



The Letter from the Trenches (Session1)

Lesson plan prepared by Seb Phillips, Cardinal Newman School

<i>Subject</i>	History - World War One
<i>Year group</i>	9
<i>Learning intention</i>	To use and investigate a primary source To ask and answer questions, using evidence from a range of sources
<i>Organisation</i>	Introduction: whole class Main activity: small groups (mixed ability) Plenary: whole class
<i>Differentiation</i>	Verbatim and edited transcripts of letters available to suit different ability levels
<i>Resources available</i>	The following resources for this lesson are available from www.letterintheattic.org (follow link to education pack): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Four letters - two letters from Herbert Whitehouse and two letters of condolence to his widow</i> • <i>Background information: Private Percy Herbert Whitehouse</i> • <i>Transcripts of the letters: unedited, with original spelling</i> • <i>Transcripts of the letters: simplified and cut down</i> • <i>Photos of Menin gate</i> • <i>Photo of Ethel and the children</i> • <i>Photo of Ethel in Newport Street</i> <p>The letters are displayed on the interactive white board. Copies of the letter are also printed and distributed to the students.</p>
<i>Preparation</i>	You may wish to read the background information about Private Herbert Percy Whitehouse which is available at: www.mybrightonandhove.org.uk/percywhitehouse
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Tell the students that a man in Brighton has inherited four First World War letters relating to his grandfather. He never knew his grandfather, who died during the War, nor has he ever seen his photo. The grandson has asked the students to investigate the letters and piece together the story they tell. He has transcripts of the letters as well as the original documents.</i>

	<p>Show the two letters from Percy Whitehouse and the two letters of condolence on the IWB. You may also want to show the Letter in the Attic website at www.letterintheattic.org and explain about the project.</p> <p><i>Teacher also needs to introduce certain conventions about document handling (for example, what (sic) means. That spelling is authentic etc. Students are then given resources suitable to their ability.</i></p>
<p><i>Main teaching</i></p>	<p>Divide the students into groups of 2-4. Give them copies of the letters and transcripts, selecting from the full or edited transcript according to the ability level of the students. If you use the full transcript, explain that the spelling is unchanged from the original document, and comment on transcription annotations such as (sic).</p> <p>Skill 1: Inquisitiveness</p> <p>Students discuss the four letters in groups of 2-4. They should put the letters into the correct sequence and work out the basic story of what happened: who/what/when/where. Use the whiteboard to explain any terms the students find difficult.</p> <p>Skill 2: Judgement / best guess</p> <p>Take initial feedback from the groups, looking for basic details. Who are the people in the story? What has happened to Percy? Give some more info based on background doc.</p>
<p><i>Group work</i></p>	<p>Skill 3: Investigation</p> <p>Students should now work more closely with these sources and draw out specific details- things they don't understand, words they don't understand etc. Students are encouraged to highlight the text to find these facts out. Students are also encouraged to find any references they recognise to life in Brighton (for example, the first letter mentions 'the Argus'.) The teacher should stress the local nature of these sources, the fact that the family still live in Brighton, etc.</p> <p>Facts are then fed back to the group and can be assembled on the whiteboard. If the group have already worked on WW1, what details agree with they already know re WW1? Is there anything that surprises them?</p>
<p><i>Plenary</i></p>	<p>Discussion</p> <p>Teacher begins the plenary by showing the students the photos of the Menin Gate, where Percy is commemorated, and the photo of Ethel and the two children. There are no surviving photos of Percy himself.</p> <p>In preparation for the next lesson, students then compile a list of questions (two for the less able, up to ten for the more able) that they would like to answer about Percy and his family. Suggestions could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did Percy do before the First World War? • What kind of person was he?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why aren't there any photos of him? • How did Ethel react to Percy's death? • How did she react to the letters of condolence? • What sort of people were Percy and Ethel? Rich, poor? • What was Ethel's life like after he died? <p>If running Session 2, the ICT lesson, carry forward these questions for individual research in the lesson using the audio interview with Percy's grandson (see Session 2 Resources).</p> <p>If not, answer the questions by playing extracts from the interview to the class or set the research task as homework.</p>
<p><i>Assessment opportunities/evidence</i></p>	<p>Discussion with students during focussed teaching.</p> <p>Questions created by students for use in the following ICT lesson</p>

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