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**Nuclear Test Veterans Oral Histories: Workshop Two – Oral Histories**

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| **Topic:** BritishNuclear Testing | | **Duration:** 50 minutes | **Key Stage:** 3-5 | | |
| **Aims:**   * To develop active listening skills * To learn about the purpose of oral histories * To hear and respond to clips of nuclear test veterans oral histories * To develop skills for delivering oral history interviews | | | | | |
| **Learning outcomes:**   * Pupils know more about the history of nuclear warfare and British nuclear testing * Pupils have practised the active listening skills needed to conduct oral history interviews * Pupils will make connections between the oral histories of nuclear test veterans and other aspects of 21st Century history | | | | | |
| **Curriculum links:**  **History KS2 & 3:** Pupils should *know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people’s lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world***.**   * *A high-quality history education helping pupils gain a coherent knowledge and  understanding of Britain’s past and that of the wider world.* * *Inspiring pupils’ curiosity  to know more about the past.* * *Equipping pupils to ask perceptive questions,  think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement.* * *achievements and follies of mankind* * *gain a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as ‘empire’*   *Social, cultural and technological change in post-war British society* and *Britain’s place in the world since 1945*  **Geography KS2 & 3:** Pupils should develop and extend their *local knowledge of the world’s countries.*  **English:** Promote development of *pupils’ confidence and competence* in speaking and listening.  **Citizenship:** *equipping pupils with skills and knowledge to explore social issues critically and take their place in society as responsible citizens.*  **SMSC:** e.g. promoting: *pupils’ sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about others and the world around them; understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain.*  **SMSC - British Values:** using the lens of nuclear testing to touch on *democracy*(Govt. control/secrecy, right to protest, defending democracy/nation/Europe), *Individual liberty* (National Service, veteran’s voices, opinions on nuclear weapons), *Rule of Law*(Official Secrets Act, treason), *Tolerance of those with different cultures and religions* **(**learning about indigenous peoples and impact of colonial power/nuclear testing) | | | | | |
| **You will need:**  Plain paper and marker pens / a bell and timer / good speakers attached to your pc or laptop / pre-prepared oral history backpack (if using – you can use Slide 10 instead) | | | | | |
| **Time** | **Activity** | | | **Resources** | **Purpose** |
| Arriving | Show Slide 1 whilst class arrives | | | Slide 1 | Reminder of pre-workshop activity |
| 1 min | Introduce the aims of the session | | | Slide 2 | Provide an overview |
| 10 mins | **Listening triads**  In a triad there are three roles: storyteller, listener, witness.  This activity will go in 3 rounds. In each round pupils will work on the same question, but in a different role. Then the listener and the witness in turn reflect back what they heard being said. This has the added benefit of giving the speaker two different perspectives on what was heard.  The triad is asked to capture the key insights that speak to the question and may possibly share back to the whole group.  Make clear that it is important not to make it into conversation (try to not ask 'supporting questions' or nod, or make comments).   1. Organise groups of 3 and give each group 3 markers and 3 pieces of paper. 2. Explain that each person will each take a turn to inhabit a role: the storyteller (tells the story), the witness (listens and prompts but doesn’t interrupt), the listener/harvester (captures insights as notes or drawing on paper). 3. Share the overarching question **‘What is the furthest you’ve travelled from home and how was that experience for you?’**  and the timing i.e. 1 minute per story. Start with the first storyteller: Tell a story about when… you have 1 min to tell your story uninterrupted. Then each of the listeners in turn reflects back what they heard being said (1 minute). 4. Swap roles and repeat until all students have taken on all three roles. 5. After everyone has taken on all three roles, debrief the activity asking about the experience in each of the roles, what they noticed about the way they felt, acted, listened, the information they captured. | | | Slide 3  Groups of 3  Pieces of paper & markers  Bell/timer | Developing and considering active listening skills |
| 3 mins | **Introducing clips from the oral histories**  Audio clips (slides 4-5) relate to the beginning of the journey to Christmas Island for two veterans. Invite pupils to listen, then consider how these men might have felt travelling across the world. | | | Slides 4 & 5 | Active listening and question formulation |
| 2 mins | **An Introduction to Oral Histories**  Slide 6 gives a brief overview of the purpose and process of collecting oral histories.  After giving this short input, press ‘n’ to bring up the question ‘What makes oral histories different from other primary sources used in history?’. Put this to the class and elicit responses.  \* *find further notes on oral history on the slide notes for Slide 6* | | | Slide 6 | Exploring primary sources |
| 2 mins | **Listen to John O’Nions talking about life on the island** This clip furthers the story of the nuclear test veterans who were stationed on Kirimati (Christmas Island) | | | Slide 7 | Adding depth |
| 10 mins | **What does it take to be a good oral history interviewer? The Oral History Backpack**  Slide 8 – ask pupils for their initial thoughts  Slides 9 – 10 take you through the oral history backpack activity. You can choose to equip yourself with a real backpack with the items from slide 10, or just to use the slide!  **In pairs/ threes, think about these objects and why they could be useful in the interviews**  As the items come up, ask students to confer on what they think the items signify:  Use one of the items as an opportunity to **make a noise** (eg a pen with a clicker or a noisy water  bottle) – because it’s important to try and avoid background noise during an interview.   * + **Notepad and pen** - because you may want to make some notes (but not many) - oral history interviews are recorded   + Cut out of large **letter Q or a question mark** – because oral history interviewers need to be prepared in terms of potential questions and prompts, but also this signifies curiosity   + **Bottle of water** – importance of people feeling comfortable during the interview   + **Audio-recorder** – having the right tech, charged and ready is important for oral history interview recording. This means histories can be kept for others to listen to in the future. Oral histories might be stored in local records offices, archives and museums.   + **Pack of tissues** – because sometimes memories can make interviewees (and potentially interviewers) feel emotional. Discuss this further – this impacts on the questions you might create. It’s important to know that it’s OK for people not to talk about things they don’t want to, and for interviewers to make time after interviews to debrief/reflect.   + **Smiley face** – because it’s important for interviewers to be friendly and put interviewees at ease and to look engaged with what the interviewee is saying.   + **Picture of an ear** – because of the importance of listening – your interviewer might mention something that you’d like to know more about and ask a follow-up question! | | | Slides 8-10 | Oral history skills |
| 5 mins | **Terry Hilliard clip – experiencing a nuclear bomb**  Listen to the clip. After listening, invite students to think on their own for a minute about how listening to the oral history clips makes them feel. | | | Slide 11 | Furthering knowledge of the subject |
| 10 mins | **Creating questions**  Explain that, if they were oral history interviewers, the questions they might create would form the basis of an ‘interview guide’ – a set of questions that guide everyone involved through conducting an interview with a nuclear test veteran.  Ask pupils to write questions for each of the three interview subjects they have heard so far (Brian on why he signed up / Roger on finding out about his mission / Terry on experiencing a nuclear blast). Listen again if needed.  Once pupils have written at least one question for each, get them to share questions in pairs.  Elicit some questions from the room and consider whether the questions would be useful for furthering the story of their involvement in the British nuclear testing programme.  Slide 13 gives actual examples used by the historians from the University of Liverpool and the University of South Wales in their interview guides. | | | Slides 12-13 | Oral history skills |
| 5 mins | **Final thoughts**  Invite any reflections – do your pupils think they would make good oral history interviewers? Do they like these primary sources more or less than other sources (eg. Newspapers, museum artefacts, photographs)? | | | Slide 14 | Summing Up |
|  | **POSSIBLE EXTENSION** –set your pupils the task of interviewing someone (you could organise this in school or set as homework). The experience of bringing generations together in this way can be very powerful and special.  Young people can use voice recorders on phones or other simple technology to record their interviews, or be invited to write short reports. Interviews around sensitive topics should not be attempted. Subjects could include memories of favourite childhood toys, hobbies, TV/films or music, or family outings, holidays or celebrations, for example. | | |  |  |

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