

Assembly: Centenary of the Armistice



Outline: This assembly covers the events surrounding the Armistice and could be delivered during the centenary of this event. Pupils will learn about events leading up to, on and after 11th November 1918. Additional information about these events can be found in the 'Teacher's Armistice secondary helpsheet'. This assembly could be used in isolation to provide pupils with an understanding of events taking place to mark the centenary of the Armistice or as part of a wider World War I project. This assembly plan tells you what information should be included in your assembly. You may wish to adapt the format depending on the number and age of the pupils involved.

Suggested timing: 20-30 minutes

Suitable for: Key Stage 3

Resources:

- 'Teachers' Armistice secondary helpsheet'
- Images relating to the events being discussed
- Accompanying PowerPoint

Suggested teaching:

Introduction:

- Slide 2: Display the date 11th November 1918 and ask pupils if this date is familiar to them? Encourage them to elaborate and explain why
- Establish that this is the date that World War I ended in addition to the date being Remembrance Day
- Depending on pupils understanding of World War I it may be useful to explore some of the key facts. Pupils should understand that:
 - Britain declared war on Germany on 4th August 1914
 - the Allies, including Britain, France, Russia and America, fought against the Central Powers, including Germany, Austria-Hungary the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria
 - first truly global conflict
 - changes in fighting compared to previous wars: introduction of trench warfare and tanks
 - many people were killed or injured: over 900,000 in the British Army were killed
 - affected everyone in the country

Key question 1: What led to the end of World War I?

- Explain that World War I (the Great War as it was known at the time) had lasted much longer than had originally been anticipated. At the start of 1918 Germany and the Central Powers were considered to be in a strong position and it looked like they would go on to be victorious
- Slides 3 and 4: talk through the key events on these slides which took place in the lead up to 11th November 1918. You should elaborate and add detail as required. More information can be found on the 'Teachers' Armistice secondary helpsheet'

Key question 2: what took place on 11th November?

- Slide 5: following three days of discussions the Armistice was signed at 5.10am on 11th November 1918
- It came into effect 6 hours later at 11.00am when the guns fell silent. World War I had ended.
- If any of the terms of the Armistice were broken by Germany, fighting would begin again with 48 hours' notice
- Explain that news of the Armistice spread quickly around the world. Ask pupils to consider how people at home in Britain, France and the other Allied countries felt when they heard the news that the war had ended and why they felt that way?
- Slide 6: Through their answers and subsequent discussion establish that the news of the Armistice was greeted with great joy and lots of celebrations. You may choose to show some images of crowds celebrating the news. However many people had lost loved ones in the war which meant the celebrations were tinged with sadness
- The feelings of sadness, loss and grief led to a public wave of Remembrance. Two thirds of the 100,000 war memorials in the UK were created in the wake of World War I. Those who died were buried overseas, some in unmarked graves and others unidentified. Families at home had no place to remember their loved ones. War memorials provided this place and ensured the names of the fallen would be remembered

Key question 3: what happened after the Armistice was signed?

- Slide 7: Explain that the Armistice was a ceasefire which allowed for talks to take place to discuss a possible peace treaty
- These began in January 1919 at the Peace Conference in Paris. The detail into which you wish to explain the talks will depend on the age of the pupils and their existing understanding. Pupils should understand that the delegates from 32 countries including the leaders of Britain, France and America met to decide what would be included in the peace treaty. Many felt the treaty needed to be strict and have strong penalties for Germany to make sure this was the peace to end all wars
- Explain that the Treaty of Versailles, so called because it was signed at the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles, was the treaty which was agreed between Germany and the Allies on 28th June 1919
- You may wish to ask pupils to suggest what they think should have been included in the Treaty before sharing some of the key points
- It should be established that Germany was shocked at how strict the treaty was and although people on both sides felt it was quite harsh it was considered necessary

Conclusion

- Sum up the key points from the assembly and if you are delivering this assembly in November 2018 highlight that this Remembrance Day is particularly important as it is 100 years since the end of World War I, the centenary of when the Armistice came into effect. Pupils could be asked to reflect on what they will be doing on Remembrance Day or if they think Remembrance Day will still be commemorated for another 100 years
- Slide 8: The Ode of Remembrance from the poem 'For the Fallen' by Laurence Binyon could provide a useful focus point for a few moments reflection and two minutes of silence

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