

Warnings From The Archive Educational Resources:

<https://humanities-research.exeter.ac.uk/warningsfromthearchive/exhibits/show/correspondance-from-blair>

Roleplay 1: Lead-up to the Iraq invasion 2003: Blair and Bush's policy teams take on a media conference.



Learning Objectives:

- **What do we want you to know:**
 - What happened in the Iraq War
 - Who was involved
 - Why it happened
 - What is the significance of the Iraq War in the future of U.S. relations

- **What do we want you to understand:**
 - How media bias can impact the way a society views an event – specifically to the Iraq War
 - The relationship between Blair and Bush

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- What were the negative consequences of Blair and Bush's relationship for the war?
- How did Blair and Bush want to frame the war through the media to the public?

- **What do we want you to do?**
 - Participate in a press conference roleplay, with some students assuming the roles of Bush, Blair and their respective policy advisors, with other students becoming journalists and asking the leaders & their teams questions about the information in the archival documents.

- **Aim of the roleplay:**
 - Throughout this roleplay, Blair and Bush, along with their policy advisors, will pitch their motivations for going to war and state why they think it is necessary.
 - The journalists will ask questions about Blair and Bush's motivations, while considering the angles from which the politicians will be trying to answer the questions.

Situation:

The year is 2003 and the Iraq invasion draws closer each day, Tony Blair and George W. Bush have had their private correspondence leaked by an anonymous source! You have access to these sources detailing their correspondence and now the teams of journalists must examine the

information and demand answers from the leaders at a national press conference. Within your groups, you must read over your character briefs and understand your motivations for asking / answering questions. Journalists will aim to get maximum information out of the politicians, and 'Blair' and 'Bush' will attempt to answer these questions without incriminating themselves.

Brief for the activity:

- Using the correspondence from Blair to Bush prior to the invasion of Iraq, the class will be split into four groups. One student will play Bush, with another acting as his policy advisor, another student will be Blair with another student playing his policy advisor. The rest of the group will act as journalists from the press, the journalists will be separated into two groups: left and right wing media.
- This role play will be split into two sessions – the first will consist of a planning session where you will be organised into your groups and read through the archival documents together and compare your notes / highlighted sections which you will have made as homework before the class.
- The journalists, in their separate groups, will plan on the questions they think they should ask the political leaders while they are in the hot seat. Meanwhile, the politicians and their policy leaders must try to predict what the journalists will ask and subsequently have some points prepared ready to respond to any questions successfully. This will operate much like a real press conference.
- Careful planning for 'Blair' and 'Bush' is crucial, as once they are in the hot seat, they may not ask for help from advisors on how to answer. Therefore, each politician and their advisor must work together closely

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to brainstorm all potential answers to questions prior to the hot seat session in the second class.

Groups:

- Blair x1 and his policy advisor x1
- Bush x1 and his policy advisor x1
- Left-wing Journalists team (up to 13)
- Right-wing Journalists team (up to 13)

Character Profiles:

- Blair – Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1997-2007 of the Labour Party.
- Bush – President from the United States of America from 2001-2009 of the Republican Party.
- Blair's Policy Advisor
- Bush's Policy Advisor
- Left-leaning journalists – Journalists from The Guardian, The Mirror, The Observer
- Right-leaning journalists – Journalists from The Sun, The Express, The Telegraph and The Times

Tasks:

Blair & Policy Advisor (Team 1):

- You will work as a two-person team throughout the planning process and will take it in turns to be in the hot seat answering journalists' questions. You will have read through the archival documents printed

out for you as homework, and from the information within the documents, you will now be making a list of points outlining your motivations to go to war and why you think that the war is necessary. Consider some potential questions you might be asked by the two teams of journalists and have some points prepared as to best answer any questions which may come up.

Bush and Policy Advisor (Team 2):

- You will work as a two-person team throughout the planning process and will take it in turns to be in the hot seat answering journalists' questions. You will have read through the archival documents printed out for you as homework, and from the information within the documents, you will now be making a list of points outlining your motivations to go to war and why you think that the war is necessary. Consider some potential questions you might be asked by the two teams of journalists and have some points prepared as to best answer any questions which may come up.

Right Wing Journalists (Team 3):

- You will work as a group and take it in turns asking the politicians and their advisors questions about their motivations for and reasoning behind the war. This is a grilling, so ensure that you ask whoever is in the hot seat for details and explanations as to why they have made certain decisions, the aim is to hold them accountable. Also consider your media bias, look at the bullet points on the background information sheet for guidance on your position / attitudes towards the politicians' decisions and motivations. Try and angle your questions according to your political

alliances. We will provide examples on the board before the start of the role play of the sort of information your team should be looking for.

Left Wing Journalists (Team 4):

- You will work as a group and take it in turns asking the politicians and their advisors questions about their motivations for and reasoning behind the war. This is a grilling, so ensure that you ask whoever is in the hot seat for details and explanations as to why they have made certain decisions, the aim is to hold them accountable. Also consider your media bias, look at the bullet points on the background information sheet for guidance on your position / attitudes towards the politicians' decisions and motivations. Try and angle your questions according to your political alliances. We will provide examples on the board before the start of the role play of the sort of information your team should be looking for.