

**National Service Remembered**

**English**

**National Curriculum KS2**



# Overview

Below is a suggested lesson plan to support National Curriculum learning for English using our 'National Service Remembered' resource pack.

The PowerPoint presentation introduces students to National Service, beginning with an overview of what National Service was and the kind of experiences that all conscripts shared. Following this, a trailer for the entire project provides a more visual introduction to National Service.

The PowerPoint also contains an excerpt from one of the conscripts we have interviewed, which gives further context to the period. Including clear written text, alongside oral history segments within first person narrative, this offers pupils two different styles of language to reflect on.

## SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

### Slide 1 to 5 (Introduction)

We suggest that these slides be read to the class by the teacher.

### Slide 3

"The term 'National Service' comes from the United Kingdom's National Service (Armed Forces) Act from 1939. National Service means that you have to sign up to government service, usually within the military. Signing up for National Service is also known as 'conscripted'."

"After the Second World War, the young men of Britain were needed. In 1947, the National Service Act was brought into force. This Act meant that all healthy men from 17 to 30 years old were required to serve in the armed forces for 18 months, and remain on the reserve list for 4 years. Men were only exempt from National Service if they worked in one of the three 'essential services', or if they had health issues."

### Slide 4

"All National Service conscripts were asked to attend medical assessments, after which they were sent for 6 weeks of basic training in the British Army. Once the conscripts arrived at their training base, they were issued with their uniform and equipment, and training could begin."

After basic training, National Service conscripts served in a variety of roles across the Armed Forces and, as well as serving at home, many Servicemen were posted to one of Britain's many garrisons around the world. An overseas posting also often meant that the conscripts saw active service."

## Slide 5

The trailer for the 'National Service Remembered' project can now be played.

## Slide 6 (Task)

National Service learning:

### SPEAKING

1. WARM UP 1: What is National Service? Think of two things you know about it and tell your desk partner.
2. WARM UP 2: Fun Tongue Twister (*Repeat until it becomes gibberish!*)

*"Sister Susie's sewing socks for soldiers. How many socks does sister Susie sew?"*

### LISTENING

#### Retrieval/writing

The teacher will re-read the first text slowly to the class without the PowerPoint aid. The pupils will then note down three things they know about National Service.

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Task: Note down three things that you know about National Service. Don't forget to write them out neatly!

## Slide 7 (Task)

### READING

Students could take turns to read the excerpt from Ivan Russ aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

*Ivan Russ- "knew I had to do my service unless I was physically unfit. It was a pity because I'd completed my apprenticeship and being deprived a man's wage, but in retrospect it was the best thing because I was a country boy down in Devonshire and I was then thrown into the British mix of people my own age, and that was eye opening. When you hear about lads that grew up in Glasgow and the room was separated by a curtain stapled to the ceiling to separate one family from the other, it makes you think a bit.*

*I got the train up to London, then to Cardington in Bedfordshire, just for a few days to get my uniform and then I went up to Wilmslow in Cheshire for square-bashing.*

*It's all shouting, trying to reduce you mentally, change your attitude. I think our generation knew we had to do things and the easiest way was to just accept it and get on with it, but we knew that trade training was going be easier.*

*After square-bashing I was sent down Yatesbury to train as a radar operator (I knew nothing about radar) and sadly, that meant that I was stuck in the UK. I ended up in Portland, which was a very nice posting. The billets were nice, relatively new, plenty of bathroom facilities. The camaraderie was great, we used to leg pull and it was always fun, a much more relaxed atmosphere."*

### SPEAKING & UNDERSTANDING

1. Teacher to review and explain any new words and discuss meaning in context. Students can check any unknown vocabulary or phrases with the teacher.
2. Students should look through the text with the teacher and consider the following things:
  - a) Was this an easy or difficult text to understand?
  - b) Which did you enjoy listening to more: the factual summary of National Service or the testimonial account of a conscripts experience?

## Slide 8 (Task)

### UNDERSTANDING & WRITING (task)

We have suggested two writing tasks, one factual and one creative:

1) Write a postcard home

Remember to first think about where you are writing from, maybe your first Army Barracks? What is it like? How are you feeling?

Students could use our postcards as inspiration for their own.

2) Write a summary piece

Note three reasons to do National Service and three reasons not to do National Service.

## Slides 9 to 13 (Finish)

### NATIONAL SERVICE MEDIA

Chose a video and a song to share with the class. We have added two of each for you to choose from. Please see times for each item below to help you plan.

John Harvey Video: 3 minutes 37 seconds

Mike Turner Video: 3 minutes 18 seconds

'This is the Army, Mr Jones': 2 minutes 15 seconds

'If I give my heart to you' 2 minutes 47 seconds

Finally, there is also a great video that was created by Blue Peter and features Matt Baker from the One Show. This video is 8 minutes 45 seconds.