

The Life and Legacy of Sir Winston Churchill

Scheme of Work Overview

Sir Winston Churchill is one of the most recognisable names in British history. Indeed he was voted 'the greatest Briton' in a 2002 BBC poll, largely due to his role in leading Britain through the Second World War. However, he is, simultaneously, derided by some as a white supremacist who defended a dying empire and oversaw brutal treatment of people in the colonies. This scheme of work offers an opportunity for students to learn about the breadth and aspects of the depth of Churchill's life and analyse how it corresponds to broader questions of British history before evaluating how the themes and events of the past have shaped the United Kingdom in the present.

This Scheme of Work is designed for students aged 13 and up and fits within a broader curriculum set in the 20th century and makes links to various elements of the advised Secondary National Curriculum for England topics related to 'Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day' including:

- women's suffrage
- the Second World War and the wartime leadership of Winston Churchill
- the creation of the Welfare State
- Indian independence and end of Empire
- Britain's place in the world since 1945

The first two lessons give the general context of Churchill as a person, allowing students to share their knowledge and own conceptions of him before developing their recognition of his individual significance whilst also acknowledging his humanity and the fact that he was just one man. From this platform the unit moves into a selection of 'deep dive' lessons which look at more specific events to assess the role of Britain (rather than just Churchill) which can feed into an understanding of what Britain is today. These lessons are entirely History focussed, but at the end of the SoW there will be space given to looking at the questions of 'what does this mean for us, today?', 'how has this shaped British culture, life, identity, etc.?', 'what have we learnt about the stories we tell about Britain and Churchill?' and 'how do I want to respond to this?'.

Below is a summary of the planned scheme of work and lesson content.

SOW Lesson order:

1. How should we characterise Sir Winston Churchill?

Intro and context (*Strand 1: A safe space for all*)

- Frontloading concepts and classroom etiquette
- What do you know about Churchill?
- Different interpretations of Churchill
- Humanising Churchill

i. Getting past 'hero vs villain'

2. What was Churchill's role in British history?

Timeline (*Strand 2: Authentic Historical Enquiry*)

- Including Churchill's early life
- Seeing the expanse of his life's work
- Understanding him and his context
- Noticing the variety of significant events Churchill was connected to

3. What did Churchill do for British people in the early 20th century?

Social Policy deep dive (*Strand 2: Authentic Historical Enquiry*)

- Workers' rights, Suffrage movement, Labour exchanges etc.

4. How did World War II change Britain?

WW2 deep dive (*Strand 2: Authentic Historical Enquiry*)

- Britain's role within the context of different stages of the war
- Challenging 'Britain alone' to an extent

5. Churchill, Britain, and the empire: *Could the Bengal Famine have been avoided?*

Empire deep dive (*Strand 2: Authentic Historical Enquiry*)

- India WW2/Bengal Famine

6. Reflections, echoes and responses

Reflecting and responding to learning (*Strand 3: Putting learning into action*)

- What does this mean for us today?
- What themes are still relevant and how?
- What do you want to do as a result of what you have learned?

Lesson Summaries

1. How should we characterise Sir Winston Churchill?

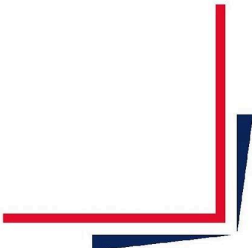
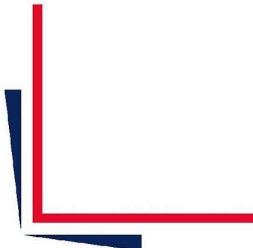
This lesson will introduce the character of Churchill and expose students to various viewpoints on him and events he participated in. Students will be invited to share what they know about Churchill as a means of setting a base of knowledge and to help identify any strong views and/or myths/misconceptions. Students will learn about his early life, considering what influenced him as he grew up (as well as contextualising the country and family he was born into). The main activity is based on demonstrating the complexity of the person, showing that it can be possible to be celebrated for one thing and vilified for another, ultimately leading towards acknowledging that binary judgements like 'hero' or 'villain' are of little use, and that in order Churchill was only one person, so it is the history we should study and 'judge' rather than the man.

2. What was Churchill's role in British history?

This lesson focusses on Churchill's career. This can be used to consolidate the previous lesson's learning, but also to develop the understanding of Churchill as a person and the world he lived in (and the context in which his views and ideas were formed). The lesson will also expose students to the different aspects of Churchill's career through a look at his roles and achievements as well as things he has been criticised for. A timeline activity will enable students to see the span of his life's work, but also pick up on themes such as war, empire and welfare.

3. What did Churchill do for British people in the early 20th century?

This lesson will focus on Churchill on the domestic front: his roles in government in the early 20th century and the impact of events happening around him at the time as well as policies of the British Government and how they affected people. Students will gain an understanding of the challenges facing Britain at the turn of the 20th century and analyse Churchill's impact upon them. Key events covered include: Workers rights and strikes, the Women's suffrage



movement and the early welfare state. The lesson gives the students insights into some key developments of Social Policy and helps them understand some of the challenges of the time in these areas. Activities will assess the significance of developments from this time and the emergence of a more involved populace and development of new ideologies and their impact on the country.

4. How did World War II change Britain?

This lesson will focus on Britain's changing role in WW2, looking at the war in two parts: Britain 'alone' (1939-1941) and Britain as part of an alliance with the US and USSR (1941-1945). By addressing the changing role of Britain during WW2 we will be able to see the blueprint for Britain's role in the world moving forward, but also be able to assess the importance of British strategy, Churchill's leadership (and '*cheerleadership*') at home and abroad, the role and importance of being part of an alliance and the diplomatic work that involved. Students should develop their understanding of the course and theatre of war as well as assessing the significance and changing nature of the role Britain played at different times during the conflict.

5. Churchill, Britain, and the Empire: *Could the Bengal Famine have been avoided?*

This lesson will use the singular event of the Bengal Famine as a case study on the British Empire. Students will develop their overall broad understanding of the state of the Empire in Churchill's time, then focus in on the Bengal famine to assess the impact of British action/inaction during the crisis. The main task of the lesson will present students with the various causal factors which surrounded the famine, showing the actions taken as well as the context in order to help students understand decisions made. This case study gives an understanding of the relationship Britain had to its colonies as well as some of the attitudes of Churchill and his contemporaries at the time towards the Empire.

6, Reflections, echoes and responses

This lesson reviews all that has been learned with a focus on the present. Students will be invited to share their opinions, and responses to the events they have studied and discuss their relevance and impact in the modern world. Potential themes that could emerge include: Worker rights, strikes, political involvement and Britain's relationship to empire and debates about immigration and integration, Britain's place in the world and significance on the international stage. The weaknesses of historical myths and hero/villain narratives could also

be explored, allowing students to gain a more nuanced understanding of modern Britain. Questions such as 'How might have these historical events influenced the country we live in today?', 'Overall, what has our study suggested about Britishness and identity in the 20th century?', and 'How has your understanding of Britain's history developed? How does it make you feel?' could be discussed. Opportunities to actively respond to the learning through social action could be raised and supported from here.