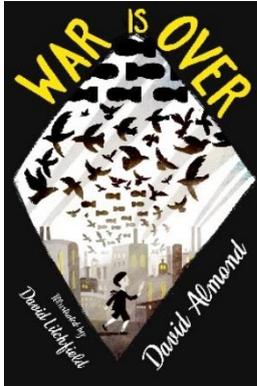


War is Over

By David Almond, illustrated by David Litchfield



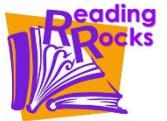
War is Over

It's 1918, and war is everywhere. John's dad is fighting in the trenches. His teacher says that John is fighting, too, that he is at war with enemy children in Germany. One day, John has an impossible moment, a chance meeting with a German boy, and catches a glimpse of a better, peaceful world.

A vivid, moving and beautifully illustrated new story from David Almond.

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Key Stage 2 Lesson Plan

Objectives: (from National Curriculum)

Comprehension-

- develop positive attitudes to reading, and an understanding of what they read, by:
 - listening to and discussing a wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks
 - discussing words and phrases that capture the reader's interest and imagination
- understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by:
 - checking that the text makes sense to them, discussing their understanding, and explaining the meaning of words in context
 - asking questions to improve their understanding of a text
 - drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence
- discuss and evaluate how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader

Composition-

- plan their writing by:
 - discussing writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar (y3/4)
 - identifying the audience for and purpose of the writing, selecting the appropriate form and using other similar writing as models for their own (Y5/6)
 - in writing narratives, considering how authors have developed characters and settings in what pupils have read, listened to or seen performed (Y5/6)
- draft and write by:
 - in narratives, creating settings.
 - selecting appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning (Y5/6)



Key vocabulary:

Din, wrought, ranks, yearning, garish, shrapnel, discern, indistinguishable, diminished, vastness, epaulettes, industry, imbecile,

Lesson Ideas:

Lesson focussed on extract from "Remain in your twos...." Page 42 to "...and knew no more." page 52.

"I am just a child," says John. "How can I be at war?"

John's father is away at war and his mother works at the biggest munitions factory in the world. This day he is going to visit with his (strict, pro-war) head teacher, Mr McTavish. Prior to this visit we read of John's desire for the war to just be over as soon as possible.

Reading the text for meaning:

On this read through, here are some questions and ideas to begin discussions:

Page 42

- How do you imagine Mr McTavish would speak? Read it aloud to a partner. Which key words suggested you should read it like that?
- Highlight the key words that show how noisy the factory was.
- Why do you think Almond describes the roof as 'that high blackened echoing metal roof'?

Page 44

- Why do you think Almond uses 'heart' for the main part of the factory? What do we think of when we read/hear 'heart'?
- Mr McTavish spreads his arms wide open and invites the children to 'feast' their eyes on the 'wonders' that are in front of them. What do you think he thinks about the munitions factory and what is made there?
- Can you think of one word to sum up the factory scene?

Page 45

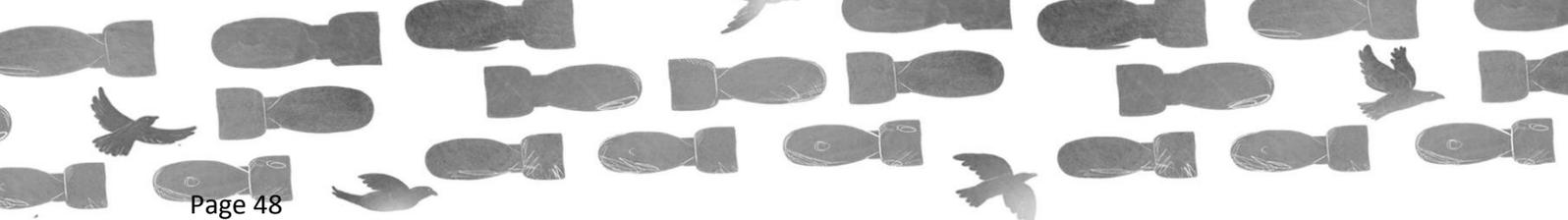
- What do the weapons make John think about?
- how does John feel towards his mam? Which part of the text infers this?

Page 46

- What do you think has happened to Major Hughes?
- What might the 'dead straight row of medals on his chest' suggest about him?

Page 47

- Major Hughes talks about heroes. Who does he consider are heroes?
- "Here," he said, "in this factory, is where the Great War will be won." – What does he mean by this? How important does he think the munitions are to the war effort?



Page 48

- Focus on Alec. He laughs about Germans dying and says, “Let me at them!” What do we think he is like? What are his thoughts on war? Where might those thoughts and values come from?
- Focus on John. Does he have different thoughts on war? What suggests this in the text?
- Who do you think you’re more like: Alec or John ?

Page 49

- Major Hughes ‘gazed in wonder at the weapons that surrounded them’. Does he have similar thoughts to Mr McTavish about the munitions factory? Why do you think so?

Page 50/51

- What does John touch again? Why do you think he did it?
- Do you think John has similar ideas about the munitions factory to Major Hughes and Mr McTavish? How might his thoughts be different?
- Describe what happens to John as a consequence of touching the shell again.

Reading as a writer:

This time, look closely at some of the word choices, sentence structures and authorial choices:

Page 42:

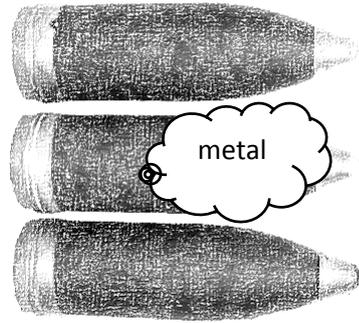
- Look at the extract ‘They entered the din..... - ...echoing metal roof.’
- Return to the highlighted words. What kinds of sounds are they? Draw out that they are harsh, loud and unpleasant sounds.
- Try swapping the sounds for opposites and discuss the effect this has on the text e.g. din = quiet/chorus/harmony, scream = whisper.

Page 44:

- Look at the extract ‘There were ranks..... - ...them hundreds, thousands.’
- Highlight or underline each time the word ‘shells’ is used.
- Discuss this effect. Does it make the reader imagine a few or many shells?
- Read aloud with a partner but swap the word shells for another type of munition e.g bomb. Is a different image created?

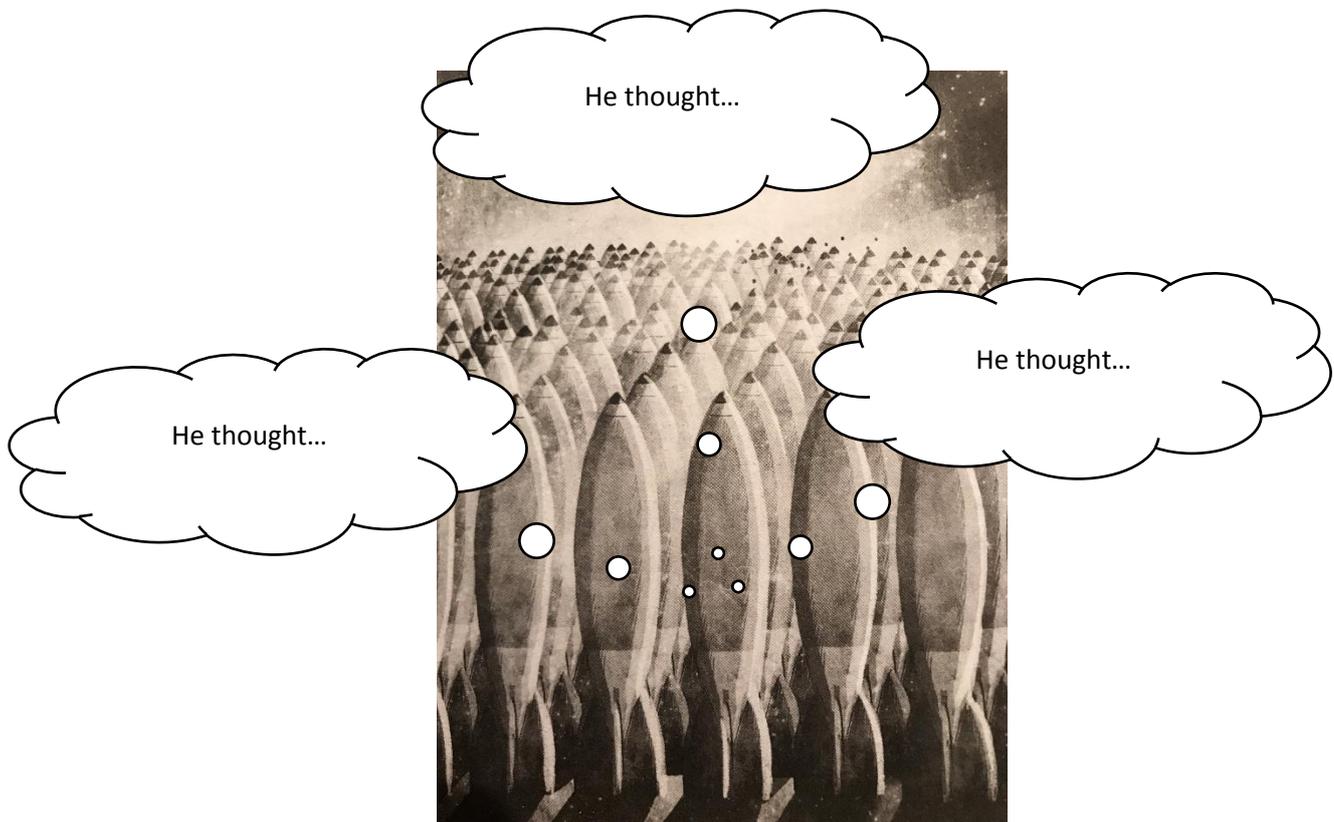
Page 44:

- Focus on the sentence ‘He pressed his warm young hand to cold hard metal’.
 - Discuss the adjectives used. What does this contrast do for the reader?
 - Let children try out this sentence model. Generate lists of opposites in pairs first to support ideas(on the formats below).
- E.g. He pressed his soft small hand on the solid huge metal.



Page 44/45:

- Focus on the extract 'He thought of the - thin steel useless helmet.'
- Highlight the repetition and discuss its effect.
- Let the children try out this model.



Into Writing:

Planning-

We are going to write a vivid description of the munitions factory, drawing on some ideas from the text. On page 42, Almond focuses on the sounds he wants the reader to imagine. We will use this as our main focus, too.



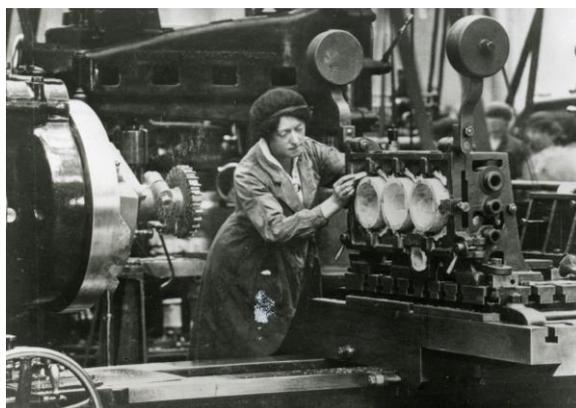
Use this image to annotate with sounds that would be heard on the battlefield.

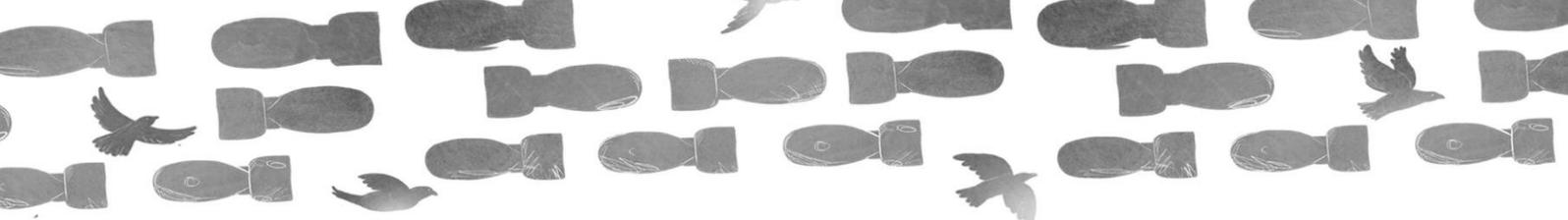
boom



Now annotate this scene with noun phrases of the items in the scene children want to describe:

Cold, hard shells





Challenge for Y5/6:

Pupils could be challenged to consider whose eyes they are giving the description through. If they are Major Hughes or McTavish, they may compare the scene to a team working in harmony, an orchestra playing in harmony etc...

Composing:

Model pulling together these ideas into a short description. Here you have a chance to bring in other vocabulary, grammar and punctuation foci you may be working on, or wish to reinforce. This could include: personification, expanded noun phrases, similes, relative clauses and modal verbs.

To help children get in the mood as they write, you could play some battle or factory sounds.

Supporting writers:

Try giving children a bank of sentence starters to get each sentence going. Or work as a guided group to generate a suitable list.

e.g.

From every corner,

Hanging in the air,

Try getting pupils to plan out the focus of each sentence with a simple list, that could be in the margin e.g. engines, shells, women, drills, hammers. Children can tick off each item as they have written a sentence for them. This can really help pupils who are likely to forget punctuation.

Evaluating and Improving:

Give children time to read aloud their description to a partner or group. Encourage children to praise the use of techniques planned and modelled.

A great way to share this description would be recording as a voice over to some munitions factory images, with some battle sounds as a background effect. This could be done with iMovie or similar software.