

National Service Remembered

History

National Curriculum KS2



**Same but
Different**

Overview

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

If used in conjunction with History, the 'National Service Remembered' resource would offer a unique, localised tool for learning about Britain's past, as well as the wider role Britain played in the world. One of the core topics for Key Stage 2 learning reflects on 'Challenges for Britain' from 1901 until the present day. Using 'National Service Remembered' as a resource, issues that could be explored include:

- why did Great Britain need to conscript men into the armed forces from 1947 until 1963?
- What role did WW2 play in this?
- What did the decision to end National Service mean in the broader global historical context?

Part of learning about history is the importance of learning about the complexity of people's lives, the process of change and diversity of societies.

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 our veterans to contrast with the overview.

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 'conscript'."

"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:

The focus of this lesson is to reflect on some of the 'Challenges for Britain', from 1901 until the present day. Why did Great Britain need to conscript men into the armed forces from 1947 until 1963? And what was it like for those men?

RECAP:

It is important to understand that the end of the Second World War did not bring an end to British military commitments abroad. Britain still needed to maintain her diminishing Empire, occupy post-war Germany and Japan, and to try to re-establish influence in the world, particularly in the Middle East. To solve this manpower shortage and meet new post-war challenges, wartime conscription was extended into an obligatory period of National Service for men of military age.

REFLECTION/PARTNER TALK – suggested questions:

- 1) After the Second World War, do you think people felt a sense of duty to serve their crown and country like their fathers had?
- 2) What do you imagine life was like in 1947?
- 3) Can you imagine what it would be like to be forced to sign up in this way, to have to do something for 18 months of your life?

Slide 7 (Task)

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

Miles Anderson – ‘It was 66 years ago that I went down to Cardington with my government supplied rail ticket in September 1954; I was to serve my National Service in the RAF. On arrival at Cardington, we were kitted out, issued with all the necessary equipment and after a brief touching base were bussed to our ‘Square Bashing’ camps.

We were billeted in a hut with probably 18/20 young men, each allocated a bed, bedding, a small cupboard and small wardrobe or place where uniforms could be hung out of sight. There were two solid stoves, one at each end of the hut to provide warmth.

From then on it was all spit and polish, discipline, regimentation and drill. Our mornings, after breakfast, were a succession of drill, physical exercise, weapon training and lectures. At each occasion we had to change from one set of clothes into another one, and all ‘at the double’ of course, and everything back in the billet had to be left in immaculate order. I learnt discipline, to fit in and get on with people who came from a wide variety of backgrounds, and how to keep a low profile when necessary.’

Slide 8 (Task)

REFLECTION/PARTNER TALK – suggested questions:

- 1) Can you imagine experiencing what Miles Anderson did?
- 2) Why do you think National Service ended?
- 3) Do you think we could re-introduce it today, or is our world a very different place?

WRITING:

Write a postcard home – remember to first think about where you are writing from, maybe your first Army Barracks (time and place), and reflect on why what you are doing is important for your family, community and country (historical context).

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.

Michael Wilkinson Video: 12 minutes 37 seconds

John Creswell Video: 7 minutes 49 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.