

**Warmer – Jobs for women**

Work in pairs. Look at the list of jobs and decide if and when women in the UK were allowed to do these jobs.

- a) yes: before, during and after the First World War
- b) yes: but only **during** the First World War
- c) no: not at any time during the First World War

Code expert	Soldier	Electrician	Ambulance driver
Nurse	Police officer	Grave digger	Coal miner
Farm worker	Teacher	Telephone operator	Politician

Now check your answers with the teacher. Was there anything that surprised you?

**Task 1 – Vocabulary: key words**

Work in pairs. Match the words and phrases with the meaning and the pronunciation.

Word	Meaning	Pronunciation
1. Sapper (n)	a) a bomb that is hidden in the ground and that explodes when a person steps on it or a vehicle drives over it	/drɪl/
2. Front line (n)	b) Make illegal copies of documents such as passports, identity cards and driving licenses.	/wɔː(r) kɒrɪ'spɒndənt/
3. War correspondent (n)	c) A soldier who performs engineering duties such as building bridges and constructing and repairing roads.	/fɔː(r)dʒ/
4. Drill (v)	d) the area where two armies face each other and fight during a war	/'læn(d) maɪn/
5. Forge (v)	e) A journalist who travels to areas where there is a war and reports on what happens there	/'sæpə(r)/
6. Land mine (n)	f) a method of military training that involves practising things such as marching or holding weapons	/frʌnt 'laɪn/

**Task 2 – Before reading: prediction**

Work in pairs.

Look at the pictures, the title and introductory paragraph of the article and briefly discuss what you think it is about.



**Dorothy Lawrence: the only woman to go to the front line in the First World War**

This is the extraordinary story of Dorothy Lawrence, a young woman who was so desperate to take an active role in the war that she disguised herself as a man and travelled to the front line. With the help of friends, she worked on the front line until she was caught and arrested.

**Task 3 – Speed-reading: ordering the sections**

Work in pairs. Look at the four sections from the story that your teacher will give you and put them in the correct order.

**Task 4 – Reading and retelling**

Work in pairs. Read two sections of the story, and then tell each other about what you have read. Listen carefully to what your partner is saying and ask them any questions you have.

**Task 5 – Matching the headings**

Look at the completed story. Add the headings (a-e) to the correct sections of the text (1-4). *Please note:* there are four sections, so there is one heading you don't need.

- a) After the war
- b) Caught
- c) Early life and the start of the war
- d) Getting to the front
- e) An interview with Dorothy

**Dorothy Lawrence: the only woman to go to the front line in the First World War**

This is the extraordinary story of Dorothy Lawrence, a young woman who was so desperate to take an active role in the war that she disguised herself as a man and travelled to the front line. With the help of friends, she worked on the front line until she was caught and arrested.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

Dorothy Lawrence was born in Warwickshire on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1896. She was abandoned by her mother and became a guardian of the Church of England. When the war began, she was 19 years old and living in Paris. She was keen to take an active role in the war and wanted to work as a war correspondent, reporting for the newspapers about what was happening on the front line. She had already had some success as a reporter as she had had some articles published in The Times newspaper. She contacted several British newspapers to see if she could write for them but she couldn't get work as it was considered too dangerous even for men. She also tried to find work with the Voluntary Aid Department, who sent women to participate in war work but was unsuccessful.

As a result, she made a plan to travel to the front line and write about her experiences there, saying "I'll see what an ordinary English girl, without credentials or money can accomplish". On her first attempt, she was arrested by French police two miles from the front line and ordered to leave the area.

2) \_\_\_\_\_

Her second attempt was more successful. She befriended two British soldiers, who became known as her 'khaki accomplices' and taught her how to drill and march like a soldier. Two Scottish soldiers she met at a train station gave her a military haircut and she dyed her skin with furniture polish so that she looked like she had a sun tan. Her friends also gave her a uniform which they stole from the laundry in their regiment. Using forged papers with the name of Private Denis Smith of the First Battalion Leicestershire Regiment, she travelled to the Somme by bicycle.

When she arrived, she made friends with a miner from Lancashire, Tom Dunn, who found her work as a sapper with the British Expeditionary Force Tunnelling Company. She was responsible for laying mines within 400 metres of the front line, where she was under constant fire. At night, she slept in an abandoned cottage that her friend, Tom Dunn, had found for her.

3) \_\_\_\_\_

The stress of living a double life and doing a very dangerous job was very difficult for Dorothy. She was also constantly worried that she would be caught, and that the men who had helped her would be in danger. As a result of this, and the terrible weather, she became ill with chills and rheumatism. She confided her situation to a sergeant in her regiment, who she thought she could trust. She was wrong – he reported her to the authorities. She was immediately arrested and interrogated as a spy. She was declared a Prisoner of War and taken to Calais for further questioning.

The army were very embarrassed that a woman had managed to work on the front line and were worried that, if Dorothy's story was known, other women would try to copy her. As a result, she was moved to a convent in Saint Omer, and kept there until she signed an affidavit, promising not to write about her experiences until the war had ended. She was very disappointed, as this was why she had travelled to the front – "in making that promise I sacrificed the chance of earning by newspaper articles written on this escapade".

4) \_\_\_\_\_

Dorothy wrote about her experiences, in a book titled 'Sapper Dorothy Lawrence: The Only English Woman Soldier'. However, the book was suppressed by the War Office, and wasn't published until 1919, after the war was over. She moved to Islington, in North London in 1919 and not much is known about her life after that. She was institutionalised in a psychiatric hospital in 1925 after accusing her church guardian of rape. She died at the Friern Hospital in London in 1964.

Dorothy's story was not well-known until it was discovered more than eighty years later by the grandson of one of her accomplices, Richard Samson. He found out about her story while he was doing research about his family at the Royal Engineering Museum. Although she is not famous, her influence can be seen in the motivation she has given to other female war correspondents.

**Task 6 – Section summaries**

Work in pairs. Choose the best summary for each section.

**Section 1:**

- a) Dorothy had a very easy childhood and she found it easy to join in the war effort.
- b) Dorothy made several attempts to find legitimate work when the war started but she wasn't able to get any.

**Section 2:**

- a) Tom Dunn helped her find a job and somewhere to live.
- b) A number of soldiers helped Dorothy and made it possible for her to achieve her plan.

**Section 3:**

- a) Dorothy stayed in prison for the rest of the war and was very badly treated.
- b) Dorothy wasn't allowed out of prison until she agreed not to tell her story.

**Section 4:**

- a) Dorothy received little recognition after the war, although she has been an inspiration to women journalists.
- b) Dorothy became famous after the war and was an inspiration to women.

**Task 7 – Vocabulary in context**

*Look at the story again. Find words in the text that have the same meaning as the phrases below.*

- 1) made friends with (section 2)
- 2) asked questions in an angry or threatening way to get information from someone (section 3)
- 3) to tell someone a secret or discuss your private feelings with them (section 3)
- 4) a legal document promising that something is true (section 3)
- 5) stopped information from being published or publicly discussed (section 4)

**Task 8 – Discussion: reactions**

*Work in pairs or small groups and discuss the questions.*

- 1) Do you think Dorothy did the right thing?
- 2) Do you admire her?
- 3) Why do you think she dressed as a man and went to the front line?
- 4) Do you think the army was right to arrest her and make her sign an affidavit? Why?
- 5) Do you think Dorothy deserves to be better known? Why?
- 6) In many countries, including Britain, women still can't fight on the front line. Do you think this is right, or should this change? Explain your answer.

**Task 9 – Role play: an interview with Dorothy**

Work in pairs – student A and student B. Read the role cards that your teacher gives you. Then prepare what you are going to say. Write your questions or your answers below.

**Ideas:**

Now work with your partner and role play the interview with Dorothy.

**Journalist:** Hello Dorothy. Thanks for agreeing to meet me. I'm very excited to hear your fascinating story...

**Dorothy:** Hello. Thanks for your invitation...

**Task 10 – Writing: a newspaper article**

If you were the journalist in the role play, read **task A**.  
If you were Dorothy in the role play, read **task B**.

**Writing task A: An article about Dorothy**

You have just interviewed Dorothy Lawrence about her experiences on the front line. You are now going to write an article for your newspaper about her story. Try to make your story as dramatic and interesting as possible to appeal to your readers.

Write 200-250 words.

**Writing task B: telling your story**

You have decided to write an article about your experiences in the war. You would like your story to be printed in a national newspaper. Make your story as dramatic and interesting as possible to appeal to the editor of the newspaper.

Write 200-250 words.