



1914

2014

WORLD WAR ONE

BBC

1918

2018

ASSEMBLY PACK

PRIMARY



ASSEMBLY THEME

REMEMBRANCE



This assembly on the theme of remembrance helps children to reflect on the 2014 centenary of World War One. It gives pupils an opportunity to think about the impact of the war and to explore why remembrance has become part of national life in the UK and other countries. The materials include a [script](#) for teachers, along with [classroom ideas](#) and suggestions for further research. There are [online resources](#) too, including [image galleries](#), [video clips](#) and [audio clips](#).

The assembly covers why we remember World War One and how that remembrance is marked, for example by Remembrance Sunday events in November, the two-minute silence, war memorials and poppy-wearing. The materials encourage the whole school community to think about the experiences of the men, women and children who lived through World War One and later conflicts. Pupils are asked to consider how learning about past wars can shape our attitude to present conflicts.

The assembly starts off by encouraging children to think about the word 'remembrance'. Can they suggest what 'remembrance' means? Can they talk about their own experience or knowledge of events surrounding Remembrance Sunday? Teachers may also wish to discuss how we mark anniversaries such as this in ways appropriate to our lives today.

The assembly offers an introduction to study topics in history, English, RE, PSHE and citizenship.



REMEMBRANCE ASSEMBLY

1914 is an important year. It is important not just in the UK, but across the world. 1914 is remembered in France and Germany, Italy and Austria, Russia, Turkey and India. It is remembered in Africa and the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand and in the United States and Canada too.

1914 is the year that World War One began. People then called it the Great War.

A hundred years have passed since 1914. But we still remember that war. Today, we call it World War One. We stop. We think. We take time out of our lives and bring to mind those people who fought and suffered and died in that terrible war a hundred years ago. We also remember the people caught up in World War Two and in other wars that have happened since World War Two ended in 1945.

'Remembrance' is not a word we use every day. In everyday life, we say we 'remember' something like a friend's birthday. Things around us help us to remember people or places. Photos remind us of a party, or maybe a holiday. Old toys or clothes remind us of who gave them to us, or why we liked them when we were younger.

But 'Remembrance' is bigger than that. 'Remembrance' is something that can be shared. That is why many people wear poppies as November the eleventh draws near. The poppy is a sign of remembrance. It shows we have not forgotten what happened long ago, to people in our own and other people's families.

There are two special days when we remember all those who suffered in war.

Does anyone know what those days are called and when they happen?

Remembrance Sunday is the Sunday nearest to the eleventh of November. It is different from Armistice Day – sometimes called 'Poppy Day' or 'Remembrance Day' – which always falls on the eleventh of November itself. You may have seen news reports about Armistice Day on television. Some of you may have been to gatherings or church services on Remembrance Sunday or Armistice Day. Many cub, Scout and Guide groups attend these.

**But what is so important about November the eleventh?
Does anyone know?**



REMEMBRANCE ASSEMBLY

November is the eleventh month of the year. And it was at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month that World War One ended back in 1918. At eleven o'clock on a Monday morning the guns fell silent. Every year, Remembrance Day reminds us of this moment. At eleven o'clock on a Monday morning the guns fell silent.

At eleven o'clock on Remembrance Day there is a two-minute silence. Ours is not a silent world. There is noise all around us. So silence is special. Silence is good for remembering. It helps us to stop thinking about what is going on right now, or what we are going to do next. Silence gives us time to reflect.

On the first Remembrance Day in 1919, people gathered in cities, towns and villages to remember all those who had fought in World War One. It was also known as Armistice Day. An armistice is a ceasefire, when the shooting in a battle stops.

 *Play the ['Remembrance'](#) video clip.*

People wanted to remember this war because it was so terrible. Soldiers, airmen and sailors often get forgotten when peace comes. But after the 1914-1918 war, people did not want to forget. They wanted to remember.

 **But why do you think we still mark Remembrance Day one hundred years later?**

On Remembrance Day we remember soldiers, service men and women who died or were wounded. Many soldiers in World War One were very young. They were still teenagers – the same age as some of your big brothers – when they left their homes and families. Many were killed. Even more suffered injuries that changed their lives. Families lost sons, brothers, fathers, uncles. It made people very sad. Remembrance is about understanding how we cope with sadness and loss.

Many people wear poppies on Remembrance Day. This video explains why.

 *Play the ['Poppies'](#) video clip.*



REMEMBRANCE ASSEMBLY

The poppy shows we remember. We remember a war that began a hundred years ago. We remember people caught up in other wars, all over the world. We remember that good can come out of bad. And enemies can become friends.

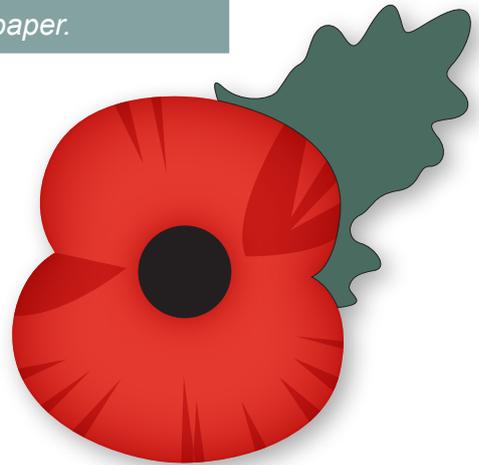
Remembrance Day is a time to be sad, but it is also a time of hope. The hope of a better, more peaceful world for everyone.



Display the following verse, onscreen or on a large sheet of paper.

These words are spoken on Remembrance Day. I will read them to you.

*'They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.'*



Now let's read these words together.



TEACHERS' NOTES:

REMEMBRANCE

Online resources

[Remembrance clip – summary](#)

The Last Post is played on the bugle at the Menin Gate in Belgium. We see the war memorial, listing the names of many thousands of soldiers killed in battle. This is followed by images of the armistice being signed, the annual Cenotaph remembrance service in London and similar services in present-day war zones. There is coverage of the two-minute silence and two veterans from wars since the 1980s (including the 1982 Falklands War) explain why they remember lost comrades. The clip ends with a sequence of people at war memorials, including the Cenotaph in London with the Queen and political leaders. We also see scenes from around the United Kingdom and from other countries, such as the United States and France. Chelsea Pensioners march past in their distinctive red uniforms and we hear a verse from Laurence Binyon's poem 'For the Fallen', published in September 1914. These words also appear at the conclusion of the assembly script.

[Poppies clip – summary](#)

Some familiar TV figures appear, all wearing poppies. We then see paper poppies being made by ex-servicemen. The commentary explains how poppy-wearing began in the 1920s and why the poppy was chosen as the symbol of remembrance. Two veterans from past wars including World War Two explain what the poppy means to them. A wounded soldier from a more war in Iraq gives his view. The clip explains how the Royal British Legion makes and distributes poppies for Remembrance Day. The clip concludes with lines from 'In Flanders Fields', the poem by the Canadian army doctor John McCrae. This poem was inspired by the poppies McCrae saw growing on the battlefields and was written after the funeral of a friend, killed in action in 1915.

Classroom ideas

Timeline

Introduce the topic of World War One using [BBC Schools](#) resources. You could put the war in its historical context by making a timeline with the class, that shows the two world wars and events that happened before and after them. You could take the line right up to the present day. Explain that World War One happened exactly 100 years ago. When we reach such an important anniversary, it is a time to look back and try to make sense of what happened.



TEACHERS' NOTES:

REMEMBRANCE

Images of war

You could show the children photographs and other images that record the World War One. You might include pictures of the Western Front, trenches and casualties.



You might ask children why they think the battlefields in France look the way they do. Can they see any clues as to what caused so much devastation?

Children could look carefully at what the men in the photographs are wearing. They might discuss what they are carrying. You could ask what must it have been like living in the trenches. What food do the children think the soldiers ate? (Their meals mostly consisted of corned beef, very hard biscuits and tea, with tinned fruit as a 'treat'.) How would the soldiers have washed? Could they change their clothes?

Pupils could examine images of poppies growing on what were once battlefields. Does anyone know why the poppy was chosen as a symbol of remembrance?

When looking at images of wounded soldiers in a military hospital, you could ask children to reflect upon why some soldiers welcomed their injuries.

When looking at images of the Home Front (such as women at home and work, Land Girls and children waving flags), pupils could discuss what women back in the UK did to help the war effort. How were their lives affected by the war? What do they think children at the time learned about the war?

Why the 'Great War'?

Explain that World War One began in Europe in 1914. You could use a map to show the main war zones and to familiarise the children with the names and borders of the combatant countries. Pupils could go on to identify the rough location of the 'Western Front', where the two military alliances faced each other from their trenches.

You might ask the children to list the main combatant nations: Germany and its allies on one side, the UK, France and Russia on the other. Use BBC Schools resources about '[Causes of war and the war years](#)' will help you find out more, including when Turkey and the United States joined the war.



Why was it a 'world war'?

(Because it was fought around the world, though most of the worst fighting was in Europe.)



IMAGES OF WAR

[The Western Front](#)
image gallery



IMAGES OF WAR

[Women on the home front](#)
and [The Women's Land Army](#) image galleries



TEACHERS' NOTES:

REMEMBRANCE

Why was it called the 'Great War'?

(Because it was more destructive than any previous war in history.)

You could ask children why they think so many more soldiers were killed in World War One than in former wars. (They might speculate that this was because of changes in technology, or because of the use of weapons of mass destruction, such as mustard gas.) To reinforce the learning, show pictures of World War One tanks, heavy artillery, machine guns, aircraft, Zeppelin airships, battleships, submarines and gas masks.



IMAGES OF WAR

[Military equipment](#)
image gallery

Why do the children think so many horses were taken to the Western Front?

War graves and cemeteries

Children could look at images at other images of war cemeteries and memorials, such as the Menin Gate or fields of remembrance (the [video clips](#) are good sources).

You could ask the pupils why they think people still visit war graves from World War One.



IMAGES OF WAR

[War cemeteries and memorials](#)
image gallery

Why do school groups often visit these sites?

Personal stories

The children might like to hear about and research the personal stories of some of those caught up in World War One. They could look for information about:

- [Capt Noel Chavasse](#) (twice a VC winner, an army doctor and former athlete, killed in 1917)
- [Edith Cavell](#) (a nurse shot for helping soldiers)
- [Elsie Inglis](#) (a doctor and women's rights campaigner, died 1917)
- Harry Patch (one of the last survivors of the 1914-1918 war, died 2009)
- [Jack Cornwell](#) (a boy-sailor killed at the Battle of Jutland)
- [Lord Kitchener](#) (a trained soldier responsible for army strategy during the war, died 1916)
- [Walter Tull](#) (a black army officer, a former footballer who served in the Footballers Battalion, killed 1918)
- [Wilfred Owen](#) (a poet who died fighting in the war in 1918 aged 25)



TEACHERS' NOTES:

REMEMBRANCE

Children may have old family photos at home that they might like to share, or even wartime memorabilia. If these items are too precious to bring to school, the children could photograph them instead. The class could make a display of all their 'found objects' and try to discover more about them from books and websites.

Remembrance poem

*'They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.'*

These lines are from a poem by Laurence Binyon, published in September 1914, only a month after World War One had begun.



Children could discuss what they think the poem means.

Pupils might try re-writing the lines in their own words.



You could ask the children to reflect on who the poet is thinking about in these lines. Why would age 'weary them'?



ASSEMBLY THEME

COMMEMORATION



This assembly on the theme of Commemoration aims to focus awareness on the 2014 centenary of World War One. It gives children the opportunity to think about the impact of the war on world history and particularly on the UK. The assembly materials explore the reasons why remembrance and commemoration have become part of national life not just in this country but around the world. The resources include a [script](#) for teachers, along with [classroom ideas](#) and suggestions for further research. There are [online resources](#) too, including [image galleries](#), [video clips](#) and [audio clips](#).

This assembly looks at why and how we remember World War One. It explores the ways in which we hold the past in memory through symbols and ceremonies, such as Remembrance Sunday, the two-minute silence, war cemeteries, war memorials and the wearing of poppies. The assembly encourages the whole school community to think about the experiences of the men, women and children who lived through World War One and later conflicts. Pupils are asked to consider how learning about past wars can shape our attitude to present conflicts.

The assembly starts off by discussing what 'commemoration' means. A [video clip](#) illustrates commemoration in action at the Cenotaph in London and in other countries. Teachers may wish to widen the discussion, to talk about how we commemorate other events in our family lives (such as birthdays, anniversaries and funerals).

The assembly has an important message: what happened affected people in the war years and still affects us today. Commemoration helps us to keep in touch with the past, as history flows through us.

The assembly offers an introduction to study topics in history, English, RE, PSHE and citizenship.



COMMEMORATION ASSEMBLY

What is 'commemoration'?

To commemorate means to remember through an action or a sign. We may carry out an action, or say certain words, in a special place.

When a pet dies, we mark the grave with a stick or a stone. When people die, we remember them not just by our thoughts, but by physical objects – a photo perhaps. People hold funerals and write the names of the dead on gravestones. Remembering the dead is as old as time, as old as the pyramids of ancient Egypt, as old as the green burial mounds around Stonehenge.

No soldier from the 1914-1918 war is now alive to tell his story. But we can still see some of these people and hear their voices on audio and video recordings. Many of their memories were sad. Often they didn't want to talk about the terrible things they had seen, but felt they had to, so that we would know about the war today.

 *Play the 'Commemoration' video clip.*

Words like those that ended that clip are found on war memorials. You can see war memorials all over the British Isles. You will find them in parks, town centres, village greens, churchyards, town halls, factories, even post offices and railway stations.

 **Does anyone know where our nearest war memorial is?**

All the old soldiers from World War One are now dead. But you can still read their names on war memorials. Long, long lists of names. Names of people who died in the world wars. Sometimes several members of the same family are named on the same memorial, brothers or cousins, all from one village or from one part of town. Putting up a memorial was a way of saying, 'We will not forget you, even if we cannot visit your grave.'

 *Play the 'Remembrance' video clip.*

In the video, we saw the Queen and other people at the Cenotaph in London. A cenotaph is an empty tomb. No-one is buried inside. It is a memorial to the dead who lie buried far away. We see the Cenotaph in London on television during the annual Remembrance Sunday commemoration. The Queen and the leaders of the country and armed forces take part. So do many members of the public. They lay wreaths of poppies at the foot of the Cenotaph.



COMMEMORATION ASSEMBLY

 Play the 'Poppies' video clip.

We wear poppies to show we remember. Poppy-wearing started after World War One. Red poppy flowers grew in the fields of France and Belgium over which some of the most terrible battles of World War One were fought. The area became known as 'Flanders fields'.

A Canadian army doctor called John McCrae wrote a poem called 'In Flanders Fields' after the funeral of a friend killed in battle in 1915. Here is part of it:

(You could read the verse aloud, or it could be read by a small group of children.)

*'In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.'*



Portrait of
Dr John McCrae
(© Mccrod Museum,
Montreal)

John McCrae's poem became famous. Sadly he did not live to see peace. He died of pneumonia in January 1918.

After World War One, many of the bodies of soldiers killed in the fighting were buried on the battlefields, in war cemeteries. People still visit them today. There are memorials and monuments, with long lists of the names of soldiers who never came home.

Thousands of soldiers who died have no known graves. Some of you may have heard of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior. It is in Westminster Abbey in the heart of London. One soldier is buried there. His body was brought back from France after World War One. Nobody knows who he was. His grave commemorates all the unknown soldiers who fell in battle.

A hundred years have passed since World War One began. This centenary is being marked or 'commemorated' in lots of ways. There are exhibitions, museums, plays, films, TV programmes, even flying displays and parades. This year, you will see and hear a lot about World War One.

There will also be times of silence. Times to remember and be sad. But there will also times to be thankful for the peace we have today.



TEACHERS' NOTES:

COMMEMORATION

Online resources

[Commemoration clip – summary](#)

This clip shows the national commemoration of Remembrance Sunday at the Cenotaph. Remembrance Day began in 1919 when people gathered to remember loved ones they had lost in the war. Today it is a national day of commemoration, replicated at other memorials not just around the United Kingdom, but in many parts of the world. In the clip, we see the wreath laying at the Cenotaph, as well as a school head teacher and a pupil talking about what it means to them. We see shots of war cemeteries with rows of memorials and graves. We are reminded that the war affected people in many countries, including India, France, Canada, Australia, Russia and the United States. People in Germany, Austria and other countries that fought against the UK in World War One also remember their losses. The clip concludes with images of memorials and the well-known lines, 'For your tomorrow, we gave our today'.

You could follow up on the video by asking the class to plot the global extent of World War One on a world map. Ask pupils to identify the combatant countries involved across Europe and beyond. These include France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Russia, Portugal, Turkey, China, Japan, Brazil, Greece and India, as well as parts of Africa and the Caribbean. Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada were all drawn into the fighting too.

Classroom ideas

Timeline

Introduce the topic of World War One using [BBC Schools](#) resources. You could put the war in its historical context by making a timeline with the class, that shows the two world wars and events that happened before and after them. Take the line right up to the present day. Explain that World War One happened exactly 100 years ago. When we reach such an important anniversary, it's a time to look back and try to make sense of what happened.

The first Remembrance Sunday

Ask children if they know in which month we wear poppies. Explain that people began wearing the poppy in the years that followed World War One. The poppy is worn in many other countries too, as an act of remembrance. In the UK, poppies are distributed by the Royal British Legion, in return for donations.

On the first Remembrance Sunday people gathered to remember loved ones they had lost in the war.

Look at images of early Cenotaph remembrance services. Ask the children why so many people wore black. Explain about mourning clothes if necessary.



TEACHERS' NOTES:

COMMEMORATION

There was a two-minute silence. Everyone stood still. Men took off their hats. Work stopped. Buses and trains stopped. Even ships at sea turned off their engines. Armistice Day may fall on any day of the week (whenever the 11th of November falls), but today Remembrance Sunday is always the Sunday nearest to 11th November.

War cemeteries and war memorials

Look at images of war cemeteries and ask children what they think about them. What might people do as an act of commemoration? (Planting trees, for example.) What other kinds of commemoration can children suggest?

Ask children to research other World War One commemorative projects, including unusual ones such as the LMS Patriot Project (building a steam railway locomotive), or the Animals in War memorial in Hyde Park.



IMAGES OF WAR

[War cemeteries and memorials](#) image gallery



Ask children if they know of a local war memorial. Who knows where it is? What form does the memorial take? Are there any other local memorials such as a brass plate in a local building or railway station, for example?

Discuss with children why they think people get upset if others mistreat or vandalise memorials.

The National Memorial Arboretum



Ask pupils to visit the National Memorial Arboretum's website. What can they discover?

The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, opened in 2001. There are more than 250 memorials there and it is a popular place for people wishing to commemorate World War One.



Why do children think this special place was made? Why do so many people visit it?



TEACHERS' NOTES:

COMMEMORATION

Tomb of the Unknown Warrior

 **Ask if anyone has heard of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey.**

Thousands of soldiers in World War One had no known graves. Can children think why this was so?

For more about the story of the Unknown Warrior, visit:

www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/unknown_warrior.shtml

Further research

Pupils could find out more about commemorations of World War One (and World War Two) in other countries (e.g. France, Germany, India, Australia and Russia).

They could discover more about the role of women at war, including the role of women as war nurses, farm labourers and munitions workers. The children could also find out how women's home lives were transformed by war.

Pupils could collect information about how the war affected children, especially those with fathers or brothers away fighting at the front.

Children could research their own family histories.

Do any of the children have ancestors who fought in either of the world wars?

 **Do their families have any old photos from the war years?
Do any of the children have parents or grandparents in the armed services, currently or in the recent past?**

Ask children to search for images that they can describe and discuss, such as: the Royal Albert Hall festival of remembrance; Armistice Day or the parade at the Cenotaph; war memorials and the wreath laying; wreath laying at sea; RAF flypasts; Royal British Legion members with their flags; poppy sellers; veterans from the USA, Australia and Canada; commemorations in France and Russia.

IMAGES OF WAR



[Women on the home front](#)
and [The Women's Land Army](#) image galleries



ASSEMBLY THEME

PEACE



This assembly describes how people yearned for peace after the horrors of World War One. It encourages children to think about the experiences of the men, women and children who lived through the 1914-1918 war and prompts pupils to consider how those experiences affected attitudes towards peace and war. Later conflicts are also considered.

The children are reminded of why the slaughter came as such a shock to people in the war years. The assembly materials ask pupils to think about what we mean by peace, patriotism and pacifism. The assembly examines the role of international peacemakers, as well as the peace movement, in the light of the commemoration of World War One's centenary.

Children will have an opportunity to think about the impact of war and peace on modern history. They will be invited to consider why some people think remembrance ceremonies glorify war and why others say such commemoration helps us to value peace, by reminding us of the sacrifices made, particularly in the world wars of the twentieth century.

The assembly materials include a [script](#) for teachers, along with [classroom ideas](#) and suggestions for further research. There are [online resources](#) too, including [image galleries](#), [video clips](#) and [audio clips](#).

The assembly's message is that what happened in the past can still affect us now. To hope for peace is not enough to achieve it. The soldiers who fought in the trenches in 1914-1918 are now all dead, but their experiences live on in archive audio and video recordings. The fallen of World War One remain graphic witnesses to history.

The assembly offers an introduction to study topics in history, English, RE, PSHE and citizenship.



PEACE ASSEMBLY

1914 is an important year. It is important not just in the UK but across the world. 1914 is remembered in France and Germany, Italy and Austria, Russia, Turkey and India. It is remembered in Africa and the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand, and in the United States and Canada too. 1914 is the year that World War One began. People then called it the Great War.

World War One started in August 1914. Once armies began to prepare for war, no one seemed to know how to stop them. It was as if a great, brutal machine was grinding into action. No one seemed to know how to control it or turn it off.

Still, at first people were sure there would soon be peace again. Young soldiers marched off cheering and smiling. 'We'll be home by Christmas,' they said. But they were not. The war lasted four long years.

In World War One, both sides believed they were fighting a 'just war'. This meant they thought they were right and the people on the other side were wrong.

In a sports team, you support your team-mate. It was the same with the countries that took part in the war. People who were patriotic believed their country was right to go to war.

Pacifists wanted peace. They believed war was always wrong. Some pacifists said it was wrong to take life in any way and they refused to join the army. They were called 'conscientious objectors'. Some conscientious objectors went to jail. Others worked on farms or in hospitals to help their country without killing anyone. Some went to the battlefields to help soldiers wounded by the fighting. It was dangerous work and some conscientious objectors won medals for bravery, even though they refused to fight.

The war went on for four years. Millions were killed. In the end both sides were exhausted.



At this point, you could ask a group of children to read out the names of some of the fallen, transcribed from a local plaque or war memorial.

Peace came in 1918. The guns at last fell silent. People felt relieved, but they were also deeply saddened and troubled. The war had caused huge loss of life. Many of the survivors could not enjoy the peace. Their bodies and minds had been ruined by war. They were haunted by the memories of what they had seen and suffered.

Everyone hoped that World War One would be 'the war to end all wars'. But 21 years later, war came again. World War Two began in September 1939. Something had gone horribly wrong.



PEACE ASSEMBLY

After World War One, people tried to find a better way to settle arguments between countries. They set up an organisation called the League of Nations. Most countries joined. But they never really agreed, or gave up their armies, navies and air forces. In fact, they started making new weapons, beginning what was called an 'arms race'. Each country tried to get ahead of its rivals.

After World War Two, another peacekeeping organisation was set up: the United Nations. It is still working hard to stop wars. It tries to reconcile old enemies and get them to live in peace.

It can happen. Germany and France fought in two world wars, but today they are partners. The UK and Germany, once old enemies, are friends today. Reconciliation has brought hope to Northern Ireland and to South Africa.

We can work and live together in peace, as long as we learn the lessons of the past.

One hundred years ago, we were at war. Today we are at peace. And it is up to us to keep it that way.

 *Play the primary 'Peace' video clip.*



TEACHERS' NOTES:

PEACE

Online resources

[Peace clip – summary](#)

The clip shows scenes of battle and civilian devastation in World War One and includes a shot of wounded survivors. It goes on to describe how the League of Nations was formed in an attempt to resolve international disputes peacefully, but how those hopes were dashed by its failure. We hear part of prime minister Neville Chamberlain's 1939 radio broadcast telling people in the UK they were once again at war with Germany. World War Two, as the clip points out, was even more destructive, with air raids, genocide and atomic bombs. When peace came, people felt relieved, as a witness explains, but also uncertain about the future. They wondered, 'Where do we go from here?' TV presenter Michael Aspel reflects on how the Blitz affected his family and many other families too. The UK today is generally considered to be at peace. Yet we face the dangers of terrorism and soldiers still risk their lives in wars and peace-keeping missions. The clip concludes with the question: 'Can war be avoided?'

Classroom ideas

Timeline

Introduce the topic of World War One using [BBC Schools](#) resources. You might put the war in historical context by making a timeline with the class, showing the two world wars and events that happened before and after them. You can take the line right up to the present day. Explain that World War One happened 100 years ago. When we reach such an important anniversary, it is a time to look back and try to make sense of what happened.

Learning from the past

What do pupils think history tells us? Some people talk about 'learning the lessons of the past,' but what does that mean in practice?

History often concentrates on past events (revolutions, battles, victories, defeats). But how often does it show us how people felt or how their individual lives were affected? How can we find out about these things? You might invite pupils to give some suggestions: letters perhaps, or diaries, autobiographies and interviews given by those who lived through troubled times.

Studying history may mean visiting battlefields or old castles and war museums.



What do the children like about such visits? Do they think castles were peaceful places? What is the most peaceful place they can think of?



TEACHERS' NOTES:

PEACE

War and peace

Have any children been to the Imperial War Museum or other military museums? Why do they think we have such museums? What do they think might be in a peace museum? Pupils could find out about Bradford's Peace Museum UK.

The children could go on to look for images of peace protests from World War One and from more recent times, such as the CND campaign against nuclear weapons from the 1950s, the anti-Vietnam war protests in the 1960s and the anti-Iraq war protests of the 2000s.

**What do the children feel about these anti-war protests?
How easy is it to be wise after the event?**

Living together

You could ask children: When we feel happy, do we feel peaceful? What is the most peaceful thing you can imagine doing? Do our family or school rules make life easier for us to keep the peace? How can we best settle arguments? Living together may need a few rules: if you hit me, should I be allowed to hit you back?

**If we say someone is good at 'keeping the peace' what do we mean?
Ask the children to think of other phrases with the word 'peace' in them, such as 'peace and quiet'.**

In the '[Peace](#)' video clip it says that the UK is lucky to be a mostly peaceful country, where people live together and get along. Images such as the London terrorist bombings and the 9/11 attack in the USA appear briefly in the video clip. Teachers should be ready to answer questions and reassure if necessary.

Is war more exciting than peace?

You could use the following questions to prompt and direct a class discussion.

**Why are there so many war games? Is war glorified or made to seem 'fun' through computer games, films, TV and books?
Who likes battle games? Who does not? Who likes war stories?**

You could introduce 'war books' such as Michael Morpurgo's *War Horse*, or read verses by war poets such as Wilfred Owen. Where the language presents difficulties for today's children, you could select short extracts of a poem, or provide a line-by-line version of the poem in contemporary terms to accompany the original. Some World War One poets have a simpler, more accessible style. Look for work by Robert Graves or William Gibson.



TEACHERS' NOTES:

PEACE

Peacemakers



Have children heard of the United Nations? What does it do?

After World War Two ended in 1945, the nations of the world set up the United Nations organisation. Its aim is to prevent wars, bring about peace and help people, but it is not a world government. It does not have its own army. Ask the class to find out more about the United Nations, its various branches and their activities.

You might look for news reports and images of the UN in action: the UN General Assembly addressed by world leaders, or UN peacekeeping forces, such as UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) and others in Mali, Cyprus, Haiti and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The children could find out about the life and work of a peacemaker such as Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King. They could find out, too, about the history of the Nobel Peace Prize.