



Teachers Notes

The resources in this pack were created to encourage development of historical enquiry skills for National 4 and 5 students.

By looking at primary evidence and a wide range of sources, students are encouraged to think critically about the evidence they are presented with, consider its nature and appreciate its value in our understanding and ability to interpret the past, in this case the First World War and its effects on the individual and society.

Students are then encouraged to formulate their own opinion, based on evidence, and present a clear, concise and well-structured argument.

There are also opportunities to develop an imaginative understanding based on evidence to attempt to reconstruct a situation or society in the past, develop empathy for individuals living in the past, and understand the actions, attitudes and motivations of these people.

This resource pack contains:

- An online interactive game
- Two accompanying PDF worksheets for student use

A more detailed breakdown of each of these resources, including supplementary suggestions, activities, discussions and further links, is included below.

Pieces of the Past

The aim of the online interactive game is to present the concept that historical enquiry relies upon a number of different sources, which independently are useful in our understanding of a historical subject, in this case the First World War, but are more illuminating when considered alongside a number of different primary sources.

The jigsaw puzzle analogy makes it very clear to students that each piece is independently important in building up the bigger picture, but also that lots of different pieces are necessary to build up an accurate picture of the past.

Each jigsaw piece represents a particular source. Selecting that piece reveals a detailed description of the content of the source, its reliability, and relative importance to piecing together this area of history.

Sources included are: letters, poetry excerpts, contemporary newspapers and documentary photography. The student is also made aware that each source has its pros and cons and encourages their critical thinking and interpretation skills. It also encourages an appreciation that there are no necessarily right or wrong views, only reasonable interpretations of the given evidence.

The Hydra and Beyond

This PDF worksheet is aimed at students of National 4 and 5 History. The content also crosses over into the English syllabus, in a close interpretation of given literary and visual sources.

The worksheet is divided into three sections:

- A visual interpretation in which students look closely at the cover the magazine of Craiglockhart military hospital, *The Hydra*, by Adrian Berrington, 1917, and derive a deeper understanding and empathy for the experience of the patients at Craiglockhart.
- A literary analysis where students consider part of Wilfred Owen's controversial editorial piece in *The Hydra* magazine and put it into context for both the hospital, and the wider, national war effort.
- A consideration where students investigate the personal experience of an officer suffering from shell shock, looking closely at excerpts from the letters he sent home. This section is to encourage active debate into why it 'wasn't done' for officers to be dismissed from active service due to mental health reasons.

Each section aims to develop your students' critical, analytical, visual and literary interpretation skills and derive a more thorough understanding of the experiences of the First World War for the soldiers and officers who fought, suffered and recovered.

Changing Perspective

The aim of the resource is to highlight the part played by propaganda during the First World War, and how information can be slightly skewed to present a wholly different perspective.

Students are presented with factual details of an event that happened during the First World War - the Battle of the Somme. They then have to write a newspaper article from two opposing perspectives on the War. This will require them to empathise with two opposing viewpoints and encourage them to think critically and understand the differences in perspective and the power of propaganda.

This can be augmented by your students doing some online research. Further class work could make it clear to students that the 'spin' of information by the media is not restricted to the period of the First World War and is just as commonplace in today's society.

Discussions

Debate, understanding differing and often conflicting opinions and presenting an argument based on evidence, are an important elements in the study and teaching of National 4 and 5 History. There are many opportunities within these resources for stimulating discussions in small or larger groups. Below are a few suggestions.

Messages in the Mass Media

The film *The Battle of the Somme* is an early documentary showing the harsh reality of life for soldiers in the trenches during the First World War. It was a box office hit when it was shown in cinemas. As an early documentary, the film is a great visual source as it shows actual soldiers, moving around, preparing for and returning from battle. However, like contemporary newspapers, the film-makers had a responsibility to aid the war effort and propagate the national message of patience and support for the fighting heroes.

Students can view excerpts from the film at the War Poets Collection Exhibition at Edinburgh Napier University, or you can order a copy via the Imperial War Museum.

An interesting topic would be to discuss the place of documentary film as a medium in contemporary and modern-day society. Today, we rely very heavily on television as a medium for news and current affairs. Are the messages being transmitted to us accurate? Biased? Objective?

Control and Censorship

In the online interactive game 'Pieces of the Past', one of the pieces includes a letter from a member of the Carmichael family. Just below the signature, there is a censor mark. One of the other pieces includes the following statement from Mr Herbert Leland: *"How I do wish I could tell you some things... I dare not of course, for fear you may never get my letters"*.

A good topic for discussion would be the government's motives in trying to monitor and to an extent control letter writing. Was it right? Were soldiers on the front afraid to tell their families back home how things really were? Was such censorship necessary? What is its purpose? Students could break into two groups, one arguing for control of the public morale, the other against such censorship.

The Tommies and the Truth

The national press had a responsibility during the First World War to communicate upbeat stories, laced with propaganda, to the public as a means of boosting morale. 'Tommy' was a name given to soldiers of the

British Army in the late-19th century. 'Tommy' symbolised a heroic, strong, dutiful British subject, fighting for his King and country.

An interesting discussion might ask what positive and negative effects this heroic figure may have had on the public and the actual soldiers. Did the soldiers relate to the image of the 'Tommy'? Did the public?

To what extent did the creation of a heroic soldier, cheerily marching into battle contribute to the shame felt by those soldiers and officers who suffering from the trauma of shell shock?

As featured in the PDF *'The Hydra and Beyond'*, the Edinburgh Napier University War Poets Collection Exhibition includes a complete reading of Mr Leland's letters and the interview with his grandson, taken from the documentary 'Shell-shock: Minds the Dead have Ravished', by Blakeway Productions.

Further Links

Wars and Conflict World War One

The BBC have a fantastic website devoted to World War One. Resources are aimed at either Primary or Secondary School pupils and there are lots of activities, movie clips and animations to help pupils develop themes introduced in this education pack and further the educational opportunity in the study of World War One. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/O/ww1/>

The First World War 100

The National Archives commemorated the centenary of the First World War with a website full of a rich variety of source materials including audio, podcasts, video, letters and official documents. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/first-world-war/>

Imperial War Museum Learning Resources

The Imperial War Museum likewise have an excellent website containing a varied source of materials including recruitment posters, letters, art and well-presented, engaging information. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/learning/resources>

