

# REMEMBRANCE DAY

## ceremony outline



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs

At 11am on 11 November 1918 the guns of the Western Front fell silent after more than four years of war. In November the Germans called for an armistice (a ceasefire) and they accepted the allied terms of unconditional surrender. The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month became universally associated with the remembrance of those who died.

Please remember to carefully time the speeches in this ceremony so that one minute's silence will commence at 11 am.

### CEREMONY OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Catafalque party mounts
- Hymn
- Prayer, Reading or Poem
- Commemorative Address
- Wreath or poppy laying
- The Ode
- The Last Post
- One minute's silence
- The Rouse
- The National Anthem
- Catafalque party dismounts

### FLAG PROTOCOL

Before the start of the ceremony, flags should be lowered to half mast. During the playing of *The Rouse*, flags are to be raised slowly to the masthead.

**INTRODUCTION** – The introduction can be given by the Principal or a student explaining why you are holding a Remembrance Day ceremony. The introduction should only take one to two minutes.

**CATAFALQUE PARTY** – A catafalque party is a guard of four service personnel who are posted at the four corners of the catafalque, a structure on which a coffin is drawn in a procession. It is usually symbolised when located near a memorial by a raised platform often made of stone. The catafalque party is posted facing outwards with rifles reversed to show that the dead are now at peace. This is not mandatory for a school ceremony. An explanation of the significance should be given during the ceremony. The catafalque party should be posted at the commencement of the ceremony and dismount after the National Anthem has been played.

### HYMN

Hymns that are suitable for a Remembrance Day ceremony include:

- **The Recessional**
- **Abide with Me**
- **O Valiant Hearts**
- **O God, Our Help in Ages Past**

An appropriate modern song may be played instead of a hymn. An example could be Bryan Adams' song *Remembrance Day*.

### PRAYER, READING OR POEM

Prayers or readings that may be recited during the ceremony include:

- **The Lord's Prayer**
- **Psalm 23**
- **John 15: 10–13**
- **Micah 4: 3–5**
- **Ephesians 6: 13–15**

Readings of epitaphs, letters written by soldiers or those on the home front or other readings about war can be recited by students during the ceremony.

Poems that may be read during the Remembrance Day ceremony can include:

- **In Flanders Fields,**  
**Lieutenant-Colonel**  
**John McCrae**
- **We Shall Keep the Faith**  
**(A reply to Lt Col**  
**John McCrae),**  
**Miss Moira Michael**
- **For the Fallen,**  
**Laurence Binyon**

Alternatively, students may research and write their own poems on war to be recited during the ceremony.

**COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS** – The address could be given by an ex-serviceman or woman, current serving member of the Australian Defence Force, local dignitary, teacher or student. The address could include an explanation of why we still commemorate Remembrance Day and who we commemorate. The speaker should be reminded that they need to adhere to time in order for *The Last Post* to commence at 10:58 am.

Sample speeches can be found at [www.dva.gov.au/commemorations/commemorative\\_events/organise\\_events/address.htm](http://www.dva.gov.au/commemorations/commemorative_events/organise_events/address.htm).

**WREATH OR POPPY LAYING** – Flowers have traditionally been laid on the graves or memorials of the dead. Students could be chosen to lay a wreath or flowers at a particular site in the school. This could be under the school's honour roll, at the base of the flag pole or in a designated site in front of the assembly.

**THE ODE** – *The Ode* is taken from Laurence Binyon's poem *For the Fallen*.

*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.  
(Audience responds)  
**We will remember them.***

**THE LAST POST** – In the military, *The Last Post* traditionally marks the end of the working day. *The Last Post* is a bugle call played during commemorative ceremonies to serve as a tribute to the dead. This lasts 1 minute 22 seconds.

**ONE MINUTE'S SILENCE** – One minute's silence should commence at 11 am. It is a sign of respect and offers time for reflection on the significance of the ceremony.

**THE ROUSE** – *The Rouse* is played following the silence and signifies waking up to a new day. During the playing of *The Rouse*, flags should be slowly raised to the masthead. At the end of *The Rouse* the ode reader says:

*Lest we forget*

The people gathered repeat:

*Lest we forget*

**THE NATIONAL ANTHEM** – *Advance Australia Fair* is sung at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Further information on Remembrance Day can be found on the Department of Veterans' Affairs website at [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au), by email at [commemorations@dva.gov.au](mailto:commemorations@dva.gov.au) or by calling 133 254.

The Last Post, The Rouse and the National Anthem are available to download from the Department of Veterans' Affairs website at [www.dva.gov.au/commemorationscommemorative\\_events](http://www.dva.gov.au/commemorationscommemorative_events)