

# [History coursework – wwi](https://assignbuster.com/history-coursework-wwi/)

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1. Use your knowledge of WWI to explain which two posters were published before 1916, and which one was published after 1916. Give reasons for your answers.

Sources A, B and C are all recruitment posters trying to persuade people to join the Army. Source A and B are both British posters and in Britain after 1916, conscription was passed so that all men between 18-40 years old had to join the Army. This means that sources A and B must be pre-1916 as they are trying to get people to join, because after 1916 they had no choice in the matter. Source C is an American poster, and as America did not join the war until 1917 this poster must be post-1916.

2. In what ways are these posters similar, and in what ways do they differ?

These three recruitment posters are all similar as they try to provoke various emotions to make people enlist. Source A is telling you that it is your duty and suggests that it will make your family proud of you. Source B uses emotional blackmail, deliberately trying to make you feel guilty and not a true father figure as you have decided against enlisting.

Source C uses a different tactic - it tries to provoke anger and rage towards the Germans, making you hate them and want to fight them. This source is the only one that actually points at Germany and shows the true horrors of war, the others show nothing about war and you have no idea what it is you're joining or who you're fighting. Sources A and B show no violence, but C is a direct contrast showing death, destruction and rape. It is also the only one who lets you know that your mission in enlisting is to kill, or 'destroy' as it is put.

These posters also differ as A and B are British posters issued prior to 1916, whereas C is an American poster issued after 1916.

3. Use your knowledge of WWI to explain whether or not you think Source D proves that Sources A and B were successful in persuading men to join the army.

We do not know when this photo was taken, as it may well have been taken after conscription so all the people queuing may not be there out of choice. Even if it was taken prior to conscription there is no proof that it was just the recruitment posters that had persuaded these people to join. Source D was taken in London, and if London did not have a large amount of new recruits nowhere would!

If it was taken in August 1914, Britain was in the middle of 'war fever' - everybody was happy about the war as there had not been a major war since 1815 and life had been becoming increasingly boring. It was thought then that the war would be over by Christmas and nobody had any idea what it would entail, so many men joined up at the start of the war. Even if it was taken after 'war fever' the likelihood is that the men joining were there because of reasons other than seeing a couple of posters. Patriotism for King and Country along with peer pressure were reasons that made many man join. Other reasons for joining included wanting to get away and see the world, to make their family proud, to get a job and a wage and to become a hero. Many men felt that they had to join up so they were not thought of as a coward. Women roamed the streets handing white feathers to any man they saw who was not in uniform as a sign of cowardice.

4. Use your knowledge of WWI to explain why the Government issued postcards like Source E to the soldiers in the trenches.

Source E shows a trench postcard that the soldiers on the front line wrote to their families. They were quick and easy and gave out limited information. In time of war the Government passes DORA - Defence of the Realm Act, to restrict the enemy or anybody at home getting hold of information that is classified secret.

The Government could not risk letting the enemies catch hold of any information so they provided postcards for the men to write home on that gave out no important information. If the enemy get hold of a letter with any details of actions, battles or places, the British Army would be ruined. It was also vital to keep up morale back in Britain so none of the true horrors of war could be reported back to the soldiers loved ones. If thousands of families discovered that their sons and husbands were suffering trench foot and living among rats in trenches that were being shelled continually, there would be a huge outbreak to stop the war and the Government could not risk that happening.

5. If you did not know the dates of Sources F and G, how else would you be able to work out that Source F and not Source H appeared with Source G in British newspapers in July 1916?

6. Suggest possible reasons why these two sources, I and J, give different impressions of conditions in the trenches. Explain your answer.

Source I is just an advertisement to sell cigarettes. It is simply an artist's impression of trench warfare and this was the image that the Government had portrayed to everyone at home to keep up morale. The artist is employed to sell Golden Dawn cigarettes and has to create a positive image around them. Showing the true horrors of trench warfare; death, destruction and dirt, would sell nothing. The artist shows brave, happy, smiling lads smoking Golden Dawns, implying that these cigarettes are for courageous, healthy men.

We know that Source I is not an accurate portrayal of the trenches as we see men standing with their heads above the trenches, both the men and the trenches looking clean and tidy and well kept, grass rather than the torn up mud banks and doesn't show anything like barbed wire, sandbags or periscopes. The soldiers are looking out as if they can't see the enemy trench, when in fact they would close enough to spot. There is no sense of danger in this picture, and because of propaganda like this, the people back at home didn't believe the true horrors of war.

Sassoon on the other hand had really been there and experienced the first-hand horrors, which had made him anti-war. He was trying to tell the true realities of war; the glue-like mud, the mangled bodies of the dead and the mask of human faces floating on the surface of the flooded trenches. Through poetry, letters and his book, Memoirs of an Infantry Officer, he aimed to tell the truth of war and he particularly wanted to upset the 'blood-thirsty civilians and those who falsely glorified the war'.

These were Sassoon's true inner thoughts of the war; he was not being paid to sell a false image or write an article to boost morale in Britain - he was stating the uncensored truth.

7)a. Sources E, F and G come from the time of war. How reliable are they as evidence of what it was like in the trenches?

During wars, the Government runs 'total war', aiming to get everyone supporting it and keeping morale up, or else it would all come crashing down. DORA (Defence of the Realm Act) was set up for this purpose and prevented bad publicity about the war making it's way back to the people of Britain. The Government is able to withhold any information and prevent the press publishing it. Back in 1914-18, news media could not just send out journalists and cameramen and photographers like they do these days, which also restricted what the public saw of the war. Due to a lack of real information making its way back, the newspapers published whatever snippet of information they could. The Government would feed them little bits of information, which were usually twisted or made-up anyway, and the newspapers would print them, as they were all they had on the war efforts to report to the public.

Source E is the trench postcard and has minimal information and reveals nothing to the public. It showed nothing of the harsh realities of war; the trench foot and using maggots to clear out wounds etc. They keep hidden the realities, but by 'reverse logic', by saying nothing they are actually implying that some bad things were happening.

Sources F and G were pieces printed in newspapers after the 'success' of the Battle of Somme. In reality, the Battle of Somme was a complete failure and 20, 000 men were killed or wounded within the first hour and by the end of the first day the dead/injured figure totalled 60, 000. However, the Government made out that it had been a huge success for the British.

7)b. Sources H and J were written long after the war. How reliable are they as evidence of what it was like in the trenches?

These sources are likely to more reliable for the accurate truth of conditions in the trenches because the authors are allowed to speak their true feelings. During the war DORA would have restricted what they said, but writing after the war DORA has no effect on it. These men are recalling what it was like; their real inner thoughts and memories. They are not being dictated (by a cigarette company, the Government or anyone else) to portray it as anything different to what they saw it as. This is first hand accounts of the war from people who were really there; not just some newspaper journalist stringing together a story from snippets of inaccurate information. Living in the trenches will be imprinted on their minds for the rest of their lives, and suffering from trauma or shellshock just reinforces it.