



OUR SHARED STORY



In partnership with:



National
Theatre



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VEVJ80: OUR SHARED STORY

Thank you for registering for VEVJ Day 80: Our Shared Story – educational resources to support young people's engagement with the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ Day, deepening their understanding of how our shared history shapes the present and future.

Eighty years after the end of the Second World War, as the conflict moves beyond living memory, we are launching the largest-ever national effort to preserve and pass on the stories of those whose courage, sacrifice, and resilience secured the freedoms we cherish today. Through this programme, schools and young people across the country can take part in activities that bring history to life, ensuring these stories continue to inspire generations to come.

**VE DAY 80: THURSDAY 8 MAY 2025 AND
VJ DAY 80: FRIDAY 15 AUGUST 2025**

On 8 May 2025, the UK will mark VE Day 80 (Victory in Europe Day), a landmark moment commemorating the end of the Second World War in Europe, and on August 15, mark VJ Day 80, the end of the war in the Pacific and the end of the conflict. To honour this historic occasion, some of the nation's leading cultural organisations are developing engaging, interactive, and thought-provoking educational experiences to connect children and young people directly with the lived experiences of the Second World War generation.

Through storytelling, hands-on activities, and encounters with veterans, students will gain a firsthand understanding of the war's impact and its lasting significance in today's world.

VEVJ 80: Our Shared Story is part of a national programme of events and celebrations that will bring people together to share stories of the Second World War generation and pay tribute to the millions of people across the UK and Commonwealth who served in the Second World War, telling the stories of those who fought, the children who were evacuated, and those who stepped into the essential roles on the Home Front.



Image Source: IWM

HOW SCHOOLS CAN GET INVOLVED:

- ▶ Delivered in partnership with Royal British Legion, Imperial War Museums, National Theatre, Atlantic Productions and The /together Coalition, this education starter pack introduces a range of opportunities for schools to participate in *VEVJ80: Our Shared Story*. Whether you are planning a school-wide assembly, classroom discussion, street party, or creative project, you'll have access to adaptable resources to create a meaningful and educational commemoration of VE and VJ Day.
- ▶ More details, resources, and activity announcements will be released in the lead-up to 8 May 2025. All educational settings will have the opportunity to mark the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ Day through the Spring and Summer terms. Stay connected by registering for updates at ve-vjday80.gov.uk and following our social media channels.
- ▶ Be part of the national story by sharing your school's or youth organisation's VE and VJ Day 80 plans. Add it to the [official interactive map](#) on the website.

I'LL REMEMBER: DISCOVERING THE STORIES OF VE AND VJ DAY

In 2025, the Royal British Legion will be helping young people to remember VE and VJ Day 80 years on, with special films including stories from the end of the Second World War, Q&A sessions and a range of supporting learning resources for Primary, Secondary and Further Education pupils.



Image Source: Alamy

Join the Royal British Legion's Teaching Remembrance Learning Programme as we create a digital time capsule to honour those who served and sacrificed during the Second World War.

We are creating films for students in Primary, Secondary and Further Education settings to help them explore the stories of VE and VJ Day as well as a Q&A with experts to enable students to reflect on the events of 80 years ago.

Downloadable supporting learning resources will help young people take their learning further in schools, colleges or at home. For younger students, there will also be a brand-new song - *I'll Remember* - to learn with their classes and friends.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

- ▶ The *I'll Remember* song, videos and supporting song resources are now available [here](#).
- ▶ [*I'll Remember: Discovering the Stories of VE and VJ Day*](#) documentary films, Q&A films and supporting learning resources available for all age-ranges on **Thursday 1 May 2025**.
- ▶ Explore the RBL's Teaching Remembrance programme, with a range of free resources and events [Teaching Remembrance | Learning Resources | Royal British Legion](#)
- ▶ *I'll Remember: Discovering the Stories of VE and VJ Day* supports learning and engagement across all phases of education with specially designed content adapted for:
 - Primary School** - Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2
 - Secondary School** - Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4
 - Further Education** - Key Stage 5
- ▶ Register your interest on ve-vjday80.gov.uk to receive updates on *I'll Remember: Discovering the Stories of VE and VJ Day* and other VEVJ80: Our Shared Story opportunities.

I'LL REMEMBER: DISCOVERING THE STORIES OF VE AND VJ DAY INCLUDES:

► ***I'll Remember* Original Song Composed By Simon Haw**

A brand-new song has been composed for the project by BAFTA award winning composer Simon Haw MBE. Called *I'll Remember*, the song is a lyrical journey of reflection and hope set to soaring music. The song is available [here](#) for teachers and pupils to listen to and learn and users will be encouraged to use the song as part of their school VE Day celebrations

► ***I'll Remember: Discovering the Stories of VE and VJ Day* Films - *I'll Remember* - Documentary Drama Films**

An opportunity for young people across the UK to connect with veterans and hear their stories.

Through these educational documentary films, young people will visit different locations around the UK to discover the impact of the Second World War on people and communities, learn more about the people who lived through the conflict and hear young people's perspectives on these stories. The stories in the film will help form a digital time capsule for future generations to remember the service and sacrifice of those who served in the Second World War.

► **Q&A Session films**

Q&A sessions for each age group with historians and experts gives a group of students from selected Primary, Secondary and Further Education settings the opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussions about the end of the Second World War. This is a unique opportunity for young people to connect with veteran experiences and understand their stories.

► **Supporting Learning Resources**

Learning resources for each age-range, designed for teachers and learners to extend their exploration of the topic beyond the video content. Activities will include: song writing, art, creating a digital time capsule and more...

The Royal British Legion is here to help members of the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, veterans and their families. We support serving and ex-serving personnel all year round, every day of the week. Our support starts after one day of service and continues through life, long after service is over.

Every year we lead the nation in Remembrance, telling stories of service and making sure that Remembrance is accessible to all.

VE80: LEARNING FROM LETTERS

A learning resource that explores the end of the Second World War and the moments leading up to and after VE Day, told through personal stories and objects from IWM's collections.

IWM is inviting schoolchildren (including via their grandparents and parents as a primary audience) across the UK to learn about the Second World War by delving into their own family histories to discover the letters sent by their relatives to loved ones. What was it like to be part of VE Day celebrations? How did people feel? Was VE Day the end of the Second World War?

IWM's new learning resource connects students to the **when**, **why** and **what** it means now for the 80th anniversary of VE Day, while contextualising VJ Day within the end of the Second World War.

Students will unlock the personal stories of children, civilians and service personnel who experienced VE Day firsthand through specially chosen sources from IWM's collections including letters, diaries, sound testimony and film, photographs, and art.

Each source will include questions to consider, supporting student's critical inquiry skills and conversations. A workshop activity also invites students to write letters or draw illustrations and make links, using sources and personal stories as inspiration.

Learning From Letters introduces your students to the people and stories of VE Day and challenges them to historically connect to this important national moment of celebration and commemoration.

This resource is designed to be used in classroom or assembly time, with activities that support differentiated learning.



Image Source: IWM (HU 41808)

BY PARTICIPATING IN LEARNING THROUGH LETTERS, YOUR STUDENTS WILL:

- ▶ Be able to confidently have conversations about VE Day, its impact at the time, and its legacy and significance today on the 80th anniversary.
- ▶ Develop knowledge and understanding about the causes, course, and consequences of the end of the Second World War, specifically related to VE Day and VJ Day.
- ▶ Develop critical thinking and research skills using primary and secondary sources including letters, diaries, sound testimonies, photographs, art and film.
- ▶ Develop letter writing, art and design skills.

LINKS TO FURTHER SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING FROM IWM:

- ▶ Historical Archive:

[What You Need To Know About VE Day 8 May 1945](#)

- ▶ Historical Archive:

[VJ Day and the End of the Second World War | Imperial War Museums](#)

- ▶ Historical Archive:

[HMS Belfast: VJ Day and Beyond | Imperial War Museums](#)

- ▶ Guide:

[VE Day - Parties In The Street: KS2/KS3 | IWM Learning](#)

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

- ▶ *Learning From Letters* available [here](#).
- ▶ Register your interest on [ve-vjday80.gov.uk](#) to receive updates on *Learning From Letters* and other VEVJ80: *Our Shared Story* opportunities.
- ▶ [Learning From Letters](#) is designed for **KS2** students but can be used across primary and secondary phases.
- ▶ In addition to this resource, any children who might have letters at home written by relatives during the Second World War can be encouraged to talk to their families, and upload them onto [ve-vjday80.gov.uk](#).

THE NEXT MORNING SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

A year-long, nationwide programme from the National Theatre - connected to the tour of *Dear England* - that engages directly with young people and schools.

The Next Morning gathers, animates and connects the stories and hopes of children and young people from 1945 and those of the children and young people of 2025. Comprising of a new film, produced by the National Theatre, supported by a nationwide creative writing and oracy project, *The Next Morning* will create a new archive of young people's hopes and ideas and give them a voice in shaping the future.

What hopes do young people have for themselves and their communities eighty years from now?

Inspired by Gareth Southgate's *Dear England* letter, and rooted in the themes of *Dear England* and VE Day - renewal, resilience, hope, and a shared national identity - this project invites students to reflect on the past and imagine the future.

Launching in **May 2025**, *The Next Morning Schools Programme* offers secondary schools the chance to explore these themes through creative writing and spoken word. Led by the National Theatre, this initiative empowers young people to contribute to a national conversation about their aspirations and the world they want to build.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

- ▶ *The Next Morning* Teaching Resource will launch on **Wednesday 7 May 2025**.
- ▶ Register your interest on ve-vjday80.gov.uk to receive updates on *The Next Morning Schools Programme* and other VEVJ80: Our Shared Story learning opportunities.
- ▶ Contact secondary@nationaltheatre.org.uk if your school is interested in hosting a workshop or attending a subsidised production of *Dear England*.



Image Source: National Theatre

THE NEXT MORNING SCHOOLS PROGRAMME INCLUDES:

- ▶ A free teaching resource designed for Key Stage 3 & 4 students studying English, Drama, History, and PSHE.
- ▶ In-school workshops and assemblies in locations across England, led by National Theatre practitioners.
- ▶ A platform for student voices - students' work will be recorded and shared as part of the *Dear England* tour.
- ▶ Subsidised tickets for students to attend a performance of *Dear England* at their local theatre.

National Theatre

Between **September 2025** and **March 2026**, workshops, assemblies, and matinee performances will take place in 16 cities across England: Plymouth, Nottingham, Canterbury, Sheffield, Leeds, Newcastle, Chichester, Southampton, Milton Keynes, Oxford, Norwich, Woking, Bradford, Wimbledon, Liverpool, and Birmingham.

By the end of the project, a year after the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ Day, we will have created a new archive of young people's voices, hopes and ideas - made in schools and shared in places across the UK.

The National Theatre makes theatre that entertains and inspires using its creativity, expertise and unique reach. The National Theatre shares unforgettable stories with millions of audience members across the UK and around the world - on its own stages, on tour, in schools, on cinema screens and streaming at home.

VE DAY 80 IMMERSIVE

VE Day 80 Immersive is a web-based augmented reality experience that brings key moments from Victory in Europe Day to life for its 80th anniversary. Designed to transport students back to 8 May 1945, this interactive resource enables them to experience history firsthand.



Image Source: IWM

Developed in partnership with Imperial War Museums, *VE Day 80 Immersive* employs cutting-edge technology to dimensionalise and colourise four distinct images from VE Day. Paired with authentic voices from the time, this experience offers a compelling way to engage young people with the stories, emotions, and legacy of one of history's most significant moments.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

- ▶ *VE Day 80 Immersive* is designed for classroom use and beyond, providing a dynamic and accessible way to bring history to life for students of all ages.
- ▶ Scan the QR code or click [this link](#) from your smartphone to access the immersive experience.



Victory in Europe Day marked the end of six years of war against Nazi Germany and was met with extraordinary celebrations. Across the UK and beyond, streets filled with people rejoicing in the long-awaited arrival of peace. Yet, behind every iconic photograph of jubilation lies a deeply personal story – one of resilience, sacrifice, and uncertainty about the future.

Beyond the street parties and cheering crowds, many service personnel and their families faced a stark reality. There was fear that the service personnel who had fought in Europe might be sent to Asia or the Pacific to fight in the war against Japan. The relief of victory was tempered by anxiety about what lay ahead.

This immersive AR experience brings these historical moments into your classroom, using four powerful photographs from VE Day as the gateway to personal accounts from those who lived it. Through historical audio recordings, students can step into these pivotal scenes, hearing firsthand the diverse experiences of a generation who witnessed both the joy of peace and the uncertainty of a world still in transition.

