

Overview of the lesson:

This KS2 activity is linked to General Post Office Despatch Riders who were responsible for delivering important and secret messages to the Front.

Pupils make a secret miniature map that fits into a matchbox.

Before undertaking this activity, pupils are likely to have:

- ◆ Used archival material to research Despatch Riders (who they were, what they did, what they wore for the journey, how they travelled)
- ◆ Discussed what problems they might encounter en route (avoiding the enemy, getting lost, impassable conditions e.g snow, ice and bomb damage, problems with language)
- ◆ Using the internet, found out what and where 'the Front' was
- ◆ Explored maps to plan a route from the school to a particular point on the Front
- ◆ Talked about other ways of sending messages in the First World War comparing with how urgent messages are sent today.

Extension activities could include:

- ◆ **History:** Researching the British Postal Museum & Archive collections to find out about individual Despatch Riders
- ◆ **English:** Ask pupils to imagine they are Despatch Riders who encounter adventures en route to the Front
- ◆ **English:** Reading adventure stories set in the First World War (see Reading List)
- ◆ **English:** Reading poetry written by men on the Front
- ◆ **Art & Design:** Looking at paintings and drawings made by First World War artists e.g. John Singer Sargent, Paul Nash, C.R.W. Nevison, Stanley Spencer, Percy Wyndham Lewis or Muirhead Bone
- ◆ **D&T, Science:** Exploring other ways of making secret messages e.g. invisible ink
- ◆ **Geography:** Using maps to explore alternative routes to a particular point on the Front
- ◆ **MFL:** Introduce vocabulary appropriate to directions/signs in a foreign country

**To do:**

- ◆ Plan a short route for the map-making activity
- ◆ Assemble equipment: an empty matchbox or similar for each pupil; strips of blank paper; art materials e.g. felt-tips, pencils, coloured inks; glue sticks. Cameras would be useful but not essential

Success criteria**By the end of the project:**

- ◆ All pupils will be familiar with how mail was moved to the Front
- ◆ All pupils will be aware of the difficulties delivering mail to the Front
- ◆ Some will explore further to discover more about moving mail to the Front

Key terms

Home Depot
Despatch Rider
The Front
Pistol

ACTIVITY 4 MISSION POSSIBLE

Despatch Riders delivered important and secret messages to the Front. They travelled on motorbikes at high speed. It was dangerous work so they carried a pistol!



The men were excellent map-readers. If the enemy, bomb damage or weather conditions blocked the way, they had to change the route quickly.

Your task is to make a map for your journey. Only you will be able to decipher it in case it falls into enemy hands.

Step 1

Cut your strip of paper just wide enough to fit in a matchbox and about six times longer.

Step 2

Divide the paper into six equal sections. Each section should be slightly shorter than the length of the box so it will fit inside when folded.

Step 3

Using the lines as a guide, fold the strip into a concertina.

Step 4

Walk along your route and note, record and collect items that will remind you which way you went e.g. a leaf from a large tree you passed, the colour of a front door. Try thinking of ways to describe things without words e.g. a barking dog, a creaking gate, or smells from a café.

Step 5

On your map, stick items down, draw signs and symbols or make coloured marks/shapes in the order that you noted them on your route. REMEMBER NO WORDS!

Step 6

Fold up your map into the matchbox. Good luck for the journey!

MESSAGES HAD TO GET THROUGH AT ALL COSTS!

