

In the UK Remembrance Day is observed every year on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November. This is the day when people who have died in war are remembered. There is also Remembrance Sunday which always falls on the second Sunday in November. Sometimes Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday fall on the same day.

The main ceremony is always held on Remembrance Sunday. It takes place in the centre of London at a war memorial called The Cenotaph. The ceremony is attended by members of the Royal Family and politicians. Many other people attend as well including people who are currently serving in the armed forces. Also there are members of the armed forces who have retired because they have been injured in battle or because they have reached retirement age. These people are usually called veterans. Members of the armed forces wear their uniforms and take part in a parade. The other people tend to wear black or dark clothing in order to show respect.

As well as the main ceremony in London smaller ceremonies and memorial services are held in towns and cities all over the UK. In Edinburgh there is a parade which starts outside the Castle and ends outside St Giles Cathedral.

The symbol of Remembrance Day is the red poppy. This is because after World War One the only flowers to grow on the battlefields were poppies. World War One ended at 11am, on the eleventh day of the eleventh month and this is why people who have been killed in wars and conflicts are remembered at this exact time every year. They are remembered with a two minute silence.

Other countries around the world have their own Remembrance Days. The countries which belong to The Commonwealth of Nations (which used to be known as The British Commonwealth) have ceremonies similar to those held in the UK. The Commonwealth of Nations includes India, Australia, Canada and many countries in Africa and the Caribbean.

**1) Find and underline the following verbs in the article:**

observe attend serve retire injure reach belong

**2) What are the meanings of the verbs in the context of the article?**

**3) What verbs or phrases mean that 'something happens'?**

**4) Find and underline any adverbs/adverbial phrases of time/frequency.**

**5) Do you have a Remembrance Day in your country? When is it? What happens?**

## Answers

1&2)

The verb **observe** can be confusing as it has a few slightly different meanings. Most commonly it means to **notice, see or watch** ('The examiner observed the class'). It can also mean to **remark** or to **say something** about something/someone. ('Older drivers are safer than younger drivers,' he observed.). However in the above context it means to **follow a custom** ('Remembrance Day is observed every year... ') which is similar to **obeying a law or a rule** ('You must observe the Highway Code when you are driving.') If we talk about festivals and other regular events we would usually say that we **celebrate** that event however as Remembrance Day is a sad and serious occasion the best verb to use is **observe**.

To **attend** means to **go to an event or a place** (also to **be present**) and that is the meaning in the text ('The ceremony is attended by... '; 'Other people attend... ') It is also commonly used when talking about going to school ('What school do you attend?' 'Did you attend school today?') Not so commonly it means **paying attention** ('He didn't attend to what I was saying') and also to **provide help** ('I attended to my mother's needs.') **Note:** My students asked if it also meant to participate – it doesn't really as you can attend a class (for example) but not necessarily participate!

Most commonly to **serve** means to **provide food and drink** to someone ('The waiter served all of the customers.'). It also has another meaning which is to **do your duty** or to **work for** someone or something, particularly when talking about the armed forces ('He served in the navy for ten years.'). **Note:** Different prepositions are used depending on the context: 'He served **in** the navy.' 'She served **on** the committee.' 'He served **under** the Prime Minister.'

To **retire** means to **leave your job** or to **stop working**, usually when you get to a certain age but also if you become too ill to work. It's a big event in someone's life and not an everyday occurrence so you wouldn't say 'I retired from my job today at 4pm'. You would simply say I stopped – or I finished – work today at 4pm. However you *would* say 'I retired when I was 65'. People sometimes use retire to mean **go to bed** ('I retired early last night.') or to **move to another room** ('Shall we retire to the sitting room?') but these uses are very old-fashioned and are only used in things like Downton Abbey!

To **injure** is quite straightforward. It means to **hurt** or to **cause physical harm** to a person or an animal ('The soldiers were injured in battle'). The related noun is injury ('He got a serious injury in the battle.'). A student asked me if injure/injury can be related to the emotional or psychological instead of the physical. It's almost always related to the physical but you might hear someone say 'You've injured my feelings' but most commonly you would say 'You've hurt my feelings'.

To **reach** is another one of those tricky verbs which can have a variety of meanings. It can mean to **stretch** in order to get or touch something ('I had to reach up to the top shelf to get the tea.'). It can mean to **arrive** somewhere ('I reached the train station just in time.') or to **make a decision, agreement or conclusion** ('Have you reached a decision yet?'). It can also mean to **get to a particular level or stage** ('He's reached level five in that computer game.') or **to a particular age** which is how it's used in the text: 'They have reached retirement age'. In this context it suggests achievement and getting to a higher level.

The meaning of to **belong (to)** depends on the construction of the sentence. If something belongs to someone it means that someone **owns** that something. In a simple construction I would say 'I own that car' – I am the subject and the car is the object. If I wanted to make the car the subject and make myself the object I would say: 'The car belongs to me.' In that context **to belong** is related to

**to own.** We tend to think about possessions being owned by people but in the text it's 'Countries which belong to The Commonwealth of Nations'. We're not saying that the CN **owns** the countries but instead the countries **are part of** the CN. Therefore when we talk about people and countries **belonging to** something we mean they **are part of** or **members of** that organisation or club (**note: belong to**). We can also talk about people belonging to a particular place which suggests an emotional and romantic feeling – 'I really feel like I belong in Italy'. On a more mundane level it can also mean things being in their proper place – 'The knives and forks belong in the drawer.' !

**3) What verbs or phrases mean that 'something happens'?**

is observed falls on is/are held takes place starts/ends

Note the use of the passive voice with 'is observed' and 'is/are held'.

**4) Find and underline any adverbs/adverbial phrases of time/frequency.**

every when always sometimes currently usually at this exact time used to

**5) Do you have a Remembrance Day in your country? When is it? What happens?**

Think of, write and discuss your own answer.