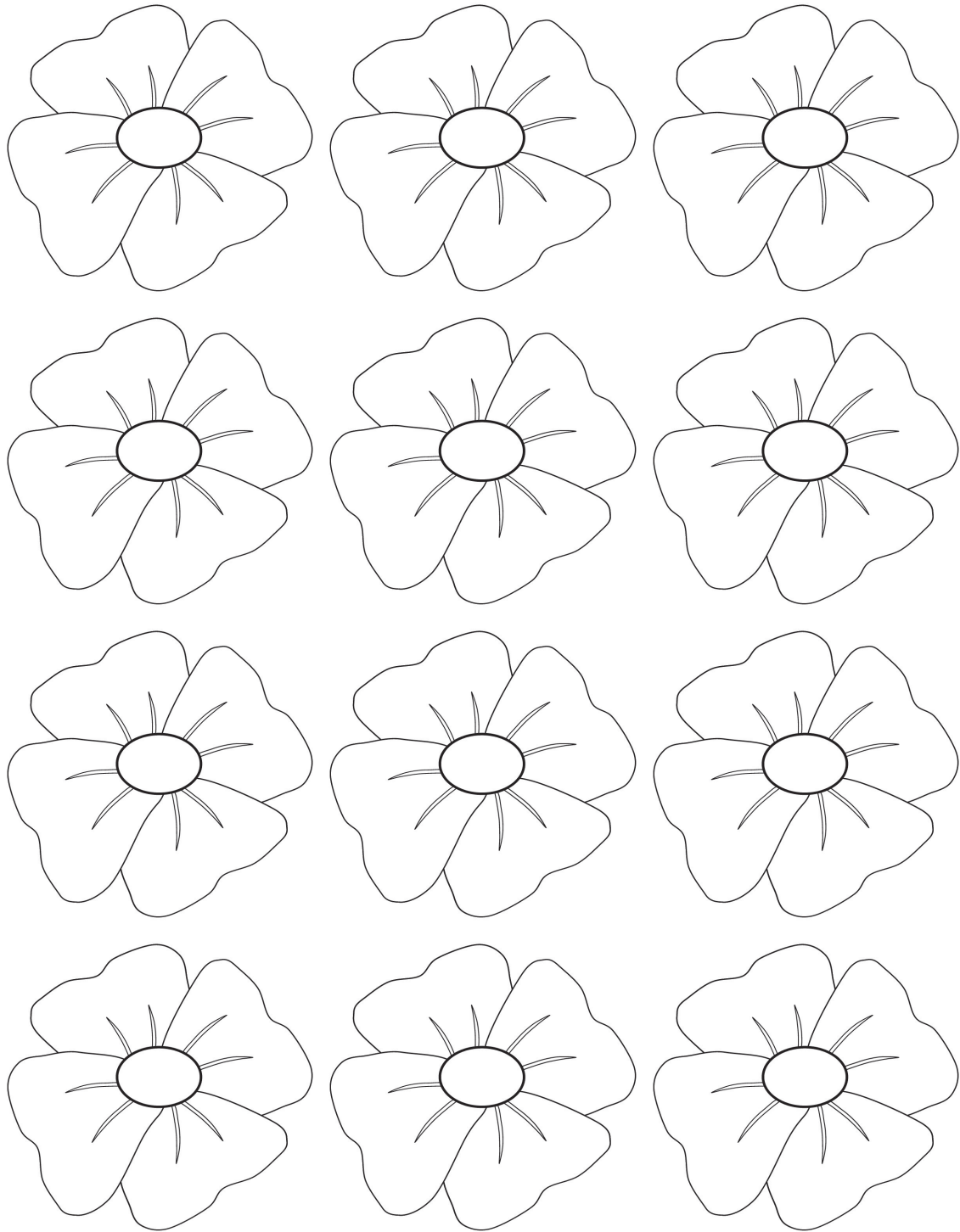
WORKSHEET 1. PURPLE POPPY DAY BROOCH

Colour this image and then glue it onto cardboard. Then cut the image out and attach a pin at the back of it. Wear your purple poppy brooch.



WORKSHEET 2. PURPLE POPPY DAY WREATH

Colour the poppies and glue them onto cardboard. Then cut out each one, make a wreath out of vines, and attach the poppies to your wreath.



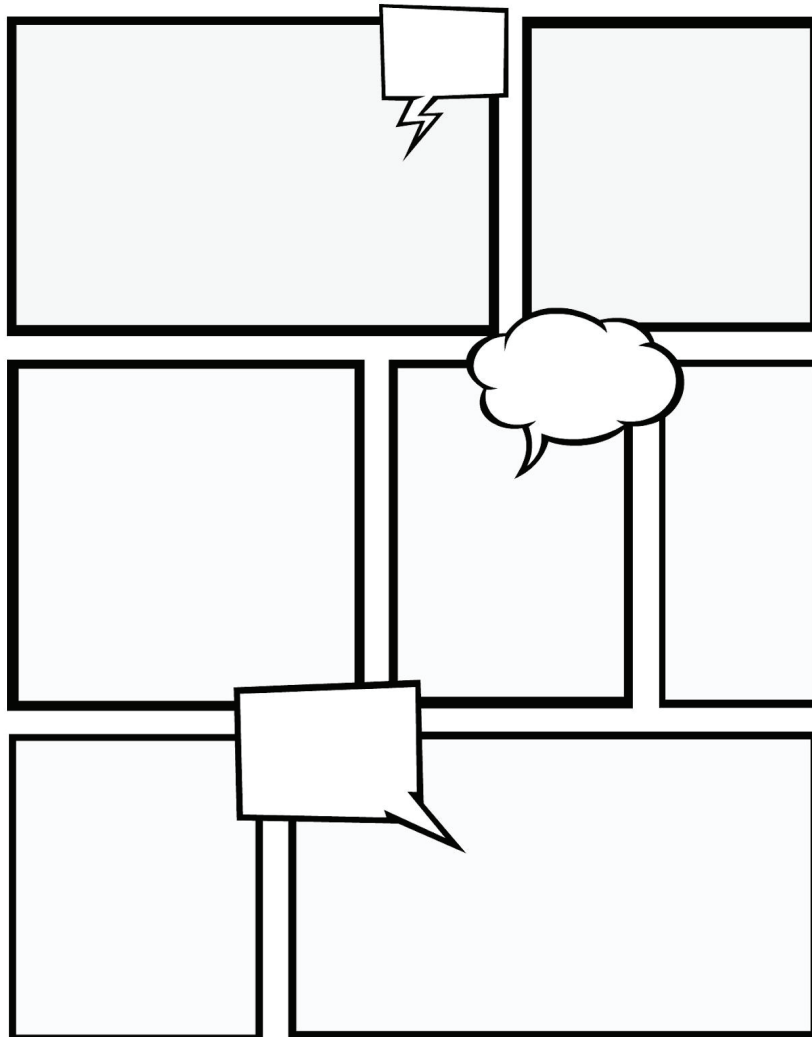
WORKSHEET 3. COLOURING IN PURPLE POPPIES

Colour in the poppies below.



WORKSHEET 4. ANIMALS AT WAR GRAPHIC NOVEL LAYOUT

Depict an animal at war involved in a daring event using the graphic novel medium. Use the layout below as your storyboard. You can enlarge the layout using a photocopier to give you more space.



Template viewed at: <<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/365706432212821426/>>

WORKSHEET 5. WORD MATCH

Match the word with the correct definition.

word	definition
crotchety	a special way of honouring someone or something important
artillery	agile, having the ability to move easily
stoic	irritable and grumpy
Walers	to move something in or out of a place in secret
nimble	lively, spirited and sometimes confrontational or argumentative
tribute	staying calm and strong, even when things are difficult
smuggled	an adverb that helps to describe something that happens or is awarded to an animal or person after they have died
feisty	named because their background dates back to the early days in the colony of New South Wales
posthumously	refers to the big guns and weapons used in wars, as well as the name for the military unit that operates those weapons

WORD MATCH ANSWER SHEET

Tier Two vocabulary consists of more complex words applicable across a range of contexts. They may require a precise definition or synonym for the student to understand the text properly.

word	definition
crotchety	irritable and grumpy
artillery	refers to the big guns and weapons used in wars, as well as the name for the military unit that operates those weapons
stoic	staying calm and strong, even when things are difficult
Walers	named because their background dates back to the early days in the colony of New South Wales
nimble	agile, having the ability to move easily
tribute	a special way of honouring someone or something important
smuggled	to move something in or out of a place in secret
feisty	lively, spirited and sometimes confrontational or argumentative
posthumously	an adverb that helps to describe something that happens or is awarded to an animal or person after they have died

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