

National Service Remembered

PSHE/SMSC

National Curriculum KS2



Overview

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

There are a number of ways in which the National Service resource could be used to support the three main PSHE topics of 'Relationships, Health & Wellbeing, and Living in the Wider World'. This also applies to SMSC where the notion of a compulsory National Service could support learning around moral and social issues.

In the suggested lesson plan below, 'National Service Remembered' can be used to look at the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and the idea of the serving 'greater-good' for your community and country. Learning about the realities of peacetime conscription offers a unique insight into many of these issues. Children will be able to explore issues such as:

- What would it have meant to have mandatory conscription for 18 months?
- How would it feel to live and work with people from all walks of life?
- How would it have felt to see active service when the choice to be a soldier was not yours to make?

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. We also use an excerpt from one of the conscripts we interviewed to provide further context for the period.

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 'conscription'."

"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)

REFLECTION/PARTNER TALK – suggested discussion:

- 1) When we choose to volunteer our time for a good cause, typically we can choose what we want to do and how much time we spend doing it. An example might be litter picking in your local neighbourhood for one afternoon a week. Now try to imagine what it would be like to be conscripted to a mandatory National Service, at a young age, for 18 months of your life.
- 2) Is it important to do things that we don't want to do for the good of our community?
- 3) How would it feel to leave your family behind? And to have your daily life change so much?

Slide 7 (Task)

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

Ivan Russ – "I 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 to 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."

Slide 8 (Task)

REFLECTION/PARTNER TALK – suggested questions:

- 1) Can you imagine experiencing what Ivan Russ did?
- 2) Can you imagine sharing a room with 20 people you had never met before, and who might be very different to you? How do you think that might change you?
- 3) Give students the opportunity to reflect on their own family: do you have grandfathers that served? Or perhaps friends or neighbours in the local community who might have a story to share? Talk about who you might know, and what it might mean to them if you asked them to share their stories (learning note: loneliness in the older generations is at an all-time high, and whilst it is hard to address this currently, research has shown that a telephone call, or a chat over the fence can quite literally transform the week of someone living alone. Using this example offers the children a great way to think about engaging with the older generations in their community).

WRITING:

Write a postcard home – remember to first think about where you are writing from (maybe your first army barracks?), and how you are feeling (worried?, happy?). Finally, reflect on why what you are doing is important for your family/ community.

Students could use our postcards as inspiration for their own.

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.