

Horse Power Lesson Two: The Use of Horses

How did the use of horses and cavalry change throughout the course of the war?

After studying an overview of the First World War, refer children to a detailed chronology of events and the procurement of horses in particular.

Hand out the document called Use of horse power during the First World War – Timeline.

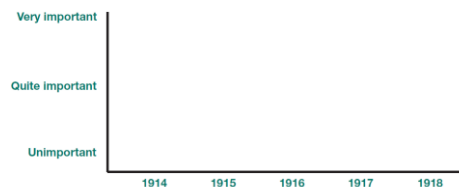
Ask individuals/pairs to highlight dates and details which both chronologies share.

Hold a discussion about events where the use of horse power seems particularly important. (It is quite difficult to identify such events, as the use of cavalry though most of the war was limited while the demand for use of horses behind the line was insatiable throughout).

Ask pairs/groups of children to draw a “living graph” of horse power on a large sheet of paper.

To do this, they mark a horizontal axis with the years 1914 to 1918 against a vertical axis marked with “Unimportant” at the base, “Quite important” half way up and “Very important” at the top.

(Example)



Using the Use of horse power during the First World War – Timeline, ask children to plot on the graph in one colour the usefulness of cavalry, and in another colour the procurement of horses for the war.

- Discuss in class any similarities or differences across the different graphs.
- Using online resources at the IWM website, watch films, look at pictures and listen to the oral history audio relating to different attitudes towards horses in war.
- Invite suggestions for the relative importance of horses in each campaign.
- Lead a discussion about whether horses were important in the same way in each area, and if so, why this was.

To summarise their understanding of the use of horse power between 1914 and 1918, children could complete the following writing framework or an adapted version of it to answer the enquiry question.

1) In 1914 there were two main uses of horses in warfare. These were...

2) Within a few months of the outbreak of the First World War, it changed because ...

3) In different parts of the world horses mattered for different reasons:

4) In Europe they mattered because ...

5) In the Middle East they mattered because ...

6) In conclusion by 1918 I think that ...

CREDIT: This resource was created in 2011 in consultation with Andrew Wrenn from the Imperial War Museum and was originally linked to an interactive map: Horse Power.

