

## How did Gottlieb explore what permacrisis *might* have felt like in 1938?

### School Context

King Edward VII School is a fully comprehensive 11-18 school in the centre of Sheffield. The History and Politics Department has seven subject-specialists, who have a range of experiences within school leadership, ITE provision and the Historical Association.

The curriculum is enquiry based and is heavily influenced by the latest scholarship. We want students to be able to 'see themselves' in the curriculum and be 'taken to other worlds.' We want them to become curious and critical; to be able to 'think like historians.'

Curriculum planning is done in pairs, with members of the department taking ownership of planning enquiries that are around 6 lessons in length. As part of this process, enquiry plans are produced that illuminate thinking to other members of staff who teach the enquiries. There is no requirement to use the centrally planned resources, rather, staff are encouraged to read the plan and have the freedom to teach the enquiry in a way that best suits their classes as long as they are able to answer the overarching enquiry question. The intricate planning of the fingertip or factual knowledge, substantive, disciplinary and procedural knowledge and the sharing of this via the enquiry plan and in departmental meetings allows for this autonomy. We define the types of knowledge as per the diagram (fig. 1) below and hope that its inclusion helps to illuminate our planning process.

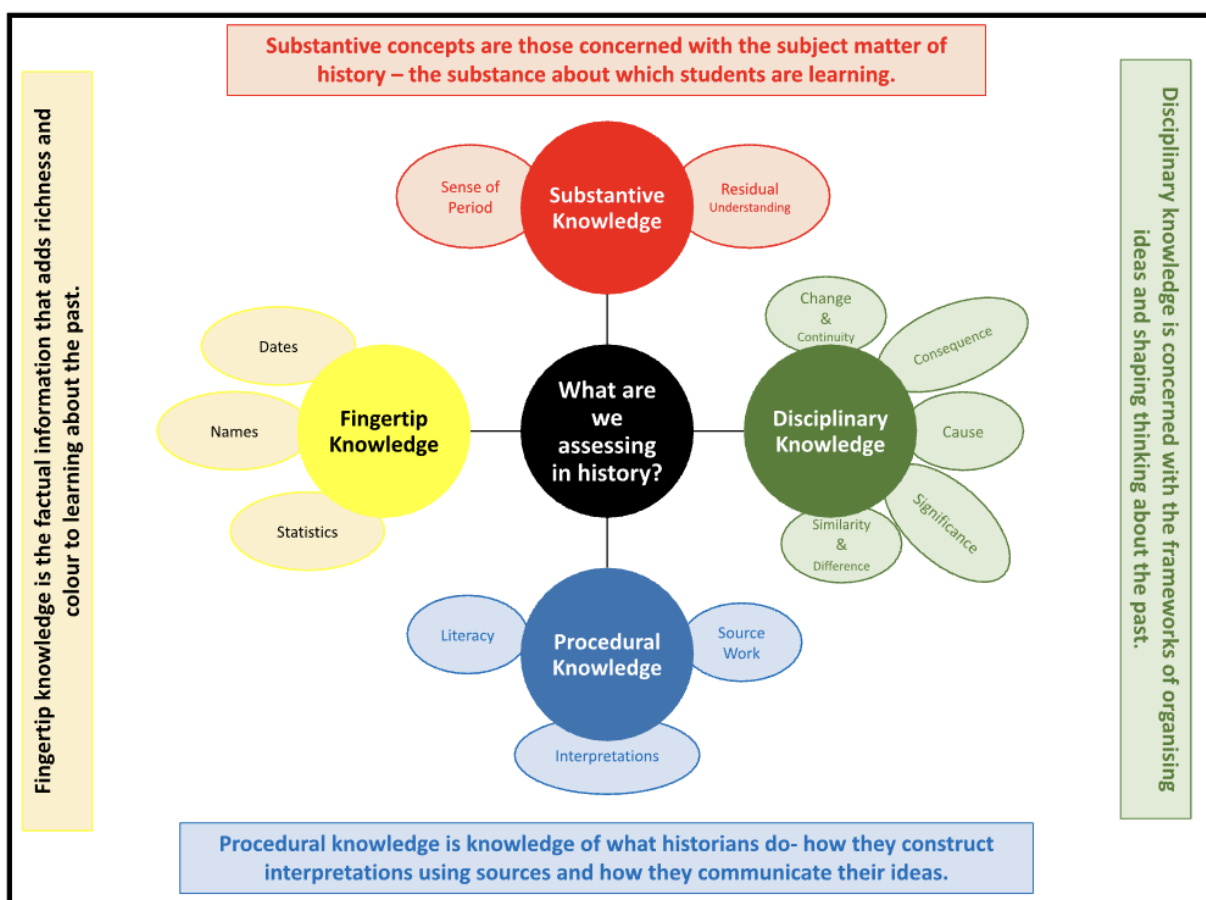


Fig. 1: This was produced by Sarah Davis and was heavily influenced by the work of Christine Counsell and other contributors to the HA. This has also been shared more widely in South Yorkshire as part of the PGDE History Programme at The University of Sheffield, where Sarah was a course leader.

In Y7, students have 2 lessons per week. In Y8 and Y9, students have either one or two lessons per week and this 'flips' with Geography half way through the year, meaning that students have 1.5 lessons per week over the year. Lessons are 60 minutes in length.

The resources produced for the enquiry above, were used with mixed-ability Y9 classes. Some of their work on the end of enquiry task is included.

### Scholarly and curricular rationale

This enquiry is designed to help students to understand the turbulent political and social atmosphere of 1938 and develop their understanding of **what mattered to people in the past**. It builds on their work on World War One and gives them a flavour of the experiences of different people during the interwar period in preparation for studying WW2 and the legacies of global conflicts in the C20th. By examining this period through a new lens of emotion history or 'history from within', students will also have the opportunity to develop their disciplinary understanding of **similarity and difference**. The enquiry lessons will allow students to '**Think like an historian**' and will curate rather than narrate the process that Gottlieb has undertaken, developing their procedural knowledge of source work. Videos from Prof. Gottlieb that directly address and pose questions to the students, in a similar way to the use of videos by Dr. Yasmin Khan as outlined by Hibbert and Patel in TH 177, will play a key role in this process. The enquiry will include FL Lucas' diary, Mass Observation and Nicola Baldwin's play *The Nervous State*, to enrich student appreciation of different experiences of the 'permacrisis'<sup>1</sup> of 1938 and the importance of reconstructing hidden voices from the past.

We felt that it was important to focus on the process of knowledge exchange that Gottlieb and her team had gone through (and we had been part of) to help students to better understand the processes and purposes of studying history. At the University of Sheffield, academics and experts in a range fields, share their research methods and findings with creatives and educators in order to allow a wider order to engage with the past. These collaborative exchanges are incredibly valuable to all parties in developing their respective crafts. This has been an enjoyable and enriching experience for students also.

### Summary of lessons

We have included a detailed **enquiry plan** as part of the enquiry materials in order to make our thinking really explicit to teachers. There are also **additional notes** and references to help teachers in the notes section of each PowerPoint slide that give guidance on timings and the logistics of each activity.

Lesson focus and learning objectives	Learning activities	Resources for the lesson
<p>1. <b>Why is Gottlieb so interested in foreign policy in 1938?</b> LO: to develop an understanding of the events of 1938 and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intro to Gottlieb and new concepts</li> <li>- Living foreign policy graph</li> <li>- Chamberlain speech</li> <li>- Answer the enquiry question</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Printed knowledge organiser for each student</li> <li>- PowerPoint 1</li> <li>- Printed worksheet for each student: Slides</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> a long period of great difficulty, confusion, or suffering that seems to have no end [[PERMACRISIS | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary](#)]

the idea of 'history from within'		17 & 18 of PowerPoint 1 - Gottlieb Video 1: Intro to the research & Gottlieb Video 2: Recruiting research assistants
<b>2. What sources are useful to Gottlieb in exploring what permacrisis might have felt like in 1938?</b> LO: to develop an understanding of how different groups of people felt during 1938 and how historians know	- Fever chart analysis - Source investigation: modelling focus on FL Lucas - Choose 2-3 sources for Gottlieb - Answer the enquiry question on the knowledge organiser	- PowerPoint 2 - Printed sheets from slides 14-21: Fever chart- one each Table- one per group, size A3, Source Pack- one per group - Gottlieb Video 3: Choosing sources challenge
<b>3. Why is Mass Observation useful to Gottlieb in exploring what permacrisis might have felt like in 1938?</b> LO: to develop an understanding of how different groups of people felt during 1938 and how historians know	- Knowledge recall - Read Mass Observation extracts and discuss the questions - Answer the enquiry question on the knowledge organiser	- PowerPoint 3 - Printed Mass Observation Extracts- one per pair (slides 14-17) - Gottlieb video 4: Permacrisis and relevance to our own society
<b>4. How did Gottlieb explore what 'permacrisis' might have felt like in 1938?</b> LO: to develop an understanding of the process and importance of knowledge exchange between academics and other collaborators	- Knowledge recall - Video and discussion - Playbill writing	- PowerPoint 4 - Printed worksheet for each student: Slides 9 and 10 - Gottlieb video 5: The importance of knowledge exchange - <a href="https://player.sheffield.ac.uk/events/nervous-state-collaboration-performances-and-impact">https://player.sheffield.ac.uk/events/nervous-state-collaboration-performances-and-impact</a>

### Conclusions and reflections

*This enquiry has been really enjoyable to write and to teach. Having the opportunity to work with experts in a range of fields has pushed us creatively and pedagogically. Students have loved the*

*interactions with Gottlieb and her team, both in person and through the videos that punctuate and give shape to the enquiry.*

*The lens of emotion history- the process of exploring how people in the past felt about what was happening- has allowed students to develop their disciplinary and procedural knowledge- they are much more cautious with language in reference to the extent of conclusions that can be drawn from sources and much more sensitive to the fact that different people in the past experienced events in different ways. This enquiry has also allowed them to make meaningful connections between the past and present. One student cited that it helped them to make sense of some of their own emotions whilst hearing about current affairs on the news. Other students cited enjoying bringing people from the past to life in different ways and hearing about Baldwin's work inspired them to explore history from below and within in other time periods.*

*We have shared these resources within our department. Other teachers have cited that they were also able to successfully adapt and teach the enquiry using the resources because we put extra notes underneath the PowerPoint slides, wrote 'teacher knowledge' slides and produced a detailed enquiry plan. These resources synthesised our learning from the knowledge exchange project and made our thinking explicit throughout. We hope that this is also useful for colleagues outside of our school.*

*Sarah Davis & Katy Dixon, King Edward VII School, December 2023*

*Useful resources:*

<https://player.sheffield.ac.uk/events/nervous-state-collaboration-performances-and-impact>