

The First World War – Descriptive Writing

The First World War began in 1914 and finished in 1918.

When the War began, many, many British men volunteered to join the armed forces and fight.

In the first weekend of the war in 1914, 100 men an hour (3,000 a day) signed up. 54 million posters were issued, 8 million letters were sent, 12,000 meetings were held, and 20,000 speeches were given by military spokespeople. By the end of 1914 **1,186,337** men had enlisted.

Some questions to think about

Why do you think so many men volunteered to fight in the War?

How do you think they felt about going to war? Why?

What emotions would be going through those soldiers' heads? Would those emotions change when they finally arrived at the fighting? Why? Why not?

Context



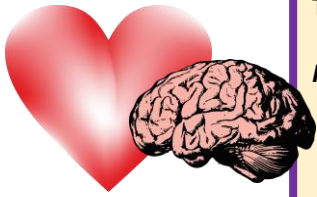
Learning outcomes



To describe the experience of being in The First World War through descriptive writing.

Today we are going to plan a descriptive piece about being in the First World War

Using your understanding of the thoughts and feelings of soldiers going off to war to add ideas to your **'thoughts and feelings'** box on the planning sheet on slide 4.



Thoughts and emotions:

How do you feel about going to war?

*How do you feel now you are at the War?
Why?*

Sounds:



Sights:



Smells:



What can you touch or feel?



What can you taste?



Key vocabulary:

No man's land
Trenches
Soldiers



Yellow

Tan
Beige
Marigold
Eggnog
Canary
Mustard
Pineapple
Blonde
Tuscan
sun
Honey
Lemon
Corn
Flaxen

Green

Juniper
Sage
Pistachio
Lime
Mint
Mossy
Emerald
Grassy

Black

Ebony
Raven
Oily
Leather
Midnight
Sooty
Inky

Purple

Violet
Lavender
Amethyst
Lilac
Plum
Raisin
Maue
Heather

Blue

Cobalt
Navy
Azure
Denim
Berry
Indigo
Teal
Cerulean

Red

Cherry
Rose
Jam
Merlot
Crimson
Ruby
Brick
Blood
Candy
Scarlet
Apple
Vermillion
Maroon
Cerise

Brown

Coffee
Mocha
Peanut
Caramel
Walnut
Tawny
Pecan
Hickory
Syrup
Brunette
Cinnamon
Chocolate

Grey

Charcoal
Slate
Foggy
Cloudy
Shadowy
Pewter
Ashen
Dreary
Stone
Smoky

White

Pearl
Alabaster
Snow
Ivory
Cream
Eggshell
Cotton
Chiffon
Salt
Lace
Coconut
Linen
Porcelain
Parchment

Choose FIVE key areas to 'zoom' in on when creating your description:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____



My first sentence will be:	Tick or cross
A short sentence for impact	
A rhetorical question to build up the reader's interest	
Speech to engage the reader	
Something else (Please state): _____	

Write your first sentence here:

My final sentence will be:	Tick or cross
A short sentence for one final, powerful thought	
A rhetorical question to leave the reader thinking	
A summing up of everything I have described to 'zoom out' at the end.	
Something else (Please state): _____	

Write your final sentence here:

Planning Sheet

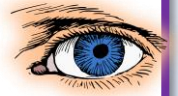
Resources to help you...

The next few slides have a selection of resources that you can use to help you with your descriptive writing piece.





We're going to watch a short documentary about fighting in the War now



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= G4ZY66BG38](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4ZY66BG38)

As we watch, make notes on your planning sheet about what you could see, hear, feel, taste and touch.



Extension: Add any technical or specific vocabulary to the box on the bottom of the sheet.



Now we're going to listen to some of the sounds soldiers might have heard during the War



When there was no fighting the soldiers would wait in the trenches for the conflict to begin. Shells could be heard dropping in the distance occasionally, but very often it was eerily quiet.

However, when the fighting was taking place hundreds of shells would be dropped. This is what it would have sounded like:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRPFQMO8yX4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dv4DrUEy1IA>

Add to your planning sheet as we listen.

Extension: How would these sounds make you feel if you were there? Why? Add these notes to your planning sheet.

Now we're going to watch a few videos that show us what being in the War was like and what we would see and feel

When there was no fighting the soldiers would wait in the trenches for the conflict to begin. This led to severe boredom but also constant anxiety and worry about when the fighting would begin.

However, when the fighting was taking place there would have been people preparing to fight, going 'over the top' into no man's land, shots being fired, shells being dropped and more. It would have been a cacophony of noises, action and terror.

Add to your planning sheet as we watch these clips:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Tv5gBa9DQs>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zBQGY_p4QM

Extension: How would these sights make you feel if you were there? Why? Add these notes to your planning sheet.



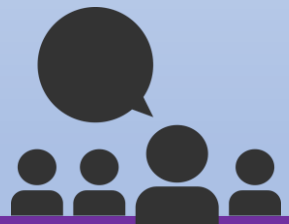
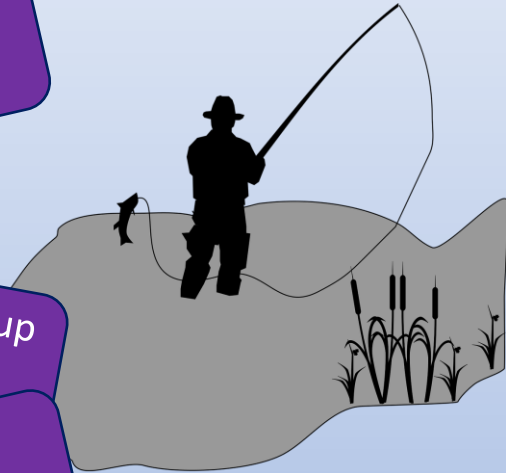
What are the best ways to **begin** a descriptive writing piece?

Remember that you want to **hook** your reader into the description. That means carefully choosing an opening sentence that will engage the reader straight away and make them want to carry on reading the whole piece.

A short sentence for impact:
My nightmare continued.

A rhetorical question to build up the reader's interest:
Why are we here?

Speech to engage the reader:
"Watch out!" I screamed.



Discuss: What do you think is the most effective way to begin a description of the First World War and why? Be prepared to share your ideas.

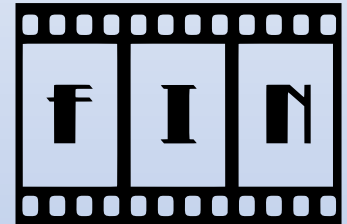
What are the best ways to **end** a descriptive writing piece?

Remember that you want to **have a powerful impact** on your reader at the end. That means carefully choosing a closing sentence that will really have an effect on the reader at the end of your piece.

A short sentence for one final, powerful thought:
I would never see him again.

A rhetorical question to leave the reader thinking:
Will there be a tomorrow?

A summing up of everything I have described to 'zoom out' at the end.
Far away from the dying, the trenches, the shells, the grey monotonous skies and the terror of our everyday lives, somewhere there was peace.



Discuss: What do you think is the most effective way to end a description of the First World War and why? Be prepared to share your ideas.

Now we'll write out our descriptions of experiencing the trenches and the First World War

Not sure how to start?

It was like something I had never seen before.
In front of me...