

Year 8 History

Knowledge Organiser

World War One
Term 4

Name:

Class:



Enquiry Question:

What happened during World War One and how did it change Europe?

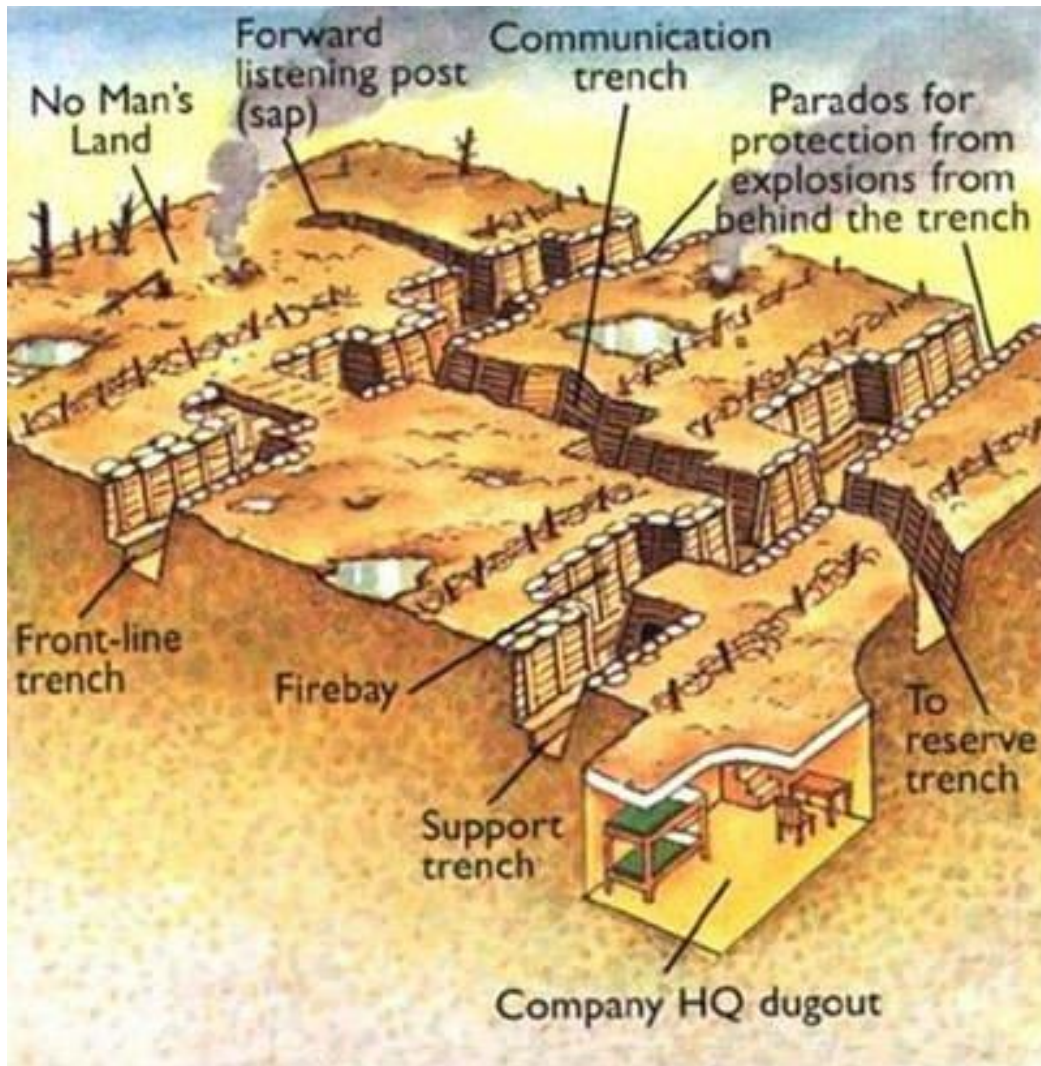
Big Questions:

- 1) What was the trench system?
- 2) What was life like in the trenches?
- 3) What illnesses did soldiers face on the Western Front?
- 4) What injuries did soldiers face on the Western Front?
- 5) What weapons were used during World War One?
- 6) Why was Haig called the Butcher of the Somme?
- 7) How were ordinary people affected by the war?
- 8) How were ordinary people affected by the war?
- 9) Why was Germany defeated in World War One?

The First World War started in 1914 when tensions that had been building up between European countries since 1871 suddenly exploded into war. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand was only the spark for war. The Great Powers all thought they could win the war and were prepared to fight. However, new technology and the new industrial processes were not anticipated and the war soon came to stalemate with defence thwarting attack. The troops dug in in trenches and largely stayed there for 4 years. New technology was developed new and devastating weapons such as chlorine gas and the war took to the air for the first time. Troops from all over the world fought on the Western front defending European Empires. In the end Germany was defeated by the allies and the war was won but at an appalling cost in lives and material.

Big Question 1

What was the trench system?



The trench system was made up of several key trenches:

- Frontline trench – Closest to the fighting and the most dangerous.
- Support trench – Located behind the frontline trench, with soldiers rotating their time between the frontline trench and the support trench.
- Reserve trench – Spare resources, soldiers and equipment were kept here to enable rotations to be made.
- Communication trench – Enabled communication between the trenches.

Big Question 2

What was life like in the trenches?

For most soldiers, life in the trenches followed a set routine, as outlined below.

Time	Activity
5am	'Stand-to' (short for 'Stand-to-Arms', meaning to be prepared for enemy attack) half an hour before daylight
5.30am	Rum ration
6am	Stand-down half an hour after daylight
7am	Breakfast (usually bacon and tea)
8am onwards	Clean selves and weapons, tidy trench
Noon	Dinner
After dinner	Sleep and downtime
5pm	Tea
6pm	Stand-to half an hour before dusk
6.30pm	Stand-down half an hour after dusk
6.30pm onwards	Work all night with some time for rest (patrols, digging trenches, putting up barbed wire, getting stores)

The greatest problem faced by the soldiers was the sheer discomfort of living in the trenches. Men used to city life could find the intense cold unbearable and this was made worse by rain and mud which left them wet for days on end. Whilst officers had their own private dug-outs, the men had to make do with a ledge dug into the side of the trenches, making prolonged sleep almost impossible. Soldiers were exhausted which added to the miseries of life in the trenches.

Big Question 3

What illnesses did soldiers face on the Western Front?

Conditions in the trenches were unpleasant. Sanitary or hygienic conditions for such large numbers of people posed a problem. In summer, the combination of sewage and dead bodies made the smell dreadful, whilst in the winter, bad weather gave rise to both flooding and frostbite. In November and December 1914, there were over 6000 cases of frostbite.

Trench Foot

Trench foot was a major problem caused by standing in waterlogged trenches with no change of boots or socks. In the first stage, the feet would swell, go numb and the skin would turn red or blue. The condition could get worse quickly, leading to gangrene and amputation of limbs!

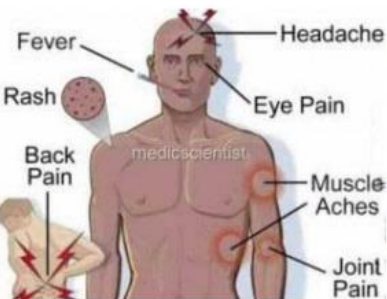
In the cold, wet winter of 1914-15 cases of trench foot were serious. The 27th Division of the British army experienced 12,000 cases of trench foot.

Attempted Solutions

To prevent the impact of trench foot, medical officers ordered soldiers should carry 3 pairs of socks and change them twice a day. They were also encouraged to rub whale oil into their feet.



Attempts were made to pump out trenches to reduce waterlogging and add duckboards, but constantly bombing made this hard



Trench Fever (PLO)

Flu-like symptoms with high temperature, headache and aching muscles which was spread by lice. Men could be ill for up to a month.

Estimated half a million men on the Western front were affected by trench Fever.

Attempted Solutions

Delousing stations were set up on the front; clothes were disinfected, men were bathed and sprayed with chemicals to prevent lice. As a result of this, there was a decline in the numbers experiencing the condition.



Shell Shock

Symptoms included tiredness, headaches, nightmares, loss of speech, uncontrollable shaking and complete mental breakdown. It is estimated 80,000 British troops experienced shellshock. Called NYD,N (Not Yet Diagnosed, Nervous) as a code by the army for shellshock.

Attempted Solutions

This condition was not understood at the time, some soldiers who experienced shell shock were accused of cowardice and any were punished, some even shot. Craiglockhart Hospital in Edinburgh was set up and dealt with 2,000 sufferers.



Big Question 4

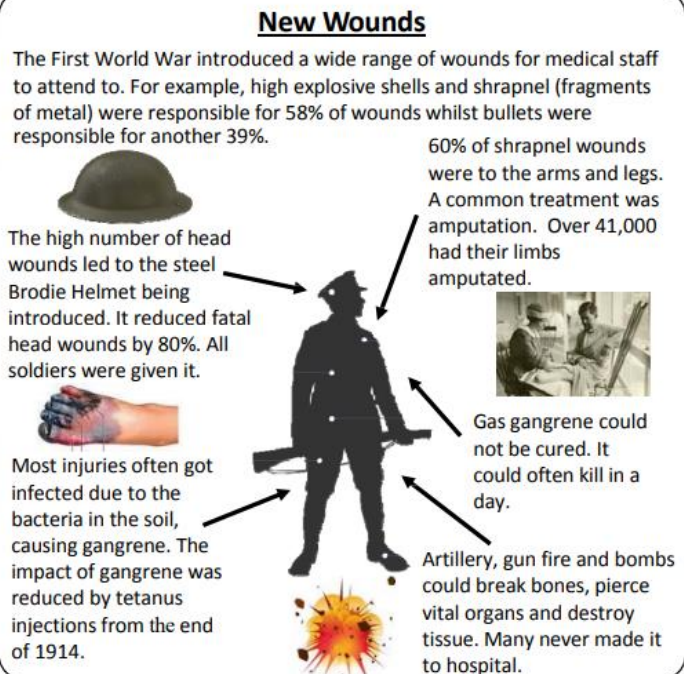
What injuries did soldiers face on the Western Front?

Not only did soldiers face illnesses in the trenches, there was also the risk of injuries caused by weapons.

- 60% of injuries were to arms and legs and over 41,000 soldiers had their limbs amputated.
- 39% of wounds were caused by bullets.
- The metal from shrapnel or bullets would take the fabric of the uniform from the area surrounding the wound and soil from the land would get into the wound, risking infection due to the fertiliser used.
- Headgear worn at the start of the war was a soft cap – to protect against head injuries, a trial using the Brodie helmet was carried out in 1915. It is estimated that it reduced fatal head wounds by 80%.

New Wounds

The First World War introduced a wide range of wounds for medical staff to attend to. For example, high explosive shells and shrapnel (fragments of metal) were responsible for 58% of wounds whilst bullets were responsible for another 39%.



60% of shrapnel wounds were to the arms and legs. A common treatment was amputation. Over 41,000 had their limbs amputated.

The high number of head wounds led to the steel Brodie Helmet being introduced. It reduced fatal head wounds by 80%. All soldiers were given it.

Most injuries often got infected due to the bacteria in the soil, causing gangrene. The impact of gangrene was reduced by tetanus injections from the end of 1914.

Gas gangrene could not be cured. It could often kill in a day.


Artillery, gun fire and bombs could break bones, pierce vital organs and destroy tissue. Many never made it to hospital.

Gas Attacks


Gas caused great panic as soldiers were unprepared for it. It wasn't a major cause of death. Only 6000 soldiers died during WW1.

There were 3 types used in the war:

Chlorine 1915
Caused death by suffocation. Before gas masks, soldiers soak cotton pads in urine and pressed them to their faces




Phosgene 1915
Used at Ypres. Faster acting than chlorine, killing an exposed person within 2 days.



Mustard Gas 1917
Odourless gas that worked within 12 hours. Caused internal and external blisters and could pass through clothing to burn skin.

Solution
British soldiers were given Gas masks, from July 1915, which became more sophisticated over time.



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Big Question 5

What weapons were used during World War One?

In the years leading up to the outbreak of the war, there had been major advances in science and technology. Trains, motorcars and aeroplanes had been invented and there were great breakthroughs in physics and chemistry. This scientific knowledge and understanding was now used to create terrifying new weapons of war, the aim of which was to kill as many of the enemy as possible.

- Artillery – large guns that fire bombs over long distances.
- Machine guns – Could fire up to ten bullets per second – French reported 200,000 men dead in the first two weeks of war due to machine gun bullets.
- Gas attacks – use of poison gas which caused panic.
- Rifles, bayonets, grenades and flamethrowers – Soldiers were trained to use flamethrowers to create a wall of fire that could reach about 15m – these could be really deadly in small spaces like dugouts.
- Tanks – Bulletproof vehicles that could travel over rough ground, crush barbed wire and cross trenches.



Big Question 6

Why was Haig called the 'Butcher of the Somme'?



- In 1915, it was still a stalemate on the Western Front in World War One – neither side had made any progress towards victory, even though hundreds of thousands of soldiers had been killed.
- Haig was appointed as the new commander of the British forces on 10th December 1915.
- On 1st July the Battle of the Somme began.
- It was a deadly battle, with 57,470 troops injured on day one and 19,240 troops killed.
- In November 1916, Haig called off the attack, as blizzards had covered the battlefield in snow, making it impossible to advance.
- At the end of the battle, British and French forces had gained 6 miles, for the cost of 420,000 British casualties and 200,000 casualties.
- The German Army suffered between 470,000 and 600,000 casualties.
- Historians have debated over whether or not Haig should be called the Butcher of the Somme.

Big Question 7 and 8

How were ordinary people affected by the war?

Why did children join the war effort?

Between 1914 and 1918, everyone was expected to 'do their bit' to help with war work.

Many British children were very keen to lend a hand.

They took on **jobs**, **grew vegetables** and **raised money**.



They wanted to support their fathers and older brothers who were away fighting on the front line and help their families and mother at home.

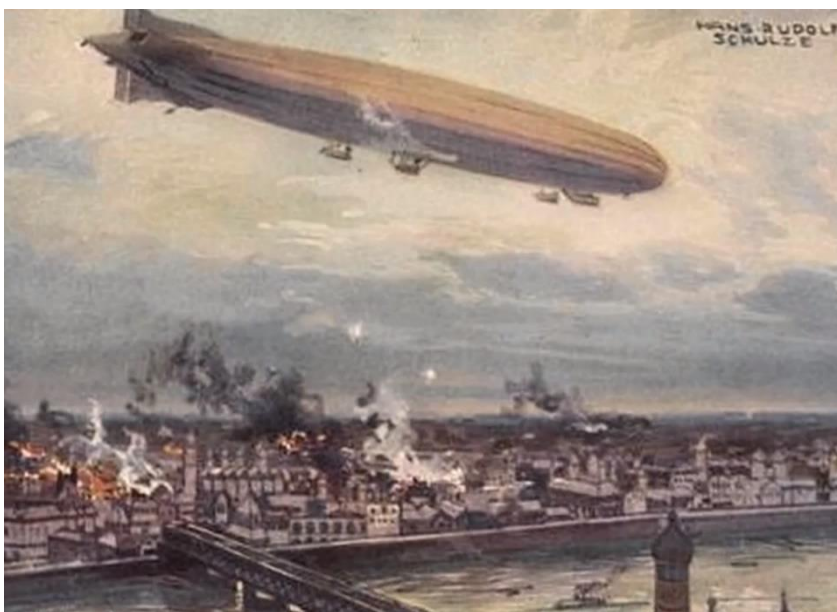


'Growing your own' food became very important

There wasn't a lot of food because German U-Boats (submarines) were sinking the ships bringing supplies. Children helped by digging, weeding and looking after vegetable patches.



Rationing made sure everyone in the country got some food. People could only have certain amounts of sugar, meat, butter and milk. Richer families discovered what it was like to go hungry.



The Germans flew huge inflatable airships – called Zeppelins – over Britain and used them to bomb British towns. By the end of the war, over 50 Zeppelin air raids had dropped over 6000 bombs, killing 557 people and injuring over 1300.

Big Question 9

Why was Germany defeated in World War One?



- The war at sea and the British naval blockade of Germany
- The USA entered the war in 1917
- Failure of the Ludendorff Spring Offensive
- Impact of the Russian Revolution
- The development of the tank
- The defeat of Germany's allies
- The German revolution
- The role of Foch and Haig in Germany's defeat

Glossary

Alliance	An agreement between two countries to support each other.
Annexation	The addition of an area, region or country to another country or state.
Armistice	A ceasefire, after which, the terms of a treaty are negotiated.
Arms race	When rival nations attempt to outdo each other in the size and quality of their armed forces.
Assassin	A person who kills someone for political or religious reasons.
Attrition	To war away an enemy to the point of them collapsing.
Bayonet	A 40-centimetre knife used for close combat.
Blockade	The stopping of supplies reaching an enemy country.
Colony	A country or area under the full or partial control of another country.
Desert	Abandon a duty or post without permission.
Eastern Front	The 1000-mile front-line between Russian troops and the soldiers of Germany and Austria-Hungary in Eastern Europe.
Empire	A group of nations or people ruled over by an emperor, empress or other powerful government.
Home front	The civilian population of a nation whose armed forces are involved in a war abroad.

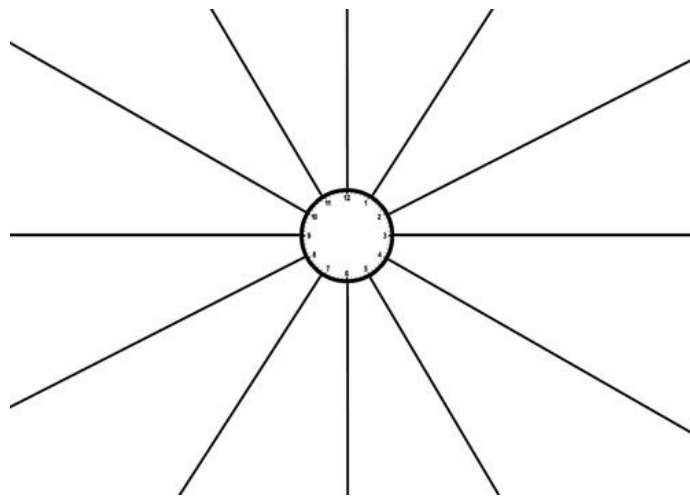
Nationalist	A person with great love for their nation. Nationalist can mean a person or group within a country that desires political independence.
Neutrality	Not supporting or helping either side in a conflict.
No man's land	An area of land between two countries or armies that is not controlled by anyone.
Shell shock	Psychological illness caused by prolonged exposure to the sights and sounds of warfare.
Slavs	An ethnic group of eastern, south-eastern, and central Europe, including Russians, Bulgars, Serbs, Croats, Poles, Czechs and Slovaks.
Splendid Isolation	Britain's position in the late 1880s and early 1900s meaning it was isolated from alliances with other nations.
Stalemate	A deadlock, which neither side can win.
Trench foot	A painful condition of the feet caused by prolonged exposure to cold and wet.
U-boat	Underwater boat or submarine.
Ultimatum	Terms or demands presented by one power (or group of powers) to another.
Western Front	The 400-mile line of trenches running from the English Channel to Switzerland.
Zeppelin	Large bomber airship.

How do I revise for end of topic assessments?

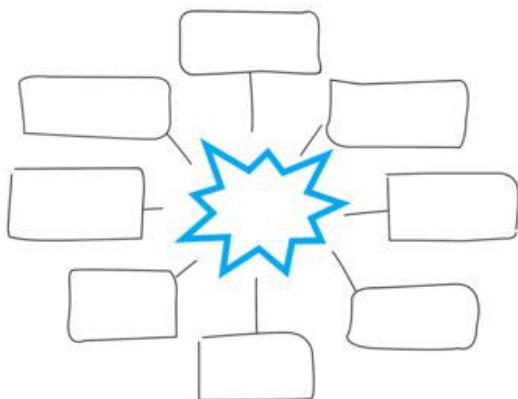


Flashcards – Use flashcards to practice key dates, terms and people. You could write a key date on one side, and turn it over and put the event. Alternatively, you could do match-ups, where a key person is written/drawn and then on another card what they have done is written down. You could then match-up the cards. Flashcards are also great for writing out knowledge questions on one side, and writing the answer on the other side.

Revision clocks –



Take an A3/A4 bit of paper and divide it into 12 sections. In each section write a big question and write 3 or 4 bullet points of the key knowledge for that question in the clock. Make your clocks colourful and highlight key words/dates/people.



Mind-maps – Write a topic in the middle and have 5-6 branches coming off around it with the key ideas. For example, you could have a mind-map on the Battle of Hastings, and your branches could include the key events, information about the different fighting techniques and the reasons why William won.

Brain dump – Get a blank piece of paper, and write down everything you know about the topic being studied. Give yourself 4-5 minutes to do this. When the time is up, in a different coloured pen, use your workbook and knowledge organiser to fill in any missing details.

Homework 1 – Christmas Truce

Late on Christmas Eve 1914, men of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) heard German troops in the trenches opposite them singing carols and patriotic songs and saw lanterns and small fir trees along their trenches. Messages began to be shouted between the trenches.

The following day, British and German soldiers met in no man's land and exchanged gifts, took photographs and some played impromptu games of football. They also buried casualties and repaired trenches and dugouts.

Descriptions of the Christmas Truce appear in numerous diaries and letters of the time. One British soldier, a rifleman named J. Reading, wrote a letter home to his wife describing his holiday experience in 1914: "My company happened to be in the firing line on Christmas eve, and it was my turn...to go into a ruined house and remain there until 6:30 on Christmas morning. During the early part of the morning the Germans started singing and shouting, all in good English. They shouted out: 'Are you the Rifle Brigade; have you a spare bottle; if so we will come half way and you come the other half.'"

"Later on in the day they came towards us," Reading described. "And our chaps went out to meet them...I shook hands with some of them, and they gave us cigarettes and cigars. We did not fire that day, and everything was so quiet it seemed like a dream."

Another British soldier, named John Ferguson, recalled it this way: "Here we were laughing and chatting to men whom only a few hours before we were trying to kill!"

Other diaries and letters describe German soldiers using candles to light Christmas trees around their trenches. One German infantryman described how a British soldier set up a makeshift barbershop, charging Germans a few cigarettes each for a haircut. Other accounts describe vivid scenes of men helping enemy soldiers collect their dead, of which there was plenty.

The truce was not observed everywhere along the Western Front. Elsewhere the fighting continued and casualties did occur on Christmas Day. Some officers were unhappy at the truce and worried that it would undermine fighting spirit.

After 1914, the High Commands on both sides tried to prevent any truces on a similar scale happening again. Despite this, there were some isolated incidents of soldiers holding brief truces later in the war, and not only at Christmas.

In what was known as the 'Live and Let Live' system, in quiet sectors of the front line, brief pauses in the hostilities were sometimes tacitly agreed, allowing both sides to repair their trenches or gather their dead.

Questions

- 1) On what date did the Christmas Truce begin?

- 2) What kinds of things happened on this day?

- 3) How do we know that this happened?

- 4) Why did some officers not like that the truce occurred?

- 5) Why were later brief pauses allowed?

Homework 2 – World War One true/false.

Read each statement and decide whether it is true or false. Correct any false statements in the space provided.

Statement.	True/False.	Corrected statement.
The frontline trench was furthest away from the fighting.		
Soldiers in the trenches would have a set routine.		
Soldiers got lots of sleep in the trenches.		
The Triple Entente was made up of Britain, France and Russia.		
The Triple Alliance was made up of Britain, Germany and Austria-Hungary.		
Trench foot was caused because the conditions in the trenches were good.		
The Schlieffen Plan relied on the Russians taking around six weeks to get their armies ready to fight		

Homework 3 – Revision

Task – Complete a revision activity to revise for your end of unit assessment. Use page 16 of the knowledge organiser to give you some ideas of how you could revise.

Wider Reading/Resources

- Moment of Truth – Michael Pryor
- The Trenches: A First World War Soldier, 1914-1918 – Jim Eldridge
- The Penguin Book of First World War Stories – Penguin Classics
- The Story of the First World War (Usborne Narrative Non Fiction) – Paul Dowswell
- The First World War, 1914-1918 – John Malam
- Road to War – a First World War Girl's Diary, 1916-1917 – Valerie Wilding
- Private Peaceful – Michael Morpurgo
- War Horse – Michael Morpurgo
- Corporal Jack: a Dog's Life in the First World War – Marjorie Quarton

Other places to extend your knowledge:

World War One - KS3 History - BBC Bitesize

WW1 (The Great War) Worksheets | KS3 & KS4 Lesson Plans Resources (schoolhistory.co.uk)

World War 1 (In One Take) Video | KS3 & GCSE History | History Bombs

KS3 first world war - also known as world war one (educationquizzes.com)

BBC - Britain's Great War

Films to watch:

A Little Princess (U)

Private Peaceful (12A)

The Railway Children (U)

War Horse (12A)