

Lesson Plan: Women at War West Newcastle 1914-1918 Ruth Dodds' Diary Transcription		
Teacher/s		Date:
Subject: Analysing Contemporary Documents		Year:
<b>Learning Objectives:</b> Use a range of historical information including primary sources. Construct an informed response to the evidence. Consider different interpretations of a range of historical information including primary sources.		<b>Success Criteria:</b> Pupils will feel increased confidence in investigating handwritten primary sources. Pupils will develop sequential skills of argument Pupils will understand the strengths and limitations of diaries as a historical evidence
<b>Key Questions:</b> Why are diaries useful to historians? Are diaries a reliable source of information about the past? Why might Ruth keep a diary?		
<b>Starter Activity/ Introduction</b> Discuss what a diary is and why people might keep them – storing memories, living through stirring times or the urge to write. Ask the children to write a short diary entry for something that has happened to them in the past week. How useful might their diary be in 100 years? Explain that Ruth was more educated than most Armstrong's workers – a middle class woman from Gateshead who was working because of her sense of patriotic duty rather than for money. Use the Journal webpage opposite to promote discussion.		<b>Resources</b> <a href="http://www.thejournal.co.uk/north-east-analysis/analysis-news/diaries-reveal-one-gateshead-womans-8669291">http://www.thejournal.co.uk/north-east-analysis/analysis-news/diaries-reveal-one-gateshead-womans-8669291</a>
<b>Main Activity</b> a) Discuss and think about the strengths and limitations of diaries as historical evidence b) Explain what transcribe means and how this is different to translate. Transcribe the diary extract using the writing frame to help structure the exercise. Work as a class or in groups to read the first 2/3 lines. Discuss letters difficult to recognise like <i>e</i> in <i>Sylvie</i> and <i>h</i> in <i>how</i> .		<b>Resources</b> Ruth Dodd's Diary Activities.
<b>Plenary</b> Discuss the information gleaned from Ruth. Does she seem to like Annie? Are there any clues that the work can be complex or dangerous? Define <i>time fuses</i> (a fuse that can be set to delay the detonation of a shell) and <i>indexing machines</i> (a machine tool for precisely rotating the fuses).		<b>Resources</b> Ruth Dodd's Diary Activity Sheet.

## RUTH DODDS' DIARY

In October 1915 Ruth started as a part time munitions worker at Armstrong Whitworth's in Elswick, with her sister Sylvie. Now you are going to try and read a page of the diary she kept.

Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>

Both Sylvie & I enjoyed training at Armstrong's immensely; we were shown how to work the indexing machines for time fuses, & Sylvie was on one or two other processes too; I was on the same machine nearly all the time learning from a very nice little girl called Annie Peacock; she was only twenty & had worked

at Armstrong's four years; she was pretty & fair & very slightly made much shorter than I am, & she worked her machine beautiful. She had a sister in another shop & her father had lost the sight of one eye by the explosion of a shell here.

# RUTH DODDS' DIARY

## Transcription Sheet

Ruth's writing is hard to read. Can you make a neater copy in your own handwriting? This is called transcription.

Oct. 13th

Both Sylvie and I enjoyed

shell here.

## RUTH DODDS' DIARY



*Ruth Dodds, the founder of Gateshead's Little Theatre, wrote about life working in a Tyneside munitions factory during the First World War. Photograph; The Journal; Newcastle upon Tyne*

Ruth Dodds was born in 1890 in Low Fell Gateshead. She came from a well-to-do family. The photograph shows Ruth in later life when she did many good things for the town.

One of the entries in Ruth Dodd's diary.

Nov 6, 1915:

*I had a good day at Armstrong's yesterday & did 108 fuses.*

*It's a curious thing I can't pray so much now. I should like to pray for victory, but somehow it seems a contradiction to expect God to interfere in a war. God is God of all the world, & how can he fight for Germany or England?*

Diaries can be very useful to the historian because they will have lots of information about what was happening at the time.

However, historians have to be careful in using them to find out about the past for several reasons.

On the diary activity sheet following, answer some questions about diaries.

# RUTH DODDS' DIARY

## Diaries - How useful are they?

Tick the boxes - yes or no and explain your answer.

Diaries will tell you:

What the person is **thinking**

Y ☐

N ☐

What they have been **doing**

Y ☐

N ☐

How things were **different**

Y ☐

N ☐

They tell **only** one person's side of the story

Y ☐

N ☐

They will tell you **everything** that's been going on?

Y ☐

N ☐

Diaries can be useful to an historian because ...

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Diaries can be a problem to the historian because ...

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Lesson Plan: Women at War West Newcastle 1914-1918 Should I work at Armstrong's Factory?	
<b>Teacher/s:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Subject: History</b>	<b>Year:</b>
<b>Learning Objectives:</b> Understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources. Appreciate that there are different views expressed about the past	<b>Success Criteria:</b> Pupils will understand that different views are expressed about the same event
<b>Key Questions:</b> What was it like for women working in Armstrong's factory during World War One?	
<b>Starter Activity</b> Look at one of the points of view expressed in the range of opinions. Why does this person hold this point of view?	<b>Resources</b> Should I work in Armstrong's factory?
<b>Main Activity</b> A pair of pupils could adopt one of the extracts and voice their opinion. These could be posted on a sticker board 'Should I work at Armstrong's?' Why might each of these women hold these particular views? Producing a balanced account. You are a reporter from the Chronicle trying to find out what it was like to work at Armstrong's. You interview all the women on the worksheet. Put together each of their views into an article for the newspaper. How will you headline your story? Will you emphasise how bad things are or how good they are? Whatever you choose as your headline, how will this affect your selection of different opinion.	<b>Resource</b> Information sheet -Should I work in Armstrong's factory?
<b>Plenary</b> Most people thought the women were doing their patriotic duty by working in the munitions factory. Can you find out if women were given any more rights/equal pay/job opportunities after the war?	<b>Resources</b> <a href="http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/12-things-you-didnt-know-about-women-in-the-first-world-war">http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/12-things-you-didnt-know-about-women-in-the-first-world-war</a> <a href="http://www.historyextra.com/article/how-did-world-war-i-change-womens-lives">http://www.historyextra.com/article/how-did-world-war-i-change-womens-lives</a>



# SHOULD I WORK AT ARMSTRONG'S

Listen to the arguments for and against working at Vickers Armstrong.



On the activity sheet following write your own arguments for and against.

[illegible][illegible]



# TO FIGHT OR NOT TO FIGHT?

## Ruth's Decision



*14 Oct*

*I hate war & I hate killing & yet I am right to make munitions. I thought once I could not, but since then I have changed my mind - & the need is much greater, & our men write and say that every shell helps to save their lives. I admire the German women who are working day and night for their men, & shall I not imitate what I admire? I cannot stop the war by holding back, but I & my like may shorten the war by working.*

On the activity sheet on the next page, help Ruth to think through her problem.

## TO FIGHT OR NOT TO FIGHT?

Write down your advice to Ruth to help her with these problems.

- 1 Attitude to war?
- 2 Needs of British soldiers?
- 3 What German women are doing?
- 4 Can I stop the war?
- 5 How might this help to end the war?

Do you think she has remained true to her Quaker beliefs?

Dear Ruth

[illegible]