

Home life before the War

History/Literacy

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To use maps as a starting point for researching the past
- To explore Michael Morpurgo's *War Horse*
- To get excited about the story
- To develop writing about characters and events through maps
- To improvise scenes from the story
- To develop descriptive writing through imagining scenes from the story.

SKILLS TARGETED

- Reading for information
- Interpreting visual information
- Map reading and map making
- Imaginative responses to text
- Creative writing
- Imaginative scene setting
- Creative improvisation

RESOURCES

- Copy of the novel *War Horse*
- Map of Albert's village (example included)
- Pens and paper for making maps

SUGGESTED TIME SCALE

- Reading time, then 2 sessions

Step 1

Read the first few chapters of *War Horse*, which describe life in England before the First World War. Explain to the class that we can learn a little bit about the village even though the details are quite vague

Step 2

Ask everyone to draw a mind map of facts about the village

Step 3

Share all findings, looking at the village map (following page) together, and add any new features and discoveries. The children could also add words and phrases from the story that gave them the information they are adding. A vocabulary bank could be helpful here for collecting these

(Step 4)

Alternatively, the class could draw their own maps, showing everything they've found out. Make sure the maps are large enough to be labelled with special events from the story

Step 5

The village is in the middle of the countryside. Agree with the class a really good name that gives a clue about what the place is like (eg Riverford).

Step 6

Now the children can label places where really important events from the story take place, for example, where the auction happened, or where Joey learned to plough

Step 7

The children can now think up other things that might happen in the village that aren't mentioned in the book, eg, where does Albert go to meet his friends? Where is the village pub where Ted goes? What is it called? What special games are played in the village? And where?

(Step 8)

Ask the children to work in pairs/small groups to make up one of these games and to write down the rules

Step 9

The children can work in groups to improvise short scenes around these events. Here are some suggested titles as starting points:

A Big Day for Albert
The Fight
The Threat of War

Here are some suggested opening lines for scenes:

Villager: *Now then, Ted, we don't want any trouble here.*
Albert: *You're no better than me Billy Narracott*
Major Nicholls: *We'll have to get every man in the village to do their bit"...*

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- Children will research information about the village in the novel
- They will read and label the map accurately and creatively
- They will imagine the world of the story and the lives of the characters



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EXAMPLE MAP OF ALBERT'S VILLAGE

