

The
Economist

EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION



ROYAL
COLLECTION
TRUST

ROGER FENTON

FINDING THE TRUTH WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

75-80 MINUTE WORKSHOP



Introduction

This workshop explores media representation of current affairs using the war photography of Roger Fenton in The Crimean War.

The resources have been produced by The Economist Educational Foundation, an independent charity set up by *The Economist* magazine. We combine The Economist's journalistic know-how with teaching expertise, and we specialise in supporting teachers to facilitate high-quality classroom discussions about the news

About this workshop

This workshop covers areas of History, English and Citizenship. It will take approximately 75 minutes to run.

Who is this workshop suitable for?

This workshop is aimed at 11-15 year olds.

Teachers are encouraged to adapt as necessary for their student's needs.

This resource complimented a recent Royal Collection Trust exhibition at The Queen's Gallery,



Let us know about any interesting discussions you have...



@RCT @Econ_Foundation

#royalcollectiontrust #rogerfentonrct #findingthetruthinfenton

BEFORE THE SESSION YOU NEED TO HAVE:

- The keywords, written up on the board
- 1 copy of the *Keywords* resource, cut up
- 3 copies of the *Crimean War Newspaper*, stuck up around the room
- A pile of *War worksheets*, enough for 1 between 2
- The *Fenton photos*, ready to stick up around the room
- The *Scepticism spanners*, cut up

10 MINUTE ACTIVITY

Photographic keywords

Resource

The *Keywords* sheet

Activity instructions

Make sure you've written the keywords on the board:

- Truth
- News
- Journalism
- War

Put students into four groups. Hand each group a different keyword and tell them to keep it secret. Each group has three minutes to create a freeze frame 'photograph' of their keyword. They must organise themselves into a dramatic pose that represents the word they have.

Tell two of the groups to get into their freeze frame 'photographs' and countdown from five to zero to signal when they must be completely still. Ask the other two groups which keywords they think are being depicted and why. Repeat with the other two groups.



Ask your students:

Why was creating a freeze frame powerful? How did it help you understand the keyword? What was difficult about it? How could photographs be a good or bad way to explain things?

KEYWORD:

Truth



KEYWORD:

Journalism

KEYWORD:

News

KEYWORD:

War

10 MINUTE ACTIVITY

Crimea Context

Resources

War worksheet and the *Crimean War Newspaper*

Activity instructions

Put students into new groups of four and hand out a *War worksheet* to each group. Explain to students that they are going to look at the first ever use of photography to report on a war. This war was called the Crimean War. Before they look at the photographs, they need to learn a bit about the war itself so they can apply their knowledge to what they see.

Tell students they have a range of different information on their worksheet. Point to the *Crimean War Newspaper* around the room. Explain that they will need to use the information on these posters to work out what the question is for each answer, and what the answer is for each question. One has been completed as an example.



Ask your students:

What was the Crimean war like?

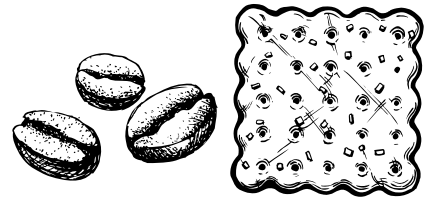
WAR WORKSHEET

Q How many British soldiers died?

A Well over 20,000

Q

A



Q What started the war?

A

Q What was the joint forces of Britain, France and the Ottoman Empire called?

A

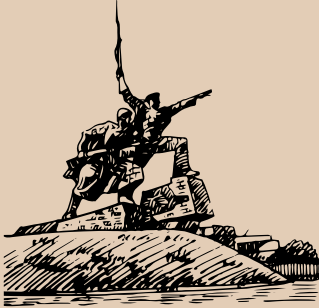
Q Where is Crimea?

A

Q

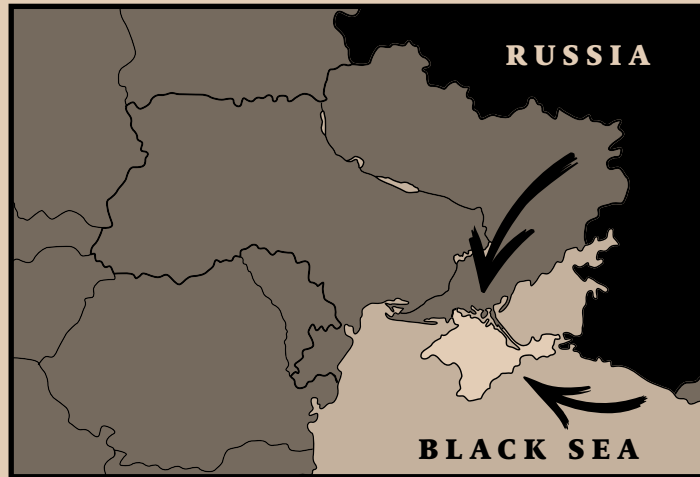
A Weather, hunger and disease.

20,000 BRITISH SOLDIERS DEAD



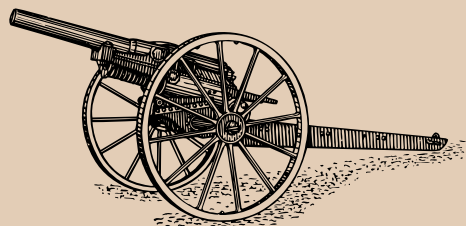
ALLIES ADVANCE

BRITAIN, FRANCE AND TURKEY were collectively known as the Allies angry at Russian invasion of the Ottoman Empire. They went to war and travelled to a part of Russia called The Crimea to fight them there.



INVADING FORCES

RUSSIA INVADED A PLACE WHICH WAS PART OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE (MODERN DAY TURKEY), AND FRANCE AND BRITAIN WERE NOT HAPPY ABOUT IT.



HUNGRY SOULS

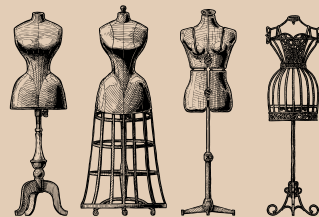
LIVING CONDITIONS for soldiers were very bad in the Crimean war. They often had only a few hard, dry biscuits and coffee beans to get them through the day. Hot meals were rare even in the harsh winter weather.

BRUTAL CONDITIONS

IT WAS VERY BADLY ORGANISED. Most British soldiers died from the poor conditions they suffered, not fighting. disease, the cold and hunger were the biggest killers. The battles were planned badly too. The British public heard about the conditions and was very upset.

CHOLERA

IN ST JAMES, WESTMINSTER. The following Medical Gentlemen are appointed, either of whom may be immediately applied to for Medicine and Attendance, on the occurrence of those Complaints, MR. FRENCH, 41, GT MARLBOROUGH ST MR. HOUSLEY, 26, BROAD STREET MR. WILDON, 16, PRINCES STREET



DRESSMAKER LATEST FASHIONABLE SILHOUETTE FROM PARIS AVAILABLE IN SAMUELS OF KNIGHTSBRIDGE.



TONIC AIR

FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM RESPIRATORY ILLNESS visit Switzerland to aid in your recovery. Villages with age-old customs, medieval castles, world-famed spas and peace and health in the tonic air.

10 MINUTE ACTIVITY

Set the scene

Resources

No resources needed.

Activity instructions

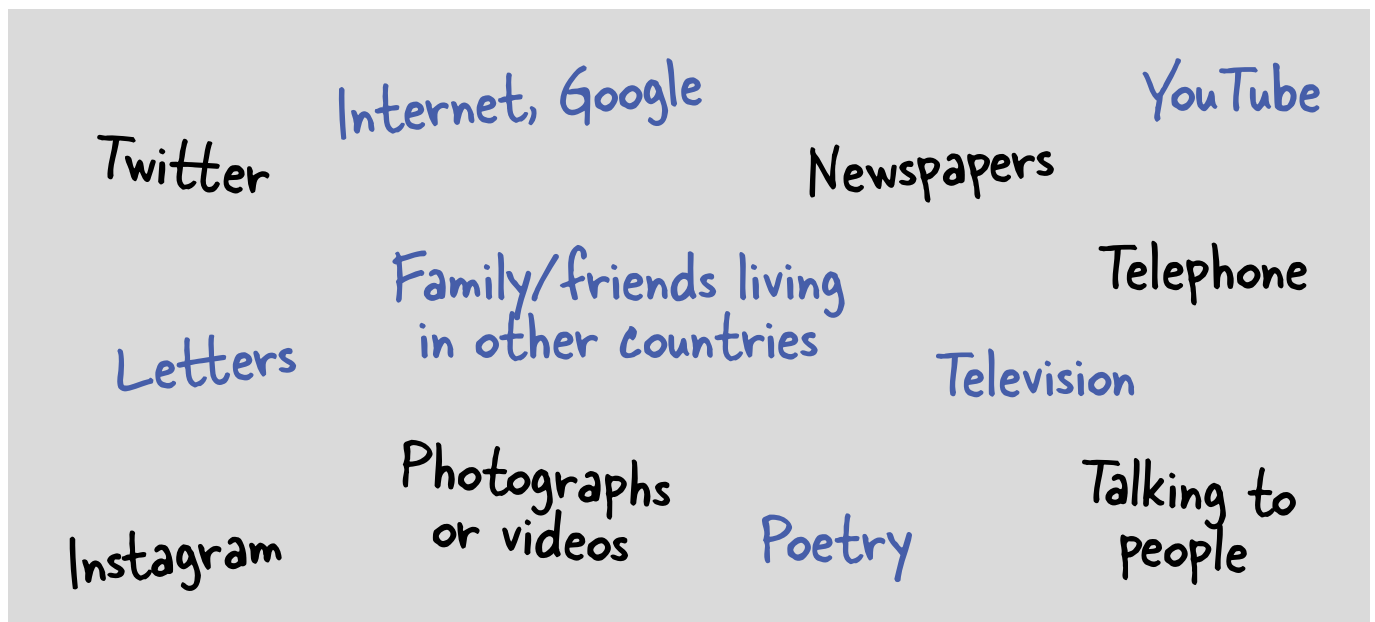
Tell students they need to think about what it was like to live in 1853. This will help them understand the impact that the photographs they are looking at would have had as a way to tell the news.



Ask your students:

How do we hear about what is happening in the world today?

Write student's ideas on the board. See suggestions below to help.
Aim to get a wide range of ideas.



Ask your students:

Look at the list. Which ones are the best ways to get news and why?
Which aren't so good and why?

ROGER FENTON: FINDING THE TRUTH WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

ACTIVITY 3 (continued)

Tell students they now have to travel back in time to 1853.

Go through your list on the board and decide together if each option was available in 1853. Cross each one out that was not available. E.g. cross off TV.

Here is a list of dates which you may want to share or write up as you go, if relevant.

1788	<i>The Times</i> newspaper launched
1820	Only half of people could read
1839	Photography invented
1843	<i>The Economist</i> newspaper launched
1876	Telephone invented
1896	<i>Daily Mail</i> newspaper launched
1927	TV invented
1977	Home computer released
1983	Internet invented
1998	Google created
2005	YouTube created



Ask your students a selection of the following questions:

- What was difficult about getting the news in 1853?
- What do you think it was like before the invention of photography?
- How might images have been portrayed in newspapers before?
- What was the impact of photography?
- How might people feel about wars going on in other countries?
- How could photography change the way people think about war?

25 MINUTE ACTIVITY

The power of photography

Resources

The *Fenton photos* and *Scepticism spanners*

Activity instructions

Make a gallery of pictures by sticking the photographs up around the classroom. Ask students to imagine they are in a gallery. They should move around the images and stand next to the one that makes the biggest impression on them. Students should discuss the reasons for their choice with group of people who picked the same picture. Tell students they will work in these groups (although you may need to move students to even out numbers).

Tell each group to move clockwise to a different photo. Groups should discuss the questions for their photo. Ask for feedback. Ask groups to move again and discuss the questions for a new photograph.

Hand out a *Scepticism spanner* to each group. They must read this together and answer their question. Get groups to share what information they had and feedback as a whole group.



Ask your students:

- Is it important to know information beyond the photograph?
- What was difficult about getting the news in 1853?
- How might people feel about wars going on in other countries?
- How do you think people would feel about photography?
- How could photography change the way people think about war?

Photo 1

QUESTIONS:

1. Come up with a caption or title for this photograph
2. What is going on here?
3. What does this photograph tell us about the war?
4. How does it make you feel?
5. How do you think the British public in 1853 would feel seeing this?
6. Is there anything missing that you would expect to see in a war photograph?





Photo 2

- QUESTIONS:** **1.** Come up with a caption or title for this photograph **2.** What is going on here? **3.** What does this photograph tell us about the war? **4.** How does it make you feel? **5.** How do you think the British public in 1853 would feel seeing this? **6.** Is there anything missing that you would expect to see in a war photograph?



Photo 3

- QUESTIONS:** **1.** Come up with a caption or title for this photograph **2.** What is going on here? **3.** What does this photograph tell us about the war? **4.** How does it make you feel? **5.** How do you think the British public in 1853 would feel seeing this? **6.** Is there anything missing that you would expect to see in a war photograph?

Photo 4

QUESTIONS:

1. Come up with a caption or title for this photograph
2. What is going on here?
3. What does this photograph tell us about the war?
4. How does it make you feel?
5. How do you think the British public in 1853 would feel seeing this?
6. Is there anything missing that you would expect to see in a war photograph?





All these photos were taken by Roger Fenton. Fenton was the first war photographer.

QUESTION:

If only one person is taking pictures of events, what problems might there be?



Roger Fenton, the photographer, was paid to take pictures of the Crimean War by a man with close connections to government and so he may have wanted to show Britain doing well in the war.

QUESTION:

How might this affect what Fenton chose to photograph or not photograph?



SPANNER
THREE

Fenton, the photographer, was used to taking pictures of famous buildings and cared about creating artistic photographs.

QUESTION:

Should war photography ever be artistic?



SPANNER
FOUR

There were some other descriptions of the war.

A famous poem by Lord Tennyson called *The Charge of the Light Brigade* describes a battle:

*"Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of hell,
Rode the six hundred."*

QUESTION:

Look back at your photograph. How do these words make you see, feel or think about the photo now?

20 MINUTE ACTIVITY

Question quake discussion

Resources

Question quakes and 'Valley of the shadow of death' photo

Activity instructions

Explain to students that one of the photos from the previous activity is the 'Valley of the shadow of death' and is a famous photograph by Fenton. Show the students the Photo 3 again and point out the cannonballs in the image.

The group are going to use this photograph to start a discussion.

Write the statement "This is a good news source" onto a piece of paper and put in the middle of the room.

To facilitate the discussion:

STUDENTS: should stand in a circle around the statement. Students should move to show how much they agree/disagree with this statement; the closer they are to it, the more they agree. Tell students they may move during the discussion if they change their mind.

Students should hold out two fists in front of them. To contribute, they should stick up one thumb. Once they have spoken they should put this hand behind their back so they have one more chance to speak, using their other hand. Each speaker can choose the next person to contribute.

TEACHER: stand outside the circle. After a few minutes of discussion, add Question quake 1 into the circle. When you do this, students must act like the ground is shaking for 3 seconds, then answer the question. Respond to the group discussion by adding in relevant Question quakes at various points. We suggest using around five in total; you may choose ones based on your student's ability or the direction of the conversation. You may also use them if conversation dries up or digresses.



At the end of your discussion ask your students:

Who moved during the activity? What made you move? Who didn't move? Why?

QUESTION QUAKE 1



This photograph was taken by
Fenton on the same day.

Is it the same road?

**What are similarities
and differences?**

**Why would he move
the cannonballs?**

QUESTION QUAKE 2

**Which photograph
is more scary?
Why?**



QUESTION QUAKE 3

**Do you think Fenton
moved them for artistic
reasons, to the make
people more scared, or
for a different reason?**

QUESTION QUAKE 4

Why might people be upset that he moved the cannonballs?



QUESTION QUAKE 5

Is it more important to photograph exactly what you see, or to create a picture to help people understand the events that are taking place?

QUESTION QUAKE 6

**Do we always see
the truth today on
social media?**



QUESTION QUAKE 7

**Have you heard
of fake news?
Would you describe
Fenton's photography
as fake news?**

QUESTION QUAKE 8

**What can we learn
from this about
how we see modern
news sources?**



QUESTION QUAKE 9

**Should all news
tell the truth?**

**Can you come
up with a good
question to develop
discussion?**

