

Year 9 HT 2 – Experiences in the First World War

Trench warfare was a significant aspect of World War I, which began in 1914 and lasted until 1918. During this period, soldiers dug and lived in trenches, fighting from these positions during battles. Trench experiences during World War One were incredibly challenging and often very difficult for the soldiers involved. Trenches were long, narrow ditches that stretched for miles across the battlefields. Life in the trenches was tough and filled with hardships. Soldiers had to endure constant fear, loud noises, and terrible living conditions. The trenches were often muddy, wet, and infested with rats and other pests. Soldiers had to sleep on damp ground and deal with limited access to food and clean water. They also faced the constant threat of disease, as the unsanitary conditions made it easy for illnesses to spread. Soldiers spent long periods of time in the trenches, waiting for battles or attacks, and had to endure harsh weather conditions like rain, snow, and extreme cold. The trenches were dangerous places, with soldiers constantly exposed to enemy fire and the risk of being injured or killed. The experiences in the trenches were a stark reminder of the horrors of war and the tremendous sacrifices made by those who served.

While trench warfare was taking place in Europe, there were a number of other important historical events occurring in the UK and around the world that should be understood in relation to this period, some of which are mentioned in the 2014 National Curriculum in England. Some of the key events and topics that are relevant to the study of trench warfare include:

1. **The Suffragette movement:** This was an important movement in the UK that saw women campaigning for the right to vote. The movement was particularly active during World War I, and some women were involved in support work for the war effort, including working in munitions factories.
2. **The Easter Rising:** In 1916, a group of Irish Republicans staged a rebellion against British rule in Ireland. This event was sparked by a number of factors, including frustration over Irish lack of representation in Parliament. The rebellion was ultimately unsuccessful but it had a significant impact on Irish politics.
3. **The Russian Revolution:** This was a period of political upheaval in Russia that saw the overthrow of the Tsarist autocracy and the establishment of a socialist state. The revolution had a significant impact on international politics and was a key factor in the lead up to World War II.
4. **The Treaty of Versailles:** This was an agreement signed by the allied powers at the end of World War I. It led to the establishment of the League of Nations and imposed significant economic and military restrictions on Germany, which had a significant impact on international politics in the following decades.

Further reading:

Fiction:

War Horse by Michael Morpurgo - Another powerful book by Michael Morpurgo, War Horse tells the story of a horse named Joey who is drafted into the British cavalry during World War I.

Non fiction:

Trenches by Jim Eldridge - This book provides an overview of trench warfare in World War I. It includes information on the construction of trenches, the daily life of soldiers in the trenches, and the tactics used by both sides.