

What caused Joseph Ryan's death?

Learning outcomes

- Experience sequencing a historical account
- Use thinking skills to organise information
- Understand the hazards associated with mining
- Learn how to work in a team

Content

Group sequencing activity requiring teamwork and decision making to produce an account of how Joseph Ryan met his tragic end. The twenty cards in the 'mystery' all throw light on his death. Not all are necessary to make a coherent account of what happened.

Recommended time

This depends very much on the ability and age of your class. Twenty minutes is a minimum requirement for the sequencing, more time needed for introducing and concluding the activity.

Preparation and resources

- Arrange to borrow the **Joseph Ryan resources** * (crib with sequence story and original inspector's report plus sets of statement cards).
Or make your own mystery statement cards by downloading the **Xtra Ryan mystery resource** (2 pages) from www.stjameschurchnewcastle.wordpress.com . Also print out **Xtra Ryan mystery crib** (4 pages - sequencing crib and original report).
- Make up enough sets for each group in your class. Familiarise yourself with the story and the statements – some can be left out, others are vital. If you want to look up technical terms used in the report, go to the glossary on the Durham Mining Museum site:
http://www.dmm.org.uk/books/terms_o.htm
Decide whether to use the story creatively, e.g. as a drama or art stimulus.

Activity

- Arrange the class into table groups – small enough to allow working together with the cards.
- Explain that we know from the enquiry into Joseph's death that there was a clear reason why it happened (you may want to ask pupils to speculate at this point).
- Tell the class that they can find this out from statement cards, by arranging them in a sequence. This is what historians often have to do as evidence emerges. Just like historians, they must evaluate the information on each statement and make their own judgement about which to include and which can be left out. What is important is completing a satisfactory and clear historical account.
- Give out the mixed up sets and set the groups going, with a time limit. You should check progress after a short time to ensure the task is understood.
- Enrich this activity with drama or art if you have time, or look together with your class at the records of other accidents kept on the Durham Mining Museum website, to see how common they were and compare with modern mining practices.



*Borrow from: Pendower Good Neighbour Project 0191 272 2962 / patpen@blueyonder.co.uk