

Lesson Plans - Key Stage 3

Five lesson ideas for teaching about the First World War and the Western Front at Key Stage 3.

These lessons support The History Curriculum, and can be used to teach Citizenship discreetly within that subject. RE and English teachers might also find some of the content and investigation useful.

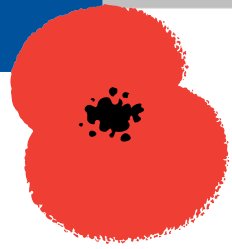
Adaptation guidance is suggested for using at Key Stage 2 or for students with differing abilities.

The approach of this series is to look at the people involved in the conflict.

LESSON ONE

Introducing the First World War.

Use the First World War section of the CD Rom, especially the maps to learn about outline of the conflict. Use some of the primary documents accompanying that section.



Use the CD Rom to look at maps of Europe and introduce the different countries/ World Powers of that time.

Using the material in the section on the First World War to explain to pupils why the First World War was such a significant event.

(option - in groups, ask the pupils to write down all the things they think they know about the First World War and who was in it.)

Explain the information about how the War started:

Show the film entitled “The Somme in The Great War” which provides an overview of the War.

In groups, ask the pupils to read the speech by British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith.

Ask pupils to list what he says about the following:

- Communications between different governments at that time
- What is important about some countries neutrality

What does the following sentence tell you about the Prime Ministers feelings towards a war? “I am entitled to say, and I do so on behalf of this country - I speak not for a party, I speak for the country as a whole - that we made every effort any Government could possibly make for peace.”

From the speech, what are your impressions about Germany’s feelings about a war with Britain?

Discuss the pupils’ answers. Ask them to write a newspaper article based on the speech telling people that Britain was about to go to war. What are the key things that they are going to tell people?

Explain that this document is an official source for trying to understand what happened and what was thought at the time. (They will be using other documents over the next sessions.)

DISCUSS:

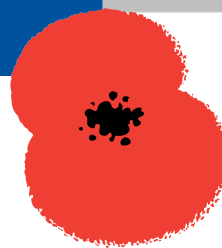
The official belief of the time was that the War would be over by Christmas but instead it lasted for 4 years. Is it realistic for Governments to predict how long a conflict might last?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES OR HOMEWORK

- Find a First World War memorial in your town or area.
- On a map, chart the events of the Schlieffen plan.
- Find out about trenches.
- Ask at home if anyone has any connection to the First World War.

ADAPTATIONS

For lower ability pupils, miss out the PM’s announcement. Introduce life on the Western Front. Use some footage from the DVD and ask pupils to look at the life of Donald Hankey.



The Battle of the Somme – the men that fought

Use the information on the Battle of the Somme on the CD Rom and the footage on the DVD. Make copies of the stories about: Evelyn Lintott; James Leonard; John Abbott king; Donald Hankey; George Butterworth; Frederick 'Ben' Keeling; and the Brain brothers.

Show some of the footage about life on the Western Front.

Using the CD Rom, tell the pupils the significance of the Battle of the Somme.

In groups, ask the pupils to read about the lives of the men who died in the Battle of the Somme:

- What do the stories tell them about daily life in the trenches?
- What do they tell them about the type of men that fought?
- Do the men have anything in common?
- What is the average age of these men? Is it what your pupils expected?

Now give them a copy of the poems, 'The Soldier' by Rupert Brooke and 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' by Wilfred Owen.

What do these poems tell them about life on the Front. Is it different to the other information they have?

Ask pupils to write a description about life on the Front using all the information they have read and seen.

EXTENSION

- Find other diaries or information about life in the trenches.
- Go to the National Archives website and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website and find out the names of people from your area who were killed during the First World War.

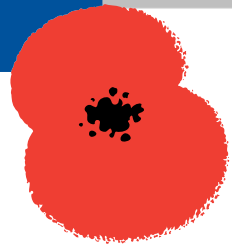
ADAPTATIONS

- For more advanced pupils, add the article about the poison gas attack.
- For low ability pupils, concentrate on examining the individual stories about the men.

LESSON THREE

Diversity

Using the materials on diversity and the British Armed Forces, the case study on Walter Tull and the biography of Isaac Rosenberg



Ask students to provide an idea of what they think the typical British Tommy in the First World War may have been like e.g. background, age etc

Introduce the story of Walter Tull (see Case Studies) Have they heard of him before?

In small groups, ask the students to discuss Tull's story. Do they think it is important? Do they think more people should know about him?

Ask them to explain their answers.

Repeat the exercise with the biography of Isaac Rosenberg.

Emphasise that both of these men were born in Britain and that they both chose to join up, even though they were from a minority group and were victims of prejudice and racism.

Give the students the information in this section and ask them to discuss the following questions in groups:

- Should more people be made aware of the history of diversity in the British Armed Services? How could this be done?
- Is it important that Service men from different religious faiths were buried in cemeteries together during the First and Second World Wars?
- Does knowing about the people in the text affect one's understanding of those that fought in the wars?

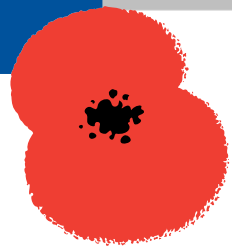
Finish with a discussion about either:

- Should there be greater recognition of diversity in the Armed Services today and during the First and Second World Wars?
- Does diversity matter when the Armed Forces are meant to create a collective group based in following orders and recognising discipline?
- Could Service men and women from different backgrounds encounter different issues in conflict today? (e.g. racism, religious conflict)

If there is additional time, introduce the statistics about the numbers of non-white Empire and Commonwealth troops that fought for Britain in the First World War. Repeat the questions immediately above in light of those statistics.

Diversity

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EXTENSION OR HOMEWORK TASKS

- Find out what percentage of minority troops currently make up the British Armed Forces.
- Find out how the different faiths are represented by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in the cemeteries.
- Find out the issues that may have affected minority troops in the First and Second World War that might not have affected British white troops.
- Explore the issues and discuss your thoughts on why someone might fight for a country they were not born in.
- Discuss why is it we know about and remember the contribution made by ethnic minorities to the British Armed Forces.
- Discuss what differences religious practice might make to the lives of soldiers in conflict.
- Find out about the status of troops from the commonwealth countries of Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

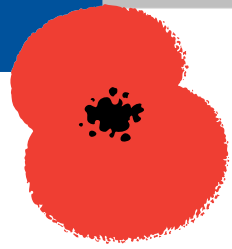
ADAPTATION

Concentrate on the two stories of Walter Tull and Isaac Rosenberg. Ask pupils to explore why their stories are important now. Does it matter that one was a talented footballer and the other a poet? What does that tell them about the type of people that joined up in the First World War?

LESSON FOUR

Women and the First World War

Using the materials from the CD Rom and the case study of Edith Cavell.



Start by showing the film of the Women's Land Army from the DVD.

Ask the class to think of all the jobs that women might have done once the men had gone to fight.

Use the material on the CD Rom to explain that the First World War was a turning point for women in terms of their involvement in the war effort. It was also because women were near the front lines.

Tell them about the creation of the WAAC.

Some women also went to France both as Ambulance Drivers and in the traditional roles of nurses.

Introduce the story of Edith Cavell.

In groups, ask them to discuss and write down what they think about the following:

- Was Edith Cavell shot as an example to other women?
- Should women and men be treated equally in war?
- Should Edith Cavell have been treated the same as a soldier?

Finally, the impact of the war on women was also the death of the men – husbands, fathers, brothers, sons. Many women never married after the war because so many men had been killed.

Ask the pupils to write a letter to a someone who was serving on the Front, a man or a woman.

DISCUSS

The First World War proved to men that women were capable of doing important jobs. The War was a positive step for women.

EXTENSION OR HOMEWORK

Ask students to write a war diary for a woman in any of the following roles: nurse in Western Europe or at home; a land girl; a newly married woman expecting a baby; a middle-aged woman working in a factory with her son in the Army.

Find out about the lives of the women who were ambulance drivers.

Find out about Nurse Nellie Spindler.

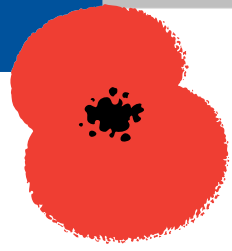
ADAPTATIONS

For lower-ability pupils, spend more time on Edith Cavell and discuss what happened to her and its impact.

LESSON FIVE

Why do we still Remember the First World War? (This is an optional lesson that supports many of the concepts of citizenship and potentially RE)

Using the materials on the war poets from the CD Rom and also the case study of Noel Chavasse



Explain to the pupils that over the past few lessons they have been learning about the people that were actually involved in the First World War.

In this final lesson they are going to examine its impact on all of us today. Why the War is still remembered.

Ask pupils to list all the reasons why they think the First World War should be remembered. Then ask pupils to list the reasons why it is not important anymore.

Show the case study of Noel Chavasse and the biography of Wilfred Owen (select a couple of his poems) and/or Isaac Rosenberg.

Ask pupils to consider the following questions and write down their answers:

- Do their experiences tell us anything about human behaviour?
- Do the stories and the poetry tell them anything about the experiences of war?
- Do the stories and the poetry tell them anything about the impact of war on people's lives?
- Are any of the stories or poems inspirational or any of them disheartening. Explain answers.

As a class, ask pupils to sum up what they have decided. Have they learnt anything over the lessons about the First World War and about the people that were there?

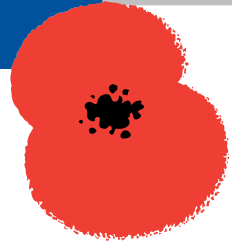
Tell them that before the First World War there was no Remembrance Day. Also tell them that the poppy as a symbol comes from that time.

As a class, discuss the following questions and statements:

- The First World War changed the way war was fought so should it always be remembered?
- The Twentieth Century had lots of wars and we still have wars today so can the First World War tell us nothing?
- People are the only important aspect of Remembrance.
- Does all war tell us how important peace is?

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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES OR HOMEWORK

- Plan a Remembrance Day Service.
- Create a series of maps showing the key events of the Western Front and marking the places where some of the people they have learnt about were killed.
- Find out how the First World War is remembered in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, France and Germany.

Local History study

NB: the unit of five lessons in the Key Stage 1 and 2 sections can be developed and adapted to be used with secondary level students – the existing lesson plans could be used for more in-depth study, focussing on:

- Finding out if any of those that were killed have family still living in the local area
- Through the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, finding out where those named were buried or their names recorded.
- Using information from Regimental Museums or from the internet, students could create visual records or maps showing where local regiments and soldiers from their local area fought.
- Investigate war memorial abroad http://www.cwgc.org/search/cemetery_reports.aspx?cemetery=91800&mode=1

An example of using a local War memorial to build a unit of local study, can be found on the Legion Website in the school's section. One teacher's journey and findings are summarised, along with his experiences of taking up a local investigation and creating a piece of study for his class and local area.