



WARTIME POSTERS

Activity 1: Wartime Propaganda

Key stage 2

History:

Chronological understanding
 Historical interpretation
 Historical enquiry
 British History

Art and design:

Exploring and developing ideas
 Investigating and making art, craft and design
 Evaluation and developing work
 Knowledge and understanding

Key Stage 3

History:

Chronological understanding
 Change and continuity
 Cause and consequences
 Interpretation

Art and Design:

Creativity
 Competence
 Cultural understanding
 Critical understanding

Overview of the activities

Campaign
 Commission
 Then and now

These sessions can be used simply for creative work or to highlight the messages that were so important in wartime Britain.

These sessions look at Wartime posters that can be seen in many of the venues. The posters were aimed at the civilian population and have enduring qualities that suggest they were very effective means of communication.

Resources

Sketch book or digital cameras (arrange with teachers for young people to bring sketch books or digital cameras)

Pencils
 Paper
 Magazines
 Paint
 Paintbrushes
 Jars of water
 Palettes
 Collage materials
 Newspaper
 Display area blu tac

Venue

Cranwell Aviation Heritage Centre
 Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre
 Metheringham Airfield Visitor Centre
 Thorpe Camp Visitor Centre.

Roles for young people
 Ministry of Information designers
 Activity 1: Campaign

Starter activity

Tell young people about the different ways the government communicated with the public, via posters and radio broadcasts. Why was this?

Display the posters provided on the PowerPoint on the white board.

This activity will work well with a visit to the venues where they can see the original posters.

Look at the posters in detail. You can look at all of the posters or choose to look at two posters on a similar theme: for example: Dig on for Victory and We could do with thousands more like you.

- » What do the images suggest?
- » What sort of illustrations are used?
- » How effective are the posters?
- » What are the main messages?

Now look at the posters about evacuation and



transport. Ask the same questions. Are they similar to the posters about the Land Army and Dig on for Victory? If not, why not?

Activity

Choose a particular wartime message and ask young people to create an idea for a wartime communication campaign. What colours would they use? What sort of language would they use? What sort of images would they use?

Exhibition

Ask young people to display their work and tell the group about the colours, feelings and messages.

Plenary

Ask other students to provide feedback on the campaign ideas.

Activity 2: Commission

Starter activity

Commission young people to create a poster for wartime Britain. The brief could be any of the following:

- » Create a poster on the theme of the blackout
- » Create a poster on managing with what people have instead of buying new things
- » Create a poster about growing your own vegetables
- » Create a recruitment poster for the Land Army, Air Raid Wardens, etc.

If this activity is combined with a museum tour give young people time to make sketches or take photographs to help them fulfil their brief. Direct the tour to artwork, photographs, posters or graphic art that may inspire the young people.

Plenary

Discuss some of the posters, images or works of art that young people remember as a starting point.

- » What is the main message of the poster?
- » Who produced it? (Could it have been produced by the Allies or the Axis? If not why not?)
- » Who is the target audience for the poster?
- » What sort of feeling does it convey?
- » How does it achieve this – colour, subject, style of drawing/painting?
- » How do the colours affect their mood?
- » Why are these colours used in this particular poster?
- » What font is used? Why?
- » Does it portray a particular sentiment?
- » How was it created? In what media?

Activity

Now ask students to create their own wartime posters. Choose a theme and a way of communicating this theme to a specific war time target audience.

Extension activity

Put on an exhibition for other school children to view. Create a display. Create an online gallery for the school website.

Activity: Then and Now

Starter activity

Take a theme from wartime Britain and ask young people to reinterpret this message for modern context so:

'Make do and mend' could be about recycling.
'Dig for victory' could be about growing your own food and being more sustainable.
'Use Shanks' Pony' could be about walking an extra mile each day for fitness, to save fuel and precious resources. It could even try to encourage young people to walk to school.

Activity

Ask young people to create a poster to convey one of these messages to their colleagues in school. They can use whatever media they choose. Encourage them to plan their poster first and to think about:



- » The aim
- » The target audience
- » The message
- » The media.

Plenary

Ask young people to display their work and tell the group about the original campaign and their chosen modern theme.

Ask for positive feedback from the group.

Create an exhibition in school showing the inspiration for the campaign and how young people arrived at their modern advertising campaign.

Background information

British Wartime propaganda posters are in most of the venues. The posters present an excellent starting point to explore both what was happening in Britain during the Second World War. They also provide the opportunity to examine the principles of good design. Some posters carried such strong images that they are being sold today. Keep Calm and Carry On is now to be found on mugs, cushions, bags, keyrings.

The Second World War was a total war involving most of the British population. It affected people fighting in the armed forces and people at home, on the home front. Conscription was in place so recruitment to the armed forces wasn't a major issue. The posters were aimed at the civilian population. The messages focused on themes such as recruitment to specialist services, the protection of women and children, the enemy within and the hardship brought about by the war.

Many of the posters have themes that are still relevant today but for very different reasons. Make do and mend was about a shortage of resources during the war, but now we are encouraged to recycle because of the

enormous waste in our communities.

Dig for victory was about becoming self sufficient in a time of rationing. Now many people are interested in growing their own food because of the nutritional value and because of the distances food is transported and the threat that poses to the environment.

Keep Calm and Carry On is now used in an ironic way to encourage people in a time of recession.

There are a number of posters encouraging mothers to evacuate their children and others about the black out and homeland security.

The posters were commissioned by the Ministry of Information and produced by a number of different artists. Most tried to create a sense of community and portray an idea of Britain united in the war effort against the enemy.

There are six posters in this section which focus on the Home Front.

They can be used to introduce topics and to look at how the Government conveyed its messages to the general public. They can also be examined as tools of communication and examples of good design.

There are many sources of further information on the internet including the Imperial War Museum and the National Archives.

<http://london.iwm.org.uk>

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>