

Teacher's notes—What is a jigsaw?

'Jigsaws' are an easy way for children to learn in the classroom. The jigsaw effect allows smaller groups to focus on one part of a topic and translate what they have learnt, back to their peers. It is a fun and informative way of learning and is a good tool for children with mixed abilities and skills.

The children need to be organised in to small groups, of mixed skills. Once in their small groups, the group will be given a topic and the children will become 'experts' on these topics. The children will need to investigate the topic using the materials given and where possible, additional information (Laptop/iPad). After researching the children will need to present back to the whole class (as an 'expert' group) on what they have learnt. They can use a variety of presentation techniques (posters, drama, singing etc) to get the information they have learnt across.

Topics of expertise:

1. **A Soldiers Life**
2. **Rationing**
3. **Evacuation**
4. **Staying Safe**
5. **The Home Front**

For example:

The group learning about *evacuation* may role play an evacuee child leaving their parents, getting on a train with a small suitcase, meeting their new family and starting a new school.

They could tell the class about *Operation Pied Piper*. The group could 'make' a suitcase and on the outside list what is in the case. They could give name badges for each person—evacuee, Billeting Officer, Billeting Homeowner etc.

Session plan

10 minutes to get children in to topic groups and give them the relevant information sheets.

50 minutes for the children to brainstorm, devise their 'lesson' and create, produce artwork and dramatise the topic using the information packs available.

25 minutes presentations—5 minutes per group

5 minute summary

Information packs are attached.

Theme boxes with real artefacts and replicas objects are available to hire from the museum. All packs have disposable gloves, antibacterial wipes and a 'non-ordering' policy of two weeks between usage.

Group 1. Information on a soldiers life during WW1.

WW1 – When war broke out in 1914, Germany's wartime army was over 3.7 million men. But here in Britain we only had an Army of 700,000, three million men smaller than the German Army! Because of this, an operation for more volunteers was launched; thousand of men answered the call to fight. Among them were 250,000 boys and young men under the age of 19 (the legal limit for armed service overseas.)

Training

All new recruits to the army were put through 3 months of basic training to build up fitness, self-confidence, discipline, obedience and essential military skills that soldiers need in wartime.

The next stage of a recruits training would be two or three months of specialist training like a machine gunner, signaller or cook.

The men would be shipped to large recruit camps where their fitness and skills were checked and then brought up to the standard needed.

The soldiers exercise, combat and marching skills were also developed and it was how quickly the men learnt or how urgent men were needed at the front line that moved them to the front line. Life on the front line in WW1 usually meant the war was fought by soldiers in trenches in Northern France.

Trenches

What are trenches? They are long narrow ditches that were dug in to the ground usually by the soldiers who would live in them for weeks at a time – day and night!

A typical trench was dug around twelve feet deep into the ground, with a ridge at the top of the trench and a barbed wire fence. Some trenches were strengthened with wood beams or sandbags and the bottom of the trench was usually covered with wooden boards called duckboards to keep the soldiers' feet above the water that would collect at the bottom of the trench, which would stop them getting trench foot, a medical condition caused by having wet and cold feet for long periods of time.

The trenches weren't dug in a long straight line, but were built as more of a system of trenches. Dug in a zigzag pattern, there were many levels of trenches along the lines with paths dug so soldiers could travel between the levels. The artillery trench was where the big guns were kept, there were communication trenches to move between front and back, there were support trenches to provide a second line of defence in case the front line as taken and first aid stations and kitchen to make sure the men had medical attention and hot food.

The trenches in WW1 were dirty, smelly, disease ridden and rat infested. For a soldier it was a life in fear - fear of disease and enemy attack.

The open space between the British and German trenches became known as No Man's Land because no soldier wanted to go in to the area for fear of attack. Because France has similar weather to England – wet and raining – No Man's Land soon became an area of deep mud, somethings so thick the soldiers could disappear and never be seen again!

The increase in the use of tanks in 1918 marked the end of using trenches - the tank was indestructible to machine gun and rifle fire and little use was made of trenches in World War II.

Soldiers Uniform

The army uniform that the soldiers had to wear was made from thick, itchy material. It was heavy to wear, especially when you had to carry guns and ammo and food and water. A standard soldier in 1918 had to carry up to 43 items!

Group 2. Rationing

Many people in Britain expected the First World War to be a short one; but it actually lasted four years and four months!

Because the war lasted much longer than expected, fresh fruit, vegetables and meat became harder to get so prices increased and people on lower incomes went hungry. Those that had money to buy food bought lots and kept it all at home (this is called hoarding) and many people wasted food. Food shortages, unfairness and malnutrition (people suffering from hunger) were common.

What is rationing?

It was during this time the government set up new laws and rationing was introduced. Rationing is sharing food fairly and equally. Every member of the public was issued with a ration book – even King George and Queen Mary! This ration book contained coupons/ tokens that were removed or signed by the shop keeper when people brought food.

Once households had a ration book they needed to register with a local butcher and grocer for their rations. Anyone found cheating this system could be fined or even sent to prison. Meat, flour, butter, margarine, milk and sugar were all rationed to ensure everyone got what they needed to survive.

By the time the World War two broke out, the British government had already been planning the allocation of food for several years. This was a lesson learned from the mistakes and failures of the First World War.

An area of concern for the government back in WW1, was the health problems of a limited diet would cause on the wellbeing of the nation. How could the country win a war with poorly fed people?

Science

A scientist looked at the basic nutritional intake that is essential for the people to survive – this was called the basal diet.

(The basal diet was to consist of 1lb of potatoes, 12oz of bread, 6oz of vegetables, 2oz of oatmeal, 1oz of fat and just over half a pint of milk per day – and no meat. The idea was that this would form the basis of a person's daily food intake and other items would be surplus to their nutritional requirements.)

Scientists were not always able to appreciate the needs of the people. One government food specialist, Magnus Pyke, proposed that the government should encourage people to eat their pets! The plan was never started as it was felt that the morale of the public would outweigh the health benefits of eating the family cat/dog/chicken!

Dig for Victory

Certain foods were scarce in both wars so people had to supplement (add) to their diets by growing their own produce. People were encouraged to grow fruit/vegetables in their own gardens and allotments and the 'Dig for Victory' campaign was set up. The type of things that the British people could grow –(potatoes, peas, pole and bush beans, carrots, parsnips, onions, shallots (the finest thing for a real pickled onion), marrows, celery, salad lettuce, radishes, spring onions, tomatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, Black and Red berries, black and red currants, gooseberries, rhubarb, strawberries, apples and pears.) As each fruit or vegetable was harvested in its season, Mum's across the country were kept busy bottling, preserving and jam making.

Clothing Rationing

It wasn't just food that was rationed in war time, clothes were too. Rationing of clothing became necessary as the demand for war related materials was huge. Wool was needed for the manufacture of uniforms, silk for making parachutes, maps, and gun-powder bags and these materials were in short supply. A separate ration book was given for clothing two years after the start of food rationing and was yet another worry that the public had to deal with.

Every item of clothing had a coupon value attached to it. It became a nightmare to keep a family properly and warmly dressed, especially with growing children! Shortages got worse and from September 1945, parents were asked to buy 'bigger' clothing for children so items would last longer! The government set up another campaign, like the Dig for Victory, to encourage people to do whatever they could to make their clothes last longer – sewing/ darning, unthreading wool jumpers and knitting them in to new clothes – even swimming costumes.

14 years of food rationing stopped on the 4th July 1954 – 9 years AFTER the end of the war!

Group 3. Evacuation

What is evacuation?

Evacuation means leaving a place. So if we had to evacuate now we would have to leave this building. You are usually asked to evacuate somewhere to keep you safe.

Britain had been at war with Germany (the First World War) since August 1914 but the first air raid that took place was nine months later over London. On the night of 31st May 1915 by a single German Zeppelin airship appeared over north London and began to drop bombs over the city. This was the first time that Britain had been bombed from the sky. Children were evacuated from London.

By the start of the Second World War, the British Government had been preparing and planned to evacuate people from cities before possible bombing started.

Operation Pied Piper

On the 31st August, a day before war broke out; the order was given to start *Operation 'Pied Piper'* where millions of people, mostly children were shipped to safer areas of Britain. Some children were sent to stay with relatives in the countryside, but others were sent to live with complete strangers.

Parents were issued with a list telling them what the children should take with them when evacuated. These items included the child's gas mask in its case, a change of underclothes, night clothes, plimsolls (or slippers), spare stockings or socks, toothbrush, comb, towel, soap, face cloth, handkerchiefs and a warm coat.

After saying a last goodbye to their mothers and families, long lines of children led by teachers or other officials walked toward bus or railway stations for their journey to different parts of the country.

Each child carried around their neck a small square cardboard box containing a gas mask and on the collar of each child's coat was pinned the child's name. Brothers and sisters held each other's hands and refused to be parted. Some children thought this was an amazing adventure; others were frightened and wanted their parents. Imagine if you were at the station saying goodbye to your mum, how do you think you'd be feeling?

Almost 3 million people were evacuated during the first four days of the operation, making it the biggest movement of people in British history.

Billeting

Once the children arrived in the countryside, *Billeting officers* were responsible for helping them off the train and helping find them new homes. The Billeting Officer visited local houses and anyone with a spare room was asked to accept a child in to their home (these were called *billeted households*). If they accepted, the billeting officers asked the new family to take their pick of the children!

For many children the experience of being matched to a billet (new home) was frightening and scary and children with brothers and sisters who did not want to be separated were picked last. The *evacuee* would start their new temporary life living with a new family and going to a new school.

Many children had positive experiences and really enjoyed their time in the countryside with new families, but others were unhappy and couldn't wait to return home.

Group 4. Staying Safe

In 1914 when Germany launched bombing raids on Britain from the sea and sky, suddenly people at home became really scared.

German bombs flattened hundreds of family homes in their attempt to destroy military sites. Lots of people died which caused people to get angry and this made more men sign up to join the army.

People had to keep their families safe. Some children were evacuated (send to live away from home) to keep safe but for many adults, moving away from home was not an option.

There were other ways to keep you safe on the home front –

Air Raid Precautions

In 1935 when the threat of another war loomed Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, asked local authorities to make plans to protect their people if another war happened. This document was called 'Air Raid Precautions' (ARP). Some towns started to build shelters to protect its people and in 1937 the government decided to create an *Air Raid Wardens' Service*. 200,000 volunteered for this service.

When war was declared, ARP wardens appeared in every street in Britain, helping people on how to wear gas masks, making sure people stuck to the new rules that had become law, like the *blackout*;

Blackout rules were compulsory and started on 1 September 1939, before the declaration of war. The Blackout meant that all windows and doors should be covered at night with materials such as heavy curtains, cardboard or paint, to prevent any light that might show and help enemy aircraft locate its target.

When an aircraft was sighted, the ARP had to sound the *air raid sirens* so that everybody knew that they had to get to the shelter, as well as supervising people getting in and out of the air raid shelters.

Shelters

A *shelter* is a place of protection and in war time protection from the enemy is really important. For people who stayed at home being near to a shelter could save your life. During the war there were 2 different types of shelter (home shelters).

An *Anderson shelter* was built outside the house at the end of a garden and was made from corrugated iron. Some people covered the shelter over with soil and planted vegetables on top, this helped protect people from bomb blasts in WW2 and gave source for extra food. Over 1.5 million Anderson shelters were given out before the start of WW2 to people in areas that were at risk of being bombed. During the war, another 2 million shelters were built in gardens around the country. The shelters cost £7, but people on lower incomes were given the shelter by the government.

Morrison Shelter was introduced in March 1941, for people without gardens. They were used inside the house. They took up a lot of room, but many people used them for other things including a kitchen table! The shelter was a large metal cage a little higher than a dinner table. It had a heavy iron frame with a steel ceiling on top. Underneath was a space where you could put a mattress to make it a bit more comfortable. It was massive and could hold 3 adults, 3 children and a dog! It became part of the house; people slept in it and on it, ate from it, played in it. When the siren sounded, day or night, people jumped inside the Morrison and put up the steel mesh around the sides; this protecting them from the falling building if the house was hit by a bomb.

Gas Masks

During World War II the British government was very worried that the Nazi's would drop gas bombs on the country during air raids that would injure innocent people. Gas had been used a lot in WW1 and many soldiers had died or been injured. Mustard gas was the most poisonous gas used as people couldn't smell it and it took 12 hours to make people poorly.

Everyone was supplied with *gas masks* so that they would be protected if this happened. By September 1939, 38 million gas masks had been given out. Men and women had them, children had them and even tiny babies had them.

Group 4. Staying Safe (continued)

If there was a gas attack, the air raid wardens would sound a gas rattle, similar sound to a football rattle, and when it was all clear a bell would be rung. It was really important that everyone knew how to put on their gas mask. The government made posters on how to put masks on and school children had regular 'gas drills' – similar to our fire alarm drills – where children learnt how to put there masks on quickly.

Unfortunately for teachers this very important process usually ended in giggles as children discovered that blowing through the rubber made rude bottom noises! Even though the country was prepared and ready for any gas attack – one was never made on Britain.

Siren

When German warships first flew over Britain a dark night in 1915, the country was unprepared for what was going to happen. Bombs were dropped and many people were hurt and many homes were destroyed.

To make sure that people were kept protected, wardens would sound an alarm, *the Siren*, and people learnt to run for cover – going in to shelters or basements, Underground stations - anywhere to keep you safe. It's quite scary isn't it? Imagine that in the middle of the night and having to run for cover!

Group 5. The Home Front and Women in Wartime

Women in Wartime

Before World War 2, women were expected to be housewives or having more 'women's jobs' like a shop assistant or nurse.

But as more and more men went to war, women were asked to take over the jobs that men had. In the beginning it was a struggle to get women to work as the jobs were considered 'men's work' not jobs for women!

At the beginning of the war only unmarried ladies were asked to work, but by 1943 nearly 90% of all single women and 80% of married women were working in some way. Women took over working in factories making aeroplanes, ammunition (bullets), weapons and other things needed to support the war. Some joined the Women's Royal Army Corps – WRAC.

They worked really long hours and they could be paid up to 40 shillings which is only £2.00 a week in today's money. This was quite a good wage in the 1940s but was far less than men had been paid for doing exactly the same job.

The women who worked in the fields and on farms were known as Land Girls. They were given a uniform and had to live on the farms where they were sent to work. They worked long hours and the work was hard. Land Girls were paid 32 shillings (£1.60) per week.

Home Guard

In 1940 the 'last line of defence' was set up in Britain against the Germans. Most men who could fight were already in the forces and those who were left were either too young, too old or in jobs such as farming or coal mining where they were needed.

At the beginning of May 1940, the Germans started their attack on Belgium and the Netherlands from the air using soldiers dropped by parachutes. Lots of people feared that Germany would soon invade Britain. The *Local Defence Volunteers* (LDV), was set up to protect Britain. All men that were not already serving in the armed forces were needed to become part-time soldiers. On Tuesday 14 May 1940, the Government made an urgent appeal on the radio to all men aged between 17 and 65.

As well as getting themselves ready to fight off a German invasion if it came on home soil; the *Home Guard* also looked after buildings that had been bombed to prevent looting (people stealing things), helped clear bomb damage, helped rescue people that may have been trapped after an air raid, they guarded factories and airfields, they captured German airmen that had been shot down and set up roadblocks to check people's identity cards.

Although the Home Guard had to wear a similar uniform to that of the British army, the Home Guard had very little weapons to protect themselves as all weapons were needed on front line. After a plea from the Government to give anything that could be used as a weapon to the Home Guard, many different weapons from knives on brooms to pitchforks, hunting rifles to shotguns were donated even some tennis rackets were given!

The expected attack on the country never came, so the roles of the Home Guard changed from part-time soldier to capturing German airmen whose planes had been shot down over Britain.