



Task 1 – Reading and note-taking: memories of the start of the First World War

You're going to read and talk about people's experiences of the start of World War I in 1914.

*Read **Text B** about Charles Chabot, a 14-year-old from London in 1914. Then add the information about him to the table.*

Text B – Charles Chabot, a British civilian living in Thailand

When the First World War broke out in 1914, my family and I were living in Bangkok, Thailand. That night I was in a restaurant because we had just finished playing a rugby game with some German friends and we were all sitting together. We were obviously mixed up. Germans were sitting next to the English, the English were sitting next to the French and so on. Everyone



was chatting around the table. Suddenly we heard a loud bang at the door. It was a courier from the French Embassy with the shocking news of the outbreak of war. None of us here had seen a declaration of war before and we didn't know what to do. Should we now get a knife from the table and fight one another or what? After a bit of discussion we decided that for us war was going to start tomorrow not tonight, and so we just continued with our party.

| | Text B | Text A | Text C |
|---|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Name of the storyteller | Charles Chabot | | |
| Place he lived in at the outbreak of war | | | |
| How he heard about the beginning of the First World War | | | |
| How he described people's reaction to war in his area | | | |

Task 2 – Speaking and note-taking: memories of the start of the First World War

Now you're going to find out about two more people in different countries, and how they experienced the start of World War I.

Speak with students who read Text A and Text C. Ask questions to complete the table.

What was the name of the person you read about?

How do you spell that?

Task 3 – Choosing the right past tense

Look at Text A and Text C. Choose the correct tense (past simple, past continuous or past perfect) and complete the gaps.

Text A – Heinrich Beutow, a German schoolboy

My parents and I

1 _____ (were living / had lived) in a small German town in 1914. I remember everybody 2 _____ (had seemed / seemed) really pleased when they heard about the declaration of war. Our teacher told us all about the war, and he was really enthusiastic that the war 3 _____ (was starting / had started) the day before. Naturally, we



schoolboys were all brainwashed with great patriotism when war 4 _____ (broke out / was breaking out). My father was an active army officer and I will never forget the day when German soldiers 5 _____ (were marching / had marched) out to the trains. They were all decorated with flowers. Even horses and guns were beautifully decorated. And of course all the people were following them. Bands 6 _____ (had played / were playing) the music, flags 7 _____ (flew / were flying) everywhere. There 8 _____ (was / had been) a strong feeling that Germany now would go into this war and win it very quickly.

Text C – Horace Calvert, a 14-year-old from London

I can remember how I

1 _____ (found out / was finding out) about the war. It

2 _____ (was / had been) a lovely August morning and I

3 _____ (went / was going) to work for seven o'clock. As I

4 _____ (had got / got)

to the end of Richmond Road, there was a

newsagent's shop and outside there was a big poster saying that Britain

5 _____ (was declaring / had declared) war on Germany the day before.

Later on that day I 6 _____ (went / had gone) into central London, and

outside Buckingham Palace, all the crowds 7 _____ (had cheered / were cheering) outside as the King and Queen came out on the balcony. Everybody was excited. It was very

patriotic. People were having a good time – they 8 _____ (were singing / sang) 'Rule Britannia', 'God Save the King' and many other national songs. I thought it was really good

that Britain 9 _____ (had joined / joined) the war.



Task 4 – Grammar: checking the tenses. Find a Student A and a Student C. As a group, check your answers to Task 3.

Task 5 – Grammar rules: past simple, past continuous and past perfect

Look at the underlined verbs in sentences 1–4 below. Which tenses are they in? Select the correct rule, a or b, for the tense of the underlined verb.

1. When the First World War broke out, I was living in Bangkok, Thailand.
 - a. This tense describes a shorter action which interrupted a longer one.
 - b. This tense describes a longer action which was interrupted by a shorter one.

2. That night we finished playing a series of rugby football games with our German friends and we all were sitting and chatting around the table. Suddenly we heard a loud bang at the door.
 - a. This tense describes completed past actions.
 - b. This tense describes situations that form a background to a story.

3. On 4 August 1914 Britain also declared war on Germany after Germany had invaded neutral Belgium.
- This tense describes an action that was before another action in the past.
 - This tense describes an action that was after another action in the past.
4. The murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand set off a chain of events that led to one of the most devastating wars in history.
- This tense describes completed past actions.
 - This tense describes uncompleted past actions.

Task 6 – Narrative story writing

- a. *Choose one of the people in the pictures. Imagine their life at the start of the First World War.*
- Where do you think they were living in 1914? Use your own ideas.
 - What were they doing when they learned that the war had started?
 - What happened next?
- b. *Now imagine that you are the person you've chosen. Write about your memories of the outbreak of the war. Try to use the three tenses you have learnt about in this lesson.*

Example: On the day when war was declared in 1914, I was ...