

# People of the Great War: Shaping the Modern World

## TEACHING NOTES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

### Introduction

This resource was made in 2008 as the generation who lived through the First World War dwindled, and experience of that time was passing from living memory.

The whole resource comprises:

- *People of the Great War* – a short, c.12 minute, film for use in assemblies and/or lessons
- *The Making Of ...* – a short film explaining how the *People of the Great War* film was made using original historical sources from the archives of the Imperial War Museum and Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- Learning Resources CD-Rom – containing a gallery of the images and documents used in the film, teaching notes and much more (all available for download)
- Online Learning Resources – free from [www.iwm.org.uk/peopleofthegreatwar](http://www.iwm.org.uk/peopleofthegreatwar) that further explore the human impact of the war, and its continuing legacy and relevance to the world today

The resource was shaped by the following learning outcomes. Having watched the resource people should have been given the chance to experience one or more of these outcomes:

#### **Knowledge and Understanding:**

- About the First World War, its impact on the people who fought and lived during that time, including an understanding of the depth of personal sacrifice and loss, the unprecedented scale and horror of the war, and its legacy on the UK now
- About the relevance of continuing to commemorate this war, and the different ways to commemorate it
- About the legacy of the war and how it has shaped the world we live in today

#### **Attitudes and Values:**

- Valuing the sacrifice of those people who fought, served or worked throughout the First World War
- Appreciating the role that they can play in their own community to preserve and disseminate its history

#### **Behaviour:**

- Motivation to take part in a commemorative event in their local school, youth group and/or community

### Using 'People of the Great War'

#### 1. A Remembrance Day Assembly

This c.12 minute film was made with school assemblies in mind as well as for use in subject teaching. It provides an overview of what it was like to live through the First World War from lots of different perspectives.

# People of the Great War: Shaping the Modern World

As an assembly resource the film can be used as a starting point to talk about Remembrance and Poppy Day. The film itself and the images of the accompanying original sources are divided into themes, Going to War, Design Technology, Combat, R&R, Home Front, Love & Loss and Remembrance & Commemoration.

After showing the film, ask the assembly group to consider one or more of the following things:

How does the film make you feel?

What can you see in the film that surprises you?

What kind of people were involved in the First World War?

Who did the First World War affect?

What is the significance of poppies for Remembrance?

What different jobs did people do during the First World War?

How many different places did people go to during the First World War? How can you tell?

What do you now want to know about the First World War?

## 2. What was the First World War all about?

### Useful for...

#### History, Environmental Studies (People in the Past)

Knowledge and understanding, investigating and interpreting

Pupils are encouraged to understand the range of experiences of people in the past and the different ways in which the past has been represented. They will also need to ask and answer questions to investigate the First World War.

#### Background

There are certain images of the First World War that dominate our view of the conflict. These are usually focussed on the Western Front and tend to involve a lot of mud and a lot of soldiers dying. These images are of course relevant and necessary, but only tell a part of the story of the First World War. This short activity aims to draw attention to the other theatres of war, the fact that many women were involved in the conflict, and that activities on the Home Front were also important to the war effort. It also highlights the fact that not everyone who fought in this conflict died, as many soldiers were fortunate enough to return home after the War.

The activity could be used as the start of a lesson about the First World War, enabling children to build up a picture of the War before they investigate it in more depth.

#### Summary

Word association exercise, carried out before and after watching the DVD film to see if there are any differences between the general perception of the First World War and the true scope of the conflict.

#### Activity

1. Ask the group what comes to mind when they think about the First World War. Record their responses.
2. Watch the People of the Great War film.

## People of the Great War: Shaping the Modern World

3. Ask the group to look at their initial responses again and see if there is anything that they would add to the list. Use word/picture cards for younger children, for them to recognise and pick out certain things from the film.
4. Discuss what this tells us about the First World War and how the First World War has traditionally been seen by people in this country.

### 3. What was the First World War all about? An Investigation

Useful for...

#### History, Environmental Studies (People in the Past)

Knowledge, investigation and communication

Pupils investigate the past by selecting sources and collecting relevant information from them. By doing this they will understand the diversity of the experience of people in the past and have to choose what to communicate to others in an appropriate form.

#### Background

The First World War didn't just happen on the Western Front and it wasn't all about British soldiers, mud or trenches. Many nationalities fought in the war, in many different parts of the world. Frontline men and women had to deal with different types of conditions, from hot sandy desert, to freezing snow. There were also those who contributed to the war on the Home Front, manufacturing munitions or working on farms, for example. This variety of experience is often overlooked, and many young people may not know about the full scope of the War. This activity could be used as an introduction to the First World War, to consider the idea of diversity, or to introduce them to looking at historical sources in depth.

#### Summary

Watch the People of the Great War film to see how many different kinds of places/people/weather etc the group can spot. Use this as a starting point to research the diversity of experience of the First World War, using resources featured in the People of the Great War CD-Rom Galleries, the suggested web resources, and other resources available in school.

#### Activity

1. Watch the People of the Great War film carefully to see how many different kinds of landscapes/people/weather etc the class can see on the screen. The class could be divided so that one group is looking at places, one at people etc. Record their responses.
2. Discuss with the group what new things they have discovered from the film, record their findings.
3. Discuss what more they might want to find out and list some research questions that they now want to explore. Talk about how they might find answers to their questions.
4. In their groups, ask the pupils to research their questions to find out more about their theme. This can be done either using the Galleries in the People of the Great War CD-Rom resource, or from following the featured further links. Present their findings to the rest of the class. This can be done in a variety of ways to suit the groups.

# People of the Great War: Shaping the Modern World

## 4. People of the First World War

### Useful for...

#### **History, Environmental Studies (People in the Past)**

Knowledge, investigation and communication

This enquiry enables pupils to understand the diverse experience of people in the past and also to investigate why they did this and the results of their actions. They will use a variety of sources from which to select and record information, choosing the most appropriate way to communicate it to the rest of the group.

#### **Citizenship**

Pupils will be encouraged to use their imagination to understand the experiences of others, investigating the personal stories of people with some connection to them to do this.

#### **Background**

The First World War was a war that was all-encompassing in a way that wars before it were not. It involved everyone: men, women, and children, those who went to the battlefields to fight or for other reasons, and those who stayed at home and contributed to the war effort from a distance. The First World War affected everyone in some way. This makes it different and particularly unique to that generation who had not experienced conflict in this way before. This activity aims to highlight this collective experience, using the film as an introduction to further research that will build up a picture of the War as a whole.

#### **Summary**

Use the People of the Great War film as a starting point to help children understand the nature of the First World War. Once this is understood, it can be used to research the stories of some individuals relevant to the class or local community, in order to build up a picture of the First World War on a personal level.

#### **Activity**

1. Watch the People of the Great War film and ask children to pick out the different types of people that were involved in the First World War.
2. Discuss these types of people – men, women, children, soldiers etc, to come to the conclusion that the First World War affected everyone. Explain that this was the first time this had happened. Previous wars had only involved those men who were in the armed forces and civilians in the places where wars were fought. For the people of Britain, there was no involvement by the population at large in these former conflicts. Discuss what this meant for ordinary people and their families both during the war and once the war had ended.
3. Use this as the starting point to research further individuals who served in the First World War, for example, family members, or people commemorated on a local memorial. Personal stories such as these can be used to build up a picture of the war as a whole.

# People of the Great War: Shaping the Modern World

## 5. We will remember them.

Useful for...

### Citizenship

Pupils are encouraged to think about their own opinions of an event which can contribute to them playing an active role as citizens and to be confident in talking about their opinions and explaining their views. They will be asked to understand other people's experiences through research, discussion and debate.

### Background

If the First World War is to continue to play a role in Remembrance events of the future, young people need to play a role in deciding how this should happen. Schools are ideal places to facilitate this debate. By beginning with the People of the Great War film, and asking children to think about how the images and sounds of the First World War make them feel, we can begin to convey some of the importance of remembering this conflict. Allowing pupils to express their own ideas about how remembrance should take place will help to ensure that it continues beyond the life of the generation who lived and fought through the First World War.

### Summary

Use the People of the Great War film as a starting point to get children to consider their feelings about the First World War and towards Remembrance itself. By talking about their own experiences of Remembrance they can start to think about how they would like to remember this generation, either personally, as a class or as a whole school.

### Activity

1. Watch the People of the Great War film, asking the children to focus on how it makes them feel. Explain that they do not have to feel the same way during the whole film and that they might feel differently about different parts. Younger children could be given cards with words on them to select from. Watch the film more than once if necessary
2. Discuss their feelings. Class could complete an exercise: *When \_\_\_\_\_ happened in the film, I felt \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.*
3. Talk about how the First World War is remembered in this country now and/or how it has previously been commemorated. The Photograph Gallery contains photographs of Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemeteries, both just after the First World War, and today. These can be used as a starting point. Children may also be familiar with the poppy as a symbol of remembrance. Children may take part themselves in Remembrance services and they can be encouraged to talk about their experiences of these. If there is a War Memorial near to, or in the school, it might be possible to go and look at this, or show photographs of the memorial to aid discussion about how we remember.
4. How would you like to remember the First World War? In groups, children can decide how they would like to remember the First World War, either individually, in school or in their community. This can be presented in a variety of ways to suit the class or group and can be incorporated into another

# People of the Great War: Shaping the Modern World

subject such as Art or Design Technology if appropriate. Ask the group to plan a whole school Remembrance Service and incorporate some of the aspects of formal Remembrance ceremonies with their own ideas.

## Want to know more?

Further learning resources, linked to the film can be found at [www.peopleofthegreatwar.com](http://www.peopleofthegreatwar.com)

## Using 'The Making of...'

### 1. Sources tell Stories

#### Useful for...

#### History, Environmental Studies (People in the Past)

Investigation, interpretation and communication

Pupils use a variety of sources to investigate the First World War, selecting relevant information from them. They will use this to identify the different ways in which the past can be interpreted and why this is, and communicate their findings in an appropriate way.

#### Background

The original sources featured in the People of the Great War film come from a variety of places. They have been chosen and arranged to illustrate a particular narrative. They could have been used in very different ways, and the aim of this activity is to introduce children to the idea that there are many different stories that can be told, using the same source material. The way in which historians interpret sources is crucial to the understanding of history and an understanding of this process is important in order to cast a critical view over historical facts and interpretations. This activity gives children the opportunity to interpret sources in their own way and to practice the skills of an historian.

#### Summary

Class will be introduced to the idea of using sources to produce something by watching the *Making Of* section of the DVD. This could be the sections that seem most relevant, or it could be the whole thing, depending on the ability of the class. Children (in groups) will then be given a selection of sources from the Galleries, and asked to devise a story that these sources can be used to tell, producing a storyboard of their ideas.

#### Activity

1. Watch *The Making Of* film on the DVD. Discuss with the group what they have seen and how the sources are used. Talk about the ways in which sources can be used to tell lots of different stories.

## People of the Great War: Shaping the Modern World

2. Show the group one picture from the Galleries section of the CD-ROM. This could be projected on an interactive white board, or given out so that each group can see the picture. Use this as an example of how sources can be used. Talk about what they can find out from the source and how it can be used to build up a story. A portrait is often a good starting point as it can be used to prompt questions such as: Who was the person? Where did they live? What did they do for a living? etc.
3. Give each small group the same selection of historical sources from the Galleries. Depending on the ability of the group they could just be photographs or a mixture of picture and written sources.
4. Each group must devise a historical narrative using the sources. They should look carefully at the evidence in each source and use them appropriately in their stories. They can record their story by sticking the sources onto a larger sheet of paper and annotating them to create a storyboard.
5. Each group presents their storyboard to the rest of the group.
6. Discuss the different stories that the groups have come up with. Talk about the differences in their interpretations and how they have come to those conclusions. Discuss what they would now need to do in order to find out how accurate their interpretation of the sources is.

### 2. The Producers (extension activity)

#### Useful for...

#### History, Environmental Studies (People in the Past)

Interpretation

Pupils are encouraged to think about the different ways in which the past is represented

#### ICT

This activity focuses on a multimedia presentation and allows pupils to share and exchange information in a variety of forms.

#### Drama

Allows pupils to adopt different roles within a group and manage this process. They are involved in scripting and performing a play.

#### Background

The People of the Great War film incorporates many different elements: image stills, film clips, sound effects and oral history extracts. All of these sources come together to create the whole piece. Each element is important in its own right and must complement the others. This activity is an extension of the storyboarding activity (Sources tell Stories) above. The storyboard is turned into a production, play, film, radio broadcast, or other performance.

#### Summary

Using the People of the Great War film to start with and the *Making Of* film as appropriate, this activity enables children to get to understand the different

# People of the Great War: Shaping the Modern World

elements of the resource, and begin to look at how they are put together to create the resource as a whole.

## Activity

1. Watch *The Making Of...* film. Ask children to look for the various elements that are included in the film. Discuss this beforehand so that they are clear about what they are looking for. These elements could be simple (for example, sound, lighting, images) but could also involve the way in which the audience is drawn into the film, and other more subtle devices.
2. Discuss what the children have discovered from watching the film, and how the different elements have been combined to create the film. Talk about how this might be achieved, highlighting that each element is usually planned and made separately and then put together at the end. Discuss the different roles that are required in making the film. Parts of *Making Of* film could be used to highlight the different roles that were required for making this film. Using these discussions and the storyboard that they have already produced, ask each group to write a short script for your production indicating where props, sound, lighting etc will be needed. Allocate different roles, researchers, producers, writers, etc.
3. Perform or produce the piece, possibly to form part of a Remembrance ceremony or service.

## Want to know more?

Further learning resources, linked to the film can be found at [www.peopleofthegreatwar.com](http://www.peopleofthegreatwar.com)

## Using the Gallery

### 1. Take One Picture

#### Useful for...

#### History, Environmental Studies (People in the Past)

Knowledge and investigation

Pupils will investigate the past using different sources, using them to ask and answer questions about the past and collect information from them. This will help them to understand the features of the past and the experiences of people.

#### Background

One image can tell us a lot about a subject and can lead to further investigation about a topic. This activity uses a single photograph as a starting point. Portraits work well, but other types of photographs can also be used. It can be used as an activity in its own right, or as an introduction to further study about the First World War. It could also link to Art, looking at photography as a snapshot of an event. Children could speculate as to what has happened before or after the photograph, or outside of the scope of the camera lens

# People of the Great War: Shaping the Modern World

## Summary

This could be a whole class activity, or small group activity where groups report back on their photograph. It takes a single photograph from the gallery as a starting point. Initially, give the group some questions that they can answer by looking at the photograph. Encourage them to pose their own questions, and find answers from further research.

## Activity

1. Groups/or the whole class are given one photograph from the photograph gallery. Ask them to look at it carefully.
2. Each group should be given two or three questions that they can answer just by looking at the photograph and any accompanying caption. These will vary depending on the photograph. Examples of these questions are: Who is the photograph of? Where do you think the photograph was taken? What is happening in the photograph? What do you think has happened before the photograph was taken? What might have happened after the photograph was taken? etc
3. Each group reports back what they have discovered from their photograph. Discuss what they found out, and also what they want to know now.
4. As a class, use this as a starting point for an investigation about the First World War: Where was it fought? Who took part? What kinds of roles did people take during the war? What happened to those who came back? What happened to those who didn't? Use the resources in the Galleries and Further Links sections of the CD-Rom
5. This activity could be adapted to looking at a photograph of an object from the Galleries, or a real object.

## 2. Investigating the First World War

### Useful for...

#### History, Environmental Studies (People in the Past)

Knowledge, investigation and interpretation

Selecting from a range of sources, pupils will further their knowledge in order to understand the features of the past and the experiences of people in the past. It will help them to understand that the past can be represented in different ways.

#### ICT

Pupils may choose to present their findings using ICT.

#### English

Pupil's presentations require them to select material and organise their talk with a clear shape, an introduction and an ending.

#### Background

The images of photographs and documents that have been used in the film can be used to investigate various aspects of the First World War. They have been organised into seven themes that correspond with the running order of the film: *Going to War*, *Combat*, *Design Technology*, *Love and Loss*, *Home Front*, *R and R* and *How can we*

# People of the Great War: Shaping the Modern World

remember. Each theme can be investigated by a different group of children, ready for a presentation to the class. This activity could support learning in subjects other than History (for example, Literacy or ICT) depending on the way it is presented.

## Summary

Class is divided into seven groups, each group given one of the themes from the People of the Great War film. It might help to watch the film as a starting point, to introduce each theme to each group. The groups will be given downloaded and printed images from their theme to investigate, plus further resources if available/appropriate. They will investigate their theme and produce a presentation for the rest of the class to tell them about it.

## Activity

1. Divide the class into seven groups and give each one the theme that they are going to investigate (see above.) Watch the film again, pointing out the different themes.
2. Each group has a selection of downloaded photographs from the Galleries, related to their theme.
3. Use the photographs/document/object images to make a presentation about their category for the rest of the class. The form of the presentation could be paper-based (similar to the storyboarding activity from the *Making Of*), or using ICT or another way appropriate to your setting.

## Want to know more?

Further learning resources, linked to the film can be found at [www.peopleofthegreatwar.com](http://www.peopleofthegreatwar.com)

## Background Notes

### Remembrance

11 November 1918 was the day of the First World War Armistice when the guns fell silent and the war was officially over. 11 November is now commemorated as Armistice Day or Remembrance Day. Ceremonies are also held on the nearest Sunday to 11 November, Remembrance Sunday. For the UK, the official commemorations happen around the Cenotaph in Whitehall. The Cenotaph was originally a temporary wood and plaster structure designed by Edwin Lutyens and used as a saluting base for the First World War Victory Parade on 19 July 1919. It proved so popular with the public that it was reconstructed as a permanent monument and unveiled on 11 November 1920. Churches around the country hold their own services which usually incorporate a wreath-laying at a local war memorial. Many cities around the country hold official commemorations as well.

The poppy is the central symbol of remembrance. Poppies grew in the ruined fields of Northern France and Belgium where so many soldiers died and they came to

## People of the Great War: Shaping the Modern World

represent those soldiers and the sacrifice that so many had made. The Poppy Appeal is run by the Royal British Legion to raise money to support ex-servicemen and women in their lives once they leave the Armed Services. Many people wear poppies around November each year and wreaths of poppies are laid at war memorials during Remembrance Services.

### Imperial War Museum

The Imperial War Museum was founded in 1920 as a record of the First World War and the contribution made by the people of the British Empire to the Great War. Sir Alfred Mond, a member of the government and Chairman of the Imperial War Museum said that

*It is hoped to make it so complete that every individual, man or woman, soldier, sailor, airman or civilian who contributed, however obscurely, to the final result may be able to find in these galleries, an example or illustration of the sacrifice he made or the work he did, and in the archives some record of it.*

It began life as a temporary exhibition at Crystal Palace in London and from 1924 to 1935 was housed in two galleries of the Imperial Institute in South Kensington. The museum opened in its present home, at the old Bethlem Royal Hospital on Lambeth Road, in July 1936. It was closed between September 1940 and November 1946 and most of the collection evacuated to stores outside London. At the beginning of the Second World War, the remit of the museum was extended to include both World Wars and since 1953 it has included all military operations that have involved Britain and the Commonwealth.

### Their Past Your Future

Their Past Your Future is a Big Lottery supported project which was launched in 2004 as part of the official commemoration of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of end of the Second World War. The first phase of the project aimed to inspire people of all ages to truly discover the Second World War, how it shaped and altered the world's course, and why it is relevant now and in the future. It included a range of activities for learners, including a UK-wide touring exhibition, overseas commemorative visits for UK schools and youth groups, teaching resources and schemes that brought young people together with Second World War veterans in learning partnerships

The second phase of the project (TPYF 2) aims to build on this legacy and is led by a partnership of the Imperial War Museum; Museums, Libraries and Archives England; Northern Ireland Museums Council; National Library of Wales; and Museums Galleries Scotland (formerly the Scottish Museums Council.) The aim of this second phase is to explore the impact and ongoing legacy of 20<sup>th</sup> century conflict on people and places in the UK and around the world. It uses historical sources, sites, museums, veterans and eyewitnesses of war, in a variety of ways, to increase young people's understanding and appreciation of history, remembrance and commemoration, national identity and civic participation today.

### Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) was established as the Imperial War Graves Commission in May 1917 by Sir Fabian Ware to commemorate the dead of the First World War. Ware had been a member of a British Red Cross mobile unit and, along with this unit, had taken it upon himself to record and care for all the graves he could find. By 1915 this work had been officially recognised and

## People of the Great War: Shaping the Modern World

his unit was incorporated into the British Army as the Graves Registration Commission. By 1918 587,000 graves had been identified and a further 559,000 casualties were registered as having no known grave. Land had been guaranteed for cemeteries and memorials and the architectural and horticultural work to design the cemeteries could begin. Rudyard Kipling was employed as literary adviser, advising on inscriptions, and three leading architects, Sir Edwin Lutyens, Sir Herbert Baker and Sir Reginald Blomfield were tasked with designing and constructing the cemeteries and memorials. To ensure a consistent approach to the designs, Frederic Kenyon, Director of the British Museum, was employed to bring together their differing approaches. His report set out the principles that are still adhered to today. These principles are that: each of the dead should be commemorated by name on a headstone or memorial; headstones and memorials should be permanent, headstones should be uniform; there should be no distinction made on account of military or civil rank, race or creed. In keeping with these principles of equality, Kenyon also introduced the notion of banning the repatriation of remains. The return of bodies to the UK would present a huge, and probably insurmountable, logistical challenge, but it was also felt that repatriation would conflict with the feeling of brotherhood that had developed between all ranks serving at the Front.

All CWGC cemeteries are walled, featuring uniform headstones, a Cross of Sacrifice designed by Blomfield and Lutyen's Stone of Remembrance. Today, the Commission cares for the First World War cemeteries and memorials and those that were added after the Second World War. It is also involved in work to identify the occasional remains that are recovered from the Battlefields and to bury them, whether they can be identified or not. By preserving the memory of the dead in this way, the Commission hopes to encourage future generations to remember the sacrifice made by so many.

### **The Royal British Legion**

The Royal British Legion was founded in 1921 to provide a voice for ex-service people and to safeguard their welfare, interests and memory. It is a charity which provides financial, social and emotional support to those who have served or are serving in the Armed forces, and their dependents. It also campaigns on behalf of ex-service men and women on issues such as Gulf War related illnesses, war pensions and war-induced hearing loss. Their latest campaign, Honour the Covenant, encourages people to lobby their MP to help ensure that the Government fulfils its life-long duty of care to those who have served in the armed forces.

The British Legion also organises the Poppy Appeal. The first Poppy Day took place in 1921 and was inspired by the poem *In Flanders Fields* by John McCrae. Poppies are made in The Poppy Factory at Richmond, Surrey which was opened in 1933. The original factory, off the Old Kent Road in London, was opened in 1922 by George Howson of the Disabled Society. This society was formed to help disabled ex-service men and women from the First World War and members worked to assemble the poppies. The original poppy design could be assembled one-handed so that those who had lost the use of a hand could make them. This principle still stands and the Poppy Factory employs 50 disabled veterans and many more home-workers who make around 36 million poppies each year.

# People of the Great War: Shaping the Modern World

## **Veterans' Policy Unit**

The Veterans' Policy Unit was formed in 2004 by the merger of the Gulf Veterans Illnesses Unit and the Veterans Affairs Secretariat. It provides support for the Minister for Veterans and Under Secretary of State for Defence and covers policy issues such as ex-service homelessness, legacy health matters, veterans awareness events, commemorative booklets, war graves and education initiatives.

The unit administers the Veterans Challenge Fund which organisations can apply to for funding for activities to prepare service personnel for the transition to civilian life, for the provision of advice and help from Government and the voluntary sector when needed and to promote the recognition of service personnel's contribution to society.

It also organises Veterans' Day, on 27 June each year. This day is a celebration of the contribution made by all those who have served in the Armed Forces and those in the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets who have served in support of operations. It is a means of raising public awareness of Veterans' issues and promotes three key messages: that the Veterans' community is diverse and that all ex-service personnel are Veterans, whatever their age or service experience; that Veterans are special, not just because of their service but also because of the contribution they continue to make, to their community and civil employers, through the transferable skills they have acquired; that a wide range of support and advice is available to Veterans through the public, charity and voluntary sector.