

Remembering WWI Soldiers

A2+

Teacher's Notes

This A2+ level article can be used as additional input to what the students study in History. It is an opportunity to mention the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI and see how Anglophone countries commemorate their fallen soldiers. It can also raise the interest of some students to watch the archive film "They Shall Not Grow Old" by Peter Jackson.

- **Vocabulary:** war, numbers (using commas to separate thousands and using points) and dates, nationalities, qualifying adjectives
- **Grammar:** preterite, the passive form, the conditional (reception)
- **Phonology:** the different sounds of the plural "s"
- **Cultural element:** the British involvement during WWI

Interaction

■ We suggest projecting the first seconds of the documentary online (<https://youtu.be/YPLXlshA0Zc>) where you can see black and white pictures transforming into colour. You can ask the students to describe what they see and make hypotheses on the context and the visual effects. e.g: *There are three black and white scenes. They transform into coloured scenes. It goes from a black and white film to a coloured film (movie). There are soldiers because the men are wearing military clothes. There are horses / cavalry soldiers. Perhaps it's WWI or WWII. I think it's the British army (troops). Maybe the black and white part of the scene is the original film.*

To help with the reading

■ **Step 1** helps the pupils prepare understanding the article, where they must first locate on a European map the different countries involved in the conflict and review the nationality for each of those countries. Then, on a second picture, they must indicate the vocabulary pertaining to war and the trenches.

Reading and Speaking

■ **Step 2** will help them understand the information in the articles. We've broken the comprehension into segments for separate groups, but of course you may choose to only use part of the elements provided. If you are using the whole document, have pupils work in at least 6 groups with an assigned part of the article to read or a picture with a caption to analyse. The goal for each group is to come up with a mind map to show to the other groups. Groups 5 and 6 can also watch a short interview of Peter Jackson talking about his project: <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/entertainment-arts-45803977/peter-jackson-world-war-one-footage-brought-to-life-by-lord-of-the-rings-director>

Each group could:

- read in silence / analyze in silence for a couple of minutes
 - discuss together what they understood
 - organise a mind map of what they understand
 - do the relevant activity to their assigned part and enhance their mind map if necessary
 - be prepared to share their mind map and activity answers with the rest of the class
- Group assignments can also be used in “differentiated pedagogy”.

Sounds of English

■ **Step 3** is a review of the difficulty of knowing when to pronounce /s/, /z/ or /iz/ when pronouncing the plural “s”.

To go further....

- Draw an imaginary line in the classroom and ask students to physically position themselves on either side of the line to answer this question. “Your country decides to declare war to another country. Your country needs volunteer soldiers and rescuers. Do you sign up?”
- Then have them, where they are, write down the reasons why they decide to sign up or not. Have help words prepared on the board as they may ask you some words, e.g. frightened, against the war/fighting...
- Discuss as a class the results and remind them of the propaganda posters of the time.
- Finally, ask them to work in pairs (ideally, they could be paired up according to how they positioned themselves in the room) to prepare a short letter of someone who enlists and someone who doesn't. They can also film themselves explaining the reason why they enlisted or not. This can be evaluated.

Solutions

■ Step 1- pre-reading activities

- 1. Belgium:** Belgian
France: French
Germany: German
Italy: Italian
the Netherlands: Dutch
Russia: Russian
Spain: Spanish
the United Kingdom: British

Observation: In English, nationalities often end with (i)an, ch or (i)sh.

■ Step 2 - Reading and Speaking

A.1.

CAMP 1: France, the United Kingdom

NEUTRAL: Belgium

CAMP 2: Germany

2.a. “Brave Little Belgium” **b.** the British
c. protect Belgium **d.** the United Kingdom and Belgium

3. 3 August 1914: the day Germany invaded Belgium

4 August 1914: the day the United Kingdom declared war on Germany

700,000: the number of professional soldiers in the British army

3.7 million: the number of professional soldiers in the German army

1 million: the number of British men who offered to go to war

18: the minimum age limit to become a British soldier

250,000: the number of British boys under 18 who signed up to go to war between 1914 and 1916

4. a short war / an adventure / monotonous lives

B. The Reality of the Conflict

1. True 2. False: The trenches were cold and wet, the constant sound of bombs was awful. 3. True 4. False: If a soldier didn't go over the top, a British officer was ready to shoot him down. 5. False: It ended 4 years later. 6. False: more than 8 million dead and 20 million wounded in total. 7. True

C. War Posters

1. **Daddy, what did YOU do...?:** A man is sitting in an armchair, at home. His daughter is sitting on his lap and his son is playing with his toy soldiers on the carpet. He is looking thoughtful and serious, with his chin resting on one hand.

Women of Britain say "GO!": Two women and a child are looking out the window at the soldiers marching away with rifles on their shoulders. The women and child seem proud but also anxious because they are clutching each other.

Your Country Needs You: This is the front page of a newspaper representing Lord Kitchener, the War Minister, who is pointing a finger at the reader. He looks very serious with his large moustache and his military cap.

2.a. What will his children think if he stays at home during the war. / His children want to know if he participated actively in the war. / His children want to know if he served and protected his country during the war.

b. Men will be admired and loved by their women and children if they go to war. / Men will be rejected and lose credibility if they don't go to war.

c. The United Kingdom needs British men to enlist to protect their country / British men can't run and hide, they must be brave and volunteer to become soldiers.

4. Poppy Day

1. red flowers 2. blood 3. hopeful because poppies are a sign of life 4. a Canadian soldier to write a poem on a WWI battlefield. / two women to use artificial poppies as a sign to remember the atrocities of the war and all the dead soldiers. 5. remembering soldiers who died in WWI. / remembering all the people who died in wars.

6. commemorate all the people who died in wars. / help create jobs for war veterans. / help develop projects for war veterans.

7. commemorated in Anglophone countries. / to wear an artificial poppy and remember. / to help war veterans. 8. France, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. 9. the U.S.A 10. New Zealand

E.1.a. British WWI soldiers

Peter Jackson, famous for his movies *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*.
The Imperial War Museum

b. The reality of WWI.

Original archive film and archive interviews
The archives are in black and white and they are silent.

Peter Jackson didn't film any scenes but he transformed the archives in color and added sound.

c. He used actors who read extracts from interviews, as voice-overs.

He asked people who can lip-read to understand what soldiers were saying in some scenes.

d. So that the audience feel closer to the soldiers' reality.

So that the audience can see the war in colour, as it really is.

For the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War.

2. A Famous Poem

a. "For the Fallen" / "They Shall Not Grow Old" / Laurence Binyon / British / volunteer in hospitals on the front in France

b. Remembrance ceremonies / the dead / the morning / death / life / young / alive / older / dead

Step 3 - Pronouncing your "s" correctly

/s/: projects, extracts

/z/: soldiers, nations, volunteers, guns, uniforms, jobs, lives, boys, lines, bombs, years, posters, cowards, countries, flowers, veterans, families, scenes, wars, actors

iz/: forces, trenches

Observation: In the majority of cases, the plural "s" is pronounced **/z/**, except when you add "es" at the end of the word and you pronounce it **/iz/**.