

Notes for Teachers

The ideas in this study guide are intended as starting points for a cross curricular topic based on the film and they are aimed at children between the ages of 6 and 11 years. The guide is divided up into a series of photocopiable worksheets with activities. The activities seek to complement and extend the pleasure that the children will have derived from a visit to the cinema whilst at the same time meeting some of the requirements of the National Curriculum.

The classroom tasks are primarily focused towards KS2 but they are adaptable for KS1. The table produced below can be used for planning and record keeping.

Table for planning and record keeping

Looking At The Film	English	KS1/2	AT1
What Is The Film About?	English	KS1/2	AT1/2
About The Author	English	KS2	AT2/3
From The Book To The Film	English Art	KS2 KS1/2	AT2/3 AT1
How Does the Film Make You Feel?	English	KS1/2	AT 1/3
Characters In The Film	English	KS1/2	AT1/2
Sara 's Imagination	English Art	KS1/2 KS1/2	AT3 AT1
Filming In Time	History	KS1 KS2	1a(Study Area) 3a(Study Area)
Diwali	English R.E. Art	KS1/2 KS1/2 KS 1/2	AT1/2/3 AT 1
India	Geography	KS1 KS2	1c, 2e, f, 4 1b,d, 2d,e,f, 4
Education	History Maths	KS1 KS2 KS2	1a,b(Study Area) 3a(Study Unit) AT2/3
The Rich And The Poor	History	KS1 KS2	1b(Study Area) 3a(Study Unit)
World War I	English Music	KS1/2AT3 KS1/2	AT1
Your Locality during World War I	History	KS1 KS2	5b (Study Unit)



SYNOPSIS

Raised in the distant jungles of India, a young girl lives in a world filled with luxury, magical tales, exotic experiences and the adoring love of her father. But when she comes to New York to enrol in the strict boarding school that her late mother once attended, the girl finds the realities of her new life insufferably grim. Then suddenly, using only her will and imagination, she finds a way to bring the magic of her childhood in India into every corner of Miss Minchin's School for Girls. A Little Princess is the story of the power of one girl's spirit and its ability to change her life and the fortunes of those around her.

Looking at The Film

BEFORE YOU SEE THE FILM

Have a brainstorming session as a class, to try to guess what the film might be about. Look at the title 'A

Little Princess'. What does this suggest to you? Had you heard of the film before you knew that you were going to see it? Where did you hear about it - on the television, in a magazine, from a poster or cinema trailer? Do you think that you are going to enjoy the film?

With a partner or on your own, write a few lines describing what you think the film may be about.

When going to see the film, look out for the colours used - particularly at the school and in India. What do you notice about them? Also listen out for the music used in the film - what does it remind you of? How does the music make you feel? Listen out for any changes during the film. Why do you think it changes?

WHEN YOU HAVE SEEN THE FILM

Were you right in your guesses? Now that you have seen the film, think about why the story was given the title 'A Little Princess'? What does the title mean - is Sara really a princess?

Sara makes the comment that "all girls are princesses". Do you agree with this - what do you think is meant by this?

If all girls are princesses, what would this make all the boys? Remember that this story was written 100 years ago when boys and girls were treated very differently.

FAVOURITE SCENES

Once you have seen the film, get together as a group and talk about the film. Think about:

- what you liked about the film
- what you did not like about the film
- which characters you liked
- which characters you did not like
- the ending of the film - did you enjoy it or would you have had a different ending?

What do you think will happen to Sara now that she is reunited with her father? Where will she live? Will she keep in touch with her friends? What about Miss Minchin - do you think that she has learnt her lesson? Write a sequel to A Little Princess following the adventures of Sara and Becky from the end of the film.

What is the film about?

The film looks at several issues and could be said to be about a number of things. Below are some statements about the story. Can you cut them out and put them in order starting with the one that you think is the most important and putting the least important at the bottom. You may find that there are some statements that you think should not be included at all. At the bottom is a space for any additional statement that you feel should be included.

1. It is about the relationship between a daughter and her father.

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2. It is about the power of magic.

.....

3. It shows us that all girls are princesses.

.....

4. It is about the inner strength and determination of Sara.

.....

5. It is about the importance of friendship.

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6. It shows us that money is not everything.

.....

7. It is about India.

.....

8. It is about children obeying adults who know what is best for you.

.....

9. It is about the difference between being rich and poor.

.....

10.

.....

Compare your statements to your class-mates - do you all agree on the order of these?

About the Author

Little Princess has been adapted for the screen from the novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett. She was born in Victorian times in the year 1849 in Manchester and died at the age of 75 in New York in the year 1924. She wrote many classic children's stories, including Little Lord Fauntleroy and The Secret Garden, both of which have also been made into films.

Have you read or seen either of these? If so you will probably notice that they have several themes in common.

Have you read the novel A Little Princess? Did you notice the differences between the book and the film - the filmmakers changed events in the book for the film.

Write the changes from the book that you remember in the chart below.

Events that were in the film but not the book

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Why do you think that the filmmakers made these changes? Do they add something to the story?

From the book to the film

The passage shown on this page is taken from Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel and was also shown in the film - can you remember the scene?

You have been asked to turn this piece of writing into a piece of film. Read the passage through and underline the ACTION - the things that the characters do and say. These are the parts that you will probably show in your film more than the thoughts of the person.

Think about:

- What you are going to show in your film and what you will leave out.
- The characters you will need to use.
- What are you going to show first.
- Where you will set the scene.
- The order in which things will happen.
- What your characters will say and how they will say it.

You could plan your filming in two ways:

1. Use a storyboard - this looks like a cartoon strip. In each box you will draw a picture of what is happening - what you want to show in that frame - where your characters are standing. In the space opposite you will write down if anything is being said (the dialogue) or describe how the characters are looking. A blank storyboard is provided on page 18 for your use.

2. You could write a script - this would show what the characters are saying in dialogue form only.

Once you have carried out one of the above you will be ready to film your piece - choose your actors and your camerapeople and off you go!

When Sara entered the schoolroom the next morning everybody looked at her with wide, interested eyes. By that time every pupil - from Lavinia Herbert, who was nearly thirteen and felt quite grown up, to Lottie Legh, who was only just four and the baby of the school had heard a great deal about her. They knew very certainly that she was Miss Minchin's star pupil and was considered a credit to the establishment. Sara was sitting quietly in her seat, waiting to be told what to do. She had been placed near Miss Minchin's desk. She was not abashed at all by the many pairs of eyes watching her. She was interested, and looked back quietly at the children who looked at her. She wondered what they were thinking of and if they liked Miss Minchin, and if they cared for their lessons, and if any of them had a papa at all like her own. After Sara had sat in her seat in the schoolroom for a few minutes being looked at by the pupils, Miss Minchin rapped in a dignified manner upon her desk. "Young ladies," she said, "I wish to introduce you to your new companion." All the little girls rose in their places, and Sara rose also. "I shall expect you all to be very agreeable to Miss Crewe; she has just come to us from a great distance - in fact, from India. As soon as lessons are over you must make each other's acquaintance.

You have probably noticed that telling a story in words and telling one on film is very different. If the author wants the reader to know something, they can simply write it down, but the filmmaker has to turn this information into pictures.

How does the film make you feel?

"This movie has a lot of joy, and the dramatic highs and lows are really extreme." (Mark Johnson, Producer) The film is very moving. There are some very exciting and funny moments but there are also some very sad moments.

Below is a chart for you to fill in. Think back to the parts in the movie that made you feel happy, the parts that made you feel sad and the parts that you felt were exciting. Write these down in the spaces below either on your own or with a partner and then discuss these as a class.

PARTS THAT MADE ME FEEL HAPPY

PARTS THAT MADE ME FEEL SAD

PARTS THAT MADE ME FEEL EXCITED

Look at the scenes that you have in each section - do they have anything in common? Can you remember what the music was like in these scenes?

Characters in the film

The characters are the people who appear in the story.

How many characters can you remember from the story? Write down a list of their names.

The way that you would describe the personalities of these characters would differ. Some will be good, some may be horrible - there may be some characters who are both good and bad.

Below are pictured some of the main characters from the film. Can you describe them using no more than 5 words from the character word box below - look in a dictionary if you do not recognise some of the words. You may need to use the same word to describe different characters. You may want to use some of your own words too.

CHARACTER WORDS

MOMENT IN FILM

SARAH CREWE

MISS MINCHIN

RAM DASS

CAPTAIN CREWE

CHARACTER WORD BOX

wealthy, greedy, jealous, imaginative, weak, sad, mysterious, generous, magical, strict,
shy, protective, strong, selfish, moody, loyal, angry, determined, dishonest, lonely,
scared, sorry, hard-hearted, mean, short-tempered, rebellious, sulky, curious, clever,
loving.

Look at the words you have used to describe these characters. When in the film did they behave like this? Write down these scenes next to the pictures.

Did any of the characters change as the story went on - if so, how did they change?



Did the characters in A Little Princess remind you of the characters in any other films or fairy tales?

Sara's Imagination

Sara is very good at using her imagination and uses it to tell stories to the other children about her times in India. This proves to be very important when she loses her father and becomes a house-maid as she is able to cheer herself up by imagining things to be better than they are. Dirty blankets become beautiful clothes and a piece of stale bread would become a feast fit for a King.

Can you try to be as imaginative as Sarah. Below is a list of everyday objects - can you try to make them into something even more splendid? Write down a description next to the picture using lots of adjectives

EXAMPLE BOX

	
AN OLD BLANKET	A BEAUTIFUL FUR-TRIMMED CLOAK

STALE BREAD

A DAISY

AN OLD CAR

A CANDLE

A ROPE

Sara's Imagination

The book A Little Princess is set in the Victorian age (1819-1901) . The film A Little Princess is set in the time of World War (1914-1918). The filmmakers had to make sure that the set and the actors looked authentic. The film had to look as if It were made almost 100 years ago. This would have been very difficult to prepare. Set your mind back to the film - how did the filmmakers make the film look old-fashioned?

Why the film looks old-fashioned

1. The methods of transport e.g. a horse and carriage.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

There are many inventions and objects that are around today that would not have been around during the Edwardian age. Can you think of these and write them down in the space below. This has been started for you.

Inventions that would not have been around in Edwardian Times

1. Television

Imagine that you are a child living in Edwardian times. What would you miss most about living in the present?

Divali

Throughout the film, Sara tells her friends at the school sections of the tale of Rama and Sita. This is a very famous Indian myth called Ramayana which Hindus commemorate at the time of their New Year - Divali. Divali means 'a row of lights' and people celebrate the time with parties, decorations and by the exchange of cards.

Below is the tale of Rama and Sita. It is a little different to the tale told by Sara. This sometimes happens with old stories.

THE STORY OF RAMA AND SITA

Long, long ago in India, there lived a King named Dasratha who ruled over the lands. His eldest son was called Rama and he was set to rule after his father.

The King's new wife Kaikeyi was jealous of Rama and wanted her son, Bharat, to be King instead of him. Kaikeyi told so many lies about Rama that eventually Dasratha banished him from the kingdom for fourteen years. Bharat disagreed with his mother and felt that it was wrong to banish Rama. He promised to take care of the kingdom until Rama returned and put Rama's golden sandals on the throne to show that it was really Rama's.

Rama left the kingdom with his wife, Sita. They made a new home for themselves in the forest. One day, a deer appeared in the forest who seemed to be in trouble. Rama went to help it but before he left, he drew a circle on the ground. He told Sita to stay inside the circle until he returned and then she would be safe. While Sita was waiting for Rama she heard a cry for help. She stepped out of the circle to find out who was crying. In front of Sita appeared an old man who looked poor and hungry. Sita had no money so gave him her jewelry. As soon as the jewelry touched the man's hand he turned into the wicked Ravana the ten-headed demon. Sita had been tricked! He captured her and took her off to the Island of Lanka, keeping her locked up in his tower.

When Rama returned to the forest and found Sita vanished, he gave chase, but Ravana drew out a mighty bow and released 10 arrows all laced with poison. When the arrows hit the ground, they released poison into the air. Rama collapsed on the ground and lay dying.

A gazelle noticed Rama and lay down next to him, giving up his life so that Rama could live. Rama rose up from the ground and rushed to Ravana's palace in search of Sita. Suddenly Ravana appeared in front of him, but this time Rama was ready and shot an arrow straight into the demon's heart killing him stone dead.

Rama and Sita were reunited once more. They left the forest and returned to the kingdom. People were so happy to see them that they lit divas all over the city. Bharat then removed the sandals from the throne so that Rama and Sita could take their rightful places.

The story is told in the Ramayana and is remembered at Divali each year when Hindus light divas just as the people in the kingdom did to welcome Rama.

Can you see the similarities between Sara's plight and the myth of Ramayana? Sara is separated from her father as Rama is kept apart from Sita. She is banished to the attic room by Miss Minchin - as Sita is imprisoned in Ravanna's tower. She even draws a circle around herself when she is first sent to the attic to live. If you look closely, you will notice that Rama in the story is played by Captain Crewe! The Indian manservant next door is even called Ram Dass which when translated means 'servant of Rama' - he brings back together Sara and her father.

- A picture of Ravana, the ten-headed demon has not been included. What do you think he would look like? Draw a picture of Ravana (including his ten heads)! Do not show anyone your picture until everyone in the class has drawn one, then compare your pictures. Are they all the same? What are the differences in the sketches? Once you have discussed this and chosen the best drawings of Ravana you could make a huge picture of the monster as a class to scare off people!
- Using the story on page 12 or the version told by Sara in the film, tell the story of Rama and Sita yourself using words and Ravana.
- Once you feel familiar with the story, you could have a go at acting it out in small groups. Once you have decided on the characters think about sound effects and props. Do you need a storyteller to tell the tale? Will you need a script for the characters or will they be performing using mime? In small groups practice your plays and then show them to the others for suggestions.
- Using your school library and books in the classroom try and find out more about the Hindu festival Diwali. Are there any people in your class who celebrate Diwali? Find out:
 - What dates will Diwali take place on this year? Do people eat special food for the festivals? Are there any special songs or dances that help celebrate the festival.

India

Sara arrives in New York, America after living in India for all of her childhood. We see her in India at the beginning of the film in a place called Simla in 1914.

- Use a globe to find out where India is in relation to America.
- On the map of the world on page 17 can you plot the various routes Sara could have taken to travel to New York from India; What countries and seas would Sara have travelled through? What forms of transport would she have had to use to travel to New York?
- Look in the atlases at your school at pictures of India. See if you can find the answers to the following questions: How big is the country? How many people live there? What is the capital city called? What is the country's climate? Look at India's physical features - what mountains, deserts, rivers are there?
- What kinds of animals would live in India that do not live in Britain?

Collect as many pictures as you can of India today - look in travel brochures and magazines as well as in your library. Is there anybody in your class or family who has been to India - what can they tell you about the country - Look out for any news from India on the television or in the newspapers. Can you remember what we see of India in the film and Sara's description of her country? Make a scrap book containing all your information.

INDIAN COSTUMES

Throughout the film we see the mysterious Indian man - Ram Dass, who travels on the same boat as Sara and her father to America and lives next door to the school, looking after Charles Randolph.

There are many different styles of traditional dress for men and women and these vary from region to region. The clothes have to be light as it is very hot in India but they also have to protect the body and head from the sun.

Look in your library for information on the style of dress in India. Can you find out the materials used to make the clothes? In your research, look for pictures of the clothes and draw a sketch of a man and woman's costume.

If you have a long piece of material in your classroom you can make this into a 'sari' by wrapping around your body. See who can make the best sari!

Education

The school that Sara attends is probably very different from your school. All the students are girls and they live at the school. Below is an example of a day's timetable that Sara would probably have had.

SARA'S TIMETABLE

8.00-8.10	Prayers and Registration.
8.10-8.30	Inspection of dress and hands.
8.30-9.00	Bible Reading.
9.00-10.00	Needlework and embroidery.
10.00-11.00	Rote learning of times tables.
11.00-11.30	Dancing lesson.
11.30-12.00	Reading aloud of classic story book.
12.00-1.00	Prayers, washing of hands and Lunch.
1.00-1.30	Handwriting practice.
1.30-2.30	Daily walk.
2.30-3.30	French lesson.
3.30-4.00	Letter writing to relatives.
4.00-4.30	Etiquette
4.30-5.00	Singing of hymns.
5.00-6.00	Study hall.
6.00-7.00	Prayers, washing of hands and dinner.
7.00-7.30	Tidy rooms.
7.30-8.00	Wash and get ready for bed.
8.00-8.45	Evening drink, story and prayers.
8.45	Lights out!

Can you make up a timetable for your own day like the one above? Remember to start from the moment you get up to the moment you go to bed.

Compare your timetable to Sara's timetable - are there any lessons or activities that you both do
Write down the differences and similarities in the space below.

THINGS THAT ARE
THE SAME

THINGS THAT ARE
DIFFERENT

There are no boys at Sara's school. How do you think the boys' timetable for this time would have looked? Would they have had the same lessons as the girls? Design your own timetable for boys, showing how their day would have gone.

The Rich and the Poor

Sara comes from a very privileged background - her father is well off and can afford to buy her beautiful clothes and toys. She is used to servants bringing her meals and tidying her room. Once Miss Minchin thinks that Sara's father is dead she will not let her remain at the school as a student. Instead she has to earn her keep as a servant - all her nice clothes and possessions are taken to pay for her schooling. Once Sara becomes a servant, some people's attitudes towards her change and she is treated differently.

We also see the lives of poor people in these times. Becky, whom Sara befriends is a servant at the school. Sara gives her food to a child who is begging on the streets with her mother and elder sister. Children who came from poor families had to work rather than go to school to bring in money for their families. In the film we see a young boy who is employed as a chimney sweep. Those children who did not have parents - many died due to ill health - were left to fend for themselves in the workhouses.

- Find out what kinds of jobs children carried out in this period in history. What do you think life was like for these children?
- Imagine that you have to work rather than go to school. You could be a chimney sweep or a house maid or perhaps you have another job. Write about your life and how it feels to work for a living

World War I

Sara's father goes off to fight in Europe in the first World War which lasted from 1914-1918. We see Captain Crewe fighting in the trenches in terrible conditions and Mr. Randolph's son John is killed whilst fighting.

Imagine that you are Sara's father fighting in the trenches. Write a letter to Sara describing the conditions - would he want Sara to know what it was really like or would he be more cheerful?

My Darling Sara,	The Trenches, France. 14th March 1915
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What noises would her father be able to hear? Use a tape recorder and have a go at recording these noises.

In the film we see Sara write a letter to her father. Can you finish off the letter to Captain Crewe from Sara? This has been started for you - try to imagine how lonely she is without her father.

<p>Dear Papa, I miss you already...</p>	<p>Miss Minchin's School For Girls New York, North America April 1914</p>
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Your Locality During World War I

Find out about your village/city during World War 1. Did it look the same then as it does now? Which buildings and streets were around at the time? Before you start your research, think about what may have changed or still be the same in your area. Make a list of these in the boxes below which have been started for you.

Where I Live

WHAT I THINK HAS CHANGED

Ways of lighting the streets

WHAT I THINK HAS STAYED THE SAME

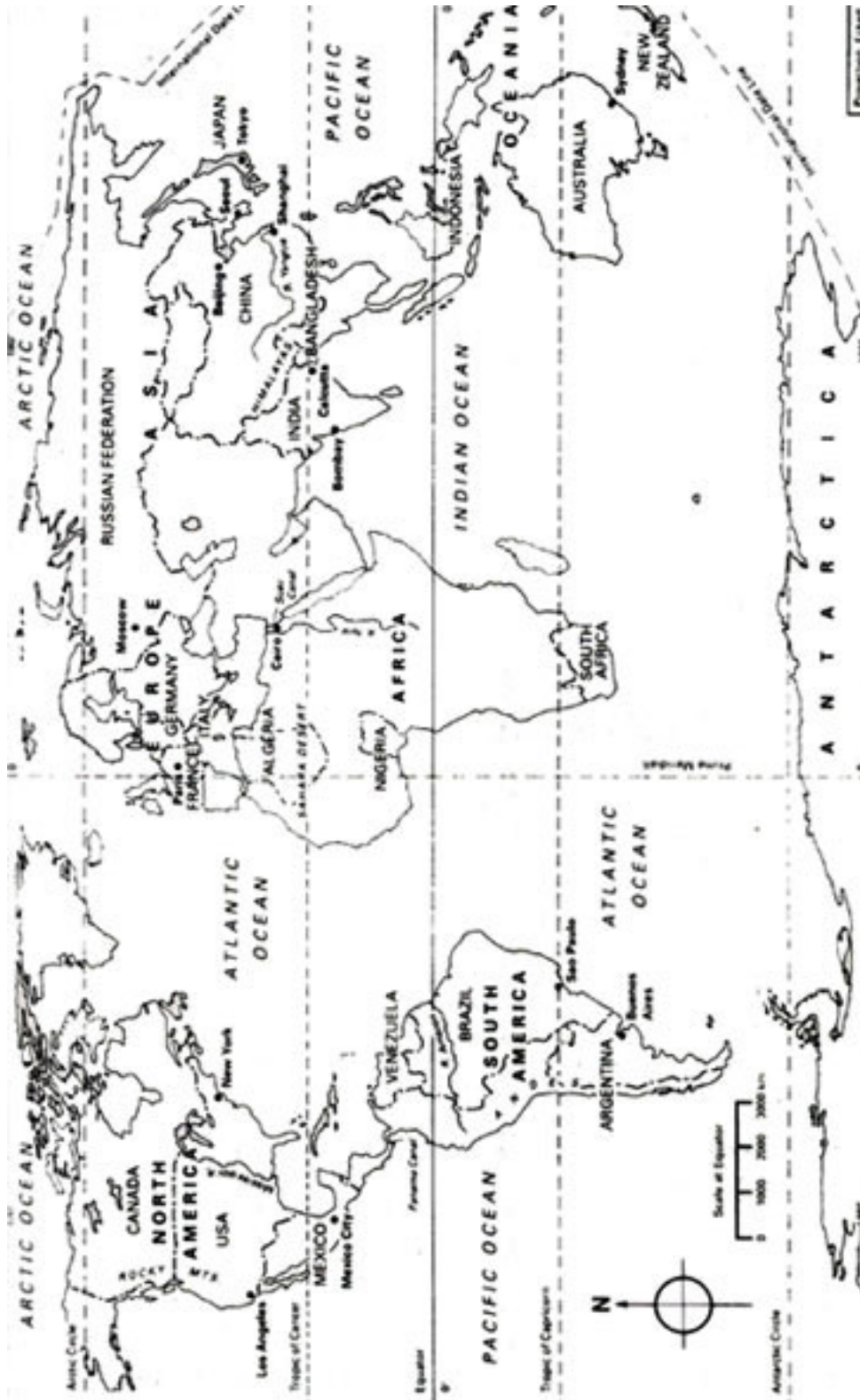
The Roads

Your local record office or history library will be able to help you with old documents and maps from the time - they may even be able to let you look at photographs from the time. If you have grandparents living in the area they may be able to tell you a little more about what it was like to live in the city many years ago. Write down questions that you would like to ask them and then interview them either at school or using a cassette recorder at their home.

Go to your local church to see if there are any memorials to people who died in the First World War. Also, look at any memorials in your local town or city - many have plaques or large crosses to help remember the soldiers who died.

From your studies you should be able to come up with a picture of what it was like to live in your area many years ago.

World Map



Storyboard

Shot

Dialogue/Description

