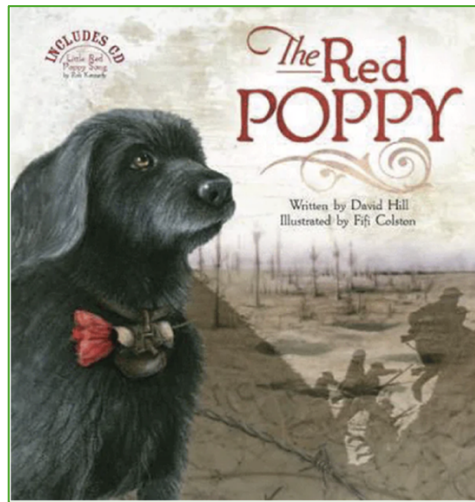


Reading Worksheet

《*The Red Poppy*》



Vocabulary

Words you'll meet across the five scenes

SCENE 1: BEFORE THE ATTACK

bayonet a sharp blade attached to the end of a rifle
crater a large round hole in the ground made by an explosion
barbed wire wire with sharp points used as a barrier
lieutenant an officer in the army

SCENE 2: GOING OVER THE TOP

artillery large heavy guns used in war
jerked moved suddenly and sharply
whine a long high complaining sound
clambering climbing with difficulty using hands and feet
staggered walked unsteadily, as if about to fall
sprawled spread out in a careless or untidy way

SCENE 3: THE SHELL HOLE

throbbled had a strong steady pain that came and went
moaning making a low sound because of pain or sadness
blotches large irregular marks or stains

SCENE 4: JIM AND CARL

gasped took a quick sharp breath because of pain or surprise
awkwardly in a difficult or clumsy way
gestured made a movement with your hand to communicate
dribbled flowed slowly in small drops
scrambled moved quickly using hands and feet

SCENE 5: THE RESCUE AND THE POPPY

croaked spoke in a rough low voice
oozed flowed out slowly and thickly
glided moved smoothly through the air
bloodstained marked with blood
stretcher bearer a soldier whose job is to carry injured people

Scene 1: Before the Attack

Jim waits in a deep trench. In 30 minutes he must climb out and advance towards the enemy. He looks at his friends and the messenger dog Nipper. Halfway across the battlefield is a patch of red poppies.

SHORT ANSWER

1. What is Nipper's role on the battlefield?

SENTENCE ANSWER

2. How does David Hill use silence and sound in the opening scene to create tension?
3. Why might Hill have chosen to describe the red poppies before any fighting begins?
4. What does the line 'They would try to kill him. He might have to kill some of them' suggest about Jim's view of war?

ESSAY-STYLE ANSWER

For essay-style answers, use a separate sheet. 1 short paragraph (5–7 sentences) per question.

5. Hill describes the soldiers marching past 'houses that had been blown apart' and 'dead horses lying in the fields' before they even reach the trenches. Why might the writer place these images so early in the story? Discuss the effect on the reader.
6. The countdown ('30 minutes... 12 minutes... 10 minutes...') is repeated throughout this scene. What is the writer doing with this technique, and what effect does it have on you as a reader?
7. Picture books often soften difficult subjects for younger readers. In what ways does Hill avoid softening the reality of war here? Give specific examples.
8. Compare Jim's situation to that of the lieutenant. What differences in role, age, or experience can you infer from the scene? What might Hill be saying about authority and youth in war?
9. The messenger dog Nipper is introduced as 'not much bigger than a puppy.' Why might Hill have given a dog such a clear role in a war story? What does this choice suggest about the audience he is writing for?
10. If you removed the patch of red poppies from this opening scene, how would the meaning of the rest of the story change? Argue your view.

Scene 2: Going Over the Top

The lieutenant blows his whistle and the men climb the ladders. The German guns fire back. Many soldiers fall. Jim hears bullets like angry wasps. He almost reaches the patch of red poppies when a shell explodes.

SHORT ANSWER

1. What is the first thing the lieutenant does to start the attack?
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SENTENCE ANSWER

2. How does the writer use short sentences and one-line paragraphs to shape the pace of this scene?
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3. Why does Hill show Jim hearing his own voice saying 'Please, please...'?
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4. What is the effect of describing bullets as 'whining like an angry wasp'?
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ESSAY-STYLE ANSWER

For essay-style answers, use a separate sheet. 1 short paragraph (5–7 sentences) per question.

5. In Scene 1 the soldiers are individuals with names, dogs, and habits. In Scene 2 many of them die or are wounded almost as soon as they leave the trench. Why might Hill have designed the structure this way? Discuss the impact on the reader.
6. Hill never tells us whether Jim fires his rifle or kills anyone. Why might that choice matter, especially in a book for children? Argue whether you think it is the right choice for this story.
7. Write a critical response to this scene. Choose one moment that you found powerful, and explain how the writer's word choice, sentence length, or imagery created that effect.
8. Some adults argue that war stories should not be written for children at all. Using this scene as evidence, argue for or against that view.
9. How does Hill balance physical action with Jim's inner thoughts in this scene? Why is that balance important?
10. If you were illustrating this scene for the picture book, which moment would you choose to show, and why? Argue your choice with reference to the text.

Scene 3: The Shell Hole

Something hits Jim and his rifle is smashed. He slides into a deep shell hole and lands on his hurt arm. A wounded German soldier is already inside. Jim is afraid the German will shoot him, but then he sees the red marks on his uniform are flowers, not blood.

SHORT ANSWER

1. What does the German soldier hold up to show Jim he is not bleeding?
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SENTENCE ANSWER

2. Why might the shell hole be described as 'like being in a cellar'? What does that comparison suggest beyond size?

 3. Why does Hill have Jim laugh at this point in the story?

 4. How does the writer change the meaning of the colour red in this scene?
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ESSAY-STYLE ANSWER

For essay-style answers, use a separate sheet. 1 short paragraph (5–7 sentences) per question.

5. The shell hole is a place created by destruction, but in this story it becomes the place where understanding begins. Discuss how Hill turns a symbol of war into a symbol of something else.
6. Hill writes that the German soldier 'looked only a few years older than Jim.' How does this single line change the rest of the story? Argue your case.
7. Compare Jim's reaction when he first sees the German soldier with his reaction once he understands the German is wounded. What does this shift tell us about how 'enemy' is constructed in wartime?
8. Some readers find the laughter in this scene the most powerful moment in the book. Do you agree? Argue your view with reference to the text.
9. Imagine the same scene written from Carl's point of view. Write a short paragraph (5 to 7 sentences) showing how he might describe the moment Jim slides in.
10. What is the difference between fear of an enemy and fear of a wounded human being? Use this scene to explain.

Scene 4: Jim and Carl

Jim bandages the German soldier's wound. The German tells Jim his name is Carl. Jim says his name too. Nipper appears in the shell hole. They put a message and a poppy in Nipper's pouch and send him for help.

SHORT ANSWER

1. What is the German soldier's name?
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SENTENCE ANSWER

2. Why is the exchange of names ('Jim'... 'Carl') a turning point in the book?
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3. What is the symbolic role of the poppy at this point in the story?
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4. How does Hill show that language barriers do not stop human connection?
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ESSAY-STYLE ANSWER

For essay-style answers, use a separate sheet. 1 short paragraph (5–7 sentences) per question.

5. Hill chooses to have Jim and Carl share a single notebook page to call for help, not two separate notes. Why is this choice meaningful? Argue your interpretation.
6. The poppy is now used as a 'location marker' for the rescue party. Discuss how the writer turns a flower into something practical and symbolic at the same time.
7. If you were arguing that this is an anti-war story, which line or moment from this scene would you use as your strongest evidence? Defend your choice.
8. What is the role of Nipper in this scene? Could the story work without him? Argue your view.
9. The scene ends with the line 'Hurry, Nipper!' Discuss how this line creates suspense for the reader, even though we are no longer in the main action.
10. Hill never tells the reader Carl's nationality is 'wrong' or 'right'. What might that silence be saying to a young reader?

Scene 5: The Rescue and the Poppy

The rescue party finds Jim and Carl in the shell hole, helped by the poppy in the message pouch. Carl is carried away on a stretcher. At the end, Jim places the red poppy beside Carl and says he will never forget this day.

SHORT ANSWER

1. What does Jim place beside Carl on the stretcher at the end?

SENTENCE ANSWER

2. Why is it important that Jim refuses to call Carl 'Fritz' and corrects the rescue soldier?
3. What does Jim's line 'I never want to hurt anyone for the rest of my life' tell us about him?
4. How does the final repetition of 'I won't forget...' shape the ending of the book?

ESSAY-STYLE ANSWER

For essay-style answers, use a separate sheet. 1 short paragraph (5–7 sentences) per question.

5. Discuss the title 'The Red Poppy.' Why does Hill make a flower the title of a book about war? Refer to at least three different moments in the story.
6. 100 years after the events shown in this story, why might young readers in New Zealand still need to read it? Argue your view.
7. Write a critical response to the ending. Did the writer earn this quiet, hopeful ending, or did it come too easily? Defend your view with reference to the text.
8. Hill never names the country, the battle, or the year directly. Why might he have left these details out? What does the choice do for the reader?
9. Compare the meaning of the red poppy at the start of the story (a flower in a field) with its meaning at the end (a gift to an enemy). What journey has the symbol travelled?
10. Some critics argue that war stories should always end uncomfortably, not with hope. Using this story as evidence, argue for or against that view.