

Battle Bus

Step onto the historic Battle Bus and learn from Joe Clough what life was like on the battlefield during the First World War, driving a London bus, one of our city's most iconic vehicles. Discover why Joe left Jamaica, how he became a bus driver and his experiences at the Western Front.

Key learning enquiry: *What was life like as a bus driver in the First World War?*

Pupils will learn:

- Students will understand what life was like for soldiers and bus drivers on the front lines
- Students will understand the role of London buses during the war
- Students will explore how soldiers might have felt at the front lines and some challenges they faced
- Students will explore how soldiers communicated with their friends and family

KS2: History

Before your visit

- **Research London in The First World War and the role of buses and bus drivers during the war.** What kind of buses did we have in London 100 years ago?
- **Hot seating.** What would you like to ask Joe if you met him? Research Joe's life in small groups and present your findings to the rest of the class. Take it in turns to act as Joe and answer the class's questions.
- **Research what lives were like for French and Belgian women during the First World War.** What were their roles during wartime?

After your visit

- **Research censorship during the First World War.** Were troops able to write what they wanted on their postcards home? How might this affect what they included?
- **Write a postcard home from the Front as if you were Joe Clough.** What would Joe write in a postcard to his wife? What might soldier's families write back?
- **Research the significance of different plants and flowers, like the ones on the postcards.** Using coloured paper, create a small collage design for the front of a postcard that could be sent from the Front.

Explore our [Future Engineering Wonders webpage](#) for more information



Joe Clough was the first black
London General Omnibus
Company motor bus driver.



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Joe Clough in front of an London General Omnibus Company in 1908



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What would you like to ask Joe if you met him?

Here is an example to help.

Question: *What was it like driving a bus in France during the First World War?*



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Hot Seating!

As the driver I was in my cab the whole time. Snow, sleet, rain or shine; and out in France it's no better. And the roads were very dangerous – lots of buses slipped off them. It was sometimes quite a frightening thing to do, driving the bus. (Joe)

