INVESTIGATION 3

What were some of the war’s consequences for daily life in schools?

Advice to teachers

This investigation explores some of the Great War’s consequences for daily life in schools while the war was in progress.

1. You are encouraged to read the Background information as context before you commence work with students.

2. Provide your students with sources 3.1-3.12.

3. You may distribute the Source Analysis Worksheet on page 18 and ask students to make notes, or ask them to complete the Tuning in activities.

4. Discuss with students what they have learned from the sources and Tuning in activities along with their answers to the overall investigation question.

5. To help them answer the questions, you may choose to provide sources from other investigations in this resource or from the CD-ROM. You may also choose to provide the Background information, but this should be done only after students have formed conclusions based on analysis of the sources.

6. Students may undertake further research or explore personal values and attitudes through the questions and activities in Going further.
**Background information**

Almost all students and teachers had family members enlist or knew of other enlistees from their school or local community. These enlistees included teachers as well as former students. Not knowing how those members of school communities were faring, and then receiving the too common news that those people were wounded or had been killed, were burdens dealt with on a scale unimaginable for school communities today. Following the initial beliefs that the war would be ‘over by Christmas’ (or by the second Christmas as Victoria’s Education Department declared optimistically), school communities suffered phases of great misery, especially after larger battles involving Australian forces.

Students were absent usually only briefly with parental permission when upsetting news struck their home lives; other students absented themselves without permission because of their trauma. Still others needed to ‘help with the harvest’ in terms of supporting their families or through schemes organised to overcome the shortage of manpower. A very few older students absented themselves and were caught attempting to enlist. Some schools declared that discipline had declined due to children not coping with their grief or war-related news and events, also because of the absence of positive male role models such as fathers or teachers. There were fights between children whose family members had or had not enlisted, or who held different opinions about the war. There was bullying of children with German surnames; moreover, in some locations, the Lutheran schools that had been established in the previous century by German immigrants were closed or instruction in German language banned.

There were requests by teachers for short leave breaks following the death of a family member or the need to support an invalid relation – but rarely did teachers request more than a minimum. Such absences further dislocated the routines of schools more than was already the case with the significant curriculum emphasis on the war and the time given to fund-raising and comforts-making.

In the first half of the Twentieth Century, women teachers needed to make tough choices with their lives. In government and most private schools, a woman could continue to teach only for so long as she did not marry, and would need to resign permanently if she did. Indeed, this was the law with most departments, reflecting wider social beliefs that a woman would be better as the ‘capable home-maker’ and could not dutifully fulfil that responsibility as well as be a paid employee; also that her husband would support her financially. Thus, for many women teachers who invested their lives in their careers, the news of the wounding or deaths of former students could be akin to the death of a family member.

With many young male teachers enlisting at a time when there were many more male than female teachers, the war led to teacher shortages. Some schools re-introduced versions of the ‘monitor’ and ‘pupil-teacher’ systems with competent or more senior students giving instruction while the few teacher training colleges fast-tracked trainees through the system. Most government schools were given permission by their departments to welcome back into the classroom the married women ex-teachers as well as retired older men and single women. Non-Government schools did the same. Many women enjoyed their return to the classroom but returned to their retirement with little argument once the war was over.

Further complicating the school day was the shortage of materials such as writing paper, inkwells, ink and chalk. Teachers and students were also encouraged to recycle and repair.

School sports, especially associated with the bigger schools, were moved to the weekends so as to become entertainment for the general public.
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Learning activities

Tuning in

1. a) Summarise in the following table some of the consequences of the war for the daily life of schools.

Consequences of the war on daily life in schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For students</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>For other members of school communities</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
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Note: some consequences may belong in both columns.

b) Place a ‘x’ next to consequences that could be considered negative.

c) Place a ‘✓’ next to those that could be considered positive.

d) Place ‘✓ ✓’ next to those that could be either. Be able to justify your selections.
1. a) Identify any two consequences of the war that were most likely short-term for individuals or whole school communities. Explain your reasons.
   b) Identify two consequences that were most likely long-term. Explain your reasons.

2. Imagine you are a student in a government, private, Catholic, German Lutheran or Quaker school during the war. Imagine yourself in any one of the settings described in the sources, for example, in a classroom or school assembly, at a sporting contest, on a farm, or living or working in an internment camp. Identify who you are and write three half-page diary entries describing what you see, read and hear happening around you and how you feel about those war-related events.

3. Has your school or wider community ever experienced challenging times?
   a) What were those challenges?
   b) Who was affected, and how?
   c) How did your school seek to overcome the challenges? Did others help? Did you help?
   d) Despite the challenges, were there any unexpected benefits from the situation? Explain.

4. Research the events of the 1916 Easter Uprising in Dublin mentioned in Source 3.7. What were some of its effects on the views and activities of Catholic schools and Irish-Australians?

5. Research further the conscription debates of 1916 and 1917 and the divisions they caused in Australian society, some of which affected some schools. Find three sources that oppose and three sources that support conscription either in this resource or elsewhere. Discuss the perspective of each source.
Source 3.1

[Teacher] Mrs Macintosh, after whom Macintosh House and the Honour Board Boarder’s Prize is named, was a bride in 1915 and was widowed by the end of 1916. Two teachers [at Ascham] lost their fiancés, killed in action in France.

“Miss Bailey read the lists out to us, and we were all saddened by the war news. Many girls lost fathers and brothers,” wrote [a former-pupil].


Source 3.2

‘Each boy would know of close relatives, or of men from his home town, or young men who had been at College in his time, who were overseas. Their safety was an ever-present intention in Masses and prayers offered in the College. How shocked the boys must have been at the announcements of Old Boys who had been killed at the front, especially when so young, such as Frank Bennett Hartley, who after having fought at Gallipoli and in France was still only 19 when killed at Bois Grenier.’


Frank Marien, a student of St. Joseph’s, illustrated how he felt: ‘In Memory of the Old Boys who were killed in World War I’.

Source 3.3

‘As a consequence of the War there is a great shortage in the supplies of paper coming to hand, and particularly in the paper available for writing books for pupils ...

It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that teachers should make the most careful use of existing stocks, and when submitting requisitions ask for as few books as possible, at least one-third less than formerly ...

Both sides of the paper should be used, and no spaces left on any page. In all subjects the books need only show answers to questions; the questions need not be written.’

J. Dawson, Chief Inspector, Shortage of Paper and Writing Books [Circular No. 81], in Education Gazette, New South Wales, September, 1916, p. 300.
Source 3.4

‘Almost all adult amateur sporting contests were suspended during the war. Increasingly schoolboy sport became important as a crowd spectacle and a source of supply for future adult teams. With growing enrolments, the G.P.S. [Great Public Schools – private] schools themselves recognised the growing public interest in various team games. In 1916, the G.P.S. headmasters decided to hold all rugby matches on Sundays and not mid-week as previously ... Whatever the reason, ‘sport for all’ became more prominent as an aim at Shore during the war and its aftermath.’


Source 3.5

‘Since the School began there had been intermittent difficulties in finding staff, but during the war there were more staff changes than ever before ... [Only two masters [were] to remain throughout the war ... [T]wenty-four other teachers came and went, often to enlist, with thirteen staying a year or less. It was hard to find replacements ... Various expedients were tried. Four boys joined the Staff from the Sixth Form, but none remained for a year, as they too enlisted. Part-time teachers were also employed. In 1914 the staff had been all male. But during the war five women were employed.’


Source 3.6

‘At its outbreak the war had seemed remotely interesting, or even exciting, but six months later the patriotic fervour and cheery optimism had given way to realization of its seriousness. Thousands were joining the expeditionary forces for service overseas, among them a number of Old Collegians, some of whom called in at school to bid farewell to former friends.

The war was the direct cause of the staff problems throughout [head master] Mr. Price’s term of office. In his first year, and despite his earnest pleadings, Mr. R. Lamble and Mr. A.H. MacRoberts went into the army. At the close of the same year he lost three more of his men ... The loss of Mr. John Cameron in 1917 was another blow: he was senior science master and had charge of the Debating Society ... A staff which had undergone little change [over time] had been almost completely dispersed in the space of the three years!’


Source 3.7

‘[In 1916] the Old Boy’s executive decided to abandon the annual re-union “owing to the unsettled state of things generally”. Whether this was simply due to the number of ex-students who had now enlisted or whether it had something to do with the Easter Uprising in Dublin or the beginnings of the Conscription debate in Australia is not entirely clear.’

Source 3.8

One effect of the war is noticeable in the unsettled attitude of some of the boys towards their work. This is especially noticeable with some of the senior boys whose fathers are away at the Front. There is no doubt that some of the lads are missing the strictness of the home discipline that prevailed when the father was at home, and the school has therefore an extra duty – the duty of keeping these lads steady and upright.


Source 3.9

In October 1915 [Headmaster Arthur] Tonge enrolled Trinity in the Grammar School Harvest Help League established by the [Victorian] Minister for Public Works ... [who] organized for senior students to assist with the harvest during the summer vacation. Six hundred boys from fifteen schools responded. Only 122 boys, including thirty from Trinity, were actually placed on farms, although many assisted privately. The project received such great publicity that men were freed from other works and university students volunteered ... Earlier in the year, Tonge ... cancelled the Annual Combined School Sports scheduled for December in order to free the boys for war duties.

Member schools with Trinity included Wesley; Scotch; Caulfield; Xavier, Ballarat Grammar and College; Brighton; Hamilton College; New College; St Paul’s Cathedral School; Melbourne High; Christ Church, South Yarra; St Thomas’s Essendon; and Haileybury.


Source 3.10

[Acting headmaster] A.H.S. Lucas pointed to the growing importance being attached to science by the wartime community:

One obvious effect of the Great War has been to bring home to all classes the tremendous power of science both for deadly destruction in the field and for beneficent work in the hospitals. Scientific processes, scientific devices, scientific organisation simply dominate the situation. An equally obvious deduction is that scientific effort may be as powerful for good in the future in times of peace as it is now for evil in this time of war ...

[The study of modern history and of geography gained considerable ground both in the numbers pursuing them and the standards reached. By the end of 1917 the teaching of German, “by the general wish of boys and parents” had actually ceased.’


Source 3.11

Two prestigious girls’ schools in Melbourne had a very bad press from the weekly Graphic of Australia. The campaign began in February of 1916, when the Presbyterian Ladies’ College was accused in screaming headlines of being pro-German ... Edward Goll was the school’s Hun Director of Music and he would have to go. But Goll was a naturalised Australian of eighteen months’ standing and was ... a Czech ...

In late July, the Graphic turned its attention to the Methodist Ladies’ College:

There has been insistent disaffection concerning the retention of Herr Otto Krome as head master of the Methodist Ladies’ College ... Herr Krome is a full-blooded German ...

He had taught at Wesley College, three private girls’ schools, had been joint proprietor of the notable University High School, and then headmaster of M.L.C. and yet because of his very name, Otto Georg Hermann Dittmar Krome, he could not be immune.

'World War I (1914–18) led to the closing of all German [Lutheran] schools [in South Australia] under a law of 1917 ... This was far harsher than in Victoria, where no Lutheran school was shut, though German language use was prohibited as the language of instruction and textbooks were not allowed if published outside the British Commonwealth.'