

## KEY MOMENTS IN THE WAR

### INTRODUCTION : LESSON PLAN

Below are numerous options to investigate the key question - What happened in the First World War? All of these options use the 5b Timeline of the Key moments of the First World War.

With all of the options below you must discuss the students' findings and get them to justify their answers by referring to the specific events which support or challenge their argument.

Whichever option you choose, it is important to get the students to reflect on their completed graphs. From the graph they should be able to consider what are the key turning points and the flow of events during the war.

### Option A: Questions

Provide your students with the following questions and the electronic timeline of the war. Although these questions may appear simple they require a lot of historical thinking and are challenging.

Suggested questions for your students - you do not have to pose ALL of these questions but could do one or two:

- When does the First World War begin?
- When could you call this a truly world war rather than a regional war?
- What is the most important date in the First World War?
- When is the most significant turning point in the First World War?
- When does the First World War end?

When the students feedback their answers it is important to stress 'from whose perspective?' Would a French person agree with a German person or a British person? Would they have had the same experience if they lived in the Middle East or Belgium?.

### Option B: Streamline the timeline

Provide your students with the electronic timeline of the war. There are four strands - the Western Front, the Eastern Front, the Mediterranean and the South East and Africa and Asia.

For each strand (known as a theatre of war) the students must select the ten events that they think are the most important. There are a LOT of events and using the internet they must choose which are important or not using their own criteria. The process of selection is difficult and students should be encouraged to justify why they chose their ten and why they did not choose other events.

### Option C: Year by year summary

Provide your students with the electronic timeline of the war. In this option they must read through the timeline and for each year summarise the story of that year in less than 50 words.

This is really difficult as the amount of words is purposefully small and in writing a concise narrative they must really think about what is important, or not.

### **Option D: Graph the war**

Provide your students with the electronic timeline of the war and a copy of the worksheet Graph of WW1.

As the students read the timeline they must plot the narrative on the graph provided. The graph has a y axis with 'Allied Success' to 'Axis Success'. As the students read through the timeline they must decide which side is successful at that point in the war. For example, they should read the end of 1914 first and decide in this earlier part of the war were the Axis powers more successful than the Allied powers. If they think the Axis powers were completely successful you can put this at one end of the scale. If you instead think that neither side was successful you could put your point in the middle of the scale.

You can make this either more complicated or more simplistic by doing the following. If you want a more simplistic task you should get your students to plot the narrative of the war as a whole (e.g. all four strands together in one). If you want to make it more complicated you could get the students to plot each of the strands separately in a different colour.