# Battle of the Somme – Theory Planning Activity –

# STAFF INSTRUCTIONS

In order for the students to understand the battle of the Somme they need to understand why the British suffered heavy casualties on the first day of the battle but also in the subsequent months, up to the November of 1916.

By the end of this activity we want the students to understand why the battle failed and why so many casualties were lost. The theory of the battle was very much different to the reality.

Students need to be gathered into groups of 4 or 5.

Each group is issued with an A3 map of part of the Somme battle. Each student has a battle planning sheet. With the instructions the students get, they need to write on the A3 sheet and the A4 planning sheet, so students can take it in turns to write.

**Activity**

Using the PPT saved in the shared area, staff are to go through the slides, giving students time to discuss and write their answers (2-3 mins). Students are not completing the ‘Reality’ column yet.

**First Step**

* Slide 1 and 2 go through the instructions –
* Slide 3 is a map so the students know where they are planning a battle for .N.B. The battle is taking placing in this area regardless of towns, villages and farms…the whole area was turned into a battlefield.
* Slide 4-11 are instructions that the students will need to make decisions on or make notes from. No need to worry about them asking you questions – just inform them that this is all the information that is known at this time. (the British new very little about how this battle would go)

**Second Step - Students to complete Task 1 on the A4 sheet**

**Third Step** - Slide 12-14 – YouTube clips that look at what happened (timings on slide) – Students to note down the reality of what happened on their planning sheet – An A5 sheet is also available.

**Examples**

Barbed wire wasn’t cut on the initial bombing leading up to the battle so soldiers were issued with wire cutters just in case.

It was heavy rain, the heaviest rain for July in over 10 years.

57,000 British casualties on the first day

1/3 of them killed

Very little territory was gained

**Fourth Step** – Students to complete Task 2 on the A4 sheet.

Once this is completed, show students the Somme Slide show – so they see the consequences of this war.

The automated slide show will finish on slide 19 showing image of a group of soldiers - These soldiers were the soldiers that attacked from the positions that the students planned. Click to next slide and this will show the village that they planned to attack – what it looks like today.

Those on the trip will go here!