Women in war – propaganda and reality

Lesson plan

Topics: the role of women during the First World War; wartime propaganda
Level: B1/B2
Time: 90 mins

Aims
• to develop students’ lexis around propaganda, and provide an opportunity to use it
• to develop students’ awareness of modal verbs in the past and to give practice

Introduction
Students will look at some propaganda posters from the First World War portraying women in different roles. This will be used to start students thinking about what women did in the war. They will go on to read a text describing the portrayal of women in war propaganda and to consider the effect of this propaganda using modal verbs in the past. Students will then read some different facts and experiences of women and share these together in order to discuss how the propaganda differs from the reality.

Preparation
A projector would be useful, so that you can show slides 1-3 in the PowerPoint file ‘Women in War PowerPoint presentation’ in the warmer. You can also use slides 4-7 whenever you feel it is appropriate from Task 4 onwards.

Make one copy of the student worksheets for each student.

Warmer – What do you think? (10 mins)
• Tell students they are going to learn about women in the First World War. Show PowerPoint slide 2 and ask students what they think the women did when the men went to war and take some quick ideas from around the class.
• Show PowerPoint slide 3 and tell students these are copies of real posters from 1914. Ask the students who they think made the posters.
• Write the word propaganda on the board and introduce the idea of the propaganda message. Ask students to discuss the questions in pairs. After 2 minutes ask students to report back on their ideas.

Suggested answers:
A. Women should join the Army. Message for women.
B. Women want men to go and fight. Message for men.
C. Working in factories can be romantic. Message for women.
Task 1 – Talking about propaganda (15 mins)

- Tell students they are going to read a text about women in the First World War and that you are going to give them some vocabulary to help them understand the text
- Ask students to work in pairs to match the words to the meanings, monitor and let students know if they are correct
- When students finish, ask them to look at the pictures and use the words to talk about them
- Elicit any sentences from the students to check meaning. Model and drill the correct pronunciation.

(Example sentences: Poster A portrays women in uniform. They are telling them to enrol in the army. The government designed the posters. They want to encourage people to join the army. They want to recruit women to work in the factories. Poster B is aimed at men. The government produced the posters.)

Answers:
1. g
2. f
3. a
4. c
5. d
6. e
7. b

Task 2 – Reading for main ideas (5 mins)

- Students read text and match paragraphs with posters, then check in pairs
- Elicit feedback.

Answers to Task 2:

Paragraph 1 – Poster B
Paragraph 2 – Poster A
Paragraph 3 – Poster C

Task 3 – Reading for detail (10 mins)

- Students read again and answer question 1(a-d) with True or False
- Students look for the words in bold and discuss possible meanings

Answers to Task 3:
1a. False
1b. True
1c. True
1d. False
Suggested answers:

2a. women
2b. work that is done to support the army in a war
2c. to play a part/ to do something which helps achieve a goal

Task 4 – Speculating about the past (10 mins)

• Tell students that we can use modal verbs to speculate or make guesses about the past and direct them to the grammar box.
• Ask them to speculate about women’s responses and discuss in pairs.
• Elicit feedback

Note – photographs
The images on the student worksheets are also included in slides 4-7 available in the PowerPoint file 'Women in War PowerPoint presentation'. You may wish to display these on a projector during Tasks 4-7.

Task 5 – Reading and sharing ideas (15 mins)

• Tell students you are going to give them some information on the realities of life for women in the war. They will each have a text where a woman describes her experience (summarised from a real interview) and some related facts.
• Divide students into pairs (A and B).
• Ask Student A to look at the texts and picture of page 5 of the handout, and Student B to look at page 6.
• Ask students to read and find out if the reality matched their ideas or the propaganda. They may wish to use a dictionary at this stage.
• Give students 5-10 minutes to read and then ask students to share their information in a discussion with their partner who has read the other text.

Task 6 – Writing practice on past possibilities (10 mins)

• Elicit from students some ideas on the women might have felt.
• Ask students to write sentences to describe these ideas using modal verbs.

Task 7 – Discussing wider issues (10 mins)

• Divide students into small groups and ask them to discuss the questions.
• Ask each group to report back on their ideas.

Homework
This can be set as a homework task.