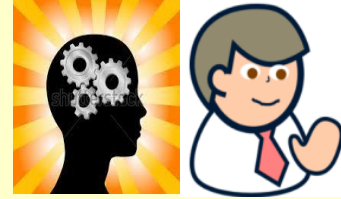


Enquiry Q: To what extent did men have valid reasons for being  
Conscientious Objectors?



**Starter: Think back to your  
previous learning about WW1.**  
**What was a *Conscientious Objector*?**



Enquiry Question: To what extent did men have valid reasons for being Conscientious Objectors?

Enquiry Q: To what extent did men have valid reasons for being Conscientious Objectors?



## What arguments were used at the trials?

### **Conscientious Objectors and the Tribunals**

The Military Service Tribunals were made up of magistrates, retired army officers and other local 'notables'. Bristol's tribunal met in the Council House (now Bristol Register Office) at the top of Corn Street.

Most tribunal applicants argued that they were needed by their employer or family so could not join up. In these cases they were likely to get little more than a deferral of call-up. A small proportion of men appearing before the tribunals claimed conscientious objector (CO) status – for moral, religious or political reasons they refused to fight.

Many of the records of the tribunals were destroyed in the 1920s. Those records that survive, along with accounts of those who attended the tribunals and press reports indicate that the standard of justice varied widely from one tribunal to the next. Despite the wording of the Act, tribunals were often

resistant to the very idea of conscientious objection - a tendency that was often reflected in other officials' treatment of objectors, although this was by no means always the case. For tribunal members, the poor treatment was perhaps unsurprising, as many seemed to see their primary responsibility as ensuring that as many men as possible were sent for military service.

A lot of the men who appeared before a tribunal were not used to presenting a case in public and got only a summary hearing. Men were sometimes told they were 'too young to have a conscience'. Men who were judged to be already working in an industry useful to the war (eg mining) were denied the right to claim a conscientious objection from military service. In contrast, some men did manage to get a full hearing of their case (see Walter Ayles below)

Enquiry Q: To what extent did men have valid reasons for being  
Conscientious Objectors?



**What criteria should be used**  
**at these trials for evaluating whether people**  
**should get CO status?**

Enquiry Q: To what extent did men have valid reasons for being Conscientious Objectors?



**Case studies preparation:**

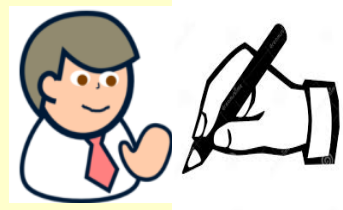
<b>George Barker</b>	<b>Student 1</b>	<b>Will Gould</b>	<b>Student 10</b>	<b>Ronald Lovell</b>	<b>Student 19</b>
<b>Prosecution</b>	<b>Student 2</b>	<b>Prosecution</b>	<b>Student 11</b>	<b>Prosecution</b>	<b>Student 20</b>
<b>Defence</b>	<b>Student 3</b>	<b>Defence</b>	<b>Student 12</b>	<b>Defence</b>	<b>Student 21</b>
<b>Elizabeth Hutchinson</b>	<b>Student 4</b>	<b>Paul Sturge</b>	<b>Student 13</b>	<b>Walter Ayles</b>	<b>Student 22</b>
<b>Prosecution</b>	<b>Student 5</b>	<b>Prosecution</b>	<b>Student 14</b>	<b>Prosecution</b>	<b>Student 23</b>
<b>Defence</b>	<b>Student 6</b>	<b>Defence</b>	<b>Student 15</b>	<b>Defence</b>	<b>Student 24</b>
<b>Whiteford Brothers</b>	<b>Student 7</b>	<b>Alfred James</b>	<b>Student 16</b>	<b>Gilford Wolland</b>	<b>Student 25</b>
<b>Prosecution</b>	<b>Student 8</b>	<b>Prosecution</b>	<b>Student 17</b>	<b>Prosecution</b>	<b>Student 26</b>
<b>Defence</b>	<b>Student 9</b>	<b>Defence</b>	<b>Student 18</b>	<b>Defence</b>	<b>Student 27</b>

Enquiry Q: To what extent did men have valid reasons for being Conscientious Objectors?



**TRIAL!!!**

Name	Reason for requesting CO status	Decision at trial (absolute, partial or conditional exemption)
George Barker		
Will Gould		
Ronald Lovell		
Elizabeth Hutchinson		
Paul Sturge		
Walter Ayles		
Whiteford Brothers		
Alfred James		
Gilford Wolland		



## **Concluding thoughts:**

1. Was it okay to be a conscientious objector?
2. What effect might their actions have had on the next generation?
3. How might they be dealt with today?
4. How should we remember Conscientious Objectors?  
Should we remember them at all?