

# 10 teaching ideas for historical drama

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1

**Sources alive!** Great for source skills for any key stage – students recreate a pictorial source (cartoons are perfect for this) and can then be questioned about the people they represent (what are you doing / feeling / saying?).

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2

**Character continuums.** In-role as a group of historical individuals students can place themselves along a continuum (e.g. agree/disagree, Catholic/Protestant, violent/peaceful) and then explain the rationale for their position.

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**Breaking news!** Try a dramatic alternative to the classic newspaper front page: students film a breaking news broadcast on any historical event. This could include eye-witness interviews based on contemporary sources. Teachit History has a great example on Pearl Harbour ([search: '23212'](#)).

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4

**Scripted role-play.** You can make your own, use one of Teachit History's or get your students to write their own scripted plays. The interviewer/interviewee format works well to draw out content. Have a look at our Jenner role-play (['22304'](#)) or The Monastery Inspectors (['19857'](#)).

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**Tableaux.** If drama activities can get a bit too noisy then silent tableaux offer a quiet alternative. Students have to create a scene depicting an historical event and 'freeze frame' themselves for the rest of the class to work out what is going on.

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**Voice-over.** A creative approach to using the wealth of historical footage from film archives (e.g. British Pathé). Students write and read-out their own voice-overs to explain the action in the clip.

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**Simulations.** A fun way to get students to see different perspectives of complex events. Give small groups information a bit at a time and get them to react to events. The outbreak of the First World War is a classic example (['22109'](#)) and Teachit History also has a U2 spy plane simulation (['22772'](#)).

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8

**Speed dating.** Students take on the role of a key word/concept/event or even person in a quick rotation to find out as much about each other as possible. Teachit History's speed dating revision resource has more details of how it can work (['22638'](#)).

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9

**History party!** Assign every student a different historical figure and allow them to mingle with at least five characters. Questioning can then uncover similarities and differences, popularity and dislikes. Teachit History has some great resources on Empire builders (['22435'](#)) and the Russian Revolution (['22560'](#)).

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10

**In the hot seat.** Students take on the role of an historical figure and can then be questioned by their classmates.