

# ARMCHAIR WAR

An Interactive, Theatrical Education Project for Primary 6 and 7s



 visiblefictions

# Visible Fictions - Armchair War

*"I learned that you can do more than just read books and look on the internet to get information"*

**– Pupil, Glebe Primary**

*'The Visible Fictions team was a pleasure to work with and made our job much easier. They engaged with pupils, were always aware of their needs and had an excellent relationship with teachers. The CPD sessions left us very well prepared'*

**– Moira McKay,  
Inverclyde Council**

**A day-long event, led by actor/teachers that examines issues, themes and experiences of living on the Home Front during World War Two.**

Through performance and drama-related activities (such as role-play and improvisation) students explore dramatic scenarios and techniques. Whilst always aiming to be fun, **Armchair War** focuses on a pupil's own creative experience, sense of investigative enquiry and exploration to drive the piece forward.

Armchair War 2007 took place between January & March. Schools from five local

authorities took part – Inverclyde, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire and Renfrewshire.

Actor-teachers presented a series of rehearsed short scenes inspired by real-life events of British and German civilians during World War 2. These mini-dramas included stories of heroism from the war front and their implications back home, rationing and the black-market, spies in our midst and the realities of bombings and air-raids. These scenes placed human dilemmas and emotional and intellectual conflicts at their centre. Props and costumes from the period were used to make the experience as realistic as possible.

The pupils interacted with the scenes and asked the characters questions about the decisions they made and why. Students could alter a decision that was acted out to see what happened





*'a great project, executed very well. The children thoroughly enjoyed it'*

**– Jill Haigh, North Ayrshire Council**

*"I enjoyed it very much because we didn't just sit and watch you do something – we got involved"*

**– Pupil response, Glebe Primary**

*"The CPD sessions really prepared the teachers for the pupil workshops and gave a good insight into the teachers pack and how to use it. Ideas given during these sessions could be used just as successfully in a different context"*

**– Teacher response, 2007**

when a character took another course of action. They could also step into the scene and improvise with characters to show what they might have done had they found themselves in a similar position. These scenes acted as a springboard for young people to discover similarities between the human dilemmas of the period and issues we face today.

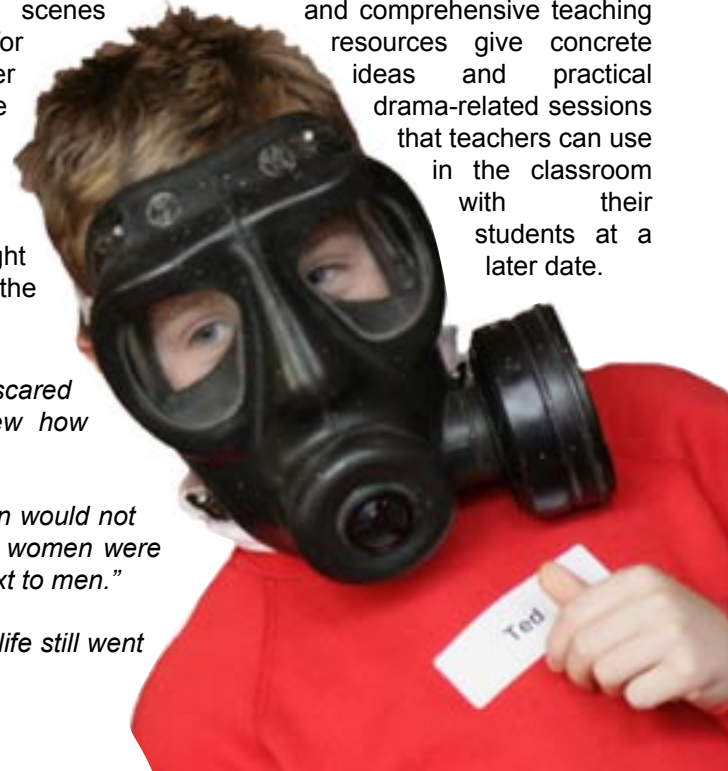
Pupils got a unique insight into the issues of the period.

*"I knew they were scared before but I never knew how scared they were!"*

*"I never thought that men would not let their wives work and women were not thought of equals next to men."*

*"Lots of people died but life still went on."*

**Armchair War** acts as an arts-education activity for young people but also inspires teachers to appreciate the potential of drama as a learning tool. The Company's CPD workshops and comprehensive teaching resources give concrete ideas and practical drama-related sessions that teachers can use in the classroom with their students at a later date.



**Stephen Bullock, West Dunbartonshire Council, Drama Cultural Co-ordinator:**

*“A first rate project that offered an holistic educational experience, benefiting pupils and teachers in equal part. For a long time I have wanted to bring Visible Fictions to our schools. Their reputation is one of inventive, exciting and relevant theatre and Armchair War did not disappoint. With time such a precious commodity in primary schools it is imperative that drama is used as a tool to explore other areas of the curriculum rather than being an isolated experience. Armchair War did precisely this with pupils experiencing the full range of dramatic conventions as well as gaining knowledge of an historical topic that remains important on both a social and academic level. The project offered an holistic educational experience and delivered it professionally. The value for teaching staff also cannot be ignored, with staff growing visibly more excited about their role and clearly taking the experience into their own day to day teaching methods. A first rate project with a great formula for other topics.”*



***Visible Fictions comes with such a blazing reputation that it's hard to ignore.***  
**- The Guardian**

Visible Fictions is one of the UK's leading theatre companies. Working with the finest artistic talent, we create professional performances that are innovative, entertaining and relevant to our audience. The company also produces a vibrant education and participation programme which, like our professional work, inspires our young participants to unleash their artistic potential.

Our dedication to placing both audience and participants at the heart of all we do has allowed Visible Fictions to build an international reputation for creating engaging and high quality artistic experiences for young people and adults alike.

Our participation and education projects work in formal and informal learning environments with partners including Local Authorities, The Prince's Trust, Young Enterprise Scotland, Penumbra and the National Theatre of Scotland. Projects take a variety of formats and include workshops, residencies and long term youth theatres. We also develop education resources that build on each production's potential for further learning.



### What the PUPILS said:

- *"I don't have many drama skills but I do now"*
- *"I liked the way they let everybody join in the acting and everybody's opinion was heard"*
- *"I learned that we could work together with each other and not argue"*
- *"If I was to give a mark it would be 200/100 it was so good"*
- *"I liked the fact that we were involved in the drama - it was much more fun than sitting in a classroom reading books because that gets boring after a while"*
- *"It was the best day in school I have ever had"*



### What the TEACHERS said:

- *"Absolutely brilliant. All these children have been giving 100 per cent since 10 o'clock this morning. I didn't think I was the drama type but I'm certainly going to do some in the future"*
- *"A highlight for me was seeing children who are normally very quiet becoming involved in acting out situations"*
- *"Wonderful day. Brought everything children have been learning to life. As a teacher, wary beforehand of my involvement, I loved every minute!"*
- *"The pack is already being used within Primary 7 and the children are keen to continue with it as they enjoyed the workshop so much"*
- *"I already have (made use of the Teacher's Pack) – for almost every E.S. Lesson. A wealth of knowledge and activities – perfect for Curriculum for Excellence. Will keep it close for next year!"*



**Brian Hayward, The Times Educational Supplement (16<sup>th</sup> Feb 2007) on Armchair War:**

“That the time slides by unnoticed and that every child is involved virtually every moment of the time, is a tribute to the drama method and team. One moment the children are laughing at the silly ‘*Potato Song*’, the next they are listening carefully to Winston Churchill vowing to ‘*to fight them on the beaches*’.”

[www.visiblefictions.co.uk](http://www.visiblefictions.co.uk)



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