LO: to know what trenches were and understand why they were used

S.C:
I can say what a trench is and complete a diagram of a trench. I can explain why trenches were used during the First World War.
What do you know about the trenches? What did they look like? How were they used?
The set up of a trench.

**Why Trench Warfare in WWI?**
In the early weeks of the First World War (late in the summer of 1914), both German and French commanders thought that the war would involve a large amount of troop movement, as each side sought to gain - or defend - territory. The Germans initially swept through parts of Belgium and northeastern France, gaining territory along the way. They very quickly took over large areas of land. During the First Battle of the Marne in September 1914, however, the Germans were pushed back by Allied forces. They then decided to “dig in” to avoid losing any more ground. Unable to break through this line of defence, the Allies also began to dig protective trenches. By October 1914, neither army could advance its position, mainly because war was being waged in a very different way than it had been in the nineteenth century. In previous wars, soldiers had advanced on horseback and fought with swords or pistols. However, these strategies were no longer effective or possible when soldiers were faced with modern weaponry like machine guns and heavy artillery, and it was this inability to move forward that created the stalemate and the need for trenches. What began as a temporary strategy -- or so the generals had thought -- evolved into one of the main features of the war at the Western Front for the next four years.
Construction and Design of Trenches

Early trenches were little more than ditches, intended to provide some protection during short battles. As the stalemate continued, however, it became obvious that a more complex system was needed. The first major trench lines were completed in November 1914. By the end of that year, they stretched 475 miles, starting at the North Sea, running through Belgium and northern France, and ending in the Swiss frontier.

Although the trenches were slightly different because of the terrain into which they were dug, most were built according to the same basic design. The front wall of the trench, known as the parapet, averaged ten feet high. Lined with sandbags from top to bottom, the parapet also featured two to three feet of sandbags stacked above ground level. These provided protection, but also obscured a soldier.

A ledge, known as the fire-step, was built into the lower part of the ditch and allowed a soldier to step up and see over the top (usually through a peep hole between sandbags) when he was ready to fire his weapon. Periscopes and mirrors were also used to see above the sandbags. The rear wall of the trench, known as the parados, was lined with sandbags as well, protecting against a rear assault. Because constant shelling and frequent rainfall could cause the trench walls to collapse, the walls were reinforced with sandbags, logs, and branches.
Trenches were dug in a zigzag pattern so that if an enemy entered the trench, he could not fire straight down the line. A typical trench system included a line of three or four trenches: the front line (also called the outpost or the fire line), the support trench, and the reserve trench, all built parallel to one another and anywhere from 100 to 400 yards apart. The main trench lines were connected by communicating trenches, allowing for the movement of messages, supplies, and soldiers. Protected by fields of dense barbed wire, the fire line was located at varying distances from the Germans’ front line, usually between 50 and 300 yards. The area between the two opposing armies’ front lines was known as “no man’s land.” Some trenches contained dugouts below the level of the trench floor, often as deep as twenty or thirty feet. Most of these underground rooms were little more than crude cellars, but some -- especially those farther back from the front -- offered more conveniences, such as beds, furniture and stoves. The German dugouts were generally more sophisticated; one such dugout captured in the Somme Valley in 1916 was found to have toilets, electricity, ventilation, and even wallpaper.
**L.O:** to know what trenches were and understand why they were used

Draw and label your own trench
L.C: to know what trenches were and understand why they were used

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TEMPERATURE CHECK
How do you feel about the mission today?

Mmm.....  Ask me later

So-So

Feeling groovy

1 5 10
L.C: to know what life was like in the trenches

S.C:
I can look at different pieces of evidence and say what life in the trenches was like.
I can write a letter to a loved one back home to tell them about life in the trenches
You have already seen what the trenches looked like and why they were used in WW1.

RECAP: why were the trenches used?

What did they look like?
Today you will be looking at different pieces of evidence to learn more about life in the trenches.

For each piece you will make notes of key facts and what impression of trench life you get.

We will begin by looking at a piece of evidence together. Fill in your worksheet for this piece of evidence.

This is a video of British soldiers describing life in the trenches.
Now you will look at the other pieces of evidence on your table and fill in the rest of the worksheet.

They are:
- Photographs of trench life
- Soldiers diaries or journals
- Trench facts and a typical day in the trenches

You have 15 minutes- spend about 5 mins looking at each piece of evidence.
TALKING POINT

Do you think the soldiers could tell their families back home the truth about life in the trenches?

DISCUSS IN SMALL GROUPS.

Thoughts in full sentences please!
L.C: to know what life was like in the trenches
You will write a letter to a loved one back home. You can choose who to write to.
Tell them all about what life in the trenches is like. Describe it so that they can imagine it clearly. Tell them how you feel about where you are.
Let's hear your letters
L.C: to know what life was like in the trenches

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TEMPERATURE CHECK
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Mmm..... Ask me later
So-So
Feeling groovy

1  5  10