

'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 pupils to explore some of the information held by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission on those who died during the Second World War.
- By using the information held by the CWGC, pupils will explore a single day during the Second World War.
- They will discover who was involved, where they had come from and where the fighting was taking place on this one day – **Tuesday 6th June 1944 – D Day**.

The aim is to answer the following question:

Using the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission was this really a 'world war'?

In using our data pupils will gain knowledge of the impact of the Second 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 pupils to extract from this information about the nationalities and background of those involved and the locations across the globe where casualties were dying in order to broaden the pupils' understanding of the worldwide nature of the Second 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 pupils aged 9-11.

A PowerPoint slide deck is available to support the lesson.

One Day in a World War

Starter activity: D Day

This BBC Education short film (4m15) is an excellent introduction to D Day and the invasion of France. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/articles/zf49rj6>

- Pupils should aim to try and record up to 5 key pieces of information about what D Day was. This can either be recorded or done as a think, pair, share activity after watching the film.

Main activity overview

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

Pupils will require a **worksheet**, the relevant **information 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 information and the story cards are grouped into themes to allow the exploration of the information 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 casualties associated with the same theme. The story card provides an individual story of someone who died on 6th June 1944 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 Soldiers from across East and West Africa data casualty data and G2 West African story
- H1 Naval Forces casualty data and H2 Naval Forces story
- I1 Air Forces casualty data and I2 Air Forces story
- J1 Prisoners of War data and J2 Prisoners of War story
- K1 Civilian War Dead data and K2 Civilian War Dead story

Activities

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

Task 2. Pupils 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. An atlas, or global map will be required at this stage. On the map, pupils 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 pupils 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?'

Pupils 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 pupils 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 Tuesday 6th June 1944.

What can you discover about what happened on this day?

- What was D Day?
- Who was involved?
- What was happening?

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

