

## **MASS OBSERVATION BEING A RESEARCHER SESSION FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Mass Observation was formed in 1937 and aimed to gauge public opinion through various different research methods. By taking part in this session your students will gain confidence in learning by engaging in activities that support key-research skills such as critical thinking, analysis and evaluation.

### **Learning objectives:**

- To understand the skills needed to be a researcher.
- To think of themselves as researchers.
- To begin to understand how The Keep can help them with research.
- To develop skills in critical thinking.
- To engage in research.
- To use a range of sources.
- To analyse information and reflect on its reliability.
- To gain confidence in using The Keep as a tool for supporting research.
- To think critically and evaluate.
- To consider different viewpoints.



# WHAT IS RESEARCH AND WHAT SKILLS DOES IT REQUIRE?

TIME	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESOURCES
10 mins	<p>Introduce the theme of the session and outline that the students are going to <b>learn how to be better researchers.</b></p> <p>Q. What is research?</p> <p>Q. When have you been a researcher? Prompt them to think about learning at school and home, interests and hobbies.</p> <p>Q. What skills do you need to be a good researcher?</p> <p>Q. How long does research take?</p> <p>Explain what an archive is and introduce The Keep.</p> <p>Q. How might the resources here help researchers?</p> <p>Q. Could they help you?</p> <p>Play a soundbite of a researcher talking about how they've used Mass Observation.</p> <p>If time, students can quickly jot down everything they already know about the Second World War on the knowledge sheet.</p>	<p>To understand the skills needed to be a researcher.</p> <p>To think of themselves as researchers.</p> <p>To begin to understand how The Keep can help them with research.</p>	Knowledge sheet.

# CRITICAL THINKING

TIME	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESOURCES
15 mins	<p>One of the key skills for research is critical thinking. This is the ability to question, reason, solve problems, identify useful information and reflect.</p> <p>Q. Why are these abilities important for research?</p> <p>Explain that they are going to complete a short exercise that requires critical thinking. They have got to decide whether a selection of statements, taken from The Mass Observation Archive, are fact or opinion.</p> <p>Hand out statement sheets.</p> <p>After they have completed the task, ask:</p> <p>Q. Was it easy? Why/Why not?</p> <p>Q. How did you work it out?</p> <p>Q. Did it make you think about the reliability of some evidence?</p>	To develop skills in critical thinking.	Sheets with statements on.

# DID THE WAR MAKE PEOPLE FEEL SAD?

TIME	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESOURCES
15 mins	<p>Explain that they are going to complete another exercise that requires critical thinking. Give each group one document. Pose the question: <i>Did the Second World War make the public feel sad?</i></p> <p>The groups then spend time reading through their document and answering the question based on this research.</p> <p>Each group takes it in turn to feedback back.</p> <p>Q. Is one answer enough?</p> <p>Q. Why not?</p> <p>Q. Do you think that researchers can look at just one source?</p> <p>Discuss with the students the importance of finding different types of evidence to support a point. If you combined all of their answers (not just one), this would be the backbone of a good essay.</p>	<p>To think critically and evaluate.</p> <p>To consider different viewpoints.</p>	<p>Research sheet with questions:</p> <p>Did the Second World War make the public feel sad?</p> <p>What evidence have you found to back up your answer?</p>

# DO WORLD EVENTS HAVE AN IMPACT ON MORALE?

TIME	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESOURCES
1 hour	<p>The group will now have time to explore wartime morale in greater detail by looking at a range of source material.</p> <p>Pose a new question: <i>Do world events have an impact on the public's morale?</i></p> <p>Teacher to give out boxes of material and group to rotate from table to table and students to add information to their knowledge sheet.</p> <p>Use time at the end of this activity to reflect on what they've found out:</p> <p>Q. Was it different looking at archive material instead of a book?</p> <p>Q. What are the limitations?</p> <p>Q. What would you like to research further?</p>	<p>To engage in research.</p> <p>To use a range of sources.</p> <p>To analyse information and reflect on its reliability.</p>	<p>A selection of boxes related to major world event—see corresponding resource sheet for details.</p> <p>Knowledge sheet.</p>

# WHERE CAN I GO NEXT WITH MY RESEARCH?

TIME	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESOURCES
20 Mins	<p>In this final section of the workshop, the students will learn how to use resources at The Keep.</p> <p>This can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-A demonstration of how to use the online catalogue.</li> <li>-A tour that focuses on the journey of a researcher: how to register, what resources are available in the Reference and Reading Rooms ...</li> <li>-A pack that they can take away which includes lists of Topic Collections, MOP directives and themes to explore with Mass Observation.</li> </ul>	To gain confidence in using The Keep as a tool for supporting research.	Access to The Keep's online catalogue.