

Letters from the Front: A First World War Historical Inquiry

Learning objective: To understand the experiences of soldiers and civilians during the First World War and to analyse the impact of the conflict on society.

Imagine you are a historical researcher helping Ellie the elephant organise her history archives. Using your knowledge of the First World War, complete this diary entry template from the perspective of a person living between 1914 and 1918. Ensure your writing reflects the challenges, emotions, and daily realities of the era.

Word bank: Alliances · Trenches · Home Front · Rationing · Armistice · Conscription · No Man's Land · Patriotism · Shell shock · Propaganda

1. The Setting: Describe where you are (e.g., in a trench or on the Home Front) and what your daily environment looks, sounds, and feels like. (3 marks)

2. The Conflict: Explain why you believe your country entered the war. What were the main causes or alliances that led to this global struggle? (4 marks)

3. Daily Life: Justify how rationing or the shortage of supplies has changed your daily routine. What items are the most difficult to find? (3 marks)

4. Compare and Contrast: Compare the experience of a soldier on the front line with the experience of a civilian working in a munitions factory. What are the key differences? (5 marks)

5. Explain Why: Explain why the introduction of new technology, such as tanks or aircraft, changed the way this war was fought compared to previous conflicts. (4 marks)

6. What might happen if: Imagine the war ended one year earlier. Predict two ways in which the world might have been different. (3 marks)

Extension challenge: Write a short poem, in the style of a soldier from the trenches, reflecting on the hope for peace. Then, write a brief paragraph justifying why it is important for historians to study primary sources like letters and diaries rather than just relying on textbooks.