

# Sounding the Somme – Kit Bag

## Lesson Plan

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Prepare the **Fact File: WW1 Kit Bag** for pupils to look at during the lesson. Either on screen, or as a hand out.

### 1. Lesson One – The Role of Music in WW1 and the Kit Bag

Explain to pupils what the project is about and refer to any previous work produced from other Sounding the Somme projects.

#### Listening task and discussion

Ask pupils to think about the role of music during the war. How would have music been used at this time? What do they know about wartime music? Get pupils specifically to think about how music can reflect a society at a particular time, often creating a national or cultural identity.

Write the responses on the whiteboard.

Play the song *Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag* from the vintage recordings on the resources page and ask the pupils to think about the following questions:

- Do you recognise the song?
- What is it about?
- Who would have sung it?
- When would it have been sung?
- What are its musical characteristics?

Generate a discussion on the song and summarise the responses from the class on the whiteboard. Using the **Fact File: Music During WW1**, talk about the role of music in the war and explain the history behind this song:

- It was composed by two brothers who entered it into a competition and won.
- The piece is about the typical British “stiff upper lip” characteristics which boosted morale.
- It is written in the Music Hall Style popular around the time of WW1
- It was hugely popular due to its catchy tune, accessible singing and playing parts

If you have time, ask pupils to research other well-known wartime songs and share the responses with the class. Are they familiar songs? Have they heard of them before? Are there any similarities between these songs?

#### The Kit Bag discussion

Introduce pupils to a WW1 Kit Bag that was issued to every soldier. Ask them what they think would have been inside it? You could write a list of items on the whiteboard.

Play the Dan Snow **BBC Bitesize** film from the resources page and look at the **Fact File: WW1 Kit Bag** that lists the contents of a Kit Bag. Explain to pupils that soldiers often had a lucky charm in their kit bags. These might include a photograph, a memento from a loved one, or a symbol of good luck (4 leaf clover, black cat, marble etc.).

Ask pupils to think about what personal items they might have taken with them to the front line to remind them of home and loved ones left behind. Get pupils to think about the era (100 years ago) and what would have been available at this time (not a mobile phone!).

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Next, ask pupils to think about their home, and your area, and what they would miss about it if they had to leave to go to war. What makes your area or home special and memorable?

You can list these answers collectively on the whiteboard, or ask pupils to make their own notes in preparation for the composing task.

## 2. Lesson 2 – Composing Task

Recap the contents of lesson one and explain to pupils that they are going to write a piece of music based on one of two themes (or teachers can pre-select just one theme):

1. Writing music inspired by a WW1 soldier's memories of home (a sense of place) or a lucky memento they would put in their kit bag.
2. Writing a song in a Music Hall style (or something more contemporary) to keep up morale in the trenches.

### Sense of place/Memento

This piece of music should be about a specific place, with sounds that might comfort a soldier far away from home on the front line. It could be about the UK in general, or about somewhere specific in the area that you live.

What aspects of the local area are special to you or hold memories? You could write a piece about the landscape and countryside, specific buildings or landmarks in the area or a town story or legend that could be composed about?

Here are some starting ideas for creating a soundscape:

- Look at a photo or picture of a place you like, make a note of what you're looking at and how it makes you feel.
- Create a simple ostinato that you feel summarises the main part of the picture, think about the time of year, or a season to help you do this.
- Layer the ostinato with a couple more motifs, or add some percussive elements.
- Add a base pedal note or two to underpin the whole piece.
- Punctuate this texture with flurries of sound or other melodic ideas that represent something in the picture (a bird, a building, a person).
- Incorporate a musical reference to a lucky memento in the piece. This should sound positive and upbeat.
- Create a structure for your piece, with a beginning, middle and end, choosing how to layer up and order all your sounds. You could create a graphic score to play from, or some notes on manuscript paper.

### Music Hall Style

If song writing is more the strength of your pupils, try writing a song in a Music Hall pastiche style. Pastiche imitates and celebrates a particular style.

The song should contain simple upbeat lyrics, a chordal accompaniment that has a good tempo for marching to and a memorable chorus. It could be scored for voice and piano with the addition of other instruments if desired, or you could write a more contemporary guitar based song, but with the same sentiment of a Music Hall style of song.

The methods of composition to be used for this task are entirely up to you and should reflect how your school normally teaches composition. This could be using keyboards/pianos, computer facilities (Logic, Cubase, Sibelius etc.) or other methods.

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### 3. Lesson 3 – Continuing Compositions

Recap on the work completed in the previous lesson.  
Use this lesson to continue composing tunes.

### 4. Lesson 4– Performances

Recap on the work completed in the previous lesson.

Finalise the compositions and arrangements and produce written or graphic scores during this lesson. Pupils could also write up what they have created and why.

You may want to then share work created across the school, at a Somme100 FILM performance, or/and platformed on our project website!



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