



Poverty

Teachers and parents

This theme explores the effect of poverty in the local area of Brighton and Hove during the early twentieth century. Many people were living in impoverished conditions at the beginning of the century. The quality of their lives was further reduced due to the impact of World War One, and the effects of the Depression.

The extracts paint a bleak picture of unemployment, hunger, debt, bad housing and illness. However, this is offset by the attitude of the writers, who often remember this period with affection, and who question the cultural effect of changes brought in to improve housing and health.

Please click the link below for suggestions on how to use the material to support teaching and learning in a classroom setting.

[History Keystage 2](#)

[Drama Keystage 3](#)

[Citizenship Keystage 3](#)

[Other curriculum links](#)



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History Keystage 2

National Curriculum

Local History Study - **A study investigating how an aspect in the local area has changed over a long period of time, or how the locality was affected by a significant national or local event or development or by the work of a significant individual.**

Schemes of Work

Below are links relevant Schemes of work.

Scheme of work: **History Unit 13 - How life has changed since 1948.**

Objectives

What aspects of the local area has changed?

Activities

Using the extracts discuss the effects of poverty on housing and homes, health and illness, employment and debt in the local area during before WWII.

Talk about what it means to do an enquiry. Introduce the two main questions and the topic areas. Explain that the enquiry is carefully structured in five stages. They will work in groups to research a topic and will present their findings using a timeline.

Outcomes

Identify some aspects of the local area that have changed

Suggested tasks

Divide class into groups to look at one of the following themes

- housing and homes
- health and illness
- employment and debt

by identifying

- key characteristics
- key differences and similarities



Poverty

History Keystage 2 - continued

Ask the group to report back to class and then as a class explore the reasons for change e.g., *slum clearances, re-housing, World War Two, the National Health Service, the Welfare state.*

Written work: Ask students to describe how the local area has changed in relation to housing and homes, health and illness, or employment and debt, and ask them to evaluate the difference it made to peoples lives.



Poverty - Drama Keystage 3

1. Choose and read sections from **Hard times, good times** and **Living in 'slum' conditions**, or summarise the main points it covers with the pupils.

As a class, discuss what you define as 'poverty'. Do you see evidence of poverty in the area that you live today?

In groups, take one minute to create a tableau entitled, 'Poverty'. Experiment with different bodily levels and proximities as well as gesture and body-language. What is the opposite of poverty? Is it wealth? Is wealth about having enough or having more than enough?

Create a tableau of 'Wealth'. What evidence of wealth is there around Brighton & Hove today? What are the effects on society of the latter? (*suitable for Years 7, 8 and 9*)

2. Take the quote **'They were lovely times when dad was in work'** from **Hard times, good times**, as a stimulus*. In groups, devise a scene in which a father returns home to his family to tell them he has lost his job. Show how the family react. In the scene, make it clear what will have to change in their lives through lack of money. (*suitable for Years 8 and 9*)

- *Extension - *you may wish to begin with this or do it instead:* In groups, devise a scene set in modern day, where the family breadwinner has to tell the rest of their family that they have lost their job. It may be a single parent with teenage children.
- *Further extention - add three short scenes showing the effect of this on the whole family, e.g., children teased at school for not having the latest things, single parent not having enough money to pay for the groceries etc. At the end of each scene, all the characters freeze and speak a line each to the audience, saying how they are feeling at that moment.*

3. Read the quote **'Neighbours pitched in to help the ill'*** from **Being ill, keeping healthy**.

** You may wish to do this exercise, as a starter, before discussing the section.*

In a circle, choose to volunteers to go into the middle and begin a spontaneous improvisation in which they have a problem, e.g., they are locked out of their house. They must make the problem clear to the audience. The pupils in the circle will then go in, one by one, as 'friendly neighbours' with an offer of help. The pupils who go in must have a clear idea on how they can help before they go in e.g., tell them they can use their phone to call a locksmith, bring them a cup of tea to calm them down etc. The aim is to have as many people in the scene, helping, as possible. (*suitable for Years 7,8 and 9*)



Poverty - Drama Keystage 3 - continued

- *Extension* - in groups of six, devise a scene showing what life was like for a family living in 'slum conditions'; one member of the family is ill (doesn't have to be seen in the scene), as a cause of this lifestyle and the family can't afford professional medical help. Show how the neighbours rally round to help, by looking after other siblings, doing housework and donating/making meals. (*suitable for Years 7 and 8*)

4. Read the section Product to keep you healthy: then and now.

In groups, create a parody of a modern advert promoting the products used as medication. Use techniques such as: an expert talking about the product's benefits, a 'before and after', a demonstration on how to use the product and its effect and a slogan. Try to bring out the irony of how inferior we'd see these products today. (*suitable for Years 8 and 9 and links to KS3 English Media Studies*)



Poverty - Citizenship Keystage 3

1. Summarize all the sections in the theme of Poverty, as well as further research found in **Our community 1920-1940**. Ask students to -

- compare people's attitudes to their local community to today.
- discuss possible reasons why there is more litter, vandalism and theft today.
- devise a campaign to draw awareness of these issues and their cost and subsequent effect on the local community (i.e., school). The campaign could include an assembly presentation, posters, leaflets and power-point presentations. (*suitable for Year 8, Local Community and GCSE Citizenship coursework*)

2. Read the section **Hard times, good times**.

Research what the current unemployment rate in Brighton and Hove is. Find out about the welfare state (a brief history can be found **here**). Ask students -

- what is it called, who is eligible, how does it work? Who pays for it? What other state benefits are available and for whom?
- what charities are you aware of that help people in a situation of poverty or need in your local area? Are there any areas, peoples that you can identify that do need help (monetary or other?)

In small groups, students to identify an area in their local community that could benefit from help, e.g., old people's home needing entertainment, books etc. Students to organise and carry out a way of contributing to this situation and write it up as their Citizenship coursework task.

(GCSE Citizenship coursework)

3. Read the extract '**In a Social History of Housing 1815-1970...**' from **Living in 'slum' conditions**, and compare to Local Council responsibility, in particular Council Tax and Agenda 21, today.

- Find out Council Tax prices in your area and what the money is used for.
- Find out what your Local Council (**<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/>**) does under **Agenda 21**.

In small groups, students to identify an area of their local community that could benefit Agenda 21, e.g., arranging for recycling bins around your school or raising people awareness of recycling and how to do it. Students to organise and carry out a way of contributing to this situation and write it up as their Citizenship coursework task. *(GCSE Citizenship coursework)*



Poverty - Other curriculum links

Science: Explore the concepts of health and growth using the content of the section and sub-sections **Being ill, keeping healthy**. Discuss diet, common diseases and remedies and describe their impact on health. This links with **Scheme of Work, Science Keystage 1 and 2, Unit 2A**.

History: Using the photo's which illustrate the **Black spot of Brighton** theme, or the tour of housing over three centuries on the **My Brighton and Hove website**, ask the class to explore 'What was it like to live here in the past'. This links in with **Scheme of Work, History Keystage 1 and 2, Unit 18**.