



ENQUIRY 7

Was the First World War really a world war?

Key stage 3

ENQUIRY OVERVIEW

This short enquiry (which might precede a study of aspects of the war in depth) focuses on the extent to which the First World War deserves its title as a world war.

This implies that it was a genuinely global conflict. Students analyse a range of contemporary evidence from a variety of geographical locations outside Europe that support the contention that the war was indeed worldwide and involved participants from North America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and the Pacific. They then analyse further evidence which shows how Euro-centric the conflict actually was. Finally students weigh the evidence from both sides of the argument in class debate and then justify a personal conclusion by reference to evidence used during the enquiry.

Links are given in the resources to modern Western Front tours aimed at non-Europeans (or those with non-European ancestry), and to information about the service of foreign labour corps between 1914 and 1918. These resources could be used during a battlefields tour of the Western Front.

There are opportunities through this topic to make links to English (e.g. developing speaking and listening skills, writing and speaking in a persuasive and discursive style, analysing texts), Geography (e.g. interactions between people and their environments, the location of places and environments) and Mathematics (e.g. analysing statistics and converting these in to graphical form).



LESSONS

STAGE 1 What evidence is there that the First World War was a world war?

This initial stage introduces students to a range of original evidence (deliberately restricted to exclude evidence from Europe itself) suggesting that the First World War deserves to be known as a world war.

Within a set time limit ask pairs of students to discuss what kind of evidence they would need to prove that a war that claimed to be a world war really was a world war, for example 'it should involve fighting on every continent.' Take suggestions from different pairs through class discussion and display them as a list.

Divide the class into small groups. **Resources 1A to 1L** (see **PowerPoint 1**) consist of a range of sources which are evidence of the impact of the First World War outside Europe. Give each group a number of different sources, ensuring that each set contains some from a variety of geographical locations. Using a copy of the table from **Resource 1M** instruct them to look carefully at each source in turn, recording their thinking in note form on the table. The aim is for groups to infer as much as they can from each source where background information has been deliberately withheld. Once this activity is complete lead a whole class discussion displaying all the sources allocated to the groups in turn, taking suggestions and inferences. Allow groups and individual students to challenge each other's inferences and reasoning.

Give out **Resource 1N** which explains the background detail of each source along with **Resource 1O** (an outline world map showing modern state boundaries – see **PowerPoint 2**) together with a modern atlas. Allow time for each group to read through the handout, discuss how accurate their previous discussion about each source had been (recorded on their group table) and mark on the world map places and countries outside Europe involved in the First World War making use of the atlas.

Return to the list of kinds of evidence compiled at the beginning of the stage which students suggested could prove that a war really was a world war. Lead a whole class discussion about the extent to which the sources of evidence that groups have analysed prove that the First World War really was a world war.



LESSONS

STAGE 1 What evidence is there that the First World War was a world war? (continued)

List of resources, worksheets, video clips and interactive activities for use with Stage 1

PowerPoint 1 including:

Resource 1A: Japanese painting dating from the First World War depicting the siege of the German controlled Chinese city of Tsingtao by Japanese forces in Sept 1914.

Resource 1B: First World War poster celebrating ANZAC soldiers.

Resource 1C: 1915 drawing depicting Armenian refugees fleeing fighting between Turkish and Russian forces.

Resource 1D: First World War photograph of a group of Arab soldiers in Arabia taking part in a British sponsored revolt against their Turkish rulers.

Resource 1E: British painting from the First World War depicting the Battle of the Falkland Islands, a naval victory over the Germans in 1914.

Resource 1F: British photograph of a captured German flag in 1915 during the occupation of German South West Africa (modern Namibia).

Resource 1G: First World War photograph of an Indian Army gun crew in action in East Africa.

Resource 1H: First World War photograph of African soldiers from German Kamerun.

Resource 1I: map from the First World War showing the route of a group of German warships across the Pacific Ocean.

Resource 1J: photograph of the New Jersey coast, United States of America.

Resource 1K: a coded telegram known as the Zimmermann telegram sent from the German government to the Mexican government 1917.

Resource 1L: First World War photograph of a soldier from Barbados who served with the British in the Middle East.

Resource 1M: table for analysis of sources.

Resource 1N: details about Resources 1A to 1L.

PowerPoint 2 including:

Resource 1O: blank world map.



LESSONS

STAGE 2 How much of the First World War took place in Europe?

The second stage of the enquiry introduces further evidence which deliberately gives a different impression of the First World War from that analysed in the first stage. It shows how much of the fighting and the bulk of the casualties and deployment of non-European forces (including labour forces) occurred in Europe itself and that much of the War's expenditure was undertaken by European powers.

Display the world map in **Resource 2A** (see **PowerPoint 3**) which shows the geographical spread of the rival alliances between 1914-1918. Explain that the areas in green represent the countries (and possessions) of the Allies (the Entente Powers) while those in orange represent the countries (and possessions) of the Central Powers. Lead a discussion about whether this confirms the impression of the First World War as a global conflict and what it seems to indicate about the relative strength of each side. Give out a copy of the map to pairs. Display **Resource 2B** (a contemporary British world map showing international boundaries in 1914). Give time for pairs to compare both maps and lead a discussion about how the map from **Resource 2B** can help them to make more sense of the map from **Resource 2A**. The students should begin to identify the countries in the alliances and show how much of the world was divided between European empires in 1914.

Display the list of Allied and Central Powers from **Resource 2C**. From **Resource 2D** read out the list of allies of the Entente powers (originally Great Britain, France and Russia) who actually took no part in fighting during the First World War. Lead discussion about whether this changes the impression of the First World War as a world war (it should do since the Latin American countries, China and others were all non-combatants).

Divide the class in to small groups. To a third of the groups give out the casualty figures for the First World War in **Task Sheet 1** and instruct them to complete the task. To another third of the groups give out the breakdown of the financial cost of the War and instruct them to complete the task in **Task Sheet 2**. Instruct the remaining third to complete the task in **Task Sheet 3** (students will need copies of some of the web pages listed under Task 3 resources or digital access to them). Task 3 may take longer than Tasks 1 and 2 and could be given to groups of more able students or be partly completed as a homework. Select three sample groups to present the different completed tasks to the class in turn.

It is worth pointing out that the vast expenditure of the United States partly reflects the amount that the US loaned to belligerent powers – a post war debt which European countries took decades to clear and was a sign of growing American economic strength.



LESSONS

STAGE 2 How much of the First World War took place in Europe? (continued)

List of resources, worksheets, video clips and interactive activities for use with Stage 2

PowerPoint 3 including:

Resource 2A: map of the World 1914-1918 showing the geographical spread of the rival alliances

Resource 2B: Political Map of the World 1914 – different versions are readily available to view on the Internet.

Resource 2C: list of Allied and Central Powers

Resource 2D: list of non-combatant Allied Powers

Task Sheet 1

Task Sheet 2

Link to financial statistics of the First World War for completion of Task Two

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWWcosts.htm?menu=FWWstatistics>

Task Sheet 3

Links to websites about modern visits to the Western Front and information about non-European labour forces which served there for completion of Task Three

Guide to Australian memorials on the Western Front

http://www.dva.gov.au/commems_oawg/OAWG/about_OAWG/Documents/westernfront.pdf

Western Front Tours aimed at New Zealanders

<http://www.battlefield-tours.co.nz/html/new-zealand-ww1.html>

Western Front Tours aimed at Canadians

<http://www.battlefield-tours.ca/html/canada-ww1.html>

Information about a South African memorial on the Western Front at Delville Wood

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/today/delvillewood.htm>

A Western Front Tour commemorating the Indian Army

<http://www.spiritofremembrance.com/page/indian-army-on-the-western-front>

Information about US involvement on the Western Front and US memorials

<http://www.worldwar1.nl/1914-1918/usa/usa.htm>

Information about the wreck of the SS Mendi and the men of the South African Native Labour Corps on the Western Front

<http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/book/export/html/730>

Information about the Chinese Labour corps on the Western Front

<http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/great-war-people/49-military-justice/874-forgotten-hands.html>

Information about foreign labour forces on the Western Front

<http://www.labourcorps.co.uk/Pages/The%20Western%20Front.html>



LESSONS

STAGE 3 Was the First World War really a world war?

This last stage of the enquiry gives students an opportunity to debate their own response to the enquiry question drawing on evidence considered in the previous stages.

Display the following sentence starter *'The First World War really was a world war because...'* Within a short time limit instruct small groups to agree on wording to complete the sentence. Take suggestions from groups in class discussion and invite further suggestions for supporting evidence for particular statements from resources that have been studied so far.

Ask small groups to agree on two further sentences to support the assertion that the First World War really was a world war and give out resources used in previous stages which groups could use to support their statements. Lead whole class discussion during which groups can explain their sentences and justify them by reference to evidence.

Then display the following sentence starter *'The First World War was not really a world war because...'* Repeat the activities described above.

Lastly set up a number line from one to ten across the room. Place the wording *'Definitely a world war'* by the number ten, *'Partly a world war'* by number five and *'Definitely not a world war'* by the number one. Explain that individual students will position themselves on the number line between the statements and be asked to justify why they have positioned themselves there. Allow students time to think about where to position themselves and initially discuss this with a partner. Once they have taken up position by a number lead a class discussion, challenging students to justify their position on the number line, allowing them to challenge each other's reasoning and to move to a different number during debate if they wish.

As a concluding activity the students could complete a piece of extended writing in response to the enquiry question (*Was the First World War really a world war?*) and making use of the sentence starters used earlier.