

## **MASS OBSERVATION DIARY SESSION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

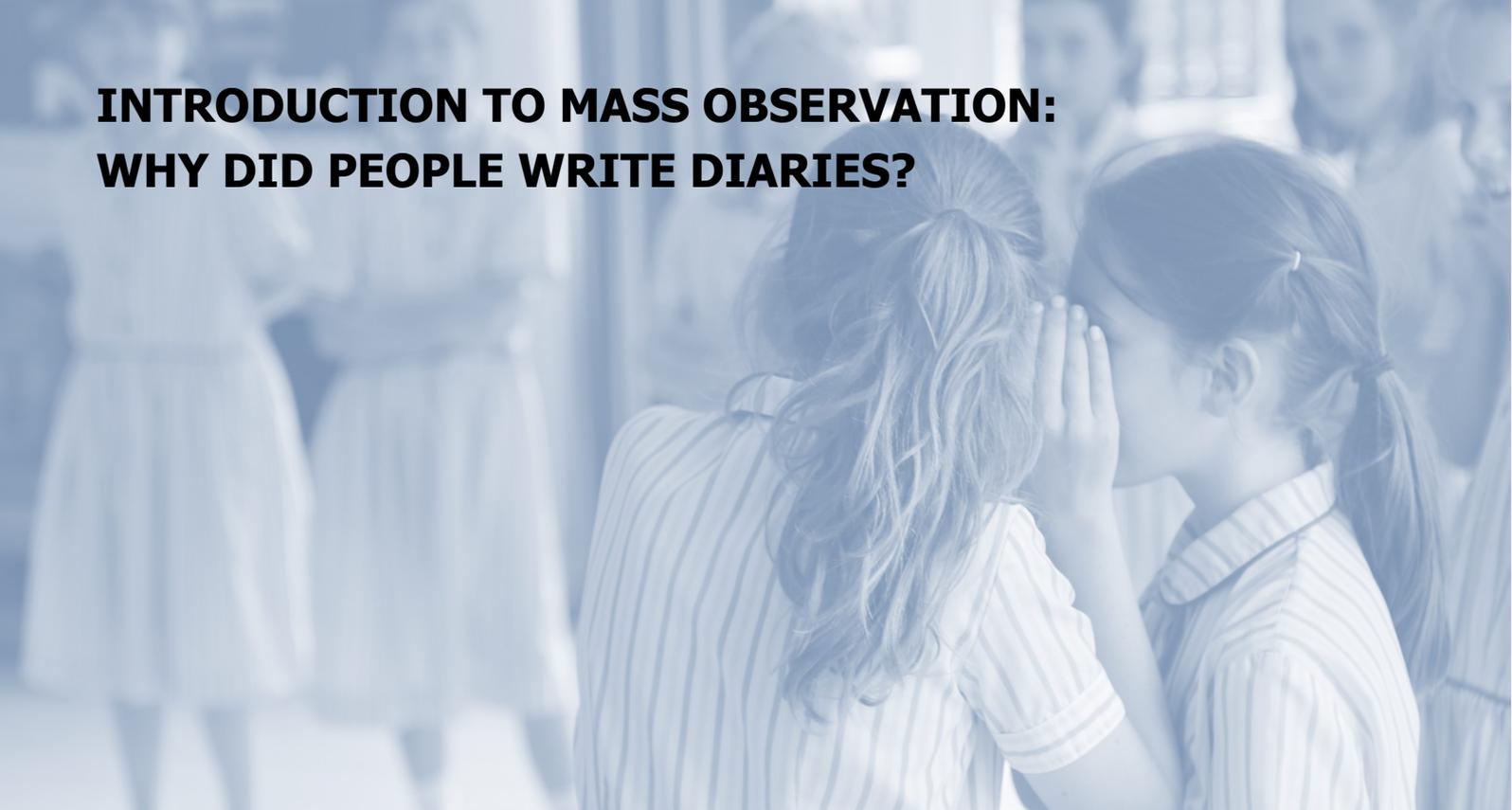
Mass Observation was formed in 1937 and aimed to gauge public opinion through various different research methods. By taking part in fun diary-focused activities, your students will learn more about these methods and also develop skills in historical enquiry, reading for meaning and confidence in spoken presentation.

### **Learning objectives:**

- To know the features of a diary.
- To understand why people wrote diaries for Mass Observation.
- To engage in historical enquiry, using primary source material.
- To compare and contrast non-fiction writing from different times and by different writers.
- To summarise non-fiction writing by making notes.
- To use their knowledge of diaries to write in character.
- To have empathy for children evacuated during the Second World War.



# INTRODUCTION TO MASS OBSERVATION: WHY DID PEOPLE WRITE DIARIES?



TIME	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESOURCES
10 mins	<p>Begin with some questions:</p> <p>Q. Do any of you keep a diary?</p> <p>Q. Why do people write diaries?</p> <p>Q. Who are they written for?</p> <p>Q. Do you think people would mind if someone else read their diary?</p> <p>Introduce the theme of the session and give a little background to the Mass Observation diaries, and the other research methods MO used.</p>	<p>To know the features of a diary.</p> <p>To understand why people wrote diaries for Mass Observation.</p>	Power Point.

# GETTING TO KNOW THE DIARISTS: COMPARE AND CONTRAST

TIME	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESOURCES
50 mins	<p>Give each table a diary pack. Each pack contains 6 different diaries. Some were written a long time ago, some more recently ... some were written by children, and some by adults.</p> <p>Show the <i>Diary Detective</i> sheet on the Power Point and talk through the activity, modelling how to complete the grid as you go:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-take one diary (look for the number)</li> <li>-fill in the grid</li> <li>-swap your diary for another</li> <li>-keep going until you fill the whole grid</li> </ul> <p>Emphasise that there are no right or wrong answers at this point; everyone is being a 'detective'.</p> <p>After 40 minutes, discuss what they've found out and compare their answers. Then show yours on the Power Point.</p>	<p>To engage in historical enquiry, using primary source material.</p> <p>To compare and contrast non-fiction writing from different times and by different writers.</p>	<p>Power Point.</p> <p>Diary detective sheet.</p>

# BEING A MASS OBSERVER: DIARY WRITING ACTIVITY

TIME	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESOURCES
20 mins	<p>Now that they've become diary experts, it's time to become a Mass Observer and write their own diary.</p> <p>Explain that this diary-writing activity is going to be slightly different because they have to imagine that they have travelled back to the Second World War, and are about to be evacuated.</p> <p>Q. What was evacuation? Q. Why did it happen?</p> <p>The teacher is going to go back in time too and become a Second World War Infant School teacher who is evacuating her class. As she tells them all about this, they are going to make notes on what she says—just like the Mass Observers did.</p> <p>Ask for two volunteers to come and make notes on the flip chart for everyone (this will help others who find listening and writing tricky). They can wear the MO costumes if they like.</p>	<p>To summarise non-fiction writing by making notes.</p> <p>To have empathy for children evacuated during the Second World War.</p>	<p>Flip chart.</p> <p>Paper and clipboards.</p> <p>Copies of the teachers report, in case children would like to read along.</p>

# BEING A MASS OBSERVER: DIARY WRITING ACTIVITY

TIME	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESOURCES
40 mins	<p>Now they've got all their notes, they can use them to write their own diary entry. They can either write as the teacher or challenge themselves and write as one of the children being evacuated.</p> <p>Model how to do this using the Power Point.</p> <p>Give students 30 minutes to write and 10 minutes to share at the end.</p> <p>Suggest that they can continue the activity back at school, if they have time.</p>	To use their knowledge of diaries to write in character.	Power Point. Paper.