A wide range of educational resources from the Peace Pledge Union

The PPU has been working to develop a wide range of material and resources for teachers to use in the classroom and in assemblies. The following is a selection of what is available from the PPU...

Conscientious Objectors

The First World War is often presented as a 'just' War and as a war that by and large everyone in Britain supported. However, there was a group of people who refused to participate in war. These were the conscientious objectors ('COs') nicknamed 'conchies' – a term of abuse. At the time of the First World War the COs were called 'cowards' for refusing to go to France as part of the British Army. But were they cowards? For religious, ethical, moral or humanitarian reasons, they believed it to be wrong to take part in anything that involved killing fellow human beings. Here are two links to information and teaching and learning materials about the often little known history of those who opposed the First World War.

http://www.ppu.org.uk/rtk/

http://www.ppu.org.uk/nomorewar/a_general/worksheets.html

Update May 2015 – The PPU have launched their new website http://www.ppu.org.uk/men/ which allows visitors to explore more than 16,000 stories of the Conscientious Objectors from the First World War.

Reading war memorials

Most of the British war memorials you can see today were built between 1920 and 1925, following the end of the First World War, although one of the last British war memorial to this conflict was not unveiled until July 1939!

The government decided early on in the war that, because of the cost, the bodies of dead soldiers would not be returned to Britain. As a result, war memorials became places where people grieved both individually and collectively and provided a focus for ceremonies of public mourning as well as justification of the war from the decade following Armistice Day and which continues to this day.

War memorials can reveal all sorts of insights about the people who wanted them, why they wanted them, who paid for them, the people who built them and the people who used them. The following resource can support your students in investigating the hidden, or not so hidden messages with war memorials: http://www.ppu.org.uk/remembrance/index.html
First World War Poetry

After the First World War it was clear that the subject of war could no longer be treated as though its slaughter was solemn and glorious. But how could war now be written about by poets? The following poems illustrate the diversity of answers to that question, in a variety of ways expressing the horrors of war. They also show that poets have not found the subject easy.

http://www.ppu.org.uk/learn/poetry/poetry_ww1_0.html

Citizenship - Can war ever be just?

Can war ever be justified? Can there be rules about war so that fair play is possible? Has there ever been a war with a just cause? Follow this link for a consideration of the arguments for and against the concept of a just war.

http://www.ppu.org.uk/learn/learnstudy/just_war.html

Check out the PPU’s no more war website http://www.ppu.org.uk/nomorewar/