

'One Day in a World War'

A classroom resource from the CWGC

Teacher Notes

- **One Day in a World War** is a classroom resource which encourages students to explore the CWGC online database.
- By using the data held by the Commission, students will explore a single day during the First World War.
- They will discover who was involved, where they had come from and where the fighting was taking place on this one day – **Saturday 16th September 1916**.

The aim is to answer the following question:

What can we learn from the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission about the extent to which this was a 'world war'?

In using our data students will gain knowledge of the impact of the First World War by focusing on just one day.

The aim is to look at the range of war dead across the globe on that one day and for students to extrapolate from this information about the nationalities and background of those involved and the locations across the globe where casualties they were dying in order to broaden the students' understanding of the worldwide nature of the First World War.

The activity moves the student from a single story to a much broader narrative while maintaining a focus on individuals and their experiences.

The activity is designed to be used in a one-hour lesson but can be adapted to individual needs, with students aged 11-14.

It would follow on well after learning about the Battle of the Somme or any other aspect of the war on the Western Front you've chosen, in order to develop a broader perspective of the world war.

A PowerPoint slide deck is available to support the lesson.

One Day in a World War

Starter activity: Different Experiences

This activity aims to begin a discussion of the range of different experiences beyond the Western Front.

- Draw out from students what keywords and ideas they associate with the experience of those who fought in the First World War. Consider how representative these might be of a global conflict.
- Show the *Left Behind* animation about Carrier Corps in Africa*. The aim is to give an alternative focal point for starting the investigation, rather than the traditional Western front focussed perspective.

English version: [Left Behind - East African Remembrance - YouTube](#)

Swahili version: [Left Behind - East African Remembrance \(Swahili version\) - YouTube](#)

- Draw out from students the differences between these experiences to develop the idea of a 'world war'.

**This animation was created as part of the CWGC [Non-Commemoration Programme](#). It was co-created by students from the University of the Arts London (Central St Martins) and the Technical University of Kenya in Nairobi. It had been carefully crafted to share an alternative, and oft-overlooked narrative of those who served in the First World War. The students selected images and even sounds to tell the story of the carriers in East Africa.*

Main activity overview

The main activity is made up of a number of tasks (see below).

Students will require a worksheet, the relevant data sheet and a story card. These are grouped together, for example, A.1 and A.2., B.1 and B.2 etc. Ideally, they can be printed off double sided.

The data and the story cards are grouped into themes to allow the exploration of the data in a range of different ways, enabling a broader summary and response to the question to be considered.

On the first page there is an extract from the CWGC data related to other casualties associated with the same theme. The story card provides an individual story of someone who died on 16th September 1916 as well as information to provide additional context.

The data and stories relate to the following themes:

- A1 Australian casualty data and A2 Australian story
- B1 British Army casualty data and B2 British Army story
- C1 Canadian casualty data and C2 Canadian story
- D1 Undivided India casualty data and D2 Undivided India story
- E1 New Zealand casualty data and E2 New Zealand story
- F1 South Africa casualty data and F2 South African story

- G1 Casualties beyond the Western Front data casualty data and G2 East African story
- H1 Army casualty data and H2 West Indian story
- I1 Naval Forces casualty data and I2 Naval Forces story
- J1 Air Forces casualty data and J2 Royal Flying Corps story
- K1 Casualties beyond the Western Front data and K2 Merchant Navy story
- L1 Casualties beyond the Western Front data and L2 Troop Transportation story

You will note that while there are 12 different stories, the data is reused in G1, K1 and L1. If you are looking to differentiate any elements of the task for some students, there is less data to review on F1 and J1.

Activities

Task 1. In pairs or small groups, students are to look at the data they have been given and fill out the summary table.

Task 2. Students explore the data and record information for at least 4 individuals, with a focus on choosing people who might best represent the idea of a 'world war'.

Task 3. On the map, students mark in one colour where the people they have on their data sheet come from. This is based on the 'Additional Information' column on the data table.

Task 4. Using a different colour, they then mark the countries where these individuals are commemorated today, using the data in the 'Where commemorated' column.

Task 5. Groups feedback their findings to others in the class and discuss what they have found. In doing so they can add more examples to their maps.

Task 6. This task asks the students to read the story card and to write a short summary about that person, using the 'key information' to add further context to their summary.

Final activity:

Discussion: 'What can we learn from the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission about the extent to which this was a world war?'

Students can then complete the final summary using three points to evidence their response plus an overall statement in response to the question.

Extension tasks are provided on the following page. These can be used in the lesson or as homework or follow-on tasks.

This resource has been developed following initial discussions and planning with PGCE History students at the University of York.

Extension activities: One Day in a World War

Option 1

One story...



Your task is to research one of those people who you recorded in Task 2. What can you discover about who this person was and what happened to them?

1. Visit cwgc.org
2. Go to **Find Records**
3. Select **Find War Dead**
4. Click on the **How to Research** button
5. **Download** the relevant guide
6. Use the step-by-step guide to research your chosen individual

Create a fact file about them and what you can discover about who they were and what happened to them.

7. Add your research to the CWGC stories portal – [For Evermore](#)

Option 2

One site...



Pick one of the CWGC cemeteries or memorials which you recorded in Task 2. What can you learn about this site?

1. Visit cwgc.org
2. Go to **Visit us**
3. Select **Find Cemeteries and Memorials**
4. Enter the name of the cemetery or memorial

Create a fact file about the cemetery or memorial.

- Where is it?
- Why is it there?
- How many are commemorated there?
- What can you learn about those who are commemorated there?

Option 3

One Day...

Everyone you have looked at died on Saturday 16th September 1916.



What can you discover about the battles and actions being fought on this day?

- Where were they being fought?
- Who was involved?
- What was happening?

Can you find maps or images to help explain what was happening on this day?