

**APPEASEMENT**

ROADTESTING SOURCES AND MATERIALS WITH GCSE STUDENTS

**HOW DID I GET INVOLVED?**

I have worked with and been engaged with the University of Sheffield over a number of years, stemming from their annual History conferences for History teachers. As a teacher in Leeds, visiting Sheffield Uni every year means that it is local and I particularly enjoy the face-to-face aspect. The quality of presentation and topics covered in these conferences have consistently been superb and as a teacher, it is invaluable to keep in contact with up to date research.

In March 2022, I was invited to help with a research and development project on appeasement. I took 8 Year 10 and Year 12 students to watch the first performance of *The Nervous State* at the Montgomery Theatre, Sheffield, in June 2022. Student feedback from the performance helped develop their understanding, and students began to look at appeasement from a different angle – from what people at the time thought, as opposed to just the political view of the Govt. I was involved with further online discussion with Julie Gottlieb at the University of Sheffield and I began to prepare materials to use with my y10 and y11 GCSE History classes so as to enhance knowledge and understanding. Andrew Wrenn from the HA visited 22/3/23 and saw both y10 and y11 classes – some of the y11 class had seen the Sheffield performance.

**USING THE RESOURCES**

When putting the materials together with my classes, I used the Sept 2018 ***History Today*** article ‘War on Nerves’ written by Julie– it was accessible to my students. I used this as a source document with students to help explain the context of appeasement.

You can red the article here:

https://www.historytoday.com/archive/feature/munich-crisis-waiting-end-world

I also used the **Journals** of **F. L. Lucas** – and selected some of these, ensuring that I selected those that Year 10 and Year 11 students could access and understand. There was,however, some stretch and challenge with some of these journal sources!

I also used Mass Observation reports – again, I selected those based on what I felt students could relate to and find accessible.. I explained what Mass Observation reports were and how ‘low history’ or ‘history from below’ plays its part – not just the voices of the politicians etc.

I also referred to the play itself – and linked this with the reflections from the students who were there.

My approach was directly linked to the IGCSE style source question that Year 11 would complete in May 2023. I made it relevant to them in particular by creating the highest marked question – ‘Study all the sources – how far do they agree that Chamberlain was a hero?’

**RESOURCE IMPACT**

This year’s Year 11 exam was on the causes of WW2. Whilst the actual exam was on the Anschluss, the source material work on appeasement helped particularly well with source skills as well as overall knowledge and understanding.

I was keen for students to access a variety of resources and Mass Observation records were new to them. I found that they accessed them easily and that they engaged particularly well with them.

Exam results from the Year 11 class of 19 students

100% L4 – 9 26% L8-9.

9 of the 19 students have continued to History A level.

The source paper was the strongest paper for this class – and I genuinely feel that the source materials created with University of Sheffield helped with this.

When reflecting with Year 10, the students have been able to work with a wider variety of materials than their textbooks. Their source topic is not on causes of WW2, however, so has enhanced their knowledge and understanding of appeasement for Paper 1. However, they have still engaged with source material and have had good engagement with something that was different to the usual and was certainly very fresh.

The whole process of working with Sheffield University has been beneficial not just for my own skills, but it has been particularly of value to the students. We have worked with a range of resources – performance, Mass-Observation reports etc – that we would not usually access – and this has widened knowledge and understanding for all. GCSE results were very pleasing and A level History numbers high.

DLSE – Sept 2023