Expression: Lest We Forget

Go to canlearnenglish.com to listen
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.

We are the Dead. Short days ago

We lived, fell down, saw sunset glow,

Loved, and were loved, and now we lie in Flanders fields. Take-up our quarrel with the foe...

Hey there. It's Dana from Can Learn English, and you're listening to the Can Learn English Podcast. The Can Learn English Podcast is for intermediate to advanced English language learners who are serious about learning English for everyday life. With this podcast, you'll reach fluency faster by learning phrasal verbs, common expressions, conversation, tips and, of course, some typical Canadianisms. Are you ready to learn English for the Great White North? Let's get started.

Hello, everyone. Welcome back to this week's episode of the Can Learn English Podcast. Now I have three updates to talk about before we get started. In the episode number one, this is the most important update, our website has moved.

So instead of going to canlearnenglishpodcast.com, you can now access the podcast, all of my video lessons, everything on canlearnenglish.com and the Can Learn English Academy will soon also be hosted on canlearnenglish.com.

So it's gonna be super simple. Everything points there. If you go to canlearnenglishpodcast.com, you're going to get redirected to canlearnenglish.com. So I'm really excited about this. It was a lot of work
getting everything switched over, but I think it's gonna be a whole lot easier for you. So I'm very happy about that.

Announcement number two. I have created a free Facebook group for listeners of the Can Learn English Podcast. In this group we'll discuss the weekly episodes. I'll be posting quizzes and polls. And I also can get your feedback on the podcast. So you can do things like help me pick topics. Tell me what you want to hear, what you don't want to hear, what you like, what you don't like.

So if you would like to join, then go to Facebook and just simply search Can Learn English podcast listeners. It's easy. You need to request to join. It's a private group. I will accept you if you say that you listen to the podcast. It's the only requirement is that you are a podcast listener and then you are in. I'll approve your request and you can join us.

Also, a little update for the Podcast Plus members, there's a new premium podcast player. So if you become a member of the Podcast Plus membership, you get access to the premium podcast player for all of the episodes. This is a special player that plays the transcript. As you listen to the episode and it highlights the text so you can see exactly where and which words I'm speaking. So we have a brand new one. It highlights the words in colour and we're just working to get the old podcasts all switched over to this new podcast player. So the most recent episodes are done and the first episodes are done. Still working on the ones in the middle, but those will be up shortly. So if you're a member and you want to see this, you just have to log into your account when you're on the website and click on one of the podcasts and you'll see the premium podcast player.

If you want to become a member, then you just need to go to canlearnenglishpodcast.com and click on get the transcripts in the header and you can join for less than the price of a coffee a week. So it's a great deal.

And one more update estimate was going to do three, but this is update number four. Usually like to give you guys a little personal update, but there isn't really much to talk about this week. You might have noticed in the last episodes and kind of in this episode, I've been a little bit under the weather.
So I've caught a cold and I'm on the mend. I'm back in action after a few days of rest. So I have not been up to too much except for trying to get all healed up. So my voice is better.

So let's get into the episode this week on the podcast. You are going to be learning about Remembrance Day. Remembrance Day is coming up and it marks the day that World War 2 ended. This is on the 11th month of the 11th day on the 11th hour. So it's celebrated on November 11th at 11:00 a.m. Remembrance Day is commemorated in many Commonwealth countries around the world, including Canada. And it is a federal statutory holiday in all provinces and territories except the provinces of Nova Scotia, Ontario and Quebec and then the Northwest Territories. In Canada, those who served in times of war, conflict and peace are honoured in official ceremonies in Ottawa, as well as many other ceremonies across the country in public spaces.

We pause to remember the more than 2.3 million Canadians who served throughout Canada's history and the more than 118,000 who lost their lives. Young children are also involved in Remembrance Day ceremonies as schools will have special assemblies with various presentations about remembering Canadians who served and died during times of conflict.

The moment of remembrance starts with the bugling of the last post. You might recognize it. I'll add a little clip in here so you can hear it.

So where does the last post come from? Well, in war times in the past, soldiers didn't have watches or any way of tracking time, so they relied on drum beats or other types of bugle calls. A bugle is a brass instrument, kind of like a small trumpet. The last post would be heard in the evening to signal the completion of the setting of night guards. The last post is played to draw a symbolic association of a soldier's last duty as in their death, and they're rising above their mortal duties.

The last post is played right before 11:00 a.m. and then two minutes of silence is observed. You might notice that in workplaces, shops or other public spaces, Canadians will pause during this two minutes of silence right after
11:00 a.m. If you notice this happening around you. You don't need to worry. You can just join in and also stop and just observe this as well.

Now a major symbol of Remembrance Day that you might notice is the poppy. This is a red flower with a black centre. And you will often see Canadians and people of other Commonwealth countries wearing a poppy pin on their jackets during Remembrance Day. These poppies are offered for free in exchange, usually for a donation, so you can make a donation of your choice. And those donations go to provide assistance to war veterans. Now, the poppy should be worn in a specific way. It should be worn on the left side of your jacket, right above your heart. Now, you can wear them from the last Friday in October until November 11th. And then they ask that when you take the poppy off, that you dispose of it in a respectful manner or you can just save it for the next year.

Now, in the beginning of this episode, I played a video from the Legion Magazine's YouTube channel. And you might have recognized the speaker. This is a famous voice. This is the late Canadian songwriter, painter and poet Leonard Cohen.

This poem that he read is one of the most quoted poems about war and was written by a Canadian doctor, Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae. McCrae was born in Guelph, Ontario and worked as a doctor and surgeon.

He enlisted at the outbreak of World War 1 and was placed as a brigade surgeon in an artillery brigade. A brigade is a small division of the army. At the second battle of Ypres in Belgium 1915 McCrae cared for the wounded and performed surgery on Canadian and allied troops. When one of his close friends died, he wrote the poem in Flanders Fields. The poem was published on the 8th of December in 1915 and gained worldwide instant fame. Today, millions of Canadians around the world read his poem on Remembrance Day.

His poem is even featured on the $10 Canadian banknote. You can find the lines of the poem on the back of the note in the lower left corner, as well as the French adaptation. The special exhibition gallery in the Canadian War Museum is named after McCrae. If you have a chance to visit the Canadian
War Museum in Ottawa, it is absolutely phenomenal. I've been once and I definitely recommend it.

So you might have noticed if you are a listener of the Can Learn English Podcast that we did this episode a little bit differently. Usually the expression is done at the beginning of the episode, followed by the Canadian fact. But since I wanted to talk about Remembrance Day and what it meant, I decided we would do that part first. And now we are going to discuss the phrase, which is a very common phrase that you might hear around the time of Remembrance Day. This is a "lest we forget". So you might see people posting on Facebook or you might see it in the news.

This phrase, lest we forget. And if we take a look at the words, the tricky one here is lest. Lest is not used in typical everyday speech in English. A lot of people, if they're asked to define it, don't really know what that one word means, but they'll know what it means in the context of this very famous saying, lest we forget. So to get a bit technical, lest is a conjunction. And we use it to express the intention of preventing something undesirable or to avoid the risk of something.

So when we say lest we forget, we are really saying we should remember, we shouldn't forget. When we use it in Remembrance Day, we are implying that we should not forget the horrible tragedies of war and we shouldn't forget those who fought and served and those who lost their lives. So just this phrase, lest we forget, most people will automatically make the connection that we're talking about, war and you know remembrance. Lest we forget, so for our listen and repeat, we're just going to do this phrase. You can practice it with me. If you can do so. I encourage you to repeat after me. We're gonna do each word so you can improve your pronunciation.

Lest.

Lest we.

Lest we forget.

Lest we forget.
That is it for our Remembrance Day episode today. Please support this free podcast by subscribing, liking and sharing the podcast. I didn't play the full version of the poem In Flanders Fields at the beginning, so I'd like to close off this episode by doing that now.

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.

We are the Dead. Short days ago.
We lived, fell down, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie.

In Flanders fields.
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.
For the exercises login on canlearnenglish.com