Goodnight Mister Tom by Michelle Magoria (Puffin)

A neglected child from a deprived home in London, Willie Beech is evacuated to the country during the Second World War to live with Tom Oakley, an old widower. With Tom, Willie flourishes, develops friendships and finds real happiness and security for the first time. Then he has to return to London to his mother, and his old life experiences wait for him again there, only to worsen. This is an accessible, but powerful, emotionally charged novel, which explores themes like safety and trust, parenting, fear and loss. The book has also been adapted for television and it is available on DVD.

Note to teachers: Teachers should be aware this book includes depictions of child abuse. However, this is dealt with in a sensitive way. Understanding would need to be shown when introducing the book to a class in which a child may have experienced this themselves; although the book may provide a context through which abused children might be able to express their feelings.

Overall learning aims of this teaching sequence:
- To engage children with a story with which they will empathise.
- To explore themes and issues, and develop and sustain ideas through discussion, enabling children to make connections with their own lives.
- To develop creative responses to the text through drama, storytelling and artwork.
- To compose poetry.
- To write in role in order to explore and develop empathy for characters.
- To write with confidence for real purposes and audiences.

This teaching sequence is designed for a Year 5 or Year 6 class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overview of this teaching sequence.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The book supports teachers to teach about emotional response to strong themes in narrative fiction. During this sequence, it will be helpful for children to hear other stories or poetry about World War 2 read aloud, and to read these texts independently or in guided reading. They can compare information, characters and settings and viewpoints with the story Goodnight Mister Tom.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This teaching sequence is approximately 5 weeks long if spread over 25 sessions.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Approaches</td>
<td>Writing Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading aloud and re-reading</td>
<td>Diary writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion and debate</td>
<td>Writing in role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book talk</td>
<td>Newspaper writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama and role-play</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing and annotating</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story mapping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visualisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other books to support and extend the sequence:
- My Secret War Diary by Flossie Albright by Marcia Williams
- The Lion and the Unicorn by Shirley Hughes
- War Boy by Michael Foreman
- The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas by John Boyne
- Rose Blanche by Roberto Innocenti
- The Diary of Anne Frank
- Carrie’s War by Nina Bawden
- Blitzcat by Robert Westall
- Number the Stars by Lois Lowry
- When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit by Judith Kerr
- Hero on a Bicycle by Shirley Hughes

Websites and online resources to support the teaching sequence:
- [http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/world_war2/children_at_war/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/world_war2/children_at_war/) [Accessed 05.05.15]
- [http://www.iwm.org.uk/learning/resources/second-world-war-learning-resources](http://www.iwm.org.uk/learning/resources/second-world-war-learning-resources) [Accessed 05.05.15]
- [http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/) [Accessed 05.05.15]
- [http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/subjects/history/ww2clips](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/subjects/history/ww2clips) [Accessed 06.05.15]
- [http://www.britishpathe.com/search/query/world+war+2](http://www.britishpathe.com/search/query/world+war+2) [Accessed 06.05.15]
- [http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01043x5](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01043x5) [Accessed 12.05.15]

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You may want to give the children their own journals to record their work through this sequence; the children could have a small book to use as Will’s diary. In this diary the children can continually write in role reflecting Will’s changing thoughts and opinions. In the diary or journal they can record a variety of types of writing, such as poems to illustrate his emotional journey, facts and figures they have learned about the war, letters in role to his mother or to other central characters and so on. You could also create a class journal to share responses as a class. It is also valuable to create a working wall that can be added to as the sequence continues.

As this is a longer and multilayered text you could read the text in guided reading sessions prior to your literacy lessons to ensure the class are reading at a sufficient pace to access the lessons, you can also use clips to support understanding: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqL-0MYZK0Y [Accessed 19.05.15]

The character is called Willie at the start of the story but as he matures and grows in confidence he is called Will. The character will be referred to as Will in the teaching sequence.

Teaching sessions

Session 1: Drama and Role-Play

Role-play is a particularly effective way for children to inhabit a fictional world, imagining what the world of the story would be like, and illuminating it with their own experience. Through drama and role-play children can imagine characters’ body language, behaviour and tones of voice in ways that they can draw on later when they write.

- Before reading the book to the children, immersing the children in the fictional world of the story can support children to have a deeper understanding and experience of the text.
- Ask the children to imagine they are a part of a community who lived in together in WW2 and pose the following question to them: should the children in this community be evacuated?
- Assign the children different characters in the community, such as a doctor, a housewife, a nurse, a farmer, a civil servant and ask the children to consider the characters’ opinions, motivations and reasons they would come up with for and against the children being evacuated.
- To support this, show the children videos or play the children sound clips of sirens and the noise of heavy bombung, show the children images of the result of bombing such as the destruction of buildings. Contrast this with clips of children expressing their fear and sadness at the thought of being evacuated e.g. http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/subjects/history/ww2clips
  Sensitivity would need to be shown here if a child in the class has had experience of conflict.
- Children could then work with each other to prepare arguments for and against evacuation.
- Following this the children could take part in conscience alley. One side of the ally could argue that the children need to be evacuated and the other side that they shouldn’t.
- Choose some children to take turns to listen to the arguments by walking down the alley in role.
- After this have a whole class discussion. Listen first to the children who were in role – which side persuaded them? The teacher or another adult, such as a teaching assistant could scribe and record the children’s responses.
- Following this invite another adult such as the Head teacher to listen to the children’s arguments and then respond to their debate.

Session 2: Drama and role-play

Role-play and drama provide immediate routes into the world of a story and allow children to explore texts actively. Through role-play and drama, children are encouraged to experiment with the ‘what if?’ of plot and make it their own.

- Following the previous session in which children considered the reasons for and against evacuation, hold an evacuee day in which the children can experience firsthand what it would have been like to be removed from their surroundings and placed somewhere unfamiliar.
- The children could find out first thing that morning that they are to be evacuated or you could let them know the night before.
- Working alongside parents you could send a letter home in which you explain that the children need to choose three items they can bring with them for evacuation day, considering why they have chosen these items over others.
- When the children arrive at school give the children labels in the style of the luggage tags that children wore in WW2. Ask the children to line up and explain that they are going to be evacuated for the day.
- If possible build links prior to this session with another local school or community centre so that you can actually ‘displace’ the class and so they can experience what the children in the book would have felt.
- Record their emotions during the day in video diaries and through photographing the children.
• During the day have a series of activities arranged such as taking a lesson in an unfamiliar class, eating lunch with a new class or having playtime with a different class.
• During the day ask the children to write letters home explaining how they are feeling.

Session 3: Freeze-frame
Freeze-frames are still images or tableaux. They can be used to enable groups of children to examine a key event or situation from a story and decide in detail how it could be represented. When presenting the freeze-frame, one of the group could act as a commentator to talk through what is happening in their version of the scene, or individual characters can be asked to speak their thoughts out loud.

• At the start of the session ask the children to reflect on their experiences in the previous sessions. Here you could give the children images of themselves during the evacuation day and ask them to annotate the pictures with their thoughts and feelings. This could then be displayed on the class working wall.
• As an entry into the first chapter show the children a pre-prepared evacuation label for the character Will. On one side include his home details including his name, address, date of birth and school attended. Then on the other side write his destination. Ask the children to think about this character and make some predictions about him based on this limited knowledge. For example, ask the children to consider how he would have felt, what experiences he might have had in London and how this could compare to the countryside where he has arrived.
• Read aloud the first chapter to the class.
• Gather the children into small groups and ask them to talk together about the scene on the doorstep with the billeting officer, Tom and Will, and the other evacuees waiting anxiously at the gate.
• Give the children some time to think about what this might have felt like from the point of view of the evacuees drawing on what they experienced in the previous two sessions.
• Ask the children in small groups to create a freeze-frame of a moment from this scene. Ask the children to choose one person in each group to be a householder, with the others as evacuees. Some of the evacuees will be alone, like Will, others will be with a brother or a sister.
• Once the children have decided on their frozen positions, capture this with photography.
• Then, while the children are still ‘frozen’, circulate around the groups holding up different cards as prompts for the children to express their thoughts, feelings and what this character might be saying.
• After this the children could scribe the different characters’ thoughts, feelings and conversations onto additional luggage tags which can be added alongside the photographs to an ongoing display or the working wall.

Before the next session read up to chapter 3

Session 4: Listening to poetry
One of the best ways of involving children in poetry is to make a habit of reading aloud to them as often as possible. The experience of being read to is likely to be the real foundation of their knowledge of poetry, and is also going to be a major influence on how they write themselves.

• Throughout this sequence it is important that the children understand the range of experiences that evacuated children had during World War Two. Although Will’s experience is very positive, many children did not enjoy their experiences. This is alluded to later in the text (page 143), but the overall experience of the central characters is very optimistic.
• In order to explore this with the children, poems offer a good starting point.
• Read aloud and share with the children the following three poems: Evacuation by Roger Stevens, Mollie by Brian Moses and Another War by Brian Moses from What Are We Fighting For? by Brian Moses and Roger Stevens (Macmillan).
• Ask the children to consider the following questions in response to the poems that they have heard:

Tell me...was there anything you liked about this poem?
Was there anything that you particularly disliked...?
Was there anything that puzzled you?
Were there any patterns...any connections that you noticed...

The openness of these questions unlike the more interrogative ‘Why?’ question encourages every child to feel that they have something to say. It allows everyone to take part in arriving at a shared view without the fear of the ‘wrong’ answer.

• As children reply it can be useful to write down what they say under the headings 'likes', 'dislikes', 'puzzles', patterns'. This written record helps to map out the class's view of the important meaning and is a way of holding on to ideas for later. Asking these questions will lead children inevitably into a fuller discussion than using more general questions.
• After this, share with the children images of children being evacuated to support their knowledge and understanding further.

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Session 5: Role on the wall

Role on the wall is a technique that uses a displayed outline of the character to record feelings (inside the outline) and outward appearances (outside the outline) at various stopping points across the story. Using a different colour at each of the stopping points allows you to track changes in the character’s emotional journey.

- Re-cap the chapters that you have read with the children so far. Ask the children what they think we know about Tom and Will.
- Draw around one of the children or have a template of a person cut out, pin this to the learning wall.
- Using these templates, begin class profiles on each of these two characters, to be added to as you read through the book.
- Ask the children to write on post-it notes words or phrases they would use to describe the characters’ feelings, which can be stuck on the inside of the outline and what the children know about their outward appearance to be stuck on the outside.
- Include quotes of things they say and descriptive pieces from the text that has been read, as well as impressions from the class.
- Return to the ideas the children generated. If the children have used a limited range of words you could use thesauri to look up synonyms for words such as ‘sad’. Add the new words to the template using a different coloured post-it and encourage the children to use these new words in their writing or discussions this week.
- You could also use a thermometer image to build up a scale of suitable words as synonyms for key emotions, modelling and explaining new vocabulary to enlarge and extend children’s stock of words.
- At this point you could encourage the children to draw either Tom or Will in their reading journals, as they see them, and annotate their drawings with labels to express their views of the characters: describing what they look like, quoting characteristic sayings etc.
- In addition, you could also create a graph of emotions on which the class can track the emotional state of main characters at key points in the text; this can also be returned to repeatedly.

Continue to return to the role on the wall as you read the story, so that you can track the emotional journey Tom and Will take as the story progresses. This could provide an interesting talking point and support discussion around the end of the story.

Before the next session read up to chapter 5

Session 6: Drama and Role-play

Through drama and role-play children can imagine characters’ body language, behaviour and tones of voice in ways that they can draw on later when they write.

- In the next part of the book World War Two is announced. You can hear this announcement at the following website: http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/radio/subjects/history/ww2clips/speeches/chamberlain_declares_war
- Ask the children to imagine that they are the different characters in the Church listening to the broadcast and to imagine what that must have been like for the people in the village. Compare and contrast their different emotions, for example comparing the emotions of a young man knowing he would probably be going to war with the feelings of a child like Zach, worried for his parents.
- Following the reading and discussion, ask the children to form groups of five to form a tableau of the scene and again consider the different feelings and thoughts of the different characters.
- You could take photographs of the children in their tableaux and ask them to annotate the pictures following the session.
- Following this, the children could complete a diary entry as Will or Tom, reflecting their feelings following the announcement.
- During the following reading sessions encourage the children to notice the changes in the setting that suggest there is a war happening, for example the blackouts going up.
Session 7: Drawing and annotating

Opportunities to draw, both before and during writing, increase children's motivation to write, and can help them to think. Drawing can help all writers to plan their writing, develop their ideas and use vivid description.

- The character Will is a very talented artist and it is this disposition that enables him to feel a sense of success even when other aspects of life are challenging, such as learning to read and write. On many occasions Will draws his surroundings and the people he meets. In this session the children will imagine that they are the character Will and that they are drawing the new people and places that he has encountered since moving to Little Weirwoold.
- Prior to drawing, encourage the children to draw comparison with the urban environment from which he has come. Show the children images of London during the War and the type of house he would have lived in. Then show the children images of the countryside in the same period.
- Ask the children to work in mixed ability groups or pairs to annotate these pictures with feelings, words and phrases that they associate with the different images and descriptions taken from the text.
- Following this, use dramatic visualising to create images of the place this story has focused on so far: Tom’s cottage (inside and out) and parts of the village.
- Ask children to 'stand' in the middle of Tom’s parlour, or in the churchyard, as Will, and to describe what they see, each from their viewpoint (they will be facing different ways).
- Do this one group at a time, each group focusing on a different place where Will has been, with the rest of the class observing.
- Then talk about how these accounts compared with individual children’s ‘pictures in the mind’. Use a flipchart or IWB to note some of the words and phrases that children use.
- After this, allow the children time to draw one of these places.

Session 8: Independent writing

When children have explored a situation through talk or role-play, they may be ready to write in role. Taking the role of a particular character enables young writers to see events from a different viewpoint and involves them writing in a different voice.

- In this session the children will write a postcard home in role as Will to his mother in London. You may want to re-read the section of the story in which Will and Tom compose one together first (p38-40).
- Ask the children to consider the different events that have happened so far and what Will could write about, ask the children to mind-map ideas in pairs first before writing independently.
- Following this, compare this with the kind of response he may receive from his mum. Ask the children to swap their postcards with one another and compose a reply in role as Will’s mother. Discuss the different emotions conveyed and the different sense of personality that comes through in the writing. These could then be added to the ongoing working wall or class journal.
- After this, consider the postcards that Zach is sending to and from home (p46-47) and why these would be so different.
- You may also want to show the children a selection of postcards from the period if you are able to, compare the images, the language and handwriting to ones that they may receive today.

Session 9: Word bank and historical display

- To support the learning in this sequence it would be useful to create a word or language bank to scaffold the children’s understanding of the language in the text, especially historical language and words linked to the particular time period, for example, Anderson Shelter or Wireless.
- Encourage the children to return to the parts of the text read so far and to pull out any words that they are unfamiliar with. Encourage the children to look up the meanings in dictionaries.
- Ask the children to write these words and their definitions onto a given template reflecting the topic, for example on a ration book coupon or identity card template. These can then be added to an ongoing display that the children contribute to throughout the sessions.
- Following this the children can develop their understanding of the period through a study of different objects from the time.
- If your school has a library or local resources centre they may be able to provide you with a range of real objects for the children to explore, otherwise you could have a laminated set of pictures.
- Give the children a range of objects such as a ration book, a gas mask, a typewriter, a blackout blind. Ask the children to consider what the objects are and what they were used for. Then give the children time to research the objects and to find out what they are.
- As inspiration, the children could explore the BBC resource The History of the World in 100 Objects:

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Session 10: Re-enactment through play

Revisiting stories through a range of play-based experiences helps children to step into the world of the book and to explore it more completely. This is important throughout the primary school years.

- During the beginning of the story Tom and Will build an Anderson shelter in the garden. Revisit this section through re-reading this section (p71-78) and explore with the children why and how shelters were made during the war. Many still exist so it may be possible to visit a real example as part of the sequence.
- Discuss with the children what materials the shelters were made from, why they were made from these materials and what different functions or purposes an Anderson Shelter needed to fulfil. To support the session the children could make prototypes in a DT lesson, working in pairs to make a model Anderson Shelter that will be strong enough to survive a tennis ball being dropped on it.
- Following this, allow the children to work in groups or as a whole class to create a shelter that they can explore and use as a role-play area. If possible build this in an outdoor area such as in the playground, if this is not possible have a role play area inside the classroom that the children have built themselves.
- Once the shelter is built, give the children time to experience what it would have been like for children to hide in a shelter during a bombing raid. For example, you could play the sounds of air raid sirens while the children are inside, the following websites have sound and images to support this:
  - http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/schoolradio/subjects/history/ww2clips/sounds/air_raid_siren
  - http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/schoolradio/subjects/history/ww2clips/sounds/air_raid_montage
- Be aware that some children may have actual experience of conflict and so teachers would need to decide if this session would be appropriate for those children.
- After the children have spent time exploring the shelter, give the children the opportunity to respond to their experiences through the medium of art. Encourage the children to draw what it was like for them in the shelter, reflecting the dark, the cold, the damp and the feelings the experience provoked.
- As an additional activity the children could write about their experiences afterwards in their journals.

Session 11: Drawing and annotating

Opportunities to draw, both before and during writing, increase children’s motivation to write, and can help them to think. Drawing can help all writers to plan their writing, develop their ideas and use vivid description.

- Show the children a series of propaganda posters from WW2. Talk about the posters and ask the children what they think these posters are for and why they had posters like this in WW2.
- Encourage the children to think about the fact that the government wanted the population to do certain things. Ask the children what they notice about the posters and why they think they would have persuaded people to do the different things that the government needed. Draw out the different ways in which the posters would have appealed to people and encouraged them to join the war effort.
- Encourage the children to think about how we receive information today and why they think the government would have had to use posters as the main way of communicating information to people during the war years.
- Following this the children can design and make their own propaganda posters.
- These can then be added to the historical display that they have created.

Before the next session read up to chapter 9

Session 12: Story maps

Making a story map is a way of retelling the story. It is a graphic means of breaking a story down into episodes and sequencing its events. This kind of graphic representation helps children to hold on to the shape of the story more confidently so they can retell it orally or in writing.

- Read chapter nine aloud to the children. Stop at different points, clarifying their understanding and allow for discussion around what they like, dislike, any patterns that they notice or any questions that it brings up.
- After this, ask the children to retell the story so far to each other, from Will’s point of view, working in pairs and taking turns.
- Invite two or three of the children to retell their versions to the class, in role as Will.
- Having established the main events and viewpoint, ask the children to story map the story so far considering the key events and the different emotions that Will has experienced.
- At the end of the session, ask the children to use their story maps to tell the story again to one another, using the images as picture cues.
• You could also use this as a point to revisit the role on the wall charting Will’s emotional journey.

Session 13: Hot-seating

**In hot-seating, one member of the class role-plays a central character from a story and is interviewed by the other children. This activity involves children closely examining a character’s motivation and responses. Before the hot-seating, they need to discuss what it is they want to know and identify questions they want answering. If children have no experience of hot-seating, the teachers may initially need to take the role.**

• Following the story mapping session, ask the children to consider what other events might be important to Will; what might help us to understand what is in his head?
• Re-read key sections of the text in which his emotions and perspective are revealed: pages 13, 18, 31, 41, 66.
• Ask the children to consider these sections along with what else has been read so far, what impression do we get of his character?
• Following this the children can repeat the same activity, but this time focusing on the perspective and feelings of Tom. The children could find their own sections of the text that they believe reveal this to the reader. After this, the children can share their ideas and feed back to one another.
• After this, the children can ‘hot-seat’ as either Will or Tom, to find out more about their experiences, thoughts and feelings.
• Give the children time to discuss questions they might ask beforehand. The children playing the part of Will or Tom will also need time to prepare their story and inhabit the character. Simple props can be useful to support this process, such as a hat or satchel.
• You could record these sessions so that the children can refer to them again prior to writing. You could also take photographs of the children in the role and ask the children to annotate the pictures following the hot-seating.
• After this session, revisit role on the wall and track any additional knowledge the children have gained about the characters.
• You can also continue to chart Will’s emotional journey on a graph of emotion.

Session 14: Writing in role

**When children have explored a fictional situation through talk or role-play, they may be ready to write in role as a character in the story. Taking the role of a particular character enables young writers to see events from a different viewpoint and involves them writing in a different voice.**

• Re-read chapter nine aloud.
• Explain that the children will now be writing in role as Will or Tom, completing a diary entry to reflect their initial experiences as an evacuee or host.
• Before the children write in role, give them time to look over all the different work completed in the sessions, such as the role-play and evacuation poetry.
• Compare and contrast the character’s different feelings and perspectives e.g. the moment when Tom poked the fire and Will thought he would brand him with it. Invite children to share ideas with a partner and then ask for suggestions to include in a whole class mind map.
• Now ask the children to think about retelling the story in writing, in role as either Will or Tom, considering how their version of the story would start. Children should begin by describing the scene on Tom’s doorstep; remind them about how they felt in the drama session in which they explored this.
• The story map will also help them to sequence events, allowing them to focus on the language and content of their story.
• Give sustained writing time for children to write their diary entries.
• At the end of the session allow time for the children to compare the different writing outcomes and to compare the different characters’ views.

*Before the next session read up to chapter 11*

Session 15: Reading Aloud

**Reading aloud is one of the most important ways that children are motivated and supported to become readers, It is essential that children experience hearing texts read aloud in the classroom as a regular part of each school day. Reading aloud slows written language down so that children can hear and absorb the words, tunes and patterns. It enables children to experience and enjoy stories they might otherwise not meet, enlarging their reading interests and providing access to texts beyond their level of independence as readers.**

• A large part of Will’s emotional development is related to his increasing access to education. His experiences of hearing stories read aloud support his journey to becoming a reader and writer and allow for a space in which he and Tom bond with one another more closely.

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- As part of the sequence the children could explore some of the stories referenced in the text, as a way in which their own reading repertoire can be broadened but also to understand the types of stories that children of the era would have read.
- The children could compile a bibliography of stories from the era that could accompany their historical display.
- The children could also accompany reviews to the stories to be placed in the class reading corner or school library.
- The main way in which Tom tells Will these stories is through oral storytelling. Discuss this tradition with the children and allow them to experience this by enabling the children to retell familiar stories to one another or organise a storytelling session or evening in the school, alongside parents.

**Session 16: Deepening understanding about the character - double bubble**

- A central character in the book, who has a profound impact on Will’s emotional journey is Zach. Revisit the part of the book where Will sees Zach for the first time (page 46). Discuss with the children Will’s initial opinion of Zach and explore this with the children.
- Move on to exploring the sections of the book in which Will and Zach’s friendship flourishes. The children should note how Will becomes more like Zach as the story progresses.
- Complete ‘double bubble’ where the children compare the two characters. This could be done in small groups or pairs on A3 paper.
- Place the characters in the centre of the paper, next to each other; you could use images to support this.
- Then establish in the centre of the two characters the similarities that the characters share – this could be as simple as ‘they are both boys’ or ‘they are both evacuees.’
- Then to the left of both the characters the children can establish the differences between the characters.
- As the sequence continues revisit the ‘double bubble’ to see if the similarities have grown. Reflect on this with the children and consider why Will grows into a character more similar to Zach.

**Sessions 17-19: Gazette writing**

*In these sessions the children will need time to draft their reports for the class gazette. You may want to allow the children to draft their writing initially without focusing on the genre features. This will allow the children to write without feeling constrained by the format of the genre. Then you can revisit the features that they will need to use in their writing in the editing and drafting process.*

- In the book, the children Will makes friends with decide to make and publish a gazette, a journal or newspaper (p127). In the story the different children are assigned different roles and prepare different sections.
- Explain to the children that they are going to make a class gazette similar to the one made by the children in the text.
- Allow the children to consider what they could write about to go into the journal, for example it could all focus on their learning during these sessions and the cross-curricular links they have made. The children could therefore write in a range of styles and genres.
- Allow the children time to plan and draft their gazette pieces.
- Then give the children time to redraft their writing. Some children may need to work with the teacher during this process in shared writing. This is where the teacher and children work as active partners, talking together to share ideas and while the teacher guides the children through all the decisions that writers need to make and helps them shape their thoughts on paper.
- Those not working with adult support could work with a response partner who supports the editing process by giving them time to read their work aloud.
- In these sessions you can introduce the features of the genre and ensure that the children are considering this in their redraft.
- Children can then write up ‘best’ copies and assemble them together into a gazette before the work is presented, giving the children a real purpose for this activity would make this more meaningful for them.
- For example, the children could read their work aloud in an assembly or to another class or they could sell their gazettes in the staffroom to raise money for charity or the class fund.
- Once the children have published their gazettes they can be placed in the class reading area or in the school library.

*Before the next session read up to chapter 14*

**Session 20: Writing in role**

*When children have explored a fictional situation through talk or role-play, they may be ready to write in role as a character in the story. Taking the role of a particular character enables young writers to see events from a different viewpoint and involves them writing in a different voice.*

- Read aloud chapter 14 to the children, at the end of the chapter it is revealed that Will has been summoned home by his mother.
Session 21: Reading aloud and book talk

By reading well chosen books aloud, teachers also help classes to become communities of readers, sharing in the rich experience of a growing range of books they enjoy, get to know well and talk about. Conversations about books help children to explore and reflect on texts in ways that are made meaningful, personal and pleasurable.

In this session the children will explore what happens to Will on his return home. In this section of the book he is subjected to both physical and verbal abuse so teachers will need to deal with this sensitively and consider the needs of their children.

- Read pages 175-192 aloud to the children.
- Give the children time to reflect on what Will endures at home, his mother’s behaviour and how he must be feeling.
- It may be appropriate at this point to indicate that his mother has a mental health problem and to discuss the implications of this.
- Return to page 192 and concentrate on the paragraph where Will realises that he is not the boy he was before; He felt as though he were a different person lying there in the dark. Discuss what this means with the children and discuss the importance of the change in his name.
- Following this ask the children to consider how Will must be feeling at this point; knowing what could face him on his return to London.

Before the next session read up to chapter 16

Session 22: Conscience Alley

Conscience Alley is useful technique for exploring any kind of dilemma faced by a character, providing an opportunity to analyse a decisive moment in greater detail. The class forms two lines facing each other. One person (the teacher or a participant) takes the role of the protagonist and walks between the lines as each member of the group speaks their advice. It can be organised so that those on one side give opposing advice to those on the other. When the protagonist reaches the end of the alley, they make their decision.

- Read aloud up to page 220. Pause at this point and ask the children to think about what Tom might do next. The text hints that Tom is going to kidnap Will from the hospital.
- Pose the question to the children: Should Tom kidnap Will?
- Ask the children to discuss in groups what he could do next, prompting them where necessary. Children could then work with each other to prepare arguments for and against before completing conscience alley.
- One side of the alley should argue that Tom should take him whereas the other side argues that he shouldn’t.
- Choose some children to take turns to listen to the arguments by walking down the alley in role as Tom.
- Following this have a whole class discussion. Listen first to the children who were in role as Tom – which side persuaded them? The teacher or another adult, such as a teaching assistant could scribe and record the children’s responses.
- The children could then write a letter to the Tom advising him of what to do next, based on the evidence that they have heard during this session.
- When all children have finished their writing, ask them to screw up their note into a snowball and throw them across the room. The receiver of the note then writes in role as Tom in reply to the children’s note telling them what he is going to do.
- These can then be placed on the class working wall, in the children’s literacy books or in the class reading journal.

Before the next session read up to chapter 18

Session 23: Drawing and annotating

Opportunities to draw, both before and during writing, increase children’s motivation to write, and can help them to think. Drawing can help all writers to plan their writing, develop their ideas and use vivid description.

- After Tom takes Will from the hospital he returns to Little Weirwold and then, to aid his recovery Tom takes him and Zach to the seaside for a short holiday.
- Read aloud chapter 19 in which the children stay at the seaside.
Session 24: Writing in role

*Taking the role of a particular character enables young writers to see events from a different viewpoint and involves them writing in a different voice.*

In this chapter Will’s best friend, Zach is killed in a bombing raid in London. Teachers should therefore consider the particular needs and experiences of their own class before shaping this session to fit the children best.

- Read aloud chapter 22. Ask the children to consider the impact of Zach’s death on Will.
- Return to the emotional journey chart and place his emotions at different points in the chapter onto the graph, ask the children to explore how these changes as the chapter progresses.
- Return to the passage in which Will realises that Zach is part of him that had been buried deep inside (p 294).
- Return to the double bubble and reflect on the way in which the two characters have become more and more alike.
- Following this ask the children to update their diaries or journals to reflect Will’s current feelings and the recent events.

Before the next session complete the book.

Session 25: Book talk and reading aloud

*Conversations about books help children to explore and reflect on texts in ways that are made meaningful, personal and pleasurable.*

- Look back at the end of the story and re-read the key parts of the book in which Will has significant moments of realisation, e.g. the part where he realises that the death of Trudy wasn’t his fault, the first time he calls Tom ‘dad’ (p289) his realisation that that he can live without Zach (p295). The last scene in which he realises that he has grown. Discuss the children’s response to his emotional journey as a character.
- Discuss children’s responses to the ending. What they liked or disliked anything that puzzled them or any connections they can make.
- Use some of Aidan Chambers ‘special questions’ to explore the children’s responses to the book e.g.
  - *Think of yourself as a spectator. With whose eyes did you see the story? Did you only see what one character in the story saw, or did you see things sometimes as one character saw them, and sometimes as another and so on?*
  - *When you were reading the story, did you feel it was happening now? Or did you feel it was happening in the past and being remembered? Can you tell me anything in the writing that made you feel like that?*
  - *Which character interested you the most?*
  - *Is that character the most important in the story/ or is it really about someone else?*
  - *Which character(s) didn’t you like?*
  - *Did any of the characters remind you of people you know?*
  - *Or remind you of characters in other books?*
- The children could then write book reviews describing their responses to the text. This may also be a good opportunity to recommend further reading to the children so that they can continue to explore the themes and issues raised in the book.

To end the teaching sequence you could hold a VE day celebration. As part of this the children and staff could dress up in 1940s style clothing, the children could make flags and bunting, the children could also spend time preparing and then eating food from the period. You could invite parents to join the celebrations too.

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