

Find Out About...World War One *History/Literacy*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To undertake detailed research around the history of World War One
- To stimulate curiosity about history
- To report back on research findings

SKILLS TARGETED

- Online research
- Answering questions accurately and thoroughly
- Imaginative scene setting

RESOURCES

- Access to the internet
- Website links to resources relating to WW1 and *War Horse* including photos, paintings and artefacts - see below for a list of starting points

www.firstworldwar.com

www.iwm.org.uk

<http://trenches.jynx.ca/>

www.inflandersfields.be/en

www.1914-1918.net

www.historylearningsite.co.uk

www.bbc.co.uk

SUGGESTED TIME SCALE

- 1 or 2 sessions

Step 1

Show the class some interesting images or documents relating to WW1 to stimulate interest

Step 2

Either in groups, pairs or as individuals – give the children the following quiz questions to research online (answers below):

1. How long did the war go on for?
2. How many horses died in WW1?
3. What jobs did horses do in WW1?
4. What was the Western Front?
5. How much was a soldier paid?
6. What was no-man's land?
7. What was a fire-step?
8. What did soldiers eat in the trenches?
9. How did the armies make the trenches?

Step 3

Share findings and discuss topics that children have found to be most interesting in their research task



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QUIZ ANSWERS

1. How long did the war go on for?

The war officially lasted from 1914-19 but on 11 November 1918 there was a ceasefire. It started between 1 and 4 August 1914.

4 years or 5 years, or 4 years 3 months 10 days would all be good answers!

2. How many horses died in WW1?

About 935,000 altogether.

On the Western Front **over 256,000** horses and mules died. The figures could have been worse were it not for the sterling work of the Veterinary Corps (in 1918 they were given the 'Royal' prefix in recognition of their efforts).

3. What jobs did horses do in WW1?

Throughout the War, the British Army relied heavily on horses and mules. Animals designated 'light draught' (from a height of 15h 2ins to 16h and a weight of up to 1,200lb) were used to **pull light artillery, wagons and ambulances, to carry supplies and munitions**, or to perform other important tasks – either singly or in teams: They were the backbone of the Army's logistic support. 'Heavy draught' horses were teamed together to pull the larger artillery pieces. As time went by, they were replaced as the largest guns of war needed tractors, motor vehicles and even locomotives to pull them. Horses were then primarily used for transport.

4. What was the Western Front?

The Western Front was the **decisive battleground** of the First World War. The Western Front was the name applied to the fighting zone in France and Flanders where the British, French, Belgian and (towards the end of the war) American armies fought the Germans, and the Eastern Front is where Germany fought Russia.

5. How much was a soldier paid?

An infantryman would receive 1s 6d per day. A basic serviceman would receive a shilling a day and more money would be given depending on the soldier's skills.

6. What was no-man's land?

It was the strip of ground that lay between the front-line trenches of the opposing armies. No man's land ran like a ribbon all along the western front. The width varied. It could be as much as 1,000m or as little as 50m.

7. What was a fire-step?

The purpose of the fire-step, which ran along the entire trench, was to enable each

occupant of the trench to peer over the side of the trench through the parapet into no-man's land in the direction of the enemy trench line.

8. What did soldiers eat in the trenches?

The rations for a British soldier during WW1:

20 ounces of bread	1/10 gill lime if vegetables not issued
16 ounces of flour instead of above	½ gill of rum
3 ounces of cheese	maximum of 20 ounces of tobacco
5/8 ounce of tea	1/3 ounce of chocolate – optional
4 ounces of jam	4 ounces of oatmeal instead of bread
½ ounce of salt	1 pint of porter instead of rum
1/36 ounce of pepper	4 ounces of dried fruit instead of jam
1/20 ounce of mustard	4 ounces of butter/margarine
8 ounces of fresh vegetables or	2 ounces of dried vegetables

9. How did the armies make the trenches?

It took nearly six hours for 450 men to construct 250m of trench. There were three main ways of constructing trenches: entrenching, sapping, and tunneling. Entrenching involved standing on the ground, and digging downwards. This method was most efficient, as it allowed for many men to construct a trench at once. However, it also left the men exposed to the enemy above ground. Sapping involved digging from the ends of the trench inwards. Only a few men could do this at a time. Tunneling is exactly as it sounds - like sapping, but leaving ground overhead that would later be removed.

