**Persuasion and propaganda**

Different countries participating in the First World War used propaganda posters to help recruit young men into the armed forces. These posters also helped to justify the countries’ involvement in the war.

There was a great deal of pressure placed on individuals to join the army and fight; not only from propaganda but also from people around them and their own sense of loyalty and duty to their country.

In this play you can see the position that Tom, Mattie and their friends are in and the pressure that they feel.

**Task one**

Below are a series of quotations that show different reactions to joining the army. Match the quotation to the explanation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<td>1. ‘That’s exactly why I would join up. To defend them from the Germans.’</td>
<td>a) High ranking government officials see those who join the army as setting an example of bravery, duty and loyalty. In so doing they are exerting pressure on others to join the army.</td>
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<td>2. ‘… I bet most of the ordinary German soldiers would much rather be home with their wives and sweethearts and families.’</td>
<td>b) Men were often made to feel worthless, cowardly and useless if they had not joined the army. Pressure came from some women.</td>
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<td>3. ‘She and that nasty Polly Jackson keep going on about a poster they saw in Lakely. The one that says you should tell yer best boy he’s got to go to war.’</td>
<td>c) Tom feels a duty to protect his country against the enemy.</td>
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<td>4. ‘In the words of the War Secretary, Lord Kitchener, it will be their duty to set an example of discipline and perfect steadiness under fire.’</td>
<td>d) Groups of young men joined the army together largely unaware of the real consequences and increased dangers. Peer pressure was strong.</td>
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<td>5. ‘I would like to draw the attention of the congregation to the fact that the recruiting station in Lakely will be open every day this week ... If any young man ... should wish to do his duty by his country, here is his opportunity.’</td>
<td>e) Jenny L sympathises with all the soldiers. She sees the individual German soldiers as being very similar to the British men who are going to fight.</td>
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<td>6. Referring to a white feather. ‘Women used to hand them out to young men in wartime – to shame them into joining the army. Trying to make out they were cowards …’</td>
<td>f) Even when attending church, young men are reminded of when and where they can join up. The pressure/persuasion comes from all directions and those who command respect.</td>
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<td>7. ‘All over England, there’s decent, brave lads like Tom signing up. Recruiting officers telling them to go round the block and come back in half an hour when they’re nineteen and old enough.’</td>
<td>g) Propaganda is not only aimed at men but also at women and girls who are supposed to persuade their loved ones to join the army.</td>
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<td>8. ‘There’s a whole crowd of us going to enlist together. If there’s tunnelling to be done they’ll need us miners... What we’ll be doing – it’s not too much different to here – not more dangerous, I mean. We’ll be underground.’</td>
<td>h) Dr Lindsay is disgusted and angry that boys who should have bright futures ahead of them are allowed to join the army even though they are known to be too young. He sees it as a waste of potential.</td>
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Task two

Look carefully at these two posters. Both are original propaganda posters from the First World War. Label the persuasive techniques that these posters use to encourage people to enlist in the army. Think about the images, the colours and the slogans.

Poster 1

Poster 2

This is the most famous First World War propaganda poster. The man pictured is Lord Kitchener.
Task three

Look again at the two posters. Answer the following questions in full sentences.

Poster one
1. Who is the intended audience of poster one? What is its purpose? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Look closely at the image used on poster one. Describe this image in detail explaining the ‘story’ that it tells.
3. How effective do you think this poster is?

Poster two
1. Who is the intended audience of poster two? What is its purpose? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Look closely at the image used in poster two. Describe this image in detail. This is the most famous propaganda poster from the First World War. What effect does this image have?
3. What slogan is used on this poster? How is this slogan made to stand out?
4. How effective do you think this poster is?

Task four

Answer the following question. You should concentrate on Act 1, Scenes 8 to 14.

In the play White Poppies, what different attitudes are presented about joining the army?

You should write about:

- the reasons that Tom and Mattie join the army and how they see the war
- the ways in which they are encouraged or pressured to join the army
- how Jenny L, Dr Lindsay and Hannah feel about them joining up
- how you react to them enlisting and the process they have to go through.

You should use quotations to support your ideas.