

Topic: The very different experiences of two brothers in the First World War – one as a soldier and the other as a conscientious objector

Level: B1

Time: 60–75 minutes

Aims

- To develop students' ability to read for detail
- To develop students' ability to listen for detail
- To provide speaking practice through a role play interview with a journalist

Introduction

This lesson is about two brothers, one of whom signed up and fought in the Somme Offensive. The other was a conscientious objector and was imprisoned for his refusal to do any work that supported the war effort. Students read some background about the brothers, do a jigsaw reading about their experiences during the war and then role play a newspaper interview with one or both of the brothers.

Preparation

You will need to print one copy of the student worksheets per student.

For Task 3, you will need to either play the audio recording or read the text yourself from the lesson plan.

For Task 5, you will need to print one copy of the file **The soldier and the pacifist. Texts for Task 5** for each pair of students.

For Task 7, you will need to make one copy of the file **The soldier and the pacifist. Rolecards for Task 7** for each group of three students.

If you or your students are interested in finding out more information, you could search online for a clip from a Channel 4 documentary *Not Forgotten*, which tells the tale of Bert Brocklesby. Use the search words 'not forgotten Hislop Brocklesby'.

Procedure

Warmer – Discussion (5 mins)

- Hand out student worksheet.
- Students work in pairs or small groups to discuss their opinions of the statement and explain their reasons.
- Conduct brief whole class feedback after the discussion.

Task 1 – The soldier and the conscientious objector (5 mins)

- This task gives students a very brief outline of the story to come and also introduces them to a key piece of vocabulary – *conscientious objector*.
- Tell students to read the short text and to match the term *conscientious objector* to the correct definition.
- Check the answer as a whole class.

Answer: c

TIP:

You may want to teach the students the usual meanings of *conscientious* and *object*.

conscientious (adj): careful and hardworking

to object to something (v): to feel or show dislike or opposition to something

However, the phrase *conscientious objector* has its own specific meaning.

Task 2 – Vocabulary and picture matching (10 mins)

- Let the students discuss the tasks together, then conduct feedback.

Answers to task b: 1-h; 2-c; 3-b; 4-f; 5-g; 6-e; 7-a; 8-d

Suggested answers to task c:

Soldier picture – sign up, volunteer, injured, recruiting office, defend

Conscientious objector picture – trial, tribunal, imprison

Task 3 – Listening: background information (5 mins)

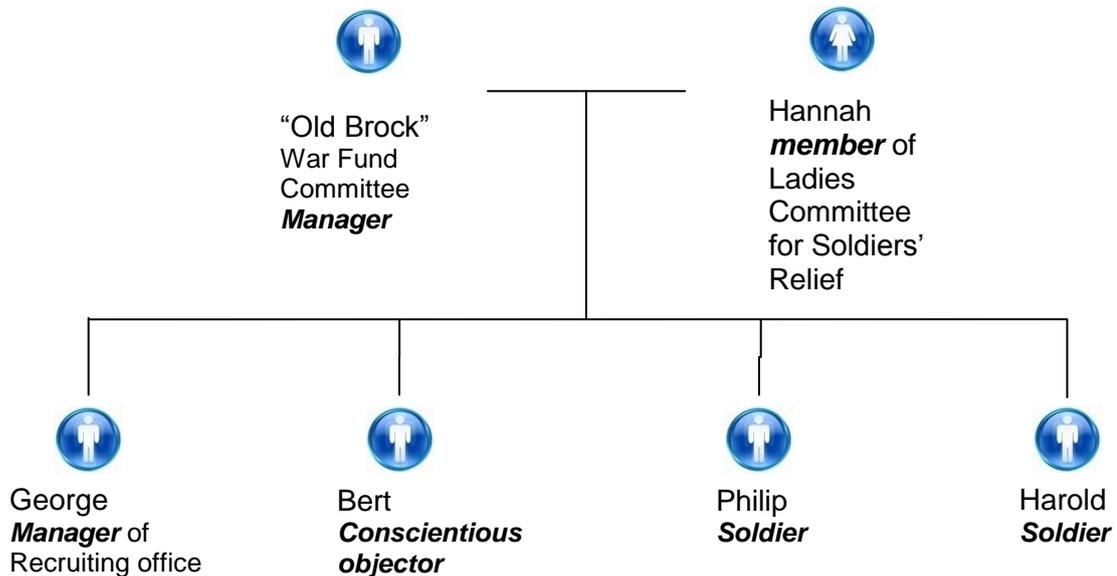
- This task is designed to introduce students to the different members of the family, as they will need to be familiar with several of them in **Tasks 5 and 6**.
- Give the students a few moments to familiarise themselves with the family tree, and ask them to listen and complete the family tree.
- Play the audio recording, or alternatively read the text yourself.

Transcript:

The Brocklesbys were a close and well-respected family from Conisbrough, a town in the north of England. The father, Old Brock, had a successful grocery business. Through his charity work, he helped poor people in the town. When war broke out, he became the manager of the town's War Fund Committee. This was an organisation which raised money to help the families of men fighting in the war. His wife, Hannah, also supported the war effort by working on the Ladies Committee for Soldiers' Relief. The committee collected food and clothes to send to the soldiers.

They had four sons, and were proud and supportive of them all. Their oldest son, George, was too ill to fight in the war. He managed the town's recruiting office, signing up young men who had volunteered to fight. The second son was Bert. He was a conscientious objector and he refused to fight. The next son, Philip, and the youngest son, Harold, were both soldiers who fought in France.

Answers:



Task 4 – Prediction (5 mins)

- Ask them to work in pairs to discuss what they think were Philip and Bert’s experiences in the war.
- Monitor and provide content-based feedback if students require it.
- Do whole class feedback to share ideas.

Task 5 – Jigsaw reading (15 mins)

- Divide the class into two halves, A and B. Put students in pairs and give them the appropriate text (**The soldier and the pacifist. Texts for Task 5**).
- Ask students to work alone to read their text and answer the questions. Note: students A and B have the same questions to answer.
- When students have finished, ask them to check their answers in pairs.
- Check their answers or give them the appropriate key from the end of this lesson plan (A for Bert; B for Philip) to check their own answers.
- Move students into A-B pairs.
- Tell them to work in their new pairs and use their answers to share information about the brothers.

Answers:**Bert:**

1. Worked as a teacher. Engaged to Annie Wainwright.
2. No, because of his religious beliefs. He didn't think that God wanted him to kill people.
3. He was a prisoner. He was put on trial for disobeying orders and sentenced to death. This was changed at the last minute to ten years in prison.
4. No, he stayed a conscientious objector until he died and continued to protest against war.
5. He went to help children in Austria who had been affected by the war, then he went to work as a missionary in Africa. After that, he returned to UK and worked as a teacher but he never worked in his home town, Conisbrough.
6. Suggested answers: meeting his brother, his trial and sentence.

Philip

1. Worked as an optician in Headingley.
2. Yes, because he wanted to defend his country.
3. Fought in the Battle of the Somme. Was a 2nd lieutenant. Left his regiment and watched his brother's trial.
4. Yes. He wrote a letter to his aunt about his dislike of war and his sympathy for the conscientious objectors.
5. He ran an opticians and pharmacy in his home town, Conisbrough. He ran the town's Home Guard during World War Two and got an MBE from the King.
6. Suggested answers: fighting in the Somme, watching his brother being sentenced to death.

Task 6 – Reactions to the text (5 mins)

- Tell students to work in pairs and discuss the questions
- Do whole class feedback to share ideas and promote group debate about their views.

Task 7 – Role play (15 mins)

- In this activity, students role play an interview between Bert, Philip and a journalist.
- Divide students into three groups – journalist, Philip and Bert.
- Give them the appropriate role card to read. These can be found in the document entitled '**Role cards for task 7**'
- Give them some time to prepare what they will ask or say.
- Tell them to work in their groups to do the role play. Monitor and support students. Do whole class feedback of some of the ideas they discussed.

TIP:

If you don't have sufficient numbers to do the role play in groups of three, you can put some students in pairs and role play the interview between Bert and the journalist.

Extension:

- Students can write the interview for homework.

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