

The  
Economist

EDUCATIONAL  
FOUNDATION



ROYAL  
COLLECTION  
TRUST

# ROGER FENTON

FINDING THE TRUTH WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

75 MINUTE WORKSHOP



# Introduction

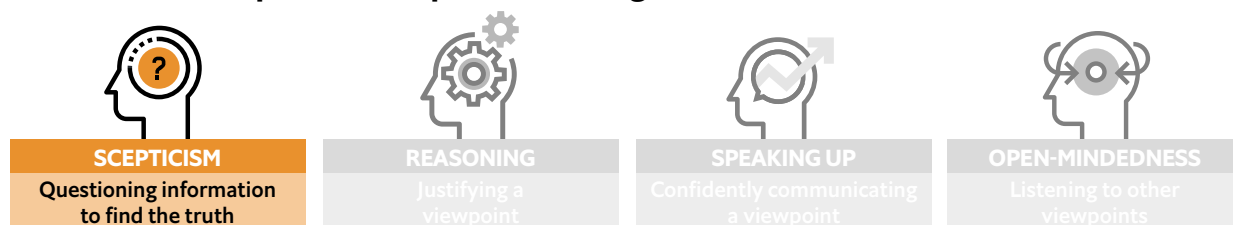
This workshop explores media representation of current affairs using the war photography of Roger Fenton in *The Crimean War*.

The resources have been produced by The Economist Educational Foundation, an independent charity set up by *The Economist* magazine. We combine *The Economist's* journalistic know-how with teaching expertise, and we specialise in supporting teachers to facilitate high-quality classroom discussions about the news.

## About this workshop

This workshop covers areas of History, English and Citizenship. It will take approximately 75 minutes to run.

**This resource helps to develop the following skills:**



## Who is this workshop suitable for?

This workshop is aimed at 11-15 year olds.

Teachers are encouraged to adapt as necessary for their student's needs. You don't need to have visited *Roger Fenton's Photographs of the Crimea, 1855* exhibition before running the workshop, but we suggest organising a trip after by visiting [www.rct.uk/schools/sessions](http://www.rct.uk/schools/sessions)

This resource compliments a current Royal Collection Trust exhibition at The Queen's Gallery, but the workshop can also be run entirely independently.



**Let us know about any interesting discussions you have...**



@RCT @Econ\_Foundation

#royalcollectiontrust #rogerfentonrct #findingthetruthinfenton

### BEFORE THE SESSION YOU NEED TO HAVE:

- The keywords, written up on the board
- 1 copy of the *Keywords* resource, cut up
- 3 copies of the *Crimean War Newspaper*, stuck up around the room
- A pile of *War worksheets*, enough for 1 between 2
- The *Fenton photos*, ready to stick up around the room
- The *Scepticism spanners*, cut up

10 MINUTE ACTIVITY

# Photographic keywords

## Resource

The *Keywords* sheet

## Activity instructions

Make sure you've written the keywords on the board:

- Truth
- News
- Journalism
- War

Put students into four groups. Hand each group a different keyword and tell them to keep it secret. Each group has three minutes to create a freeze frame 'photograph' of their keyword. They must organise themselves into a dramatic pose that represents the word they have.

Tell two of the groups to get into their freeze frame 'photographs' and countdown from five to zero to signal when they must be completely still. Ask the other two groups which keywords they think are being depicted and why. Repeat with the other two groups.



### ***Ask your students:***

Why was creating a freeze frame powerful? How did it help you understand the keyword? What was difficult about it? How could photographs be a good or bad way to explain things?

**KEYWORD:**

**Truth**



**KEYWORD:**

**Journalism**

**KEYWORD:**

**News**

**KEYWORD:**

**War**

10 MINUTE ACTIVITY

# Crimea Context

## Resources

*War worksheet* and the *Crimean War Newspaper*

## Activity instructions

Put students into new groups of four and hand out a *War worksheet* to each group. Explain to students that they are going to look at the first ever use of photography to report on a war. This war was called the Crimean War. Before they look at the photographs, they need to learn a bit about the war itself so they can apply their knowledge to what they see.

Tell students they have a range of different information on their worksheet. Point to the *Crimean War Newspaper* around the room. Explain that they will need to use the information on these posters to work out what the question is for each answer, and what the answer is for each question. One has been completed as an example.



**Ask your students:**

What was the Crimean war like?



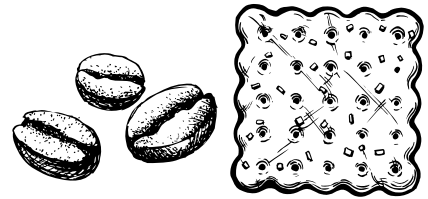
# WAR WORKSHEET

**Q** How many British soldiers died?

**A** Well over 20,000

**Q**

**A**



**Q** What started the war?

**A**

**Q**

What was the joint forces of Britain, France and the Ottoman Empire called?

**A**

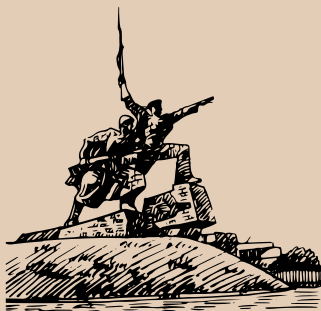
**Q** Where is Crimea?

**A**

**Q**

**A** Weather, hunger and disease.

# 20,000 BRITISH SOLDIERS DEAD



## ALLIES ADVANCE

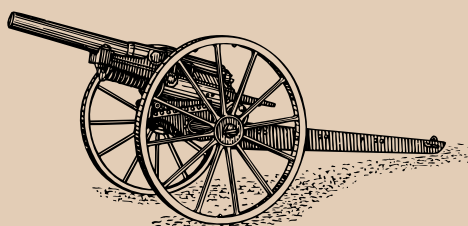
BRITAIN, FRANCE  
AND TURKEY were  
collectively known  
as the Allies angry at  
Russian invasion of  
the Ottoman Empire.

They went to war  
and travelled to  
a part of  
Russia called  
The Crimea  
to fight  
them  
there.



## INVADING FORCES

RUSSIA INVADED A PLACE WHICH WAS  
PART OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE  
(MODERN DAY TURKEY), AND FRANCE AND  
BRITAIN WERE NOT HAPPY ABOUT IT.



## HUNGRY SOULS

LIVING CONDITIONS for  
soldiers were very bad in  
the Crimean war. They  
often had only a few hard,  
dry biscuits and coffee  
beans to get them  
through the day. Hot  
meals were rare even in  
the harsh winter weather.

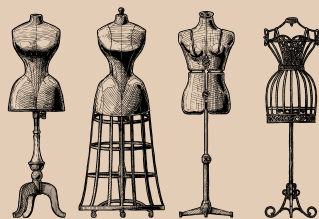
## BRUTAL CONDITIONS

IT WAS VERY BADLY  
ORGANISED. Most British  
soldiers died from the  
poor conditions they  
suffered, not fighting.  
Disease, the cold and  
hunger were the biggest  
killers. The battles were  
planned badly too.  
The British public heard  
about the conditions and  
was very upset.

## CHOLERA

IN ST JAMES, WESTMINSTER.  
The following Medical  
Gentlemen are appointed,  
either of whom may be  
immediately applied to for  
Medicine and Attendance,  
on the occurrence of those  
Complaints,

MR. FRENCH,  
41, GT MARLBOROUGH ST  
MR. HOUSLEY,  
26, BROAD STREET  
MR. WILDON,  
16, PRINCES STREET



## DRESSMAKER

LATEST FASHIONABLE  
SILHOUETTE FROM PARIS  
AVAILABLE IN SAMUELS  
OF KNIGHTSBRIDGE.



## TONIC AIR

FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM RESPIRATORY ILLNESS  
visit Switzerland to aid in your recovery. Villages with  
age-old customs, medieval castles, world-famed spas  
and peace and health in the tonic air.

# ROGER FENTON: FINDING THE TRUTH WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

## ACTIVITY 3

### 10 MINUTE ACTIVITY

## Set the scene

### Resources

No resources needed.

### Activity instructions

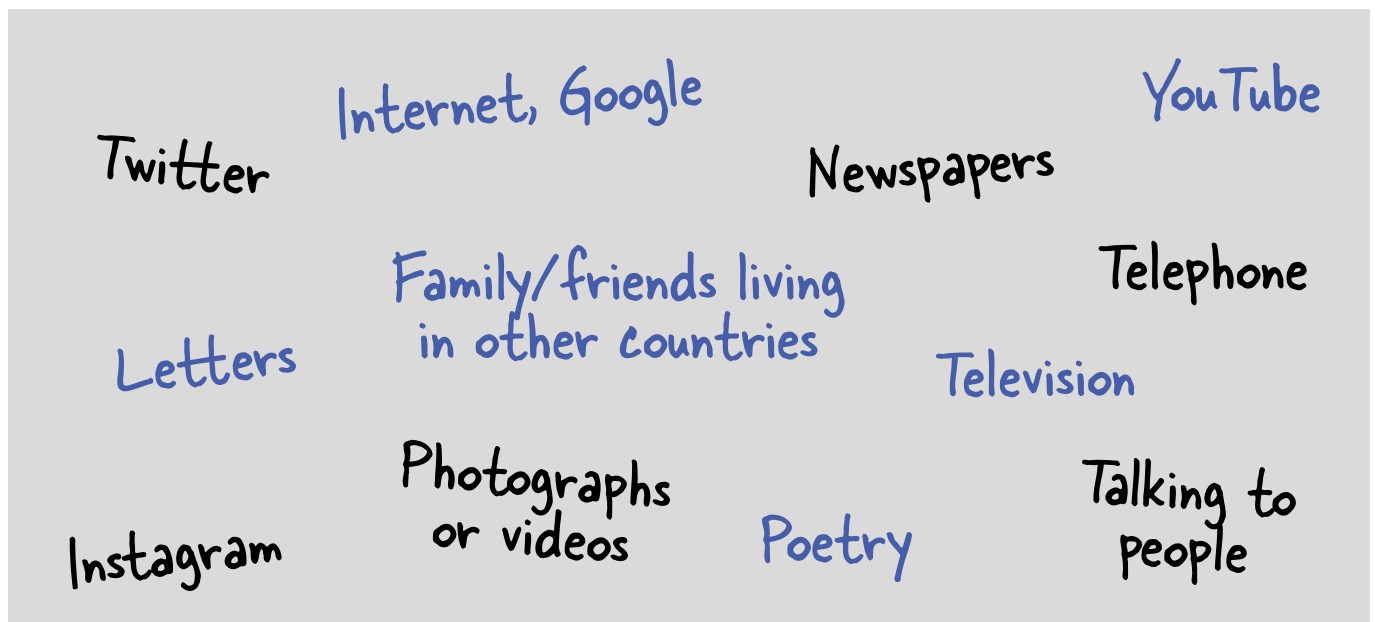
Tell students they need to think about what it was like to live in 1855. This will help them understand the impact that the photographs they are looking at would have had as a way to tell the news.



**Ask your students:**

How do we hear about what is happening in the world today?

Write student's ideas on the board. See suggestions below to help.  
Aim to get a wide range of ideas.



**Ask your students:**

Look at the list. Which ones are the best ways to get news and why?  
Which aren't so good and why?



### ACTIVITY 3 (*continued*)

Tell students they now have to travel back in time to 1855.

Go through your list on the board and decide together if each option was available in 1855. Cross each one out that was not available. E.g. cross off TV.

Here is a list of dates which you may want to share or write up as you go, if relevant.

<b>1788</b>	<i>The Times</i> newspaper launched
<b>1820</b>	Only half of people could read
<b>1839</b>	Photography invented
<b>1843</b>	<i>The Economist</i> newspaper launched
<b>1876</b>	Telephone invented
<b>1896</b>	<i>Daily Mail</i> newspaper launched
<b>1927</b>	TV invented
<b>1977</b>	Home computer released
<b>1983</b>	Internet invented
<b>1998</b>	Google created
<b>2005</b>	YouTube created



**Ask your students a selection of the following questions:**

- What was difficult about getting the news in 1855?
- What do you think it was like before the invention of photography?
- How might images have been portrayed in newspapers before?
- What was the impact of photography?
- How might people feel about wars going on in other countries?
- How could photography change the way people think about war?

**25 MINUTE ACTIVITY**

# The power of photography

## Resources

The *Fenton photos* and *Scepticism spanners*

## Activity instructions

Make a gallery of pictures by sticking the photographs up around the classroom. Ask students to imagine they are in a gallery. They should move around the images and stand next to the one that makes the biggest impression on them. Students should discuss the reasons for their choice with group of people who picked the same picture. Tell students they will work in these groups (although you may need to move students to even out numbers).

Tell each group to move clockwise to a different photo. Groups should discuss the questions for their photo. Ask for feedback. Ask groups to move again and discuss the questions for a new photograph.

Hand out a *Scepticism spanner* to each group. They must read this together and answer their question. Get groups to share what information they had and feedback as a whole group.



### **Ask your students:**

- Is it important to know information beyond the photograph?
- What was difficult about getting the news in 1855?
- How might people feel about wars going on in other countries?
- How do you think people would feel about photography?
- How could photography change the way people think about war?



Photo 1

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Come up with a caption or title for this photograph
2. What is going on here?
3. What does this photograph tell us about the war?
4. How does it make you feel?
5. How do you think the British public in 1855 would feel seeing this?
6. Is there anything missing that you would expect to see in a war photograph?







*Photo 2*

- QUESTIONS:** **1.** Come up with a caption or title for this photograph **2.** What is going on here? **3.** What does this photograph tell us about the war? **4.** How does it make you feel? **5.** How do you think the British public in 1855 would feel seeing this? **6.** Is there anything missing that you would expect to see in a war photograph?





*Photo 3*

- QUESTIONS:** **1.** Come up with a caption or title for this photograph **2.** What is going on here? **3.** What does this photograph tell us about the war? **4.** How does it make you feel? **5.** How do you think the British public in 1855 would feel seeing this? **6.** Is there anything missing that you would expect to see in a war photograph?



Photo 4

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Come up with a caption or title for this photograph
2. What is going on here?
3. What does this photograph tell us about the war?
4. How does it make you feel?
5. How do you think the British public in 1855 would feel seeing this?
6. Is there anything missing that you would expect to see in a war photograph?





All these photos were taken by Roger Fenton. Fenton was the first war photographer.

**QUESTION:**

**If only one person is taking pictures of events, what problems might there be?**



Roger Fenton, the photographer, was paid to take pictures of the Crimean War by a man with close connections to government and so he may have wanted to show Britain doing well in the war.

**QUESTION:**

**How might this affect what Fenton chose to photograph or not photograph?**





Fenton, the photographer, was used to taking pictures of famous buildings and cared about creating artistic photographs.

**QUESTION:**

**Should war photography ever be artistic?**



There were some other descriptions of the war.

A famous poem by Lord Tennyson called *The Charge of the Light Brigade* describes a battle:

*"Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of hell,  
Rode the six hundred."*

**QUESTION:**

**Look back at your photograph.  
How do these words make you  
see, feel or think about the  
photo now?**

**20 MINUTE ACTIVITY**

# Question quake discussion

## Resources

Question quakes and 'Valley of the shadow of death' photo

## Activity instructions

Explain to students that one of the photos from the previous activity is the 'Valley of the shadow of death' and is a famous photograph by Fenton. Show the students the Photo 3 again and point out the cannonballs in the image.

The group are going to use this photograph to start a discussion.

Write the statement "This is a good news source" onto a piece of paper and put in the middle of the room.

### *To facilitate the discussion:*

**STUDENTS:** should stand in a circle around the statement. Students should move to show how much they agree/disagree with this statement; the closer they are to it, the more they agree. Tell students they may move during the discussion if they change their mind.

Students should hold out two fists in front of them. To contribute, they should stick up one thumb. Once they have spoken they should put this hand behind their back so they have one more chance to speak, using their other hand. Each speaker can choose the next person to contribute.

**TEACHER:** stand outside the circle. After a few minutes of discussion, add Question quake 1 into the circle. When you do this, students must act like the ground is shaking for 3 seconds, then answer the question. Respond to the group discussion by adding in relevant Question quakes at various points. We suggest using around five in total; you may choose ones based on your student's ability or the direction of the conversation. You may also use them if conversation dries up or digresses.



### *At the end of your discussion ask your students:*

Who moved during the activity? What made you move? Who didn't move? Why?



This photograph was taken by  
Fenton on the same day.

**Is it the same road?**

**What are similarities  
and differences?**

**Why would he move  
the cannonballs?**



**Which photograph  
is more scary?  
Why?**



**Do you think Fenton  
moved them for artistic  
reasons, to the make  
people more scared, or  
for a different reason?**

QUESTION QUAKE 4

**Why might people  
be upset that  
he moved the  
cannonballs?**



QUESTION QUAKE 5

**Is it more important to  
photograph exactly what you  
see, or to create a picture to  
help people understand the  
events that are taking place?**

QUESTION QUAKE 6

**Do we always see  
the truth today on  
social media?**



QUESTION QUAKE 7

**Have you heard  
of fake news?  
Would you describe  
Fenton's photography  
as fake news?**

QUESTION QUAKE 8

**What can we learn  
from this about  
how we see modern  
news sources?**



QUESTION QUAKE 9

**Should all news  
tell the truth?**

**Can you come  
up with a good  
question to develop  
discussion?**





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