

# World War One

[www.bl.uk/world-war-one](http://www.bl.uk/world-war-one)

## Teachers' Notes

Theme: Propaganda

Subject area: Advertising

### Rationale

In this lesson, students will be introduced to some of the ways in which advertisers used the war to sell their products. Students will examine how these materials present a positive picture of the war.

The class will also look at some of the materials produced for or by the troops themselves as amusement and propaganda.

### Content

#### Historical sources:

- Advertisement - [Advert for Perrier Water](#)
- Advertisement - [Advert for Greys Cigarettes](#)
- Advertisement - ['Bovril gives strength to win', an advert for Bovril from 'Fighting Australasia'](#)
- Book with photographs - [Fighting Australasia, a record of the Australasian forces in the Great War](#)
- Book - [Digger dialects: slang phrases used by Australian soldiers on active service](#)
- Advertisement - [When your thoughts fly home – advert for Swan Fountain](#)
- Postcard - ['Are we afraid? No!' A propaganda postcard depicting the British Empire](#)

#### Recommended reading (short article):

[Commercial advertising as propaganda in the First World War](#) by David Clampin

### Key questions

- Why have advertisers used the war as a way to advertise their goods and what are they trying to achieve?
- What effect does light-hearted and patriotic material have on troops and civilians?
- What function might poetry have had at different stages of the war and on different audiences?
- What constituted popular culture between 1914-1918 and how is it different from today?
- What does popular culture reveal about society's attitude to the war?

## Activities

- 1.) Ask students to think about the main ways of communicating ideas to different groups. Introduce the importance of advertising to the students - especially at a time when there is neither television nor computers.
- 2.) Show the students the different types of advertising and ask them to work out for whom they were intended and what they are trying to convey.
- 3.) In groups show the students the following sources:
  - [Fighting Australasia, a record of the Australasian forces in the Great War](#)
  - [Digger dialects: slang phrases used by Australian soldiers on active service](#)
  - ['Are we afraid? No!' A propaganda postcard depicting the British Empire](#)
- 4.) What do students think is the purpose of these documents? Who are they written by and who are they for? Students could record their answers.

## Extension activities

- Ask students to create an advert for a product that might have been used at the time of World War One for a specific audience e.g. women in the military or children of soldiers.