



# A history of World War 1 through a range of objects

## What can a collection of artifacts reveal about how people experienced World War 1?

### Teacher Material

#### Activity Plan

An example of an object for  
initial discussion

### Student Material

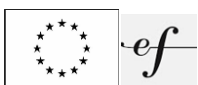
'Experiencing the war' section of  
the World War 1 Module on  
historiana.eu

### Acknowledgements

Activity designed by Helen Snelson, with the support of the Historiana learning and historical content teams and EUROCLIO trainees. The source used in this activity was contributed by Alun Edwards and David Blore to [www.europeana1914-1918.eu](http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu).

This activity makes use of sources from the collection of the [Chicago Tribune](#).

The development is financially supported by the **European Union** and the **Evans Foundation**.



More information about the sources is included in the material for teachers.

The aim of this learning activity is for students to research, and set in their historical context, a number of objects (artefacts) from World War 1, in order to reveal something of what it was like to experience the war. In 2010, Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum, delivered a programme for BBC Radio 4 called 'A History of the World in 100 Objects' (for reference, see teacher material). He says of objects: "*With objects, we do of course have structures of*



*expertise – archaeological, scientific, anthropological – which allow us to ask critical questions. But we have to add to that a considerable leap of the imagination, returning the artefact to its former life, engaging with it as generously, as poetically, as we can in the hope of winning the insights it may deliver.*" This learning activity is designed to enable your students to adopt a similar approach. They, or you, can choose any number of objects to form their collection. The aim is to understand what each object, and the objects as a collection, reveal about people's experience of the War. The process of selecting objects, setting them in their historical context to use them as historical evidence, and thus producing an interpretation, involves your students practising the skills and dispositions of the discipline of history. It should be clear to them that the interpretation they produce is as a result of the sources they have selected to use as evidence. The curation process models the way a historian works.

## Learning outcomes

### Students will

- Students learn about some of the diversity of experiences of the First World War.
- Students learn to use sources as evidence by setting them in their historical context.

16-18 years



2 hours



- Students learn about the way the selection and presentation of sources as evidence shapes the historical interpretation that is produced.
- Students research the historical context to an object and present their work to their peers for review.