

Reading Thematic Overview

'Goodnight Mister Tom' – Michelle Magorian

Goodnight, Mr Tom is a touching story about a young boy named Willie, who is evacuated from London during the Second World War. He finds himself living with a quiet, yet caring old man named Mr Tom in the English countryside.

English

Goodnight Mister Tom can be used to explore character development and emotions by analysing the relationship between Willie and Mister Tom, encouraging students to identify key themes such as friendship, trust, and resilience. Additionally, students can write diary entries from Willie's perspective, practicing descriptive writing and reflecting on the historical context of World War II.

Music

The book allows students to investigate how songs reflected the emotions and experiences of the time. Students can also analyse the use of music in the book to enhance character development and narrative, creating their own musical compositions inspired by the themes of the story.

Geography

The story also reflects the large-scale movement of people during the war, with children being relocated from dangerous cities to safer rural areas. This shift in population illustrates how conflict and safety concerns can cause significant demographic changes.

Although set in the countryside, there are reminders of the hardships in London, such as the bombings known as the Blitz. Willie's evacuation from London and the fear of air raids depict the real dangers of urban life.

Science

The book can be used to teach science by exploring the impact of World War II on health, such as the effects of rationing on nutrition and the importance of exercise and fresh air for well-being. Students can examine the science of weather, considering how storms and the changing seasons are described in the book, and how these conditions affect the characters' lives and experiences..

ICT

Pupils can explore digital storytelling by creating a multimedia presentation that brings key scenes or characters to life using images, audio, and text. Additionally, they can practice internet research skills by investigating World War II history, creating informative webpages or posters to accompany their understanding of the book's setting and themes.

History

The book highlights the emotional struggles and difficulties caused by the war, such as families being separated, the loss of loved ones, and the pressures it placed on everyone. Through the relationship between Mr Tom and Willie, we see how ordinary people coped with the challenges and changes brought about by the war.

Willie's experience as an evacuee is central to the story. It demonstrates the various challenges evacuees had to face, including fear, homesickness, adjusting to new surroundings, and sometimes escaping difficult situations.

