

Ellie's Historical Enquiry: The Great War

Learning objective: To understand the causes and daily experiences of soldiers during the First World War (1914–1918).

Use your historical knowledge of the First World War to answer the following questions. Provide evidence and explanations where required.

Ellie the elephant has been researching the archives to learn about the complexities of the First World War. She is looking at how global alliances, the invention of new technology, and the daily lives of those in the trenches shaped the history of the 20th century.

Word bank: Alliances · Trench warfare · No Man's Land · Home Front · Armistice · Recruitment · Patriotism

1. Explain why the system of 'Alliances' in Europe acted as a catalyst for the outbreak of war in 1914. How did one event lead to a wider conflict? (3 marks)

2. Describe the physical conditions of a soldier living in the trenches. Why was the area between opposing trenches referred to as 'No Man's Land'? (3 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the role of the 'Home Front' in Britain with the life of a soldier on the front line. What sacrifices were made by civilians? (3 marks)

4. Justify your answer: Why do historians often describe the First World War as a 'total war'? (2 marks)

5. What might happen if the Armistice had not been signed on 11th November 1918? Consider the impact on both military and civilian populations. (3 marks)

6. Evaluate the impact of new technology, such as tanks or aircraft, on the stalemate of trench warfare. Did these inventions make the war shorter or more destructive? (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a commemorative poppy in the style of a historical memorial, adding a label that explains what it symbolises to people today.



Extension challenge: Write a short diary entry from the perspective of a person living in 1916. Describe your feelings regarding the war and the news you might hear from the front line. Use at least four words from the word bank in your writing.