



BRITAIN SINCE 1930: JARROW CRUSADE

Teachers' notes

This term the Year 4 history topic was Britain since 1930. As an introduction to the period the class had already watched the *How We Used to Live* video for the 1930s. The children had also written letters to their grandparents, asking for memories of pre- and post-war Britain.

The class teacher, Caroline, and I decided that the 1936 Jarrow March would make a good case study of the Depression. So often this decade of hardship is omitted from the unit, wrongly in our view.

How were we to bring the march to life for the children?

We decided to set the scene through studying a photograph of the march and working on J B Priestley's original account of what the town of Jarrow was like in 1933. Caroline's husband kindly made a tape-recording of the Priestley account, and we used historical information from Stevenson and Cook's book *The Slump* to work out the details of what might have been involved in the march. [Priestley's written account is supplied here – see Resources.]

We were able to identify key people and events, such as the 1935 shutting of Palmer's shipyard, which had kept the town alive; the mayor; the council; and the town's MP, Ellen Wilkinson. We also discovered that the town's Boy Scouts lent the marchers field kitchens to provide food, and that the Crusade Committee bought leather and nails so the marchers could repair their own boots. In the town we identified shopkeepers, shipyard workers (foremen, clerks, painters, draughtsmen), coal miners, railway workers, policemen, teachers and doctors.

On the basis of this information I was able to plan out two lessons and prepare character cards for role play.

Class/Year group

Year 4, mixed gender and ability, 30 children in the class.

Time

Two lessons, overall just over 2 hours.

Learning objectives

History:

- To develop the children's understanding of what the Jarrow Crusade was about, and the related issues of unemployment, hunger, deprivation.
- To foster pupils' enquiry skills in the context of developing their understanding.

Literacy:

- To extend the children's observation, speaking and listening skills.
- To extend the children's reading skills, through scaffolding their reading of two challenging texts, one visual, the other written.

Key questions

What was the Jarrow crusade?

Why did it occur?

What did it involve?

What was its outcome?

Resources

- Photograph of the Jarrow marchers – one copy per pair of children.
Download images from
http://www.bbc.co.uk/tyne/content/image_galleries/jarrow_crusade_gallery.shtml?1
- J B Priestley's 1933 description of the town of Jarrow – one copy per child (taken from his 1934 book: *English Journey*) (see *Resources A*)
- Tape-recording of the JB Priestley piece (not supplied)
- Character cards for role play (see *Resources B*)
- Character/family sheets for role play (see *Resources C*)

Other useful references (not supplied)

The BBC has an excellent summary of the Jarrow Crusade, including the general situation, a brief biography of Ellen Wilkinson, and the aftermath.

www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/britain_wwone/jarrow_01.shtml

Here are some other useful websites:

<http://century.guardian.co.uk/1930-1939/Story/0,6051,127027,00.html>

A primary source: *Guardian* article, written a week after the start of the March; gives typical reporter's account of the marchers.

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_20001109/ai_n14344469

Modern newspaper article by Ian Jack; from bottom of p.1 to end of p.3 contains good detail about the Crusade.

<http://www.answers.com/topic/jarrow-march> Concise summary.

Books: Mowat, C L (1955) *Britain between the wars: 1918-1940*, Methuen & Co., p. 443

Stevenson, J & Cook, C (1978) *The Slump: Society and Politics during the Depression*, Jonathan Cape, pp. 184-187

The teaching [Lesson 1]

Episode 1

Focus: The visual image – the Jarrow March photograph.

We put the children into pairs, gave each pair a copy of the photograph of the march, and gave them a few minutes to study it. We then asked them to think of a headline for the picture, using just a few words.

This they enjoyed, coming up with pithy headlines such as: MISERY!

We now prepared to move on to the ‘I spy with my little eye’ game. We split the class into two teams (Left team and Right team), but kept the children in pairs within their teams. We divided each pair into a looker using a magnifying glass, and a writer who was to jot down all the things the pair could spy in the picture.

Episode 2

Focus: Looking deeper into the photograph – playing ‘I spy with my little eye’.

Before the game began, I stressed the idea of doing detective work, looking at clues in the photograph, and remembering the senses of sight, smell and touch. We now played the game, with the pairs first jotting down the things they were to spy. Then we started, with a pair from the Right team asking the Left team to spy something in the picture. Next it was a pair from the Left team’s turn to ask, and so the game went, turn and turn about. We discussed and dealt with issues from the photo as they arose. For example, when the point was made that it was only men who were marching (arising from:

I spy with my little eye, something beginning with ‘m’), a child remarked that women did not have jobs so they did not worry about losing them. To this another child responded that although the women would have had to stay at home to look after the children, they would have been worried about their husbands losing their jobs.

An example of the children’s close looking was: *I spy something beginning with ‘r’ (for rain). We asked: How do you know it was raining? Came the response: The shining ground, and they were wearing raincoats and Wellingtons.* The children also noticed that some of the marchers were wearing clogs.

From the discussions and explanations arising during the game, the children picked up a good amount of background information, such as that the march went from Jarrow to London, and that the marchers didn’t walk back, they caught a train.

The level of pupil involvement and observation was acute. Each child had a go and the Left team won by one point with great cheers for themselves.

Episode 3

Focus: Enquiry skills - raising questions about the crusade.

The next part was to help the children develop the art of questioning. We asked each pair of children to come up with at least one question in relation to the photograph. Below is their list:

- Why are they bothering to march?
- How many miles from Jarrow to London is it?
- Is it raining?
- Why did they walk from Jarrow to London?
- Why did they catch a train back from London to Jarrow?
- How long did it take to march?
- Why are they so grumpy?
- Why are they holding their signs?
- What are the men like?
- Who are the men?
- Where is Jarrow?
- Why have they got the signs?
- What did the government do about the Jarrow Crusade?
- How many men are there?
- Did they sleep?
- Did they eat?
- What kinds of food?
- What were they wearing?
- Why was there a policeman?
- What does 'crusade' mean?
- Why could they not get any jobs?

After inviting answers from the class, referring them to atlases and briefly answering the remaining questions, I changed the thrust, because I knew we were going to play the Priestley tape in the next lesson, after the short afternoon break. I asked: *Any questions about Jarrow?*

- Why did they lose their jobs?
- What caused the company [shipyard] to close down?
- Did they have houses?
- How many people lived there?

The teaching [Lesson 2]

Episode 1

Focus: Reading, listening, imagining – Priestley’s description of Jarrow.

We now moved on to consider the Priestley document (Resource A supplied). As a brief introduction, we gave each child a copy, and asked them to read it through quickly. We told the children to underline words and phrases they did not understand.

Next we told the class they were going to visit Jarrow, and to shut their eyes to help them imagine the town. We played the tape through, while the children listened intently with their eyes closed.

At the end of the tape, we announced that we would play it through again. This time the class would follow the words on their written copies. As they listened the children were to highlight words, phrases and sentences that described what the town was like. We wanted them to try to visualise Jarrow in their minds, to recreate mentally the town as it was in 1933.

We now played the tape for the second time, while the children highlighted key sections. Afterwards we asked the class to put aside their copies of the document, think for a few minutes, then to write down their own key words and phrases to describe Jarrow.

Episode 2

Focus: People of Jarrow at the time of the march.

The lesson now switched focus. We put up a list of some of the people who would have lived in the town in 1936. Our list read:

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mayor | Manager of the shipyard |
| Councillors | Ship painter |
| Ellen Wilkinson, MP | Draughtsman in shipyard office |
| Boy Scout leader | Riveter |
| Publican | Labourer |
| Miner | Doctor |
| School teacher | Grocer |
| Policeman | Post Office keeper |

We explained briefly to the class what each of the characters did. Now we moved on to the role play, with the children taking on the characters on the list.

Episode 3

Focus: Role play – Jarrow characters.

The class teacher, Caroline, had the brainwave of making the class do the role play in boy/girl pairs. I had prepared 15 role cards (Resource B supplied) and there were 15 pairs, so it all fell very neatly. We gave out the cards randomly to the pairs, telling them that each pair was a family (this was to give the girls a voice, as most of the characters were inevitably men).

The pairs, in role as families, now discussed what they had heard about the closing of the shipyard, and what they felt should be done about it. They also talked about what their lives were like, their homes, where they worked (or used to work) and what their jobs were like.

Intense discussion followed. After 10 minutes or so, we stopped them. Each pair now came up to the front and gave a brief report on their family to the rest of the class.

Finally, we gave out the character/family sheets (Resource C supplied) for the pairs to draw on, and the lesson ended.

The next day Caroline told the class what happened in the years after the Jarrow Crusade, and the children discussed how their role-play characters would have been affected.

Learning outcomes

The children:

- developed a good understanding of what the Jarrow Crusade was about, and the related issues of unemployment, hunger, deprivation
- developed their skills of historical enquiry through investigating a photograph in depth and posing questions relating to the Jarrow Crusade
- extended their observation, speaking and listening skills
- extended their reading skills, of both visual and written texts.

Nuffield Primary History project

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