



Teacher's notes

Aims

The Great War is a topic that still excites huge interest among young students and the general public. It also continues to provoke debate among academic historians. Add to this is an enduring fascination with the Great War on the part of the media, often rooted in popular perceptions shaped by film, poetry and other media, and we have a winning subject for historical study.

This exhibition has a number of aims:

- To get students to think about popular perceptions of the Great War, how these have changed over time, and how far historians support these perceptions
- To examine original sources and how these have been used to support different viewpoints and perspectives on the Great War
- To give students a feel for the complexity of the Great War and the scale of its impact on those who fought in it and those of us affected by its legacy today.

Like all Learning Curve exhibitions, it aims to provide a resource that combines:

- Depth of coverage
- Focus on the curriculum
- A flexible, enquiry-based approach
- Stimulating opportunities to interpret sources and communicate ideas.

The intended audience for this exhibition is pupils and teachers of the History National Curriculum:

- KS3 Unit 18: Hot war, cold war: why did the major twentieth-century conflicts affect so many people?
- KS4: Conflict in the modern world / The war to end all wars, 1914-1919.

The Great War was a world war and wherever possible we acknowledge the activities and contributions of people from around the world. However, because this exhibition is written for British school children, we take a British viewpoint in describing events.

Content

There are 6 galleries in the exhibition. Each contains a number of case studies. Each case study can be used as a stand-alone item in one or two classroom sessions. However, each case study in a gallery is also linked to form a coherent area of research. This gives students and teachers great flexibility in the ways the materials can be used.

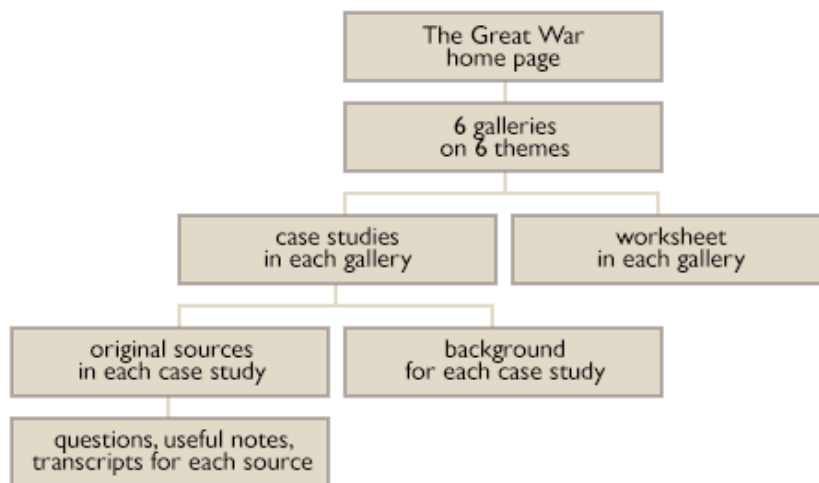
The case studies in each gallery are linked together to allow students to answer a key question or examine a key theme. This is explained in detail in the worksheet that accompanies each gallery. Worksheets also provide supporting features, such as recording tables or writing frames, for organising written work.



Most galleries contain a background section. This, together with the useful notes provided for each source, gives some context to the sources being studied. It is not meant to replace standard resources such as textbooks.

To help students make effective use of the original sources, each source is accompanied by questions, useful notes and a transcript. The questions are focused on the key theme of the gallery and are designed to help students build up a bank of points and ideas that will be helpful to them in tackling the worksheet activities.

The structure of the exhibition looks like this:



For more detailed information on content, see the site map.

Gallery 1: The Great War: conflict and controversy

This gallery focuses on historical interpretations. This makes it an ideal resource for teachers wanting to examine this issue with students at KS3, probably in Y9. However, it is just as valid for students examining the Great War in their GCSE or post 16 courses. Although historical interpretations are not examined in the same way after KS3, they are an important part of historical study.

The primary focus is on how interpretations of the Great War have changed, with a secondary focus on considering why they have changed. With this in mind, the sources are not confined to the usual collection of contemporary or near contemporary sources. They include sources from a range of periods, reflecting changing perspectives on the Great War.

Ways to make use of this material:

You might make use of this gallery after studying one or two other galleries and consider the relative merits of each interpretation.

Groups or pairs of students might be asked to investigate one source only and then explain its views to the rest of the class or be asked to locate one other source which contrasts with their allocated one.



The whiteboard is an ideal tool for projecting a source for the whole class to see and then highlighting particular elements.

Source one, a poem written by a mother, and source two, extracts of writings by Siegfried Sassoon, each have audio clips of the sources being read as well as the text. A sound enabled computer will be necessary for playing these clips.

The word processor is an ideal tool for tackling the key question in this gallery. The framework in the worksheet can easily be copied into a word processor and completed electronically by students individually or on a whiteboard in a teacher-guided discussion.

Gallery 2: Why did Britain go to war in 1914?

The aim of this gallery is to consider the events of 1914 from the British perspective. As a general rule, most students examine the chain of events that led to the outbreak of war and see Britain's participation in that war as inevitable. This gallery uses a range of sources to show that many in Britain saw British involvement in the war as far from inevitable and that the decision to go to war was not taken lightly. It is not an exploration of why war broke out in Europe in 1914, although this is inevitably touched upon in the sources and in some detail in the background section. The focus of this gallery is on the decision-making process that brought Britain into the war when the government was not obliged to join in. There is also some consideration of the reaction to the outbreak of war.

Ways to make use of this material:

- A quick and efficient method might be to divide the class into groups and allocate the sources in each case study to particular groups. The sources could be further sub-divided and allocated to individuals or pairs of students.
- The gallery quiz would be an enjoyable vehicle to examine how far students remembered the sources and background they had been reading.
- The sources in case study 3 (Did public opinion drag Britain into war in 1914?) are the most accessible in this gallery. They are written from a home perspective and are generally quite short. This case study could be used to create a mini investigation on British opinion in 1914.
- The sources in case studies 1 and 2 are mostly from diplomatic sources and can be used to challenge brighter students, particularly if used without the supporting notes.
- The main task in the worksheet is ideally suited to use with a whiteboard and projector, although it would also work as a printout.

Gallery 3: The trench experience

The aim of this gallery is to give students as wide a perspective as possible on the experience of the soldiers in the trenches. It is understandable that students can sometimes develop a one-dimensional view of life in the trenches as sitting in mud and then going over the top. While this view is certainly not wrong, it is far from complete. The various case studies explore the changing technology and tactics of warfare, the experience of battle, the range of different troops in the Allied forces and the range of activities which troops took part in when they were at the front and when they were behind the lines.



Ways to make use of this material:

- The main task of the gallery asks students to create their own presentations. A structure for research and presentation is provided in the worksheet. This task is suited to use with a range of different technologies. Presentations can be created in PowerPoint. Images and extracts from text sources can be copied from the website into PowerPoint and other similar software packages. If you are really ambitious, it is possible to use video cameras and mix student 'pieces to camera' with images and documents.
- This gallery is large, but can be used flexibly. You may wish to direct some students to look at just one case study or at a certain selection of sources. Case study 1 (Warfare and weapons) is quite technical and will suit students with an interest in that direction. Case study 4 (Daily grind) contains a great deal of 'human interest' material.
- You may wish to use the gallery as an archive of material to support a different enquiry. For example, you might contrast the impression of life given in case study 4 with impressions derived from TV programmes or literary sources. Case study 3 (An allied army) would be an excellent resource for an enquiry such as 'Who fought at the front?'
- There is a multimedia source in each case study in this gallery. There are three film sources, one each in case studies two, three and four, and an audio clip of a source (a poem) being read in case study one.

Gallery 4: Lions led by donkeys?

The aim of this gallery is to get students to examine the popular perception of the Great War in which incompetent officers sent courageous troops to pointless slaughter. This gallery is not an exercise in revisionism, but in balance. There is plenty of material here to show errors of judgement by the commanders. However, there is also material to put these errors in context. The sources also allow the officer class to be fleshed out a little, with examples of the actions of junior officers as well as documents written by senior commanders and politicians.

Ways to make use of this material:

- The main gallery task is the comparison of 3 different, albeit overlapping, views. This provides a range of opportunities to allocate sections of material to different students or groups of students to study. This could be done by case study, by source or by viewpoint.
- Two film sources appear in this gallery, in case studies three and four, and there is also an audio clip to accompany the poem in case study one.
- There are plenty of opportunities to use word processing, presentation or desktop publishing software to argue particular viewpoints. A variety of ideas are suggested in the worksheet. For example, students being asked to examine View 1 could use desktop publishing software to select sources and create a 'Hall of Shame'.
- Alternatively, students can use the recording frames in the worksheet to investigate the topic and then use whiteboard software to hold a class vote on the validity of each of the three views. This could even be used to compare the voting patterns of different classes in the year group.
- Case study 2 (Gallipoli) contains more material than the other case studies. This is because the other case studies refer to the western front and there is a wealth of related material on the western front in the other galleries, especially gallery 3. Students using gallery 4 for research may wish to cross-reference and explore this other material.



Gallery 5: Why was it so hard to make peace?

This gallery focuses on one element of the Versailles peace negotiations, specifically the reason why it was so hard to achieve a settlement that was acceptable, not only to the Germans and their allies, but also to the British, French and US leaders. In this respect, the gallery is most useful in providing material to start off a study of the topic of the Versailles Treaty and to conclude it.

Ways to make use of this material:

- The final source in the first case study has some interactivity to allow students to explore the Versailles Hall of Mirrors as drawn by the Illustrated London News of the time.
- The main task is to write a report on why it was so hard to reach an acceptable settlement. The worksheet contains a structure to help students organise their thinking. This is probably best used after students have examined the sources in the two case studies. The completion of the table could be tackled as individual, paired or small group work. It could also be used as the basis for a whole class plenary using a whiteboard and allocating the various points to the correct columns using a word processor file. Below is a completed version of the table.

Why was it so hard to make peace? – Completed research table

	Attitude towards Germany during the Peace Conference	Points of agreement / disagreement	Attitude to final terms of Treaty of Versailles
Britain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Germany should be punished ● Germany should not be crippled ● Germany was a future potential trading partner ● Unjust treatment of Germany might lead to future war ● Unjust treatment of Germany might make Germany turn to Communism ● Strong support for League of Nations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concerned that French attitudes were too harsh ● Largely in agreement with American attitudes ● Agreed with French that Germany should pay reparations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Generally saw Prime Minister Lloyd George as a hero ● Some newspapers had concerns about reactions to the Treaty in Germany ● The Times approved of the Treaty ● Socialist newspaper The Daily Herald disapproved of the Treaty
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Germany should be crippled ● Germany should pay reparations ● Germany should lose large amounts of land ● Germany should not keep the gains made from Russia in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk ● Strong support for League of Nations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Britain and USA did not have borders with Germany and were not concerned enough about Germany being a threat in the future ● Agreed with Britain and USA that Germany should pay reparations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mixed views, including joy at end of the war but wanting revenge on the Germans ● Felt that some politicians like General Smuts were trusting the Germans too much ● Worries about opposition to the Treaty in USA



USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Germany should be punished Treaty should not be unjust League of Nations was a good idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxious that Britain and France would be just and not take revenge on Germany Agreed with French that Germany should pay reparations Generally more in agreement with Britain than France 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Republican opponents of Democratic President Wilson were opposed to Treaty Worries about German colony of Shantung going to Japan US Senate rejected Treaty of Versailles and League of Nations
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepared to accept some responsibility for the war Prepared to pay for damage caused to Belgium and France Anxious to make clear that Germany had suffered in the war 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Felt that all countries were responsible for causing the war Prepared to pay reparations but wanted these to be fair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outrage at the terms of the Treaty Felt that it was wrong to be made to accept all responsibility for causing the war

Gallery 6: How has the Great War been remembered?

The key aim of this gallery is to encourage students to understand how and why the Great War was the subject of so many memorials and to consider how appropriate those memorials are.

It also addresses the issue, which many history teachers grapple with, of getting students to really care about aspects of history, rather than simply seeing the subject as a detached study. Memorials are extremely moving in their own right. When linked to other forms of memorial that may have a direct relevance to the personal experience of students (such as memorials for family members or memorials relating to specific events), they can have an added poignancy.

Ways to make use of this material:

- This is a personal research exercise.
- There may be some merit in working through some or all of the sources in case study 1 (Remembering the Great War: Then) in a whole class session, looking at the different agendas behind the different types of memorial. This would help to model the process of describing and evaluating memorials, which is the main task of the gallery.
- There is one multimedia source in case study 1, a film showing the Armistice Day ceremony at the Cenotaph in London, 1930, which would be useful to view in a class session studying memorial ceremonies, or during personal research.
- Case study 2 (Remembering the Great War: Now) is meant to be a starting point for individual research on memorials. Students can be encouraged to explore other types of memorial in addition to the ones we highlight (web-based, local, musical etc).
- This approach to the subject encompasses other curriculum areas such as English and especially Citizenship. The proper remembrance, for example, of British Empire troops is a key Citizenship issue.