

# History – Animals and their jobs in World War One

## Main Welfare Aims:

To recognise the importance of animals in World War One and why we should care for and respect them.

## Curriculum Links

Key Stage 1 – pupils should be taught:

### History:

- About events beyond living memory that are significant nationally or globally
- How to choose and use parts of stories and other sources to show that they know and understand key features of events

### PSHE links

### Resources Needed:

- Pictures of animals used to help in the war
- Gunfire/trench warfare sounds

### KS1: Introduction

When World War One started in 1914, it wasn't only humans that were asked to help in the war. From carrying supplies to providing company for fighting soldiers, animals played an important part during the war and helped humans in many different ways. Put some pictures of animals helping out in World War One on the board. Ask the children to discuss in groups if they know of any jobs that animals helped with in World War One and then share ideas with the class.

### Main:

Some of the animals that helped in World War One included horses, dogs and pigeons.

**Activity 1:** In pairs or table groups, ask the children to look at the three pictures in the activity 1 worksheet and discuss what important jobs the animals have. What are the animals doing? How are they helping in the war? Feedback and discuss as a class.

### Plenary:

Ask the children who has a pet. Ask them to describe how their pet makes them feel. Does their pet ever make them laugh or make them feel happy when they are feeling sad?

Play them some gunfire sounds (these can be found on a google search) and ask them to imagine they are fighting in the war. How do they think soldiers would have felt? How would an animal have felt? Explain that they would have been away from home and that they were living in difficult places. Would it be scary for them?

**Activity 2:** Have a look at the soldier and dog worksheet. Fill out and discuss how might a dog make a scared soldier feel?

Do you think a dog or a horse might have been a friend to a soldier during these difficult times? Feedback and discuss as a class.

## Animals in World War One Activity 1 worksheet:

Horses, dogs and pigeons all had important jobs to do in World War One.

In your groups or pairs, write down what jobs the animals are doing in the picture and why they are doing them.

1.



**Job:**

**Why?**

2.



**Job:**

**Why?**

3.



**Job:**

**Why?**

### Extension:

1. Dogs are very good at smelling. How might this be useful in the war?
2. Horses are big and strong. What other jobs might they have helped with?

## Activity 2 worksheet:

1. Circle how the sounds of gunfire made you feel?

Sad Happy Scared Unsure Excited

2. Circle how the sounds of gunfire might make a soldier feel?



Sad Happy Scared Unsure Excited

3. Circle how the sounds of gunfire might make an animal feel.



Sad Happy Scared Unsure Excited

Have a look at the soldier below and the dog.



How might a dog make a scared soldier feel?

Why would soldiers and dogs be friends in World War One?

## Teacher guide to activities

### Activity 1:

Picture 1: Carrier pigeon. Pigeons were used in World War one to carry messages from one side of the battlefield to another. They were used because they are quick, very difficult to shoot and with training they are excellent at finding their way home.

Picture 2: Horses were used a lot at the start of the war on the frontline of battle. This is a Calvary charge. Soldiers would have guns with long knives on the end of them (bayonets) and they would have charged at the enemy ready to attack. It was used less and less as the war progressed and trench warfare became used more widely.

Picture 3: Medical dogs were used on the battlefield to get medical kits to injured soldiers. They were quick and agile which meant they had a better chance of getting to injured soldiers than humans. Their kits would contain the basic equipment a soldier could use to attend his wounds himself. For example, a medical kit might have plasters and bandages in it.

### Extension:

1. Dogs were used to sniff out the enemy and warn soldiers if any enemy soldiers were approaching. They would also sniff out rats and other vermin in the trenches and were even used to sniff out mines and bombs (this is something they still do today).
2. Horses are big and strong animals and were used to transport goods and people throughout the war. They were often used to transport very heavy things like artillery and guns.