

Writing a postcard home from the trenches

This lesson has been piloted with a Year 3 class but can be adapted as necessary to fit other age groups.

Activity title:	Write a postcard home in the role of a WWI soldier
Curriculum subject or area:	History, English
NC objectives:	<p>History (2013) - KS2 1b, 2a, 2c, 3, 4a, 4b, 5b, 7</p> <p>History (2014) - local history study, historical questions.</p> <p>English - writing a recount in the form of a postcard</p>
Main learning objective:	Writing a postcard in the role of a WWI soldier

Timing	Lesson plan ideas, activities and resource sheets needed
INTRODUCTION 5 - 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start by asking the children what they would miss the most about being away from home. Relate this to World War I and ask them to think what a soldier would miss about home. They can use their facts gathered in the lessons What can we find out about WW1? and What was life like for soldiers in WW1? to help explain their answers. Explain how postcards and letters played a key part in a soldier's life. Use the following webpage to share with the children the purpose of postcards and letters: http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/0/ww1/25401267.
MAIN ACTIVITY 20- 30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the purpose of a postcard, what type of information it includes, and how it is different from a letter. What might a soldier tell their family and friends back home? Show children examples, some of which can be found at: http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/article/116757/Lesson-1---Letters-home. Even though postcards would not have contained information about poor living conditions and the progress of the war, the postcards that will be written by the children will contain this information. Talk briefly about the issues of censorship and why it was so important.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give out the Postcard from the Trenches Planning Sheet and model how to use the information gathered in the What was life like for soldiers in WW1? lesson to fill it in. Allow 5-10 mins to write bullet pointed notes under each heading. Show children on the board how to turn their notes into sentences. At each stage of writing, involve the children: Who am I writing my postcard to? What do I include in the opening sentence? How do I close the postcard? Explain how women would not have been on the front line so they will have to invent a male name for themselves. Talk briefly about names that were popular at the time. Children can then write their own postcard, using their notes to help. Higher ability children will be expected to write more, exploring their thoughts and feelings in greater depth. Once edited and improved, the postcard can then be written up on the Blank Postcard.
PLENARY 5 - 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share postcards written with the class. They can be put into a book which can be used as part of a display.

Suggested extension activities or cross curricular links:

- Make an audio recording of the children reading out their postcard.
- Make a digital story using Windows Moviemaker to complement the audio recording.
- Look at examples of WWI postcards. Children can then design their own WWI postcard using an image that would be keeping with the time period.