

Earl Haig debate challenge: brilliant or butcher?

Teacher's notes

The big question

What is the significance of the poppy?

Level

Second and Third.

Significant aspect of learning

Developing useful skills for learning, life and work. [SOC](#)

Listening & talking. [LIT](#)

Experiences and outcomes

I develop and extend my literacy skills when I have opportunities to communicate, collaborate and build relationships. [LIT OA](#)

Using what I know about the features of different types of texts, I can independently select ideas and relevant information from a variety of sources, organise essential information or ideas and any supporting detail in a logical order, and use suitable vocabulary to communicate effectively with my audience. [LIT 3-06a](#), [LIT 3-14a](#) & [LIT 3-26a](#)

I can recognise how the features of spoken language can help in communication, and I can use what I learn. I can recognise different features of my own and others' spoken language. [ENG 2-03a](#)

I am developing confidence when engaging with others within and beyond my place of learning. I can communicate in a clear, expressive way and I am learning to select and organise resources independently. [LIT 3-10a](#)

When listening and talking with others for different purposes, I can: share information, experiences and opinions, explain processes and ideas, identify issues raised and summarise main points or findings, clarify points by asking questions or by asking others to say more. [LIT 2-09a](#)

Learning in the social studies will enable me to learn how to locate, explore and link periods, people and events in time and place. [SOC OA](#)

I can use my knowledge of a historical period to interpret the evidence and present an informed view. [SOC 3-01a](#)

I can discuss the motives of those involved in a significant turning point in the past and assess the consequences it had then and since. [SOC 3-06a](#)

Through researching, I can identify possible causes of a past conflict and report on the impact it has had on the lives of people at that time. [SOC 3-06b](#)

I can explore and use the features of a variety of familiar and unfamiliar software to determine the most appropriate to solve problems or issues. [TCH 3-03a](#)

I enhance my learning by applying my ICT skills in different learning contexts across the curriculum. [TCH 3-04a](#)

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Introduction

Debate is now widely used in History and English classrooms not only as part of the course but to stimulate interest and active learning in any particular topic.

One way to increase participation is to add a competitive element to the debate and also to self-evaluate. Self-evaluation can take a simple form like the points grid below or can be more specific looking at clarity of thought, clear speaking, ability to respond to questions, etc.

Sample marking grid

- 5 points = all criteria met and “WOW” factor
- 4 points = all criteria met satisfactorily
- 3 points = one of criteria missing
- 2 points = two of criteria missing
- 1 point = more than one of the criteria missing

Cross curricular

This activity also allows for a number of subjects to become involved.

Some examples:

- IT/Computing - research
- History/English - research, writing up of scripts, debate skills
- Modern Studies - modern day issues often debated so skills can be taught here

Additional resources

Poppyscotland’s documentary films and archive footage are available from the Poppyscotland Learning website: <http://learning.poppyscotland.org.uk/resources-category/films/> or from the ‘A Poppy’s Point of View’ DVD which is available to watch via this link:

<http://learning.poppyscotland.org.uk/resource/a-poppys-point-of-view/>

Poppyscotland’s image library is available from our website:

<http://learning.poppyscotland.org.uk/resources-category/media/>

Earl Haig debate challenge: brilliant or butcher?

Your challenge

Haig the brilliant commander — proposition/for

You have been challenged to write a speech for an upcoming debate on the founder of Poppyscotland – Earl Haig.

Earl Haig was the main officer in charge of the British army for most of the First World War. It was a bloody war with many casualties. However, many historians are now defending Earl Haig and saying that he was a brilliant commander who learned lots of new tactics and used new technology. After all, Britain won the First World War.

Your task is to **write** a speech to **convince** the audience that Earl Haig was a brilliant commander in the First World War.

- Work in small groups.
- Produce a speech that should last no more than six minutes.
- Allocate jobs (researchers, script writers and speech readers.)

Make use of the following resources:

- The school library;
- History text books;
- Earl Haig debate - fact or opinion challenge;
- Earl Haig debate - quotes challenge;
- The film 'Douglas Scott on the debate about his grandfather, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig' (Earl Haig), to be found at <http://learning.poppyscotland.org.uk/resources-category/films/> and other resources too.
- The internet (be careful you do not spend too much time on the web as most information can be found in the above).

Rules

- Everyone participates in the production and presentation of your group's work.
- Work within the timescales provided by your teacher.
- Meet the criteria - have you done what you were asked to do?

Good luck

Earl Haig debate challenge: brilliant or butcher?

Your challenge

Haig the 'butcher' — opposition/against

You have been challenged to write a speech for an upcoming debate on the founder of Poppyscotland – Earl Haig.

Earl Haig was the main officer in charge of the British army for most of the First World War. It was a bloody war with many casualties. For example, on the first day of the Battle of the Somme in 1916 almost 20,000 British men were killed and 40,000 injured. Earl Haig is often blamed by historians for this and is called a 'butcher' by them.

Your task is to **write** a speech to **convince** the audience that Earl Haig was a 'butcher' in the First World War.

- Work in small groups to research about Earl Haig.
- Produce a speech that should last no more than six minutes arguing that 'Haig was a Butcher!'
- Allocate jobs (researchers, script writers and speech readers).

Make use of the following resources for your research:

- The school library;
- History text books;
- Earl Haig debate - fact or opinion challenge;
- Earl Haig debate - quotes challenge;
- The film 'Douglas Scott on the debate about his grandfather, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig', to be found at <http://learning.poppyscotland.org.uk/resources-category/films/> and other resources too.
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Earl Haig debate - quotes challenge

Task

Read each of the following and decide whether they show that Earl Haig was a butcher or brilliant commander – select some to include in your speech! You may wish to cut out and sort!

- Earl Haig was a brilliant commander who led the British Army to victory in the First World War.
- Earl Haig was not good at communicating with others and was very stubborn.
- Earl Haig masterminded a great victory early in the First World War at the Battle of Ypres.
- Earl Haig sent thousands of men to their deaths as he did not know any other strategy other than sending soldiers 'over the top' to try to attack German trenches.
- Earl Haig did not know how to use new technology such as the tank and aircraft and so did not use it to help him in battles.
- Earl Haig had only been a soldier on horseback (cavalry) and had no experience of artillery (big guns) or infantry (soldiers on foot).
- A historian after the war said that the soldiers in Earl Haig's army were like lions and Earl Haig and his generals were like donkeys. At the Somme 20,000 died.
- Earl Haig did not live in the trenches but had his headquarters forty miles away from where the fighting was happening.
- Army officers working for Earl Haig were sometimes scared to give him bad news.
- When Earl Haig first saw the newly invented tank he immediately ordered 100 of them for his army.
- Earl Haig's army had lots of casualties but in a war someone has to make hard decisions and lead the army.
- Earl Haig always had big plans about how to win the war. He could sometimes be unrealistic.
- Earl Haig learned lots of lessons after he lost the Battle of the Somme and used what he learned to win later battles.

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Fact or opinion challenge: who was Earl Haig?

Task

Look at the following pieces of information. Once you have read and discussed each of them decide which are 'facts' and which are 'opinions'. Circle 'fact' or 'opinion'.

- Earl Haig was born in Edinburgh on 19th June 1861.
Fact **Opinion**
- Earl Haig commanded the British army at the Battle of the Somme (1916).
Fact **Opinion**
- Earl Haig joined the army and went into the cavalry (soldiers on horseback).
Fact **Opinion**
- 20,000 men were killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme.
Fact **Opinion**
- Earl Haig was born at 24 Charlotte Square in Edinburgh and was the youngest of eleven children in the family.
Fact **Opinion**
- Earl Haig was the best commander in the British army.
Fact **Opinion**
- Today money received from poppy sales helps to support veterans and their dependants.
Fact **Opinion**
- Earl Haig was very good at using new inventions and technology.
Fact **Opinion**
- Today Lady Haig's Poppy Factory produces nearly 5 million poppies each year. There are plastic stemmed and stick-on varieties to choose from.
Fact **Opinion**
- Earl Haig was a terrible army commander.
Fact **Opinion**
- The Earl Haig Fund Scotland (now Poppyscotland) was founded in 1921 by Field Marshal Earl Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army.
Fact **Opinion**
- Earl Haig was very arrogant.
Fact **Opinion**

Earl Haig debate challenge: brilliant or butcher?

Earl Haig – butcher or brilliant commander?

Look at the following pieces of information on Earl Haig:

- Earl Haig was Commander-in-Chief of the British Army fighting in France and Belgium for most of the Western Front. He was given the rank of Field Marshal, which meant he was not only in charge of many soldiers but also many generals and officers in the British Army.
- Since the First World War historians have argued about how good a commander Earl Haig actually was.
- Some say he was a cruel commander who did not care for his men and sent many of them to their deaths needlessly. Thousands of men were killed in the trenches in the First World War and historians often blame Earl Haig and his commanders for these deaths.
- Other historians say he was a brilliant commander who did well to win the First World War, especially given he had to use modern technology for the first time (for example the machine gun, tank and aeroplane).

Task 1

Highlight or underline the key points on this sheet.

Task 2

Read the quotes sheet which shows historians views of Earl Haig.

Task 3

Once you have gathered information about Earl Haig, place your points under the correct heading 'butcher' or 'brilliant commander'. You may write in your answers or cut and paste from the worksheet and stick into your jotter/folder.

Earl Haig debate challenge: brilliant or butcher?

Evidence for 'Earl Haig was a butcher'	Evidence for 'Earl Haig was a brilliant commander'

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What progress have I made today?

When listening and talking I can...[SAL LIT](#)

2nd level

Select and discuss a range of texts about Earl Haig, giving an increasingly detailed response about Earl Haig.

Some points I said were....

3rd level

Select and discuss a range of texts about Earl Haig, justifying personal preference about whether he can be considered a butcher or brilliant commander.

Some points I said were....

4th level

Select and discuss a range of texts about Earl Haig, justifying personal preference and evidencing personal response about whether he can be considered a butcher or brilliant commander.

Some points I said were....

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Peer marking exercise / self-assessment

Tick all that apply

Experiences and outcomes

- I am able to communicate, collaborate and build relationships when working in a group.
LIT OA
- I was able to gather information about Earl Haig from different sources and select relevant information for my argument. I was also able to organize this info and use it in a debate.
LIT 3-06a, LIT 3-14a & LIT 3-26a
- I can talk about something I have learned and can recognise different features of my own and others' spoken language. ENG 2-03a
- I am developing confidence when working with others within and beyond my class. I can communicate in a clear, expressive way and I am learning to select and organise resources on my own. LIT 3-10a
- When listening and talking with others, I can: share information, summarise main points or findings, clarify points by asking questions or by asking others to say more. LIT 2-09a
- I can use my knowledge of WW1 to interpret the information about Earl Haig and present my own view. SOC 3-01a
- I can discuss the actions of Earl Haig and consider the consequences it had. SOC 3-06a
- Through researching, I can identify possible causes of large casualties during WW1 and report on the impact it has had on the lives of people at that time. SOC 3-06b
- I can explore and use video and websites to gather information about Earl Haig to complete the task. TCH 3-03a
- I improve my learning by applying my ICT skills in different class tasks and subjects.
TCH 3-04a