



ENQUIRY

How wise was the journey towards peace 1918-19?

Key Stage 3 and 4

ENQUIRY OVERVIEW

This unit of work is designed to move student thinking beyond the traditional teaching of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

The aims of the unit are to:

1. Explore the reasons why Germany decided to seek peace in 1918
2. Examine how the tone of those leading the armistice commemorations influenced international relations up to 1945, as well as the terms of the subsequent Treaty of Versailles
3. Provide a meaningful citizenship activity for use of the Glade of the Armistice in Compiegne, a useful but rarely visited site for school tours of the First World War battlefields
4. Provide a framework for explicitly linking student knowledge of the flawed peace to present day global harmony, with specific reference to the Prevent strategy, British Values and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education.

Students are asked first to focus on the decision making process, terms and consequences of both the 1918 armistice and the 1919 Treaty of Versailles; they are encouraged to explore how to avoid similar circumstances and outcomes when considering solutions to 21st Century local, national and global dilemmas and disagreements. .

Students are asked to explore a number of key questions:

Question 1: Why did Germany decide to seek peace in 1918?

Question 2: Examine how the tone of those leading the armistice commemorations influenced international relations up to 1945, as well as the terms of the subsequent treaty of Versailles

Question 3: Why was the Treaty of Versailles considered to treat Germany harshly?

Question 4: How can we develop more harmonious local, national and global relationships?



Lessons

Section 1 – Why did Germany Decide to Seek Peace in 1918?

The reason for the starter activity slide – to consider the image of the German eagle (a strong symbol of the Roman Empire) is to enable students to later interpret the meaning of the Alsace-Lorraine monument at Compiègne (if this enquiry is linked to a visit to the place where the armistice was signed on 11th November 1918) whilst also showing how important it was for the unified German government of the nineteenth century, the Weimar Republic and Nazi governments to try to demonstrate strength of the people of Germany.

The main activities focus firstly on the reasons why the Germans were desperate to seek peace in the autumn of 1918 as well and secondly on the priorities of the peacemakers. Students are asked to prioritise the main worries of each side and explain their reasons.

Stretch Activity

These students could identify how different groups of people within each side would have had different priorities.

Resources

Presentation 1: Why Did Germany Decide to Seek Peace in 1918?

Section 2 - Examine how the tone of those leading the armistice commemorations influenced international relations up to 1945, as well as the terms of the subsequent treaty of Versailles

This section is best used on a site visit to Compiègne. However, the tasks have been phrased in such a way that they can also be used as a virtual visit – simply using the photographs of the site as evidence to help complete the tasks. For those taking students to the site, it is worth photocopying the two slides for each member of the group.

The first task is based around the Alsace-Lorraine statue, outside of the main clearing area. It sets the tone of the armistice negotiations which took place here – seeing the German eagle being cut down so viciously reveals the less than diplomatic tone of the negotiations. See if students can work out this symbolism.

At the railway tracks in the clearing students can then consider the relative fairness of each of the terms of the armistice. Once students have fed back, the teacher can explain how closely these proposals were incorporated within the Treaty of Versailles the following year.

Stretch Activity

The picture source shows the Alsace-Lorraine statue in 1940, when the Nazis had control of most of France. Ask students to explain why this photo may have been taken.



Lessons

Section 3 – Why was the Treaty of Versailles considered to treat Germany harshly?

Thus is perhaps the most traditional section of the enquiry. Students learn the main terms of the treaty of Versailles and partake in a decision making exercise to assess how fair each term is.

However a number of sources are then used for students to consider why each country held the particular view they did of kind of treaty they wanted.

Stretch Activity

Whilst all students will be able to describe the aims of the Big 3 and most students will be able to use sources to explain how the peacemakers disagreed and compromised. More able students should also be encouraged to explain the utility of a source.

Resources

Presentation 3: Why was the Treaty of Versailles considered to treat Germany harshly?
Worksheets at the end of the presentation (final 3 slides)

Section 4 – How can we develop more harmonious local, national and global relationships?

This section assists history teachers in using history lessons to explicitly support whole school responsibilities around the Prevent strategy, to develop Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education and to promote British Values.

The terms highlighted in the first slide are taken from the DFE guidance to schools – building children's resilience to radicalisation. The aim of the activity is to use the dilemmas and consequences of the treaty of Versailles to help students think through solutions which might bring greater harmony to their local communities. There may be issues which divide your community, perhaps revealing prejudice or discrimination or simply causing destructive tensions. The skills here is to use students learning about the often disastrous decision making at Versailles to identify real and creative solutions which they can apply to improve community relations.

The swot analysis task and memorial design assessment task criteria are selected from criteria in the School Inspection Handbook to assess Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural provision in schools (except for Cultural part C, which is included to ensure student demonstrate knowledge of memorial symbolism)



The final task (slide 41) is designed to consolidate students learning from all four sections of the enquiry, and to see the links between past events and present responsibilities

Stretch Activity

There are ample opportunities here for able students to become leaders of the group tasks. They must be encouraged at every stage to use their knowledge of the events of 1918-1919 in order to make their arguments for modern day strategies to promote community cohesion and the listed British Values.

Resources

Presentation 4: How can we develop more harmonious local, national and global relationships?