

# REACHING OUT

We want to reach out! Whilst it may prove difficult for you to visit us at our sites we want to find ways to still work with and support our schools.

As schools return, we look to support each school's efforts to get involved with the rich tapestry of culture and creativity within Borough. Tameside Cultural Services have been looking at how we can best use our years of experience and resources to support schools. We will link in with the Philosophy for Children, as well as the National Curriculum, the schools recovery curriculum and the councils five ways to wellbeing: Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give.

Monthly we will share information relating to our education offer as well as giving further ideas and ways to engage with our offer in the classroom. There will be activities from each of the cultural services teams and we will take the opportunity to highlight one of our site based workshops as when we are in a place to, we can not wait to welcome you back to our sites and great outdoors.



## ASHTON MUNITIONS EXPLOSION, 1917

This session is about the Ashton Munitions Factory

Explosion, that occurred on the 13th June 1917. During WW1, many buildings were converted to create weapons and chemicals for the war. The old cotton mill in a built-up area of Ashton, acquired by the Hooley Hill Rubber and Chemical Works, was producing TNT (an explosive chemical) when a fire started, soon leading to an explosion of the chemicals stored there. 43 died as a result, and many more were injured.

**culture**  
Tameside



# Tameside Cultural Services

## MUNITIONS EXPLOSION

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**This activity seeks to teach children about the sometimes hidden aspect of the war; those back home, often also risking their lives.**

Ashton under Lyne's Local Studies and Archives Centre holds collections which can expand, inspire and stimulate a child's learning and also tie directly with local heritage and your curriculum.

### Objectives

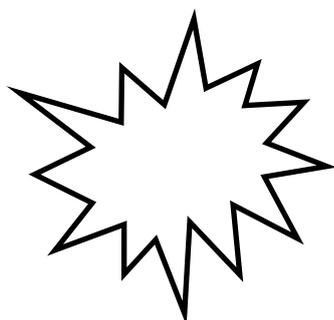
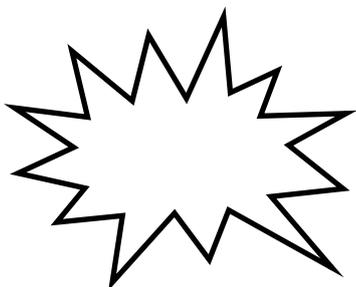
This lesson enables pupils to develop skills:

- Awareness of their local history
- Understanding of the hidden costs of war, away from the frontline
- Creativity/expression

### The activity:

1. Pupils can answer the questions on the worksheet, either in pairs or groups, allowing for discussion.
2. Print the attached newspaper material on coloured paper (ideally yellow, orange, or red) giving each pupil 3 different colours. Invite the pupils to make a collage from this representing the blast. They could also use pens and pencils adding text to their design that links to the explosion.

\*Perhaps you could cut out different 'explosion' shapes in the different colours and sizes. Layer this 'explosions' one on top of the other to make a huge 'BOOM!'.



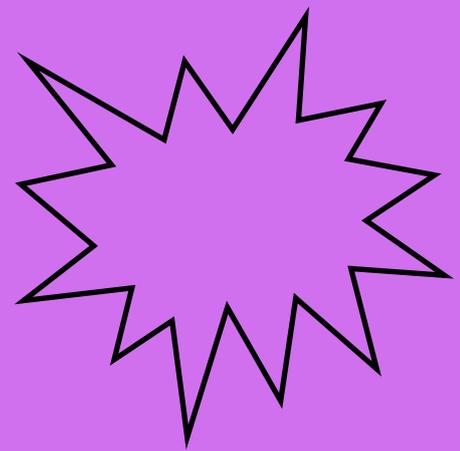
### Resources

Paper

Pen or pencil

Colouring pens/pencils

Newspaper copies printed on coloured paper



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### Question sheet

**1. Working either alone or in a pair, consider the following questions:**

**A)** The factory was set up in an old cotton mill in a residential area, meaning that when the explosion happened a lot more harm was caused than if it had been further away from homes and schools. (Looking at the pictures gives an idea of the damage). Why do you think the factory was set up somewhere so dangerous?

**B)** Many of these factories were built very quickly at the beginning of the war, or converted from factories making other products. Why do you think this may have made them more dangerous?

**C)** Many people were killed or injured by the blast, but even many of those who were at work or away from home still had their lives affected, can you think why this could be?

**D)** Can you think of a reason why it may have taken a long time to repair or replace the damaged buildings?

**2. Consider these questions about industry during the war:**

**A)** Many of the young men who would often have worked in these types of heavy industry jobs at the time were away fighting the war; at the same time, more people were needed to do these jobs than ever before. Often it was women who took up these jobs. Why might this have been strange to people at the time?

**B)** These jobs were extremely dangerous, not always well paid, and involved working with chemicals that could have serious lasting effects on health. Despite this, huge numbers of women took them up. What reasons can you think of for why this might have been?

For more information or to discuss please email:  
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### Answers for questions:

- A)** During the war, countries had to make thousands of times more weapons and explosives than they normally would, so a lot of factories were converted to produce them and this meant a lot of them had to be in places where they wouldn't usually be allowed.

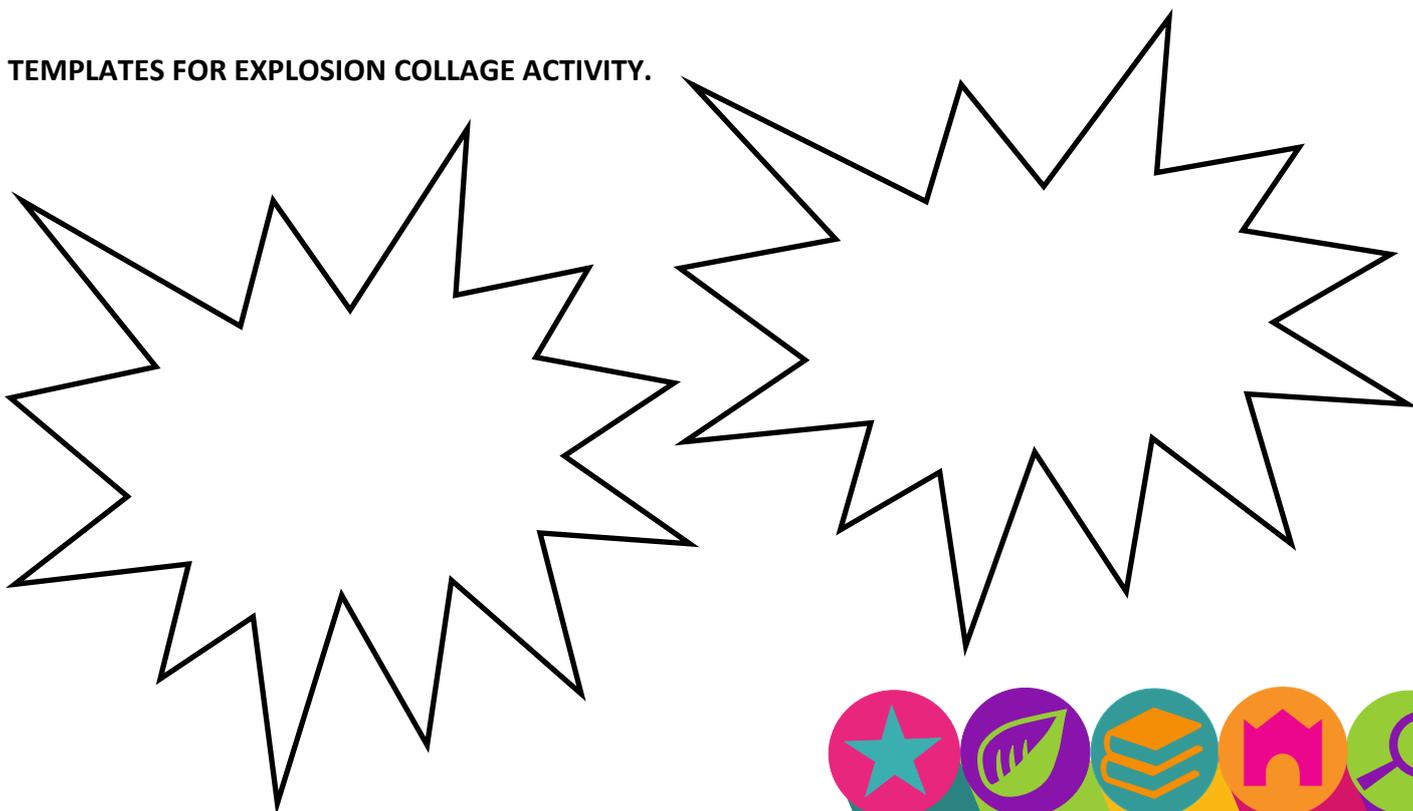
**B)** Many of the employees were not used to this type of work, and the buildings had been built or converted very quickly, often with limited materials .

**C)** Many buildings were destroyed, including homes and businesses, meaning that many additional lives were affected for a long time.

**D)** Many materials and resources, as well as workers and builders, were focussed on the war effort at the time.
- A)** It was considered unusual for women to work in these types of jobs, and if families could afford to they would normally send the husband to work and earn a wage whilst the wife was expected to stay at home, where she would maintain the house, perform domestic duties, and look after children, for which she would not be paid.

**B)** Many women would usually be reliant on their husbands for income, and with their husbands away fighting, any additional requirement for income would have to come through them. Many also felt that they needed to support the cause for the sake of the soldiers, and ensure that they were well equipped, or for the country, to ensure the war would be won.

### TEMPLATES FOR EXPLOSION COLLAGE ACTIVITY.



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