

THE 1918 SPANISH FLU PANDEMIC



Courtesy of the American Red Cross Archives

Secondary Resource Pack



Shobana
Jeyasingh
Dance

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SPANISH

FLU



About the resource

This resource has been created jointly by the Florence Nightingale Museum and Shobana Jeyasingh Dance to support the exhibition Spanish Flu: Nursing during history's deadliest pandemic (21 September 2018 to 16 June 2019) and Contagion, a dance installation commemorating the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic and touring throughout the UK in Autumn 2018.

For more information: www.florence-nightingale.co.uk
www.shobanajeyasingh.co.uk

This resource is designed as a cross-curricular resource to be used by teachers for History Key Stage 3 and 4 and Dance GCSE and A-level teachers. There are suggested activities and discussion points for the classroom at the end of this resource.

Cross-Curriculum Links

- History Key Stage 3 – challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to present day. First World War.
- History Key Stage 4 GCSE.
 - **WJEC EDUQAS:** Changes in Health and Medicine in Britain – causes of illness and disease.
 - **AQA Shaping the nation, Thematic Studies:** Health and the People: c1000 to the present day.
 - **OCR Medicine Through Time:** Medicine in modern Britain, C.1900-Present. Responses to Spanish Influenza. Responses from the people: effective and ineffective; Role of the media; Local and national government responses.
- All Dance GCSE and A-Level curriculums.

How to use this resource:

1

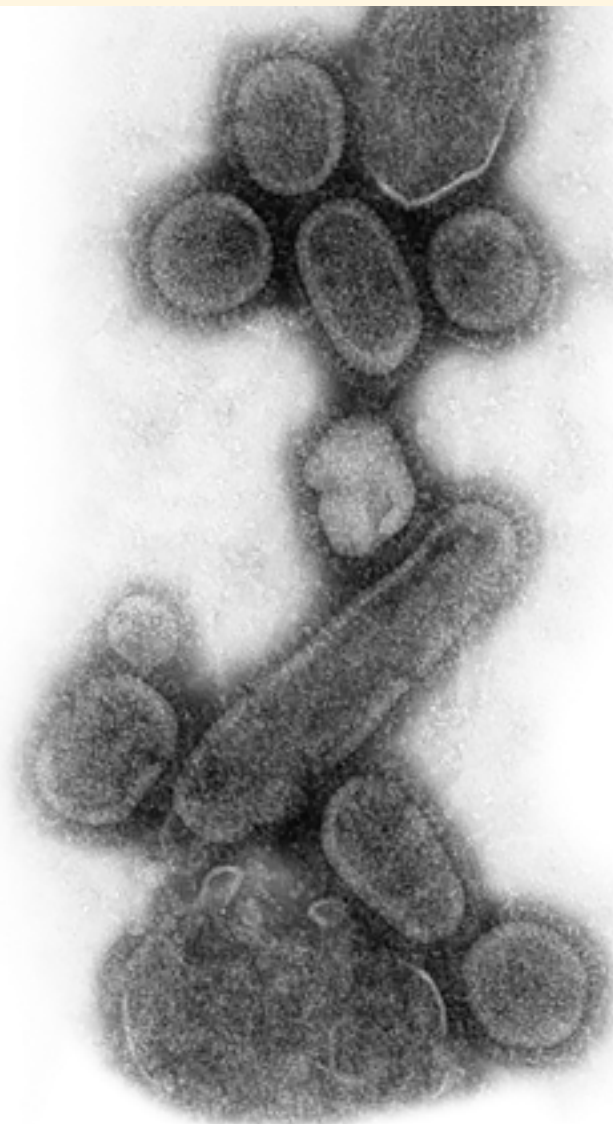
Use the suggested activities at the end of the pack to help students analyse the letters.

2

On the Florence Nightingale website, download the PowerPoint which provides further background information about the images and films used in this resource pack.

Introduction: The Spanish flu

One hundred years ago, a deadly influenza pandemic swept around the world. It infected up to a third of the world's population, and killed up to **100 million people**. In the United Kingdom, **a quarter of a million people** died of the Spanish flu. Other countries lost a far higher number of people: in Western Samoa, for example, nearly 25% of the population died.



The Spanish flu was an unusual flu virus. It was very infectious, and spread easily from person to person. It also affected a different type of person to usual flu outbreaks. Normal, seasonal flu mostly affects the very young or very old. Instead, the Spanish flu affected young adults (between 20 and 40 years old) most severely. It also appeared in successive waves. In the United Kingdom, the most deadly wave of the Spanish flu arrived in November 1918, in the midst of Armistice celebrations marking the end of the First World War. The mass celebratory gatherings and crowds helped the virus to spread quickly and effectively, leading to more infections and more deaths. Many soldiers, doctors, and nurses were also heading home at this time, and some of these accidentally took the deadly flu home with them from the war.

A lot about the Spanish flu remains a mystery today. For example, no-one knows where the Spanish flu started. It was not called the 'Spanish' flu because it started in Spain. Instead, it was called the Spanish flu because newspapers in Spain reported on it widely, because Spain wasn't fighting in the First World War, and also the King of Spain caught it. In contrast, the countries fighting in the war censored bad news, including the mounting flu death toll, to preserve morale for the war. Historians and virologists argue between two main origin theories. American historian John Barry argues that the Spanish flu started in Kansas, in the United States. British virologist Professor John Oxford, on the other hand, argues that it started at Étaples military camp in Northern France, which was on the Western Front during the First World War.

Reconstructed Spanish Flu Virus

Spanish flu Virus courtesy of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

SYMPTOM 1



This illustrates an early case in which the facial colour is frankly red, and the patient might not appear ill were it not for the drooping of the upper eye-lids, giving a half-closed appearance to the eyes.

SYMPTOM 2



This illustrates a pronounced degree of the "heliotrope cyanosis." The patient is not in physical distress, but the prognosis is almost hopeless.

SYMPTOM 3



This illustrates another type of the cyanosis, in which the colour of the lips and ears arrests attention in contrast to the relative pallor of the face. The patient may yet live for twelve hours or more.

The symptoms of the Spanish flu were spectacular. It caused extremely high fevers, and violent nosebleeds. Many patients became delirious and experienced hallucinations and violent behaviour. Some patients turned blue as their lungs clogged with fluid and their bodies were starved of oxygen. After death, many victims' bodies turned completely purple or black. Patients that were lucky enough to survive the Spanish flu often experienced long-term health complications. These included hair and fingernail loss, problems with hearing, the lungs, and the heart, and severe depression.

Doctors and nurses didn't know how to treat or prevent the Spanish influenza. Viruses hadn't yet been discovered, so doctors and nurses tried all sorts of different treatments to try to cure patients. Treatments ranged from quinine, camphor, and whisky, to creosote (antiseptic) and strychnine (currently used as a pesticide)! Some of these were more effective than others, but the one thing that did help was effective nursing. Even though they couldn't treat the influenza virus, doctors and nurses could try to treat the deadly bacterial problems that often came with the flu, like pneumonia and bronchitis. However, doctors and nurses were in short supply, due to so many of them serving on the Western Front in the First World War. Therefore, it often fell to family members, including sometimes children, to nurse their sick families.

There are not many memorials to the men, women, and children that died of the Spanish influenza, or to the doctors and nurses that worked hard to save them. The years after the Spanish flu were overshadowed by the commemoration of the First World War. But the Spanish flu is being remembered more now in its centenary year, particularly because we may one day have another serious influenza pandemic. We don't yet have a vaccine that prevents all types of flu, but current medical research is working on a universal flu vaccine.

Research contributed by Hannah Mawdsley, co-curator of ***Spanish Flu: Nursing during history's deadliest pandemic*** exhibition at the Florence Nightingale Museum.

Testimonies from Spanish Flu

SURVIVORS

In the early 1970s, British historian and journalist Richard Collier placed adverts in newspapers all around the world. These adverts asked for memories of the 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic in each country. Richard Collier got far more responses than he expected, receiving over 1,700 in total from all around the world. He used the letters to write his book, *The Plague of the Spanish Lady*, which was published in 1974. The original letters are now held in the archive at the Imperial War Museum, London. This is a selection of them, exploring the experiences of professional and family nursing, children, and soldiers.

A SURVIVOR'S STORY

Robert Swan, writing from Stepney, London. Letter dated 16 May 1973:

'I well remember the Influenza Epidemic of 1918. I lost a younger brother, his wife, and their baby daughter 1 year old. They were all stricken down together; with no one willing to help them. My wife (the mother of two young babies herself both under 3 years of age) said "they can't lay there helpless. I'm going to see what I can do to help, never mind the risk!" My two sisters were terrified and would go nowhere near the house. The wife died first, then the baby and my brother got up from his sick bed to make the necessary arrangements for their funeral. He had a relapse and died himself. The undertakers couldn't make the coffins quick enough let alone polish them. The bodies changed colour so quickly after death they had to be screwed down to await burial. The grave diggers worked from dawn to dusk 7 days a week to cope. The smell of those deaths was indescribable. All these set backs helped to increase and prolong the epidemic I'm sure...There was the sorry procession of the 3 coffins in hearse on its last journey! I will never forget!'

A SURVIVOR'S STORY

Claude Rush, aged 15 during the pandemic and in Suffolk.
Letter dated 25 October 1973:

'In 1918, when I was 15, I stayed with an aunt at Lowestoft. Living there, and helping in the house and shop, was a cousin (not the child of that aunt) aged 28, May Kemp, and on 23 Aug 1918 she died after 2 or 3 days illness and it was said that she was one of the early victims of this outbreak of Spanish Flu. Her sweetheart had been taken prisoner-of-war early in the 1914-18 conflict and she had been sending him parcels of comforts, food, etc, with frequent regularity for years, then she died a short time before he regained his freedom after the Armistice 11 Nov 1918. Very sad! Towards the end of Oct that year I became ill and was in bed a week - apparently Spanish 'flu. This was at my home in Stradbroke. My mother looked after me but, before I got up she, then aged 47, became ill...She became very ill indeed, her face was an ashen/slate colour, her body gave off a nasty smell and she became mental. Father gave up hope of her recovery - I remember him weeping secretly - but, after about ten days there was some improvement. I remember the bells of the parish church at Stradbroke, which was very close to us, rang out on Armistice Day, and we were able to make my mother understand why they were ringing. She nodded and whispered, "I understand"...

A SURVIVOR'S STORY

Elsie Phillips Cole, writing from Tring, Herts in 1973:

'My husband was in France...I had 3 children under 4 years, boys. I remember one night in particular, I slept between the cots of my two eldest and we all had high temperatures from flu - but I was nursing my baby just the same - there was no time to wean him. The boys were restless and tossed and muttered - but the baby slept on - unusually till I was dressed and when I took him from his cot he was practically unconscious and limp. I had read in "The Daily Mail" that the French treated the flu successfully by taking nothing but brandy for 3 days. By the grace of God I had about 1oz Brandy left (for medicinal outside medication) and I began to wet the baby's lips with it and got a little down him till he became fully conscious. I looked out of the window for help and saw the empty car of the one Doc left in Tring. I raced downstairs and got in the car, till he came out of his client's house and got him to see my baby and in no time he had the very efficient District Nurse in to help me. My daily help had not been able to come, as her brother was on leave from France and he was down with the flu and my sister and parents, who lived near also and their staff had it. There were isolated Cottages where all the inhabitants lay dead and unattended (3 to be exact close to Tring) and the National School was turned into a Hospital - but with 3 trained Nurses in charge. But the 3 nurses caught it, 1 died and 2 ended up in a mental home. My aunt volunteered but gave up when she had it.'

A SURVIVOR'S STORY

Eileen Sampson, writing from Perth, Scotland. Letter dated 01 June 1973:

'I was 5 ½ years old...I got 'flu and I believe I was very ill. I do remember being covered with a linseed meal poultice over the entire front of my body from throat to the bottom of my stomach and pleading with mum to take it off and her placing her hand gently on my chest and saying "just a few more minutes, love". Then I was dried and gently turned on my face and another poultice applied completely covering my back. I don't know how many days and nights this was kept up and I know I had lots of medicine...My sister May was very ill with 'flu as she had a bad cough with it. Dr Hume told mum it was due to her splendid and constant nursing that we all got over it as she sat up during the nights to give us our medicine and keep the fire going. She had none of her own folks near us to help as she was a Manchester woman and my father was a Londoner. So, she had to do it all herself except when dad got leave...The family next door to us (all boys) had 'flu also and an aunt of theirs gave birth to a baby girl. The mother took 'flu while on child bed and the baby died a few days later with pneumonia which I suppose would be the main cause of so many deaths in these epidemics. It must have been very difficult for doctors as there were no drugs to speak of, never mind antibiotics as we have now, treatment at the onset of chills etc was hot bread and milk in a bowl, chest and lungs rubbed with camphorated oil and for aches and pains, hot salt in a wool stocking applied to the sore part and some people here still believe in a spot of mustard and flour mixed with milk and spread on soft brown paper to loosen a tight throat cough.'

A NURSE'S STORY

**Nurse Mary Courtenay, Guy's Hospital, London.
Letter dated 22 June 1973:**

'I trained as a nurse at Guy's Hospital, London, 1917-1921, and had the unfortunate experience of having suffered from "Spanish 'flu" in 1918. It was very serious among us nurses as well as in the wards and depts. Our matron had us nursed in the Home...Many of us not as ill as others tried to look after ourselves and help with the really very ill nurses. Many of my friends died and their names will be found on the memorial planks [sic] of our Guy's Hospital Chapel. The infection seemed to attack different areas of the body; I had the abdominal type. The worst was cerebral, bronchial and heart. As you will know there were no anti-biotics for pneumonia nor penicillin discovered by 1918! The wards were very depleted of staff, but everyone who escaped this illness or recovered worked very long hours (no extra pay). But nurses in my training days often worked 70 hours a week on day duty - with one day off once a month. It was indeed a labour of love. Our Drs were wonderful too. Our consultants were not paid, they gave their services free in the voluntary hospital system (they of course had their names up in Harley St etc) and of course being war time, life was even more difficult - no air raid shelters, zeppelins coming over, dropping bombs near us...'

A NURSE'S STORY

Billie Pratt, writing from Leeds. Letter from 1973:

'At the beginning of this epidemic I was in Stobhill Hospital in Glasgow after being badly gassed in France which left me blind for 4 or 5 weeks and I landed in Glasgow 7 April 1918 after being in hospital in France for 3 weeks. After a while I began to get my sight back and another soldier and myself was allowed out to sit in the grounds of the Hospital. It was a lovely May day and we were arranging to have more of each others company. The next morning, I went to look for him and he was absolutely out and did not want to talk to anybody. I spent the day somehow and got up next morning I had a little breakfast and suddenly felt awful. I got back into bed and no one took any notice of me til the nurse came round about 4 pm. I did not take any notice of her as I was so ill and she took my temperature and the lads told me after that when she took it out of my mouth she ran for the Sister damned quick as I had a temp of 109. They put another blanket on and gave me some white tablets... Believe me if I hadn't have been in hospital and got that treatment, I would not have been here to write these few lines, I am convinced of that. After getting better, I soon recovered with care. I was posted into Dumfries for convalescence which I stayed 8 weeks. When I returned to Glasgow, I learned that the epidemic had swept through the hospital and caused a spate of deaths and that during that time, over 4000 had died alone in Glasgow. After I returned to my home where I had got married in Jan 1918, I learned that 26 people had died in the little Yorks Village of Sicklinghall and I don't think the whole population exceeded 120.'

A NURSE'S STORY

Nurse Isa Oliphant, 4th Scottish Military Hospital, Glasgow, Scotland, U.K.
Letter dated 16 May 1973:

'I was a V.A.D. nurse stationed at the 4th Scottish Military Hospital, Stobhill, Glasgow at that time. One day, all nurses on this three-hour daily off - time were told to report at a pavilion occupied by V.C. patients and staffed by orderlies. We gathered information as we went along. V.D. patients and staff had been removed to another hospital, no time to disinfect or fumigate. An American troop ship had arrived at the Clyde bearing hundreds of flu victims. They were divided amongst all military hospitals in Glasgow. Our job was to bed-bath the American soldiers - black and white. How surprised we were to hear the whites complain and protest that black soldiers should be in the same ward! The beds had to be shifted - blacks on one side and whites on the other. But even then, they were far from happy. The poor blacks were so ill they could only roll their eyes and look grateful for their bath. I could not tell when they were clean but as the water was dirty I felt reassured.'

A NURSE'S STORY

Charles H. Ward, writing from Sunderland, England.
Letter dated 06 June 1973:

'An old friend, Miss M. J. Wilson [Mary]...retired matron, Chester Le Street Isolation Hospital, advises me that in March, 1919, shortly after completing training as a student nurse at the Royal County Fever Hospital, York, and returning home to Haswell, Co. Durham to seek local appointment, she received a telegram from her matron, begging her to return to York. She found matron the only member of the staff able to serve, save for one sister who was in charge of sick hospital staff in the nurses' home. Nurse Wilson found herself in charge of five wards, normally staffed by six nurses and two maids, and nursing was aggravated by temperatures high to delirium. No Laudanum was available for the patients, some of whom were scholars of St Peter's School, and one of the patients, a young footman in the service of the Turners family died. After one month, she returned home exhausted, and later took up a local post.'

Philip Learoyd, at Rossall School, near Blackpool during the pandemic.
Writing from Blackpool on 11 May 1973:

'Both Sanatorium and Hospital were quickly filled with victims and dormitories were hastily converted into temporary wards. I got a bed in my own house dormitory. We just lay there while a harassed doctor and matron made desperate attempts to find nurses, of whom there was a great shortage owing to the war. Where they got them from eventually I do not know...At noon, on the 11th of November, a gaunt female appeared in the dormitory and announced that the Armistice had been signed and the war was over. The news, to her obvious consternation, was received in dead silences. Nobody seemed to care, though the news must have come like a reprieve to the older boys. Life expectancy for a subaltern on the Western Front was then about three weeks. Later in the day, the same female appeared again and with dramatically upflung arm declaimed: "Boys, I regret to inform you that your headmaster has succumbed to the prevailing epidemic." This time we really rocked her back on her heels. Our cheer nearly lifted the roof off. Our reaction might suggest that our headmaster was extremely unpopular, but although he had a bleak eye and an austere manner, I do not think this was so. Our demonstration was merely the normal manifestation of youthful joy at the discomfiture of authority...Even today, some fifty-five years later, the sound of a church bell recalls for me the Dickensian scene of a drab and dreary dormitory with greyish yellow November gloom feebly countered by low voltage lamps, and the soft swish of the tide on the shingle outside. It reduced the inevitable post-influenza depression to almost suicidal depths.'

A CHILD'S STORY

A CHILD'S STORY

Emily Turner, writing from Bristol, UK. Letter dated 14 May 1973:

'I was ten years old at the time of the awful Spanish Influenza epidemic. I was in Bristol children's hospital for six weeks, and can remember how everyone was isolated in one or two wards. We had grownups, babies, children from the cripple ward, boys and girls all in the ward I was in. While I was in there, armistice was signed, and I well remember the day the war was declared over. It was a very nice day, as I remember it and the ward was very quiet, everyone was either very ill, or napping. A nurse was cleaning the brass knobs on the beds or cots, when someone came in the ward, and she threw her dusters and polish (in a tin) up in the air shouting "the war is over". The ward was filled with dancing, shouting, laughing, crying, people, and above all the noise the small babies crying who had been waken up. I have never forgotten it. People collapsed in the street we were told, my mother used to climb St Michael's hill every night after she had finished work (which was very steep), she was a widow, and having no pension had to go to work to support herself and me.'

A CHILD'S STORY

David Balbarnie, writing from Dundee on 16 May 1973:

'I can remember that at the time there was great worry in every household as to whether this plague would eventually strike at their family. The local health authorities campaigned to all that vaccination should be carried out as quickly as possible and I can remember as a boy being scared that my mother (a widow) would have this terrible thing done to me. I was seeing the awful results of this vaccination more and more every day at school and on the streets with boys and girls all going round with a sleeve rolled up and a cage fixed to their bicep in order to protect the scab that eventually developed where the jab had been carried out...One day coming home from school, I met a girl acquaintance of mine who asked me if I would care to see her mother who had died that week as she was lying in a coffin in the house. We went along and she guided me into the poorest of houses, bare wood floor, and took me into the room which contained nothing except a coffin sitting on wooden trestles with a cloth covering the dead woman's face. My friend lifted this cloth and I gasped and hurried out of the house, so terrified was looking at what looked to me as a skeleton. The father of this family had died the previous week and my friend was an orphan along with two young brothers all kids. They were eventually all put into institutions.'

A CHILD'S STORY

Ethel Brown, nee Robson, aged 9 during the pandemic and living in Coventry.
Letter dated 15 May 1973:

'I was one of a very large family of nine children ranging from 10 months old to fifteen years of age. Eight of the family went down with flu including my mother, doctor calling in twice every day I was the only one out of all the family that didn't have the virus. Therefore I was doing my best to help the others. Of course no-one else would come into the house owing to so many of my family being so ill with Flu. After a few days some of my brothers and sister were able to get up and help but when we had five of the family still sick my sister aged 7 yrs old died November 3rd then on November 5th my Mother died...My Mother only at the age of 35 it caused quite a sensation having to have a double funeral which was on November 11th 1918 which was the very day the First World War ended. I can remember very well when the cortège was on its way to the Church. Bells hooters and all sounds of celebration was raving but how silent people stood who realised it was our funeral. It really was a terrible time not knowing who we were going to lose next. The Doctor said afterwards he expected to sign five death certificates in our family everyone was so ill. I would like to tell you I am 64 years of age now but that period of my life I will never forget.'

A SOLDIER'S STORY

William Milne, in Brussels in 1918 and writing from Angus, Scotland on 08 May 1973:

'I was with the 4th/5 Blackwater during the war. We were in Brussels a few days after the Armistice was signed. I had to go sick and along with other two men we were rushed to the 1st Australian C.C.S. I was very ill as were my pals I do not know what happened to them as I never saw them again, men were dying in hundreds every day, the cemetery...must have thousands of graves of British troops. I managed to last out. The nursing sister said that I had the constitution of a horse, being able to overcome the effects of Spanish Flu. I was taken to Calais and carried aboard a hospital ship by German prisoners carried off again at Dover again by prisoners and taken to Horlington [Horton] War Hospital at Epsom. I spent Christmas there and part of January convalescing and arrived back in Dundee where there was about 3 feet of snow out in the country rejoining the battalion at Haddington expected to get discharged when I got my medical instead I was passed fit and was drafted out to Constantinople for the army of occupation, it was the best holiday I ever had 9 months of it. I am still pretty fresh as regards health but am now stone deaf.'

A SOLDIER'S STORY

Edith Bishop, nee MacLean, writing from Aberdeen on 10 May 1973:

'Do I remember the great Spanish influenza of 1918/19! Sept. 1918 I was betrothed to my soldier friend David R. Bishop when he was on leave. He was in the 1/4th Gordon Highlanders and had been in the War right from the first day as, at that time, they were in the Territorial camp...As soon as we could procure one, we sent a 'decent' photo to each other. These crossed the English Channel when we were both lying ill with the Flu. We couldn't have had a better pick-me-up! I enclose them for your interest, also S.A.E. for return which I would like to be as soon as you can manage it. David was at the rest camp at Rouen where the soldiers were going down like nine-pins. I remember him saying that it would have been impossible for them all to have proper nursing, so the routine was, when a chap felt the illness coming on, he lay down and stayed put with a bottle of rum! Luckily Davie made a good recovery. My legacy was that, for a few years, I had what my friends described as a 'grave-yard' cough!'

A SOLDIER'S STORY

Claude Todd, aged 17 during the pandemic and writing from Seaham, County Durham on 26 May 1973:

'I, along with four others, were detailed to go to Easton in Lincolnshire...but in the morning several of us were feeling unwell and our departure was delayed to await the arrival of a Doctor...By the time the Doctor arrived we were all feeling bad, but all he could do was to give us medicine before the journey and allow us to go and lie down until it was time to go for the next train. And then began a journey I will never forget, because I felt so ill and riding down to the station from the camp, about three miles, on top of a load of kit-bags on a lorry with solid tyres, on a very rough road was no help. The train we caught arrived in London late and when we got to Kings Cross Station it was only to find the Peterborough train had left ten minutes before. All five of us were in a sorry state now but there was nothing we could do except lie down somewhere and try to rest...I was told afterwards that the Station-Master at Stamford had contacted the C.O. at Easton Aerodrome and he immediately sent transport to Stamford to take us straight to an emergency Hospital in a marquee erected for the purpose of isolation, on a site clear of the Aerodrome where we were put to bed because it was realized that we, all five of us, were victims of the Epidemic, and we were now in the company of a Hospital full of men who were already stationed on the camp. It was an experience so sad and frightening to one as young as I was, that I was never to forget the sight, and sound, of men becoming delirious and dying and wondering if it would happen to me. Thanks, however, to the wonderful Nurses who looked after us and the Doctors, who I believe came from Stamford, four of our party survived and got better, but the other poor lad who had travelled with us died along with many more.'

A SOLDIER'S STORY

Arthur Tucker, aged 21 during the pandemic.
Writing from Bristol on 16 May 1973:

'I was 21 years of age at the time and was stationed in Dover in the Army Service Corps. A girl cousin of mine aged about 25 in Bristol went down with the 'flu in November 1918 and died within a few days. I got leave to come up to the funeral and arrived in Bristol on the evening of November 10th. When I arrived at Temple Meads station in Bristol a great number of people were dancing on the platforms and telling the arriving soldiers and others that the war was over. Of course they cheered...but I had to attend the funeral of my Cousin the next day i.e. November 11th and it was while the funeral cortege was slowing moving towards the cemetery that the Armistice was officially declared and people were putting flags out of their bedroom windows and later on in the afternoon Bristol was celebrating the end of the War. You can imagine my mixed feelings - sadness over the death & funeral of a relative but happiness in the realization that the war was over.'



Suggested activities

1

ACTIVITY

As a starting point show the PowerPoint to students in order for them to see what life was like during the Spanish flu pandemic. Use the letters as a way to develop students' understanding of life in Britain during the pandemic.

Split the class into four groups and assign a group of survivors' letters to each group.

Ask students to carry out some research about the Spanish flu pandemic. Use the worksheet provided to help students analyse the letters.

Further research:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/0/ww1/25403865>

<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/The-Spanish-Flu-pandemic-of-1918/>

<https://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/the-spanish-flu-pandemic-of-1918/>

After reviewing the letters, have each group report back what they discovered about the impact of Spanish flu pandemic on British life.

2

ACTIVITY

Florence Nightingale helped to establish nursing as a profession, setting up the first training school for nurses, the Nightingale School of Nursing, in 1860. By the First World War there was a greater demand for nurses, both professional and voluntary.

Research the role of women as nurses during the First World War.

Further research:

Women's roles on the front line:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/0/ww1/26374718>

Volunteers during the First World War:

<https://vad.redcross.org.uk/What-we-did-during-the-war>



Using the letters, note down the role that nurses played and what it was like to nurse during the Spanish flu pandemic.

Using your research on nursing during the First World War and the letters from survivors, think about the impact the First World War and the Spanish flu pandemic had on nursing as a profession.

3 ACTIVITY

Using the letters and students' knowledge on First World War, what impact did the First World War have on the spread of the flu pandemic?

Watch the film by Mark Honigsbaum as he describes the history of pandemics and how that knowledge can help halt future outbreaks:

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-pandemics-spread>

As a class discuss how they think pandemics spread and what they think a pandemic would be like today.

4 ACTIVITY

Infecting up to a third of the world's population, and killing up to 100 million people. Discuss with students why they think the Spanish flu is not more widely remembered.

Students could create a memorial to those that died during the Spanish influenza or to the doctors and nurses that took care of them.

5 ACTIVITY

In the absence of any proven knowledge on how to treat the virus and soaring mortality rates, many people were willing to try anything that might protect themselves and their families. The manufacturers of foodstuffs such as Bovril, Oxo and Horlick's quickly began marketing their products as revitalising those sick with flu, and were soon in high demand from those looking to defend their families from the threat of Spanish flu.

Use the advertisements in the PowerPoint to find out about "treatments" that were advertised during the Spanish flu pandemic. Ask students to analyse the adverts.

Discussion points:

How effective do you think these adverts were?

Who is the advertisement aimed at?

What do the adverts suggest about methods used by advertisers to get public to buy their products?



Formamint Advert © The Advertising Archives / Bridgeman Images

6

ACTIVITY

Great emphasis was placed on the importance of sanitising anything which might have come into contact with influenza.

The Local Government Board (later the Ministry of Health) commissioned the film 'Dr Wise on Influenza' public information film. Its hard-hitting message was designed to shock people out of their complacency towards the flu and take preventative measures. At the time of filming around 2,500 people were dying every week in London alone. Play the film 'Dr Wise on Influenza' to the class.

'Dr Wise on Influenza', Local Government Board, 1919

<https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-dr-wise-on-influenza-1919-online>

Use the film to analyse the response the British government took to the Spanish flu. What effect do you think this film might have had on the public?

Pupils could create their own public information film discussing the importance of the flu vaccine today.

7

ACTIVITY

Let's dance!

Be part of our online dance pandemic and take part in a unique creative project!

Log onto www.amostcontagiousdance.co.uk to see how Shobana Jeyasingh created and choreographed Contagion.

Have a go at creating your own movements and dance!

Photo © Jane Hobson



Prefer a workshop directly in your school? Contact Alice at Shobana Jeyasingh Dance to have one of our dancers deliver a dance workshop in your school:

education@shobanajeyasingh.co.uk

Tips for participants/teachers:

Use the images in this pack and look carefully at the poses and gestures of the people depicted. How are people standing, what are they doing with their arms and hands, what expression do they have on their faces? Use these to create your own poses and movements, as explained in our video.

Now go back to the letters and write down the descriptions of the illness that have been recorded: how people got ill, how they reacted to relatives being ill, what the virus did to their bodies, how and where ill people were cared for. These should provide you with strong visual images. Do these depictions inspire you to create a short narrative? If so, can you replicate those descriptions with your own bodies or 'dance out' your story? Once you have all this material, go back to our tutorial video and let yourself be guided into creating your Most Contagious Dance.

About The Florence Nightingale Museum



The Florence Nightingale Museum celebrates the life and work of the world's most famous nurse. The Museum examines Florence Nightingale's legacy, her influence on nursing today and the continuing relevance of her work. The Florence Nightingale Museum runs a busy learning programme for schools.

Building on from Florence Nightingale's work during the Crimean War, the Florence Nightingale Museum is exploring the work that nurses, both in hospitals and at home, did in 1918 when the Spanish Flu broke out in the exhibition *Spanish Flu: Nursing during the deadliest pandemic in history*. This exhibition explores the experience of those that lived and died during the pandemic, and if a similar devastating pandemic could happen again today.

If you are interested in arranging a visit to the Florence Nightingale Museum to see the Spanish Flu exhibition please contact Stephanie Tyler: Stephanie@florence-nightingale.co.uk



SPANISH FLU

Nursing during history's deadliest pandemic
EXHIBITION

About **Shobana Jeyasingh Dance**

Shobana Jeyasingh Dance pushes the possibilities of dance beyond storytelling, to stimulate thought, reaction and sensation through the movement of the human body. Restless, inquisitive and intrepid, we never tread the same path twice. Shobana Jeyasingh has been creating dynamic, fearless and enigmatic dance works for 30 years. Born in Chennai, India, she currently lives and works in London. Her acclaimed, highly individual work has been witnessed in all kinds of venues, including theatres, outdoor and indoor sites and on film. Her work taps into both the intellectual and physical power of dance, and is rooted in her particular vision of culture and society.

Contagion commemorates the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic, which killed more people than the First World War itself. The piece is inspired by the nature and spread of the flu virus, the unseen enemy that mankind was battling within, while engaging in more conventional warfare in the world outside.

Set to an atmospheric soundscape, this dance installation with digital visuals echoes the scientific features of a virus – rapid, random and constantly shape-shifting. Eight female dancers contort and mutate as they explore both the resilience and the vulnerability of the human body.

This is a standing performance presented in unusual venues, many with connections to the First World War.

Contagion is co-commissioned by 14-18 NOW, the UK's arts programme for the First World War centenary.

For more information on Contagion and our Learning programme, contact Alice Odin: education@shobanajeyasingh.co.uk.



Photo © Jane Hobson



Photo © Jane Hobson

We would love to hear from you

We know you are busy, but if you can spare a few minutes we would love to hear what you thought about this resource pack and how you have used this pack. Send us a message to stephanie@florence-nightingale.co.uk or education@shobanajeyasingh.co.uk.

We look forward to hearing from you.

SPANISH FLU Worksheet

1. What challenges faced families/doctors/nurses/children/soldiers during the pandemic?

2. What were the symptoms of the influenza?

3. What treatments and home remedies were used? How effective do you think these were?

4. What impact do you think the Spanish flu had on the public just as the First World War was ending?

5. How useful are these memoirs to give us an understanding of the Spanish flu pandemic?

Further resources

SPANISH FLU

Films

'Spanish Flu: The Forgotten Fallen',

BBC Four, 2009 (1 hour)

School-age books

Geoffrey Rice, ***Black Flu 1918:***

The Story of New Zealand's Worst Public Health Disaster,

(Christchurch, N.Z.: University of Canterbury Press, 2018)

Young Adult Fiction

Pat Barker, ***The Ghost Road*** (A William Abrahams Book/Plume, 1996)

Myla Goldberg, ***Wickett's Remedy*** (Bond Street Books, 2005)

Reina James, ***This Time of Dying*** (St. Martin's Press, 2007)

Makiia Lucier, ***A Death-Struck Year***

(HMH Books for Young Readers, 2014)

Susan Meissner, ***As Bright as Heaven*** (Berkley Books, 2018)

Thomas Mullen, ***The Last Town on Earth*** (Random House (NY), 2006)

Anne Rouen, ***Angel of Song*** (StoneHut Publishing, 2015)

Charles Todd, ***An Unmarked Grave*** (William Morrow, 2012)

Gloria Whelan, ***Listening for Lions*** (HarperCollins, 2006)

Cat Winters, ***In the Shadow of Blackbirds*** (Amulet Books, 2013)