



Writing Poetry for the International Competition!

About

After six successful creative arts competitions to mark the centenary of the First World War, Never Such Innocence is giving children and young people from across the world the opportunity to process, respond to and reflect on all forms of conflict throughout history and consider the value of commemoration.

Never Such Innocence invites young people to have a strong and powerful voice to influence the world's decision makers. To date Never Such Innocence works with young people in 50 countries, territories and dependencies across five continents. This work will continue as we invite young people to create a poem, a speech, a song or piece of art reflecting on something they feel strongly about historically or currently, on an international scale, or within their local community or wider society.

The project will be extended to embrace our intergenerational society, encouraging young people to collaborate with older people, sharing stories and experiences.

A schools' resource will be published online, and updated year-on-year, to provide inspiration for competition entries. The resource will be thematic and will cover impacts of war and responses to war, drawing on examples throughout history.

<https://www.neversuchinnocence.com/nsi-resource-conflict-through-the-ages>

Objectives:

- To read and understand the structure of a range of poems
- To deepen understanding of war and conflict, using a specific example of a conflict from history or the present day
- To recognise a range of linguistic features used to create meaning in poetry, including simile, metaphor, alliteration, rhyme, personification, repetition.
- Learn how to choose words to explore and construct meaning

Resources:

Our Stories of the First World War and our Anthology are both available on Amazon for purchase!

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Never-Such-Innocence/e/B07HOR1L59/ref=dp_byline_cont_book_1

If focusing on a different conflict, you may find the Poetry Foundation's collection of War Poetry a useful way of finding suitable poems:

www.poetryfoundation.org/collections/144683/war-poetry

Classroom activities:

Option 1 - using art as inspiration

Show pupils visual cues like pictures and paintings from various aspects of a War or Conflict. Have your pupils work in groups to list words that describe how it makes them feel and words they could use to describe the picture. Share as a group, writing down new words as they hear them.

- You may find the Imperial War Museum Collections Online a helpful resource for finding images: www.iwm.org.uk/collections

Option 2 - young people's poems

Read poems written by previous winners of the Never Such Innocence competitions:

- See *What would they think?* By Emily Dutson and *Carpe Diem* by Lia Taylor which can be found at the bottom of this document.
- You can also find all of the winning work in the Winners' Booklets, which can be downloaded for free [here](#).

Discuss in groups how the poems make the pupils feel? Ask pupils to share which poem they liked the most and why.

Help pupils to identify poetic techniques that have been used – what rhyming pattern does Emily's poem have? How does Lia use repetition?

Option 3 - *What Happens Next?*

Read aloud or have pupils read aloud Sean Thackwray's short poem *What Happens Next* – a winning poem from the 2014 Competition. Ask pupils to come up with words to describe how it makes them feel.

More advanced pupils might consider who is writing it and why:

<p>What happens next? <i>by Sean Thackwray</i></p> <p>What happens next Will our lips meet again? I long to feel you But know in my heart this could be the end! Are you listening my darling? There is hate and selfishness, But I'm only full of love and hope!</p>
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Option 4 - mad, sad, glad, and scared

This activity will help pupils understand the universality of certain human experiences, and help develop empathy.

- Ask pupils to write a list or mind-map of things which make them feel 'mad'. Encourage them to think of some things from their own everyday lives, some things within the broader community, and some things happening in the wider world.
- Have everyone feed back to the class and write the common themes on the board.
- Repeat for 'sad', 'glad', and 'scared'.
- Ask pupils whether they think someone living 100 years ago might have felt the same things for the same reasons. Did their siblings make them mad too? Did seeing their friends and family make them glad?

- Show pupils that most things can be drilled down to a few fundamental human emotions, and that they have lots in common with other people - whether across history or geography.

The pupils could then focus on one theme from the list in their poem.

Option 5 - commemoration

Discuss in groups the different ways that we commemorate:

- The Commonwealth War Graves Commission care for war memorials to remember 1.7 million people who died in the two world wars
- Many communities build memorials or hold events (e.g. Remembrance Services) – ask pupils if they are aware of local commemorations
- Visiting museums and learning about someone’s life is a way of remembering them

Ask your pupils whether they think it is important to remember and commemorate people who have lost their lives in conflict and why.

Option 6 - worksheet on commemoration

Ask pupils to each complete a Never Such Innocence worksheet about commemoration – these can be downloaded from the NSI website [here](#).

- Their thoughts will directly inform the next phase of Never Such Innocence
- We hugely appreciate any worksheets sent to us in the post or emailed as scans.

Option 7 - creating a poem

Ask pupils to make lists of words that they associate with the topics of conflict and commemoration – start by asking pupils to list words associated with these topics and display them on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper. In groups, get pupils to come up with words that might rhyme with words on this list.

Encourage students to consider the topic from different perspectives. Possible topics include:

- The different experiences of children, teenagers, and adults
- How might women and men have experienced this differently
- The lives of people who were in the military, and civilians
- People in different countries or areas

Tips on writing a poem from Dr Martin Stephen:

- Write about what you know and have experienced
- Ask yourself at the end of every line, ‘Do I really need all these words? What are the ones that carry power, and what are the ones that are padding?’
- Remember you don’t have to write in complete sentences in the poetry – there are no restrictions
- Never use a word just because it rhymes, and remember rhythm is as important in poetry as rhyme
- Think images! Images are pictures that tell a story

Please note that we accept artwork in any medium, and strongly encourage teachers not to filter entries.

Email: enquiries@neversuchinnocence.com Tel: 0207 836 2603

Poems

What would they think?

by Emily Dutson from Perranporth Community Primary School

I have visited museums; been into a mock trench,
I have tasted the ration packs, and smelt the foul stench,
Of a war that killed more men than my mind can behold.
Of a people so unbelievably strong and so bold.

I have read of the politics – “Ferdinand” rings a bell,
The manoeuvres and battles, all the stories to tell.
Letters home to loved ones never again seen.
The songs sung to keep the spirits up and men keen.
I have heard of the men who saw such horrific sights,
That would chase them through their dreams in the night.

And yet the museum experience of taste, smell, sound and sight,
Cannot bring to me the terrible horror and fright,
Of the 8.5 million who died in the fields,
In the hope a fairer place the world would yield.
But I watch the news sitting next to my mum,
And see the count of people injured, displaced from their homes.
There are millions today affected by wars,
That, people believe, are for a fair and just cause.

We remember the soldiers who died through those years,
They gave up their lives so we could live without fear.
I ask “What would they think of our world today?”
My mum shakes her head, with a look of dismay,
“Oh Emily,” she says “Our hope is with you,
your friends and their brother and their sisters too,
To think of the lessons that millions would give,
To live the life they died for, that they hoped we might live.”

Carpe Diem

by Lia Taylor from St. Joseph's College, Ipswich

In these times of peace
With all the triggers calm,
Since the fire has ceased
And the sky's seen our palms

They speak to us.
In the dead of night
And the hope of day,
Do we hear their plight?
Or ignore what they say?

But still, they speak to us.

We cannot neglect,
And we cannot shy away.
We cannot forget,
Lest we hear the bugles play.

Because still, they speak to us.

There are lessons to learn
On the torture of hate,
There is more love to earn,
And fear to eradicate.

And so, they speak to us.

We can't stop here,
We can't give up hope,
We must shape a new world,
One in which we can cope.
This was the beginning
Of a new life for us.

Can you hear them?
Can you hear what they say?

We must pass on their stories,
Let everyone know it,
We must live by their glories,
By the songs of dead poets.

You can hear them. Now,
Heed what they say:
Carpe diem. Seize the day