 

The War and the Flu 1918-19

# Teachers’ Notes

These notes comprise four lessons about the end of the First World War and the influenza pandemic in 1918-19. The lessons here are a prelude to a project to record the experiences, opinions and feelings of children during the coronavirus pandemic. These four lessons introduce an historical epidemic and thinking about how we remember it as a way in to explore and allow expression of children’s experiences of the coronavirus. However, they can also be used as individual lessons just to look at the end of the war and the epidemic.

Outcomes:

* Learn about the 1918-20 Influenza Epidemic to understand that similar epidemics have happened before.
* To understand that people were emotionally affected by events, such as the influenza epidemic, in history.
* To introduce forms of remembering around loss, e.g. war memorials, and historic events, e.g. plaques.
* To reassure children that worries and anxious feelings are shared and normal

These resources are produced as part of the LSE 2021 Festival Shaping the Post-COVID 19 World.

We are grateful to historian Wendy Moore and Dr Martin Bayly in the Department of International Relations at LSE for their time to answer questions in the videos. These lessons have been in part informed by the report from the Department of International Relations at LSE [*Confronting the COVID-19 pandemic: grief, loss, and social order.*](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/106739/1/Confronting_the_covid_19_pandemic_grief_loss_and_social_order.pdf) We are grateful for Alison Ramsey and Digital Drama for allowing use of their award-winning video Deeds not Words in this resource.

Images and textual evidence are taken from the heritage collections in the London School of Politics and Economics (LSE), unless otherwise stated. This is an open access resource under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any non-commercial medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Notes and ideas for the teachers (not in the text of the slide) are in **bold**.

Warnings are given in *italics* about reference to upsetting scenes (e.g. serious injury and death). We have avoided using words like ‘loss’ or ‘passed on’ and used dead, death and died in accordance with best practice in talking about death and grief to children.

There are links to more resources at the end of these notes.

# Lesson One: Endell Street Military Hospital and World War One

*Warnings: severed limbs mentioned in video, death in war, verbal description of hospital and very sick and dying soldiers.*

First Slide - Image: Endell Street Military Hospital – Photograph of Staff in 1916

* Introduction and welcome

Image: Photograph of Debbie

Hello, my name is Debbie and I work in the library at the London School of Economics, which is a college that is part of the University of London. It is a school where young people and adult go to learn things.

I have been talking to historians and academics (people who teach and research at universities) about the influenza pandemic in 1918-19. You’ll see me on some of the videos in these lessons.

* Remembrance Day

Image: A red remembrance poppy from the Royal British Legion.

11 November 11am
What do people remember?
What happened at 11am 11 November 1918?

* The First World War & Suffragettes

Women had been campaigning to get a vote for years. Suffragettes used violent methods. These are called ‘militant tactics’.

When the war broke out in 1914, suffragettes announced that they would stop the violence and help the war effort

Two former suffragettes, the doctors Louisa Garrett Anderson and Flora Murray, formed the Women’s Hospital Corps to care for soldiers wounded in the war. They are pictured here.

Eventually they ran a military hospital in central London.

* Women and the War

Women could not fight in alongside men in the army, navy or air force in World War One 1914-18.

Women joined the war effort as nurses, doctors, orderlies (an attendant carrying out non-medical tasks like laundry or cleaning), office staff, farm workers, in factories . . .

The hospital that the two women doctors ran was called Endell Street Military Hospital. It was open from 1915 to 1919 and was staffed almost entirely by women.

This is porter Mardie Hodgson and a special constable, who was one of the few men to work there, at the entrance to it.

* Nina Last

Image: Photograph of Nina Last in her hat at the time of the war.

**Nina Last is someone who we will refer to in each lesson and in the lessons for next term as she kept a diary and we have her records in the library.**

Nina Last worked as a hospital orderly at the Endell Street Military Hospital. Her sister Barbara also worked there as a nursing orderly and helped with the soldier’s injuries.

Nina fainted at the sight of blood so worked in the laundry where she cleaned the bed sheets and dirty clothing.

She would help when soldiers were brought into the hospital and wrote in her diary:

“A loud bell would go suddenly at any hour of darkness, generally around midnight. We were up in a second and incredibly quickly stuffed our nightdresses into our dark blue bloomers, popped on our uniform, caught up our hair in our bonnets and reported down in the yard…”

**Might need to check with the class that they understand words: bloomers, bonnets**

* Nina Last’s Uniform

Image: The hospital orderly uniform belonging to Nina Last.

This is what Nina wore when she worked in Endell Street Military Hospital.

It was very different to the type of clothes she was used to. She came from a wealthy background and was used to restrictive dresses and corsets.

This uniform is still in the Women’s Library at London School of Economics. It is part of our archives. Archives are a place in which records or old papers are stored and shared.

You might want to give examples of libraries and archives, e.g. records of their learning.

* Video courtesy of Digital Drama:

**The video is 14 minutes long and aimed for KS3 students so some of it – particularly the interviews – may go over the children’s head. However, the photographs and film footage really bring the Endell Street story to life. The creative and broadcast company Digital Drama made this award winning film as part of a larger project. It is available online as well as embedded in the video.**

 <https://www.digitaldrama.org/deeds-not-words/deeds-not-words-film/> or <https://youtu.be/L8qGyEiJUbM>

* The Endell Street Scrapbook

Image: The front of the Endell Street Scrapbook

One of the reasons that film could use so many images taken in the war is that the chief medical officer, Flora Murray, kept a scrapbook of events and activities at the hospital.

It was made up of newspaper clippings, photographs and invitations. It even included drawings of her and Louisa’s dogs. This is the front of the book.

**You can see the whole scrapbook here:** [**https://myalbum.com/album/NPzgqqvU4yQW**](https://myalbum.com/album/NPzgqqvU4yQW) **And can use it in class separately, virtually flicking through the pages or make it available to the students.**

Have you ever kept a scrapbook? **You could ask them what they put in it, photos drawings, tickets etc and if they didn’t, do they collect things like stickers or cards for albums.**

* Image of a newspaper clipping in the scrapbook.

This page shows the visit of Queen Alexandra and her daughter to the hospital in 1916

* Image of women working in the hospital in the scrapbook.

Another page from the scrap book shows women carrying out some of the tasks.

The next page shows characters in a pantomime visiting the soldiers in hospital.

* **Spare scrapbook page. Can be used as an activity and printed out.**

What would you stick in this spare page of the scrapbook to remember the war, the hospital and the women? Think about what you saw on the film.

* Armistice Day – 11 November 1918

Image of a massive crowd gathered in London on 11 November 1918

World War One (or the First World War) officially ended on 11 November 1918 at 11am. All soldiers were commanded to put down their weapons.

An armistice is an agreement between the different sides to stop fighting in a war.

Britain, France, Italy and America had won the war and there was huge celebrations. Crowds danced, sang and cheered on the streets in all major cities.

Many people were sad too as people they loved had died in the war.

[There is footage from Pathe here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1QSNP9ibBs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1QSNP9ibBs) **N.B. You’ll have to skip or sit through a short ad.**

* Activity Choice
* Draw, write and add ideas to the spare scrapbook page
* Endell Street Hospital Wordsearch

Word search: Orderly, Nurse, Surgeon, war, suffragette, hospital, soldier, patient, poppy, scrapbook

# Lesson Two: Endell Street Military Hospital and Influenza 1918-19

* The end of the war at Endell Street Hospital

Operations and treatment of patients were going on as normal when the war ended.

When the news spread, some of the staff rushed out to buy cakes and chocolate for the soldiers and doctors and nurses.

Flora Murray and Louisa Garrett Anderson (pictured here) organized a fancy dress party to celebrate a few days after war had ended.

* What was the Spanish Flu?

There was a flu in the summer of 1918 that made people very ill. Just before the war ended in November, this flu returned.

It was known as the ‘Spanish flu’ as it was reported in Spain. Spain was not involved in the war and did not have any restrictions on what newspapers could say.

It is estimated to have killed between 50 and 100 million people across the world. **(We will never know how many.)**

It is a virus. We now know that it spread by being breathed in (called a respiratory infection). In 1918 it was thought to be a bacteria and spread by touch.

Image: Drawing of the 1918 Influenza. Credit: [Wellcome Collection](https://wellcomecollection.org/works/ffbx664n). [Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

* Influenza at Endell Street

The hospital saw its first cases of influenza in soldiers and some local people in October 1918.

The celebrations for the end of the war with lots of people close together and mobilisation – moving around – of lots of troops meant the flu spread quickly.

People who were normally fit and healthy died from the flu. It particularly attacked the lungs. It was known as ‘blue death’ as they went blue before they died.

Endell Street Hospital was asked to stay open for another year to help the government deal with the pandemic.

Image: A monster representing an influenza virus hitting a man over the head as he sits in his armchair. Pen and ink drawing by E. Noble, c. 1918. Credit: [Wellcome Collection](https://wellcomecollection.org/works/mm6hadt4). [Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

* Historian Wendy Moore on Endell Street and the Flu

Wendy Moore writes books and her latest one is on the military hospital at Endell Street.

**This is a 13 minute interview with a series of questions between Debbie and Wendy. Wendy explains the background to the hospital, what was going on in 1918 and why the hospital stays open.**

Link: <https://youtu.be/65U3Lkkdg3s>

* Nina Last

Do you remember Nina Last from the last lesson?

* She worked as a hospital orderly and her uniform is in the Women’s Library at LSE.
* 22 members of staff got the flu at Endell Street Military Hospital, including Nina and her sister Barbara.
* Nina was admitted to the H ward – the special quarantine ward – and was very ill but fully recovered. Her sister Barbara remained ill throughout her life.
* Five women on the staff at Endell Street died of influenza in 1918-1919.
* What could the doctors do at Endell Street?

There was no medicine for the flu at this time. The main thing the doctors could do was to try and stop the spread of it and help the patients.

Unusually the Commanding Officer Flora Murray (pictured) made the doctors wear masks, patients were screened from each other and put in separate wards.

* Activities

**Choice of activities to set in class or for homework:**

* Words and meanings – **separate word document with words. Can ask Students to find out meanings or go through them in class / cut them up as flash cards.**
* Drawing – **can print slide (or see separate slide for printing)**
* Comprehension - **separate PDF based on Wendy Moore interview**

**Words – Definitions see sheet**

# Lesson Three: More on the ‘Spanish Flu’

Image – Endell Street Hospital Staff, 1916

Warning: talking about death, people dying and being very ill in the influenza pandemic.

* The Spanish Flu - Recap

The flu in 1918-1919 was known as the ‘Spanish flu’ simply because it was reported in Spain.

Now we know it was a virus that was spread by being breathed in (called a respiratory infection).

A virus is a tiny germ you can’t see. Scientists call the Spanish flu H1N1. There are different flu viruses with scientific names.

Image: Drawing of the 1918 Influenza. Credit: [Wellcome Collection](https://wellcomecollection.org/works/ffbx664n). [Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

* The Influenza Pandemic

The ‘flu’ has always been around but it was not dangerous to healthy people. Older people, young children or those sick with something else get very ill with the flu.

With the Spanish flu, people aged between 25 to 40 years old were more likely to get complications, like pneumonia and get very ill or die.

The flu was a pandemic – this means that it was a disease that people got all around the world, like COVID-19 is today.

* A Survivor’s Account

This account is from a TV programme ‘In Search of the Spanish Flu’, broadcast in 2009.

**In this programme scientists look at the body of a politician who died of the ‘Spanish Flu’ in 1919 in order to learn more about the disease.**

Florence Herrington is 104 years old and got the flu when she was 13. She recalls people getting the flu around her and how she felt.

* The memories of Florence Herrington

*“We knew it was coming, yes, we knew...* *We were sort of waiting for it, yes.* *It was all over the place. Everybody was going down with it.*

*Every house would go down with it, all the people.* *They couldn’t get away from it. People were dying in the village, the undertakers, well they were kept busy,* *you know. They were very, very busy were the undertakers, and the doctors,* *but the most they could do for you in those days was "Stay in bed, keep warm”.*

*You started feeling poorly, you started feeling hot, and you started aching in every joint.* *Your head ached, sometimes you were cold and sometimes you were hot* *and all you wanted to do was just creep away, just to be left.*

*Oh, yes, every one of them [In the household got it]* *all except the newborn baby - the newborn baby didn’t.”*

* Academic Martin Bayly talks to Debbie Challis about the Spanish Flu in 1918-19

Warning: Reference to death and illness. You may want to split it up a bit. 14 minute video: <https://youtu.be/Yva_weNzIsA>

**A comprehension on treatment of influenza based on this interview can be used after the interview to consolidate understanding or later on.**

* ‘War Weary’

A major difference between the current COVID 19 pandemic and the flu in 1918 is the First World War.

People had been fighting for four years (1914-18) and many had died. Mostly soldiers in battles but some people in air raid attacks on towns.

Martin (on the video) has found that the number of people dying of the flu was not treated as a shock in 1918 and 1919. Due to the war, people were more used to sudden death. Although, this did not mean they did not get upset.

People were also more used to people dying of illnesses as they did not have the medicine we have today.

* Nina Last

Do you remember Nina Last?

She worked as a hospital orderly and her uniform is in the Women’s Library at LSE.

1. members of staff got the flu at Endell Street Military Hospital, including Nina.

Nina was very ill but got better.

She wrote an account of her time at Endell Street, including having influenza in early 1919.

After the nursing orderly Joan Palmes died in February 1919, Nina wrote that ‘last week was the saddest this hospital has ever seen’.

* How did people feel?

Nina Last described the week in which Joan Palmes died as the ‘saddest’ in the hospital’s history. The hospital had treated soldiers for three years but in the influenza pandemic, five staff died.

Why do you think people were sad?

Can you think of other words to describe feeling sad?

What face would you draw to describe Nina’s feelings?

* Activity: Interview

This lesson has included interviews with people who are experts or accounts from people who were there at the time.

There will be very view survivors of the Spanish flu alive now – they would have to be over 100 years old.

However, we can imagine that we can go back a few years in time and interview them.

**This can be set in the classroom or as homework – you could use the account of Florence Herrington as a reference for the children to draw om**

Who would you like to interview from 1918/19? Choose one:

1. A doctor who treated people with the flu
2. A child your age who had the flu
3. A relative of someone who died from the flu

Think about what questions you would ask and write an interview sheet. Make sure you include questions asking about how they felt and their emotions.

# Lesson Four: Remembering Endell Street Hospital, the War and Influenza

Slide – Image Endell Street Hospital staff, 1916

* How is the First World War remembered? And other wars?

Remembrance Day 11 November 11am

The Royal British Legion makes and sells poppies to remember Those who died and raise money for injured soldiers and their familes.

Are there other ways of remembering?

* Remembrance Sunday

On the Sunday nearest to 11 November, places of worship hold services. There are often ceremonies in towns and villages to remember wars and battles and people, particularly the soldiers, that died in them.

In 2020, Remembrance Sunday was on 8 November. There were changes made due to COVID-19 with everything taking place outside and people were not as able to gather together

Sometimes on anniversaries, like 100 years after the end of the First World War, the government hold special services too. This is a programme and invite for a service at Westminster Abbey.

* How do we remember things?

Think about how you remember things like birthdays or family events, like weddings. Do you and your family take photographs? Send cards?

Where do they go? Into albums? Online? On facebook?

Discuss with your nearest student (or adult if at home) and make a list of how you remember events that happen to you.

**Can open up a class / group discussion here.**

* Influenza Nursery Rhyme

I had a little bird,
Its name was Enza,
I opened the window
In 'flu' Enza.

Children sang a nursery rhyme about the influenza pandemic.

What is the word play going on here?

Can you think of any another nursery rhyme about a disease? **(e.g. Ring a Roses)**

We now know that the Spanish Flu (or H1N1 influenza) was a virus that got transmitted from birds (possibly chickens) when it first formed in America in 1917. The nursery rhyme is very accurate!

Rhymes and songs are one way that people remember things.

* Scrapbooks

Remember the Endell Street Hospital Scrapbook?

Scrapbooks and keeping leaflets or newspaper articles is another way people remember things.

Part of the reason we know so much about how Endell Street looked is due to the pictures and descriptions in this scrapbook.

* Photographs

There are some photographs taken of Endell Street for newspapers and for postcards so that the soldiers could send them to friends and relatives

These photographs are generally planned in advance - not a snap taken on a phone. Photographs took longer to be processed and shared 100 years ago.

* Diaries and letters

Image: Portrait of Nina Last

Some people keep diaries to record what happens to them day to day. These are usually private documents.

Letters record personal accounts of events too.

Nina Last wrote a memoir of her time at Endell Street Military Hospital and other aspects of her life. This memoir and some of her letters are in our archives.

Letters and diaries like this are usually only read after people have died and / or allowed others to read them.

* Clothes and other objects

We know what the uniforms of the doctors, nurses and orderlies looked like due to the photographs there are.

We know even more about the uniforms of the orderlies because Nina Last kept one of hers and gave it to the Women’s Library to look after.

All the photographs are black and white.

What can you see in the uniform that you can’t see in the photograph?

What do you think the uniform feels like?

* War Memorials

This is the main war memorial for Britain in the centre of London. It is called the cenotaph and honours all the soldiers who died in war.

Most villages, towns and even some schools have memorials like this. (Sometimes words like ‘fallen’ are used on memorials to mean some one has died.)

There are lots of memorials for the First World War and other wars but none for the influenza epidemic.

* Remembering Endell Street Military Hospital

Despite the hard work of the women at Endell Street Military Hospital, their war work and sacrifice was forgotten until recently.

In the last ten years they have had a plaque (image) placed on the site of the hospital, a short film made and a book written about them.

Their stories have only been remembered since most of you were born!

* Memorials for Endell Street

There is another memorial listing all the women who died in World War one York Minister (Image IWM). The staff who died of influenza at Endell Street Hospital are listed on it.

Historian Wendy Moore described seeing it in her interview. **Clip of Wendy Moore talking about the York Minster memorial and what it looks like (90 seconds):** [**https://youtu.be/4c2iZAi9R9E**](https://youtu.be/4c2iZAi9R9E)

* Why do we remember?

Lots of people think it is important to remember wars and fighting so that we do not go to war again.

The influenza pandemic has been the subject of books by specialists and some television programmes, but there are no memorials.

Martin Bayly said it was important to remember the influenza virus – clip. **2 minutes of Martin explaining why it is important to remember pandemics as we learn from them too**: <https://youtu.be/zy8NGup4nYQ>

Do you think we should remember it? If so how?

* Make a poster about the influenza pandemic and why we should remember it

You could concentrate on why people were sad or worried at the time of the pandemic in 1918-19.

Think about the memories of people who lived through the pandemic – Florence Herrington or Nina Last.

Or, you could make a poster about why it is important for us today, especially living with COVID-19, to remember the pandemic that happened one hundred years ago.

Think about what we know about the ‘Spanish Flu’ today compared what they knew then. Also what the doctors at Endell Street hospital did (masks, quarantine etc).

Some Further Reading and Links

**Endell Street Military Hospital**

Poppies can be downloaded for a donation from the Royal British Legion [website](https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/), which also has good [resources](https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/teaching-remembrance/?seg=XPINOV&utm_source=The%20Royal%20British%20Legion%20Charity&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11957166_Cause%20Led%20-%20Remembrance%20Email%20-%202020&utm_content=XPINOV&dm_i=1LKB,74A7I,3TF6WU,SSFVW,1) on teaching remembrance for children and young people.

Deeds not Words Film can be downloaded from the Digital Drama website, as well as photographs and audio from a play based on the hospital: <https://www.digitaldrama.org/deeds-not-words/deeds-not-words-film/>

The entire of Louisa Garrett Anderson’s scrapbook of Endell Street in the Women’s Library LSE has been uploaded to My Album: <https://myalbum.com/album/NPzgqqvU4yQW>

Wendy Moore (2020), *Endell Street Military Hospital. The Women Who Ran Britain’s Trailblazing Military Hospital*

The World War One screen ‘Women of the Empire’ in York Minster can be seen on the Imperial War Museum War Memorials website – Endell Street Military Hospital is on Panel 6: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/30649>

**Influenza Pandemic**

Mark Honigsbaum (2018) ‘Why the 1918 Spanish flu defied both memory and imagination’, Wellcome Collection website: <https://wellcomecollection.org/articles/W7TfGRAAAP5F0eKS> [accessed 5 November 2020].

**Coronavirus and Grief**

CBBC Newsround – Coronavirus: How to support your wellbeing at the moment: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51896156> [accessed 5 November 2020]

Downloadable book – Coronavirus. A book for children about Covid-19: <https://nosycrow.com/blog/released-today-free-information-book-explaining-coronavirus-children-illustrated-gruffalo-illustrator-axel-scheffler/> [accessed 5 November 2020]

LSE Press Release on the Report *Confronting the COVID-19 Pandemic*: <https://www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2020/j-October-20/The-way-COVID-19-is-officially-commemorated-will-shape-our-ability-to-respond-to-a-second-wave> [accessed 6 November 2020].

[Millar, Katharine M., Han, Yuna, Bayly, Martin J., Kuhn, Katharina and Morlino, Irene (2020) *Confronting the COVID-19 pandemic: grief, loss, and social order.*](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/106739/1/Confronting_the_covid_19_pandemic_grief_loss_and_social_order.pdf)

Supporting bereaved children – Child Bereavement UK Charity website:

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/supporting-bereaved-children-and-young-people> [accessed 5 November 2020]