



Lions led by donkeys?

Even today, people hold strong opinions about the commanders of the British and Allied forces in the Great War. There is a range of different views:

- 1 The commanders were 'donkeys'. They were incompetent and didn't take care of their soldiers, the 'lions'. They sat in safety behind the lines while they sent their troops charging against machine guns and barbed wire. Their men resented them and only obeyed because they would be shot otherwise.
- 2 The commanders didn't do a great job and the soldiers paid the price. However, we shouldn't blame only the military commanders, since the politicians shared in the big decisions and ordered the commanders to try to win the war.
- 3 The commanders did a remarkable job while facing tremendous challenges. They had to create a huge army from ordinary civilians in a short space of time. They also learnt new tactics and used new weapons as they became available. They took as much care of their men as they could and relations between officers and men were good.

Have a look at the sources in this gallery. The key question is: What do you think about the military commanders?

This [worksheet](#) will help you plan your work and present your conclusions.

To help you with your research there are 4 case studies:

