



**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 C** about Horace Calvert, a 14-year-old from London in 1914. Then add the information about him to the table.*

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

I can remember how I found out about the war. It was a lovely August morning and I was going to work for seven o'clock. As I got to the end of Richmond Road, there was a newsagent's shop and outside there was a big poster saying that Britain had declared war on Germany the day before. Later on that day I went into central London, and outside Buckingham Palace, all the crowds 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 were singing 'Rule Britannia', 'God Save the King' and many other national songs. I thought it was really good that Britain had joined the war.



	<b>Text C</b>	<b>Text A</b>	<b>Text B</b>
Name of the storyteller	Horace Calvert		
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 B. 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 B. 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 B – Charles Chabot, a British civilian  
living in Thailand**

When the First World War

1 \_\_\_\_\_ (broke out /  
had broken out) in 1914, my family and I

2 \_\_\_\_\_ (had lived /  
were living) in Bangkok, Thailand. That night I was

in a restaurant because we

3 \_\_\_\_\_ (had just  
finished / were just finishing) playing a rugby game

with some German friends and we were all *sitting* together. We were obviously mixed up. Germans

4 \_\_\_\_\_ (sat / were sitting) next to the English, the English

5 \_\_\_\_\_ (were sitting / had sat) next to the French and so on. Everyone

6 \_\_\_\_\_ (was chatting / had chatted) 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 7 \_\_\_\_\_ (was seeing / had seen) a

declaration of war before and we 8 \_\_\_\_\_ (didn't know / weren't knowing)

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

9 \_\_\_\_\_ (continued / were continuing) with our party.



**Task 4 – Grammar: checking the tenses.** Find a Student A and a Student B. 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.

- This tense describes a shorter action which interrupted a longer one.
- 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.

- This tense describes completed past actions.
- 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.

- a. This tense describes an action that was before another action in the past.
  - b. 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.
- a. This tense describes completed past actions.
  - b. 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 ...