MINI SCHEME OF WORK

Key Stage 4 – Tolkien (English)

To mark 100 years since the end of the First World War, The Royal British Legion is leading a national movement to say 'Thank You' to all who served, sacrificed and changed our world during the First World War. We want to look beyond traditional commemoration of British servicemen and celebrate the efforts of an entire generation, with the movement based around themes of:

- The arts
- Commonwealth
- Women
- Children
- Pioneers
- Armed forces

This mini scheme of work focuses on the contribution of Tolkien whose writing was influenced by his experiences during the First World War. The lessons have been planned by the National Literacy Trust and support young people in Key Stage 4 to write a thank you letter to JRR Tolkien as their personal act of remembrance.

In addition to literacy outcomes, the lessons provide an opportunity for students to develop skills relevant to AO3: "Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written". We have provided lesson plans, supporting PowerPoints and worksheets for use in English classes.

By delivering this scheme of work your school will become part of The Royal British Legion's Thank You movement. You can celebrate this by sharing the students' work in the following ways:

On Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/thankyou100
On Twitter: @PoppyLegion
Contact The Royal British Legion at thankyou@britishlegion.org.uk and let them know you're involved. By sharing your schools' logo with the Legion you can become a Thank You school and your activity can be shared on the Thank You website.

To find out more about the ways your school can get involved with the Thank You campaign, please visit www.rbl.org.uk/thankyou

KS3 UNIT OF WORK: TOLKIEN – WRITERS ON THE FRONT LINE

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Unit Objective:

To examine and celebrate the work of Tolkien, particularly focusing on use of metaphors and allegory in his writing. To use information and understanding to craft a written letter.

Introductory Lesson

Use the Introductory lesson, Remembrance and Thank You to set a purpose for the sequence of lessons about artists.

Royal British Legion 'Thank You Campaign - artists': https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/remembrance/ww1-centenary/thank-you/what-is-thank-you/the-arts/

Tolkien – Writers on the front line (60mins) Lesson 1: Reading Comprehension	
Key Objective: To understand how the Battle of the Somme had a profound influence on the life & work of JRR Tolkien	Description: This lesson introduces the life and work of JRR Tolkien to pupils and demonstrates to pupils how real life event can have an effect on the work of an author. By learning about his life and work, pupils should get a clear idea of how his experiences in the arena of war led on to him producing his famously epic pieces of writing. The comprehension questions are also a good practice of exam technique, encouraging pupils to look for specific points in their answers and explanations.

Tolkien – Writers on the front line (60mins)
Lesson 1: Reading Comprehension

Literacy Outcomes:

Speaking: Take a role within group discussions

Reading: Analysing text to recall key facts

Writing: Communicating personal opinion in their writing

Teacher Notes on delivery:

This lesson is designed to be an introduction to this unit, helping pupils to read around the subject before delving deeper into the idea of writers using metaphor and analogies within their work.

The activities in this section include a reading comprehension section which can be accessed within the classroom or works equally well as an independent learning task which can be set as a piece of homework.

The comprehension itself is framed as a classroom task within this lesson plan designed as a guided reading task. It is split into two sets of questions, with the second set being designed as an extension for those pupils who work quickly and finish before their peers.

Resources:

JRR Tolkien – comprehension worksheet.

Whiteboard & Pen

Highlighter pens

Sticky notes

Differentiation:

The language of this worksheet has been deliberately written for all KS3 pupils to be able to access, but for those who struggle with both their reading and their comprehension skills, it is recommended that teachers work through the main task as a class before attempting to answer the questions.

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Starter (15 Minutes)

Ask what the class might know of The Lord of the Rings or the The Hobbit already. These stories have recently been made into very successful Hollywood films so there is likely to be some class awareness of this world already. Examples pupils give could be character names, locations, stories, catchphrases or even plot points. Mark these on the board as a mind map.

Main Activity (20 Minutes)

- As a class, read through the sheet detailing the life and work of JRR Tolkien. As you reach the end of each paragraph use highlighter pens to pick out some key facts from the text (you might choose to use different colours for key dates, locations or names)
- Now focus on the questions – remind yourself of what is expected when there are a number of marks available for each question.
- Complete the answers on the worksheet ensuring that each all of your answers are evidenced from the text.
- As a class, go through the questions one by one, with pupils recalling the facts from the text as well as offering their own opinions about the work of Tolkien.

Plenary (15 Minutes)

List three objects you might see in a battle scene (there is no limit this to any particular time period for this exercise so do not worry about precise historical military knowledge)

Now, in the same way that Tolkien created the evil of the Morgeth in The Fall of Gondolin from the tanks of WW1, turn your objects into creatures for a dark fantasy world. You may have an airplane which becomes a type of flying monster – or an archer's bow which becomes a being which can launch sharp objects. Let your imagination run wild. Share your thoughts with the rest of the class.

Homework/Extension

Draw a picture of your new fantasy character from today's lesson. Label up their special powers, give them a name and perhaps even a short biography. Would this character be on the noble and just side of a battle or would they be a nemesis of all that was good? You decide!

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Tolkien – Writers on the front line (60mins)
Lesson 2: Poetry

Key Objective: To be able to create a new piece of poetry which uses metaphor to portray the theatre of war.	Description: The content of this lesson focuses on how Tolkien's work has often been seen as a metaphor for key events in history and how his characters have been seen as allegories. Pupils will compose a new poem which uses new metaphors to tell the story of what they can imagine a battle field to be like.
Literacy Outcomes: Speaking: Performing a prepared piece of poetry. Reading: Recognising style within a piece of poetic work. Writing: Communicating a personal view-point in poetic writing	Teacher Notes on delivery The poem 'Nurse' has been composed in rhyme but this is not a necessary feature for the poem that the pupils will construct for the purposes of this lesson. Please feel free to discuss this writing freedom with pupils to ensure that they do not feel bound by too many 'rules' in the task. Whilst this lesson focuses on metaphor – there is also a natural crossover with other linguistic comparisons like similes.
Resources: 'Nurse' by Paul Jenkins 'Battlefield picture' – Frank Hurley	Differentiation: Metaphor is notoriously difficult for some pupils, particularly those who may struggle with making symbolic links between texts. In this was, it may be an opportunity for the whole class to practice the individual task as a whole class composition activity, with the teacher facilitating ideas.

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Starter (10 Minutes)

Look at the quote on the board from an ancient Chinese proverb. "The more you sweat in times of peace, the less you bleed in times of war". What does this quote mean? Is it literal? Does it mean physically sweating? Does it mean statistically that the second part is true?

Main Activity (35 Minutes)

- Read through the poem "Nurse" which is written from the point of view of someone who is in a military hospital and is having recurring visions of what they have seen on the battlefield. How is this idea similar to Tolkien's experience of WW1?

- Highlight the metaphors used in the poem. What impression do they give you about the nature of war? Why might the writer have chosen these images?

- Now look at the image taken by Frank Hurley during the battle of Passchendaele in 1917. It's a very busy picture which shows a lot of battlefield action happening. Make a note of all the things you can see and then make a second list of things which are not in the picture but that you can imagine are nearby.

- In groups of 3 or 4 write a series of metaphors that can describe the action that is taking place in the picture. Combine your metaphors together to assemble your own poem which tells the tale of this battle.

- Rehearse your poem with your group, thinking about how you will show the story to the audience. Will you perform the poem in unison or do you wish to split the lines into individual readers? How will you position yourself when performing? All in a group or in a line? Are there and gestures or movements that you think would help get your point across.

Plenary (20 Minutes)

Perform your poem for the class. Classmates can give feedback on particular lines which they found powerful and moving. Are there any metaphors from other group's poems that would be better suited in something created elsewhere in the class?

Homework/Extension

As a contrast to your war poem, can you write a peacetime poem which focuses on a remembrance service? How can you use the images of poppies, marching bands, war memorials, medals and parades to create some positive metaphors?

Tolkien – Writers on the front line (60mins) Lesson 3: Drama	
Key Objective: To be able to understand how writers use extended metaphors to tell stories.	Description: This lesson encourages pupils to make connections between important moments in history and how writers use extended metaphors to convey a human response to them.
Literacy Outcomes: Speaking: Pupils will be able to practice interpreting and demonstrating a character in performance. Reading: drawing on knowledge of the purpose, audience for and context of the writing, including its social, historical and cultural context and the literary tradition to which it belongs, to inform evaluation Writing: Selecting and organising ideas.	Teacher Notes on delivery: This is a drama lesson which enables students to empathise with Tolkien and consider how the context for his writing influenced the text. The lesson aims to remind students of some of the things Tolkien is likely to have experienced during WW1 and the impact this had on him. Students will explore figurative language and consider why much of Tolkien's writing is considered to be an allegory for the experiences of the armed services during WW1.

Tolkien – Writers on the front line (60mins)
Lesson 3: Drama

Resources:	Differentiation:
Extracts from The Lord of the Rings trilogy	This lesson can be used to aid understanding of metaphors and extended metaphors. We have provided three different extracts to provide an element of choice: 1. Descriptions of the Nazgûl This extract provides the most explicit examples of figurative language e.g. "huge and threatening" and "like vultures". 2. The passage of the Marshes The description of the marshes can be linked with Tolkien's experience of the Somme. An existing understanding of the conditions in WW1 would be useful for exploring this text. 3. The Taming of Smeagol In this extract, Frodo's symptoms are comparable to shell shock. For additional challenge, introduce the term 'allegory' as you explore the text extracts.

Starter

Ask pupils to get into pairs with one person facing the board and one facing the opposite direction. The person facing the board should describe the items that appear in as much detail as possible (what they look like, sound like, smell like, feel like and their purpose) so that their partner can guess. You might choose to add in a competitive element with guessing partners writing their answer on a mini whiteboard. Swap positions after the first three.

- Tank
- Artillery shell
- Poison gas
- Machine gun
- Flamethrower
- Military aircraft

Main Activity

Look at one of the descriptions from Tolkien's writing:
1. Descriptions of the Nazgul
2. The passage of the Marshes
3. The Taming of Smeagol

Can you find any examples of metaphors or descriptions which might be linked with his wartime experiences? Why might he have chosen to present his experiences in his writing? Remind students of the term 'allegory'.

Ask students to devise a scene which presents Tolkien in hospital suffering from Trench Fever and recounting his experiences. Try to show the audience where his ideas for his characters and dramatic battle scenes might have come from.

Plenary

Why did Tolkien create a fantasy world that echoed his experiences in WW1 rather than retelling his experiences in a more traditional way?
Why do you think his work is still popular today?

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Tolkien – Writers on the front line (60mins)
Lesson 4: Speaking and Listening

Key Objective:

To be able to discuss the impact of the work of artists who were inspired by their experiences during WW1.

Description:

This lesson is intended to explore the reasons for the plethora of responses to WW1 in literature, music and art, and to consider the impact these have had on us.

Literacy Outcomes:

Speaking – Pupils will formulate opinions and articulate them in classroom discussion.

Reading – students will consider authorial intention.

Writing – Pupils will create bullet points in note form to summarise their thoughts.

Teacher Notes:

Students will prepare for and participate in a Socratic debate. This lesson plan provides prompt questions to support preparation and help structure the conversation.

Set up the class discussion in your usual way, reminding the class of your groundrules for group discussion or of your speaking and listening frame.

Resources:

Clips of music:
- George Butterworth: The Banks of Green Willow (1913)

- Arnold Schoenberg: Variations for Orchestra (1926-28)

- Gustav Holst: Ode to Death (1918-19)

Differentiation:

Many pupils in your classes may not feel confident volunteering their opinions without prompting, so it's important that during these sessions that these pupils are given ample time to put forward their viewpoint, whether that be in a smaller group setting during the preparation or through the wider group discussion.

Tolkien – Writers on the front line (60mins) Lesson 4: Speaking and Listening	
Three composers PPT	For students struggling with the abstract nature of this conversation, it may be useful to remind them that there were wars before the First World War, but none of them sparked such an enormous response from artists, musicians and writers. The work they produced provided invaluable insight into the realities of war, changing the way we think about it today.

Starter (5 Minutes)

Play first 60 seconds of three pieces of music and ask students to discuss what it makes them think of.

- George Butterworth: The Banks of Green Willow (1913)
- Arnold Schoenberg: Variations for Orchestra (1926-28)
- Gustav Holst: Ode to Death (1918-19)

Listen to the pieces of music again and reveal the snippet of information about each composer on the ppt. Does this change their original thoughts about the music?

What impact might WW1 have had on the arts? How does this connect with our understanding of Tolkien's writing?

Main Activity

Share the following quote with students and discuss as a class:

"An author cannot of course remain wholly unaffected by his experience, but the ways in which a story-germ uses the soil of experience are extremely complex, and attempts to define the process are at best guesses from evidence that is inadequate and ambiguous." (J. R. R. Tolkien, Foreword in Lord of the Rings)

Explain to pupils that Tolkien often denied the direct link between his writing and his experiences of WW1. Why do they think this might be?

Ask students to prepare for a Socratic debate using the following questions:

- Did Tolkien intend to recreate his experiences of WW1 for his readers? Why/why not?
- Does it matter whether this author intended for their work to be linked to events in history or not?
- Why do you think so many artists produced pieces of work (art, writing, music) inspired by WW1?
- Was it important for them to share their experiences with us in this way?
- What might be different today if they hadn't created these pieces?

Keeping Tolkien's quote on the board, ask a student to respond to the first prepared question in order to begin the discussion. Ensure that everybody has the chance to contribute and the class rules for speaking and listening are observed throughout.

Plenary (15 Minutes)

In silence, ask students to consider their own thoughts about war and how these might have been influenced by people like Tolkien who shared their experiences. Students should make a note of the ways they are thankful to these people in preparation for writing a thank you letter tomorrow.

Homework/Extension

Ask students to find examples of other pieces of literature which are allegorical.

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Tolkien – Writers on the front line (60mins)
Lesson 5: Writing a Letter

Key Objective:

To write a formal letter thanking JRR Tolkien for his contribution to modern life through his stories.

Description:

This lesson is designed as a culmination of the work completed so far in this unit, giving pupils a chance to say 'Thank You' to JRR Tolkien for his works of literature and for how they have helped us understand the nature of conflict.

Literacy Outcomes:

Speaking – Pupils will be able to demonstrate a variety of ways to verbalise thanks.

Reading – Pupils will be able to see a clear example of the layout of a formal letter

Writing – Pupils will be able to articulate a personal response within a structured letter.

Teacher Notes on delivery:

Writing this letter is an act of remembrance for Tolkien's contribution to the war effort and how this influenced the work he did afterwards. You might want to make pupils aware that children all over the country are writing letters to thank people for their contributions to the First World War.

The lesson is however framed within the idea of writing a 'formal' letter to Tolkien at his office at Oxford University and helps pupils to distinguish between conventions of writing such correspondence. It is important that teachers give pupils guidance in the structure but allow a personal response within the 'content' of the letter.

Draw the link between this lesson and the two minutes' silence on Sunday 11th November at 11am.

Tolkien – Writers on the front line (60mins) Lesson 5: Writing a Letter	
	This will be a time for us to remember all the people who contributed to the war effort in some way including the soldiers on the frontline, the men and women who worked in hospitals to save injured soldiers' lives and the artists who conveyed their experiences and attitudes to the war through their work. *For the sweets/treats please be aware of pupil diet/cultural implications of certain ingredients in some sweets.
Resources: Letter writing template / guide. Chocolate / Sweets / Small treats* Sticky Notes	Differentiation: A letter template is available if required.

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Starter (15 Minutes)

- As pupils enter the classroom, offer them a small treat. It is up to pupils if they choose a chocolate/sweet/biscuit/whatever you choose to be appropriate. On the desk is a post it note. Let pupils know that they have been donated by a mystery benefactor.

- If pupils took a sweet, use the sticky note to write a quick message to the mystery person but you are not allowed to use the words 'Thank you'

- Place the sticky notes at the front and ask pupils to look at other people's efforts. What are the most creative ways of saying 'thanks'?

Main Activity (30 Minutes)

- Look at the example sheet for how to set out your letter which we will be writing to JRR Tolkien – author or The Lord of the Rings. Why do you think that we would be writing this as a formal correspondence? Think about; how Tolkien had served in the army, how he had risen to the role of professor, how he had received a CBE from the Queen.' and the time in history he lived in.

- Write down two or three bullet points from what you have learned/studied in this unit that we can thank Tolkien for.

- Write a letter thanking Professor Tolkien for his contribution to not only the war effort, but for the way he helped to improve the lives of girls and women in later years

- Place the finished letters into a mailbag/post box.

Plenary (15 Minutes)

Draw 2/3 letters out of the mailbag and deliver them to another pupil to read aloud. After each one comment on how you think it would have made the reader feel to receive a letter such as this.