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THE INDEPENDENT

**'TUGS AT
THE HEART
STRINGS'**

THE GUARDIAN

FIERY ANTHEL, THE AMBASSADOR THEATRE GROUP, FIERY DRAGONS & THE CHILDREN'S TOURING
PARTNERSHIP PRESENT THE GLOUCESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE PRODUCTION OF

**GOODNIGHT
MISTER
TOM**

A PLAY BY **DAVID WOOD** FROM THE
NOVEL BY **MICHELLE MAGORIAN**

**RESOURCES
& EDUCATION
PACK**

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Background Information | 4 |
| Plot Summary | 5 |
| Evacuation and the Blitz – A Timeline | 6 |
| Evacuation – Key Questions | 8 |
| EXERCISES | 10 |
| Notes for Teachers | 10 |
| Exercise 1: Operation Pied Piper | 12 |
| Exercise 1 (A) The National Evacuation Plan | 12 |
| Exercise 1 (B) Propaganda | 14 |
| Exercise 1 (C) Gas Masks | 15 |
| Exercise 2: Leaving Home | 16 |
| Exercise 2 (A) Rumours | 16 |
| Exercise 2 (B) Radio Address | 17 |
| Exercise 2 (C) Packing a Suitcase | 18 |
| Exercise 2 (D) The Train Station | 20 |
| Exercise 3: Townees and Country Bumpkins | 22 |
| Exercise 3 (A) Last One to be Picked | 22 |
| Exercise 3 (B) Us and Them | 22 |
| Exercise 3 (C) Letters Home | 23 |
| Exercise 3 (D) Describing a cow | 23 |
| Exercise 4: Responding to the Production | 24 |
| Exercise 4 (A) Classroom Critics | 24 |
| Exercise 4 (B) Character Study: Zach | 25 |
| Exercise 4 (C) William and Mister Tom | 28 |
| Bibliography and Links | 30 |

GOODNIGHT MISTER TOM – INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this Education and Resource Pack for the stage production of *Goodnight Mister Tom*, adapted by David Wood from the award-winning novel by Michelle Magorian. This pack has been designed for anyone who has an interest in learning more about the story of *Goodnight Mister Tom*, and the context in which it takes place, as well as anyone who would like to discover more about the process of bringing a classic novel for young people to the stage.

While the information contained within these pages will be of interest to anyone, much of this resource pack is aimed at teachers who may be planning on bringing a group of students to see the production of *Goodnight Mister Tom* and would like to continue their work on the production after they have visited the theatre. Information and exercises have been designed to conform to curriculum requirements in History, English, Drama and Geography, and can be adapted to fit the needs of pupils in both Key Stages 2 and 3. While many of the exercises have been designed with specific learning outcomes in mind, we have tried to leave as much room as possible for teachers to develop and adapt exercises to fit the needs of their class.

Many of the exercises and approaches that we have recommended within this pack are drama and role play based. We hope that the theatrical experience that young people will have when watching a performance of *Goodnight Mister Tom* will fuel creative responses to the challenges set out in these exercises. For example, we have included in-role writing exercises, opportunities for pupils to imagine themselves both as evacuees and characters from *Goodnight Mister Tom* specifically, and possibilities for in role discussion of the issues laid out within the text. Many, if not most, of the exercises require a degree of creative thinking; this is not a pack designed to give all the facts about evacuation and the Blitz, but rather is intended to act as a stimulus for young people to empathise with, and find relevance in, the past.

Please feel free to use as much or as little of this resource pack as you like – we hope that you will find it of use.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Goodnight Mister Tom, the captivating story of evacuee William Beech who finds a new home with the curmudgeonly Tom Oakley during the Second World War, was the first novel by writer and actress **Michelle Magorian**. First published in 1981, it has since become a modern classic of children's literature; the novel has won numerous awards, including the Guardian Award for Children's Literature, and has been translated into thirteen languages, winning international acclaim. It has sold over 1.2 million copies in the UK alone. In 1998, *Goodnight Mister Tom* was adapted into an award winning television drama, starring John Thaw as Tom Oakley. The novel continues to enchant readers of all ages, and is studied as a set text in many schools.

This new adaptation for the stage has been written by **David Wood**, whose other adaptations for the theatre include: *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, *The Twits* and *Tom's Midnight Garden*. He has been described as the "National Children's Dramatist" by The Times, and in 2004 was awarded an OBE for his services to literature and drama. The first ever production of David's new adaptation of *Goodnight Mister Tom* premiered on 2nd February 2011, at Chichester Festival Theatre and then toured the UK throughout Spring 2011. It will open at the Phoenix Theatre in the West End of London on 27th November 2012, and will embark on a further tour of the UK in Spring 2013.

The production is directed by **Angus Jackson**, whose credits include *The Power of Yes* and *Elmina's Kitchen* at the National Theatre, as well as *Bingo* and *Carousel* at Chichester Festival Theatre.

Oliver Ford Davies plays Mister Tom. Over a long career, Oliver has played a huge number of roles on stage and screen. Recent performances include *The Crucible* at the Open Air Theatre, Regents Park, *Hamlet* with the Royal Shakespeare Company playing opposite David Tennant's Hamlet, and *All's Well that Ends Well* at the National Theatre. On television, Oliver has appeared in *Midsomer Murders*, *Kavanagh QC* and *The Long Walk to Finchley*, among many other appearances. He was also in the three *Star Wars* prequel films, *Atonement*, and *Johnny English*.

GOODNIGHT MISTER TOM: PLOT SUMMARY

Goodnight Mister Tom follows William Beech, a young boy from London who is evacuated to the countryside to be kept safe from German bomb attacks. He is an unhappy, deprived child, who has been treated very cruelly by his mother, and is nervous and quiet; he ends up living with a grumpy old man called Tom Oakley and his dog named Sammy.

Eventually William starts to really enjoy living with Mister Tom, as he is kind to him and cares for him, and Mister Tom seems to really enjoy having William there too, soon becoming more cheerful. As well as this, William makes some nice friends at school, in particular a boy called Zach who is very theatrical!

Suddenly, William's mother requests that he return to her in London, telling him she is sick. At first, William thinks this will be a good thing, so that he can return home to help his mother. However, his mother is not pleased to learn about the enjoyable time William has had with Tom. While William has been away, she has become pregnant and had a baby, to whom she has been very cruel. When she first sees William, he gives her cakes and other treats that Mister Tom has sent him with, she is very angry and thinks he's been stealing so she throws William against a bookcase, purposely knocking him out, then ties and gags him and locks him, with the baby, in a cupboard under the stairs.

Tom really misses William while he's in London and has a feeling that something is not right. Although he has never travelled beyond his village, he ventures into London and, with luck, locates William's neighbourhood and then his home. No-one answers the door when he knocks, but he persuades the local policeman to break it down.

Inside, he finds William locked in the closet, holding a small, still bundle: his dead baby sister, named Trudy. William is hungry and badly bruised, as he had been locked under the stairs for several months after a savage beating. He blames himself for the baby's death and can hardly speak. It is later discovered that William's mother has killed herself.

William goes to the hospital, where he is treated awfully and experiences terrible nightmares. Tom kidnaps William from the hospital and takes him back home to Little Weirworld, soon after adopting him officially.

Back in the countryside, William is really pleased to be back with his new father Mister Tom and his friends, but not long after he returns, news reaches them that Zach's father has been injured by a German bomb and so Zach has to leave for London straight away.

William later discovers that Zach has died in a bomb attack in London. This comes as a terrible shock, but with the love and support of Mister Tom and all his friends he comes to realise that Zach will always be a part of his life.

EVACUATION AND THE BLITZ: A TIMELINE



1938: In a climate of increasing fear at home and abroad about a war in Europe, the Committee on Evacuation is formed, to decide on the best strategies for evacuating children and the vulnerable from towns and cities across the country in the event of war.

March 1939: Hitler's army invades Czechoslovakia, further increasing speculation that war is imminent. Over the course of the summer, evacuation drills take place in towns across the country.

August 1939: Hitler threatens to invade Poland. On 31st August, with war seemingly inevitable, the evacuation plan is put into action.

1 September 1939: German armies invade Poland. Over 800,000 unaccompanied children are evacuated from British towns and cities, along with more than 500,000 mothers and young children, 13,000 expectant mothers, and 113,000 school teachers and escorts. This all happens over the course of just three days. This number is actually lower than expected, as many families choose to stay and face the war together.

3 September 1939: The Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, makes a radio address in which he announces that Britain has declared war on Germany. France, Australia and New Zealand also declare war on Germany.

September – December 1939: A period known as the 'Phoney War'; very little direct conflict between the competing powers occurs, and no bombs are dropped on British cities. Many evacuees return home for Christmas, and since there has been no bombing, decide to stay there.



January 1940: The rationing of food starts in Britain.

May 1940: Hitler invades Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland. Winston Churchill becomes the new Prime Minister, replacing Neville Chamberlain

June 1940: British troops are evacuated from Dunkirk, as Germany takes over France.

July - August 1940: The Battle of Britain takes place in the skies over the South of England, as the Germans try to destroy the Royal Air Force in preparation for an invasion of Britain.

September 1940: The beginning of the Blitz. German bombers begin nightly raids over London.

September – November 1940: Nightly bombing raids over London continue; by the end of October, over 250,000 people are homeless. Other cities throughout Britain are also targeted, notably Coventry, which was devastated by a raid on 14-15 November.

May 1941: The Blitz comes to an end, as the Luftwaffe abandons its regular bombing of British cities.

EVACUATION: KEY QUESTIONS

Why were people evacuated?

In the late 1930s, Britain seemed to be on the brink of war with Germany. The aggression and unpredictability of Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime in Germany led many to believe that Britain was going to have to go to war against the Germans, just as it had in 1914, starting the First World War.

However, whilst the First World War had been fought mainly on the ground, aviation technology had improved significantly since the end of that war, and if war were to come again, German airplanes would now have the ability to fly over to Britain to attack its cities, something which greatly frightened the British public. As Britain geared up for war, plans were put in place to try and get the most vulnerable people - children, expectant mothers, and the sick - away from city centres, and into the countryside, where they would be in less danger. At the beginning of September 1939, as the Second World War began, the plans were put into action.

Who was evacuated?

Over one and a half million people from across Britain were evacuated. This included 827,000 unaccompanied children, more than 500,000 mothers with young children, thousands of pregnant women, and thousands more disabled or handicapped people. Along with them went over 100,000 teachers, to help to care for the children while they were away from home.

Where did they come from?

Many evacuees came from London, but this wasn't the only city that experienced evacuation. Evacuees came from Newcastle, Glasgow, Hull, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Southampton and Portsmouth, as well as many other large towns around the country.

Where did they go to?

Evacuees often did not know where they were going when they were evacuated. They were taken, often by train, to small towns and villages across the country, where the threat of German bombing was not so great. Evacuees were billeted with host families, who were paid a small amount of money by the government to take them in. A lot of children were billeted with families who came from very different social backgrounds – inner city children were often placed with farming families, and those from deprived backgrounds, used to sharing a bed with their brothers and sisters, might find themselves living in a manor house!

How long did they stay?

Many evacuees missed their families, and cases of children running away back to their home towns were common. At the end of 1939, with no bombs having been dropped on Britain by the German Air Force (the Luftwaffe), some went home for Christmas, and did not return. The devastating bombings of London and other cities that occurred during the Blitz of 1940-41 prevented many from returning home, but many were able to leave the countryside after the bombings ceased in the summer of 1941. Some evacuees stayed in the countryside for most of the war, and a few even stayed on in their host villages and towns after the war had ended.

EXERCISES

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Goodnight Mister Tom deals with the experience and stories of young people, and deals with emotions and sentiments that young people today will be very familiar with, even if it places them in an unfamiliar context. The experiences of evacuees can be compared to modern day experiences of leaving home for the first time, and spending a night away from your parents; the loneliness and isolation that many children experience on their first day of a new school can help them to empathise with William's experiences. The contrasts between the way that children in the play react in certain circumstances and the way that modern-day children would react can serve to highlight and reinforce the changes that have occurred in society over the past seventy years.

What now follows is a framework for a number of exercises based on the experiences of evacuees and others involved with evacuation and the war on the home front. These exercises are intended to follow on from one another, however many of the ideas can be taken out of context and adapted to work as standalone exercises. Suggestions for possible extensions and variations on each exercise are included. Every exercise can be adapted to a range of abilities, and there are opportunities within the exercises for differentiation, although we have not specifically outlined these within this pack.

These exercises are intended to serve as an introduction both to the themes and issues of *Goodnight Mister Tom*, and as part of a wider enquiry into evacuation as a topic. While there is some discussion of the Second World War, we have not included a detailed examination of the war as a whole; it will certainly be useful for groups to do some introduction to the Second World War as a topic, but unfortunately space restrictions do not permit us to tackle this within these pages.

The intention of this pack is not to overload young people with a surfeit of information about evacuation, the Second World War, or the story of *Goodnight Mister Tom*. The pack has been designed in a way which hopes to cultivate creative responses, whether in writing, drama, art or design, to the issues raised in the play. While these exercises can certainly be used to work towards formal learning outcomes as outlined in the National Curriculum, they are first and foremost intended to enhance and illuminate young people's enjoyment of their theatrical experience by providing them with background information, and allowing them to respond to the themes and characters encountered within the play in a creative way.

Many of the exercises can be best described as cross curricular, combining learning about History and Geography for example with Drama and creative writing and reading outcomes. I have attempted to leave all exercises open to allow for differing levels of ability, and differing knowledge levels. None of the exercises require a previous knowledge about evacuation, but even if you have read *Goodnight Mister Tom* as a class

and have done a great deal of work on the book, there will hopefully be some exercises here that are of use!

Additionally, the use of drama techniques in many of the exercises can be adapted to suit each class's needs, and the skills of the teacher. However, particularly when responding to a piece of live theatre, allowing pupils to act out and physicalise their reactions can be very effective, and lead to more creative approaches to written tasks.

Exercise 1 introduces evacuation on a national scale. It serves as an introduction to the reasons behind evacuation, the ways in which the government encouraged parents to let their children leave to the country, and examines evacuation from a Geographic perspective, as well as an historical one. This exercise is particularly relevant to learning outcomes in **Geography** and **History**.

Exercise 2 looks at the personal stories behind evacuation; the reactions of young people to the start of the war, the experiences of leaving home, and the differences between young people in 1939 and today. Focusing to a large extent on process drama, these exercises can be extended both to create pieces of theatre, or pieces of creative writing. This exercise focuses on **History, English** and **Drama**.

Exercise 3 examines the relationships between evacuees and the areas that they were evacuated to. This exercise encourages young people to look at the differences between town and country, and the differences between 1940 and the present day, both in terms of rural and urban life. This exercise is tailored to examine aspects of **Geography, Citizenship** and **Drama**

Exercise 4 is designed to allow young people to respond to their theatrical experience after having seen *Goodnight Mister Tom*. It encourages students to critically engage with the story, the characters, and the production itself, and to produce creative responses based on their experience in the theatre. This exercise is particularly relevant to **Drama** and **English**, as well as **PSHCE**.

The following key will help you identify which subject each exercise is focusing on:



ENGLISH



HISTORY



DRAMA



GEOGRAPHY



CITIZENSHIP



ART



EXTENSION

EXERCISE 1: OPERATION PIED PIPER

EXERCISE 1 (A): THE NATIONAL EVACUATION PLAN

The year is 1938. You are part of the Anderson Committee, the group responsible for organising the safety of all people in Britain during air raids. You have been asked to decide which cities should be evacuated, and where children and vulnerable adults should be evacuated to.

- Here is a list of some major cities in Britain. In groups, try and **pinpoint** as many of these cities as you can on the blank map on the next page. Mark in **RED** the locations of these cities.



London
Portsmouth
Southampton
Glasgow
Liverpool
Manchester
Newcastle
Birmingham
Coventry
Sheffield

- Now, try and identify some of the areas where children might be evacuated to. Colour these in **GREEN**:

Lancashire
Sussex
Kent
Glamorgan
Yorkshire
Surrey
Suffolk
Somerset

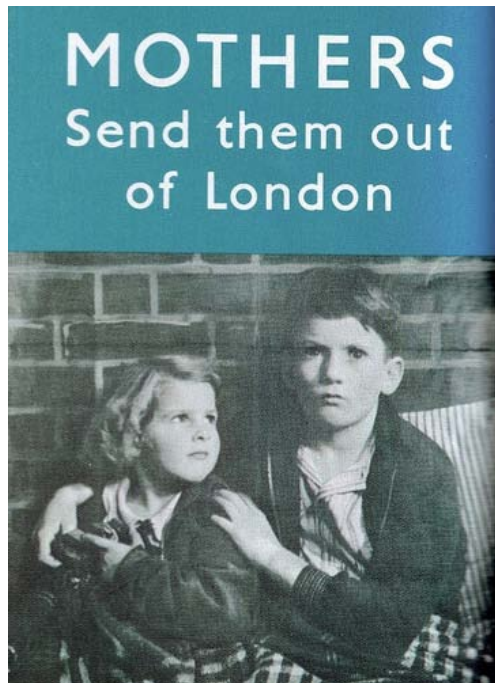
You might want to use a map or an atlas to help you with this!



- These are just some of the areas that children were evacuated from and to during the Second World War. Have a look at the map. Decide in your groups which children should be evacuated where.



EXERCISE 1 (B): PROPAGANDA

A lot of parents and children were not very happy to be evacuated: the government had to come up with lots of different ways of persuading them to let their children be evacuated. They issued lots of posters like this:



- In groups, imagine that you are responsible for making sure that mothers send their children out of London. What sort of **slogans** could you come up with? Using a big piece of paper, jot down as many slogans as you can. 
- Pick one of the slogans and think about how you would say it. Does it need to be menacing or comforting? Using your voices to create the slogan, and adding sound effects, come up with a way of using that slogan on the radio. 
- Once you have your slogan, come up with a **moving poster**, using your bodies and the slogan, which demonstrates the danger of leaving children in the city. This should start with a frozen image (like a normal poster) and then move while you say your slogan as a group, coming back to the frozen image again at the end. You should then be able to repeat it as many times as you like.

EXTENSION: You might also like to look at other propaganda posters that were issued by the government during this period; make a series of moving 'adverts' based on these. Perhaps try making a sequence of advertisements, showing all the different pressures on people on 'The Home Front'.





EXERCISE 1(C): GAS MASKS

During the First World War, twenty years before the outbreak of the Second World War, both the German and Allied Forces had used poisonous gas as a weapon against each other, and it was widely expected that the Germans would once again use gas, perhaps even against the civilian population of Britain. To protect civilians from this weapon, over 38 million gas masks were given out in Britain by 1939, and people were instructed to carry their masks with them wherever they went. The gas masks were very uncomfortable and a lot of people, particularly children, hated putting them on, as they smelt of rubber and disinfectant.

The government tried lots of different techniques to try and make gas masks more appealing to wear, including designing brightly coloured gas masks for small children:





- In pairs, try and think of a different way of making the gas mask more appealing to wear. How could you make sure that children would put it on if danger threatened? Make a **drawing** of your design for a gas mask. 
- Once you have made a drawing, have a **fashion parade** through your classroom. One of the pair can model the mimed gas mask, showing off all its exciting features, and the other can describe to the group all the wonderful benefits that this gas mask can have. 

In the end, Germany never used gas as a weapon against civilians in the Second World War, so the gas masks went unused, so all the preparations that had been made were never put into practice. However, throughout the war, the threat of a gas attack seemed very real to millions. How do you think that would make you feel?

- The National Evacuation Plan was codenamed Operation Pied Piper. Why do you think it was given that name?

EXERCISE 2: LEAVING HOME

EXERCISE 2 (A): RUMOURS

- Walk around the space as if you belong there. Imagine that you are walking around a familiar town, down streets near to where you live. Make sure that your movements are decisive and strong, and that you walk with your head held high. Think about all the places that you know really well near to where you live. Imagine you are walking home from somewhere nearby; perhaps from school, or a local shop. You know exactly where you are going. 
- Imagine that you start to see posters at bus stops, on the walls of shops, and on street lights, saying that children must be evacuated. (NB – If you have done exercise 1(B) then use the ‘moving posters’ that you have created; if not, show the children examples of propaganda images used on the home front during the Second World War). How does this make you feel?
- Before the outbreak of war, rumours about what was about to happen flew around British towns, and spread like wildfire. What sort of rumours do you think children might have spread about evacuation, and the countryside? By yourself, come up with three things that children might have worried about, if they thought that they might be evacuated. Don’t make them too far- fetched yet!
- Now, picking one of your rumours, start to walk around the space. Imagine that you are in your school playground. Whisper your rumour into the ears of people as you pass. As you hear other people’s rumours, pass these on too, and start to exaggerate them slightly, so eventually we will have loads of far fetched rumours about evacuation flying around the room!
- Once you have done this for a while, try and write down all the rumours that you can remember. What impression do you get about evacuation from these ideas? 

EXTENSION: Come up with a scene or a series of still images which represent the picture that is built up from these playground rumours. It might be that you have built up a picture of evacuation that is very positive, or it might be that it seems terrifying.



EXERCISE 2 (B): RADIO ADDRESS

- **Listen** to the radio address by the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain (<http://bit.ly/B60Vm>). What is he saying? What are the most important things in this speech?

**TRANSCRIPT OF NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN'S RADIO ADDRESS, 3 SEPTEMBER 1939**

I am speaking to you from the cabinet room at 10 Downing Street. This morning the British ambassador in Berlin handed the German government a final note stating that unless we heard from them by 11 o'clock that they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Poland, a state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received, and that consequently this country is at war with Germany.

You can imagine what a bitter blow it is to me that all my long struggle to win peace has failed. Yet I cannot believe that there is anything more, or anything different, that I could have done and that would have been more successful. Up to the very last it would have been quite possible to have arranged a peaceful and honorable settlement between Germany and Poland. But Hitler would not have it. He had evidently made up his mind to attack Poland whatever happened...

...His action shows convincingly that there is no chance of expecting that this man will ever give up his practice of using force to gain his will. He can only be stopped by force.

We have a clear conscience. We have done all that any country could do to establish peace. But the situation in which no word given by Germany's ruler could be trusted, and no people or country could feel itself safe, had become intolerable. And now that we have resolved to finish it, I know that you will all play your part with calmness and courage.

- Imagine that you have to **explain** to a younger brother or sister about the outbreak of war, and the evacuation. How do you think you will explain it so that it is not too upsetting for them? What sort of questions do you think they would ask? Are there questions that you have about why the war has started?



EXERCISE 2 (C): PACKING A SUITCASE

Most evacuees were only allowed to take one suitcase with them when they left their homes, as space on the trains was so limited. The government issued a list, with recommendations of what each child should pack in their suitcase.

- **Write a list** of the things you would want to take with you if you are going to stay away from home for a long time:
- Now **compare** it to the list issued by the government:



| BOYS | GIRLS |
|--|---|
| <p>2 vests 2 pairs of pants Pair of trousers 2 pairs of socks 6 handkerchiefs Pullover or jersey Gas Mask Identity Card</p> | <p>Vest Pair of knickers Petticoat 2 pairs of stockings 6 handkerchiefs Slip Blouse Cardigan Gas Mask Identity Card</p> |
| <p>ALL CHILDREN</p> <p>Overcoat or mackintosh Comb 1 pair of Wellington boots Towel Soap Facecloth Toothbrush Boots or shoes Plimsolls Sandwiches Packet of nuts and raisins Dry biscuits Apple</p> | |



What are the differences between the two lists? Why do you think there are these differences? If you could take one favourite thing with you when you left home, what would it be? What sort of things do you think children took with them in the 1940s to remind them of home?

- Imagine that you are packing your suitcase in your bedroom, before being evacuated. **Choose** four of the items from the lists above, and the one object that you would most like to take with you when you left home. Imagine that these are the last five things that you are putting into your suitcase. **Mime** picking each one up, looking at it, and then putting it into your case. How are the mimes for each object different? Some you might just throw roughly into the suitcase, some you might fold and place in there tenderly. Mime closing your suitcase and picking it up. How heavy is it? Open your bedroom door, and take one last look back at your bedroom. How does it feel, not knowing when you will see your room again?




Show your mime to a friend. See if they can guess which five items you have mimed. Work with your friend to make your mimes as clear as they can be.

EXTENSION: These mimes could be developed into an ensemble movement piece, showing all evacuees leaving their homes





EXERCISE 2 (D): THE TRAIN STATION

Look at the picture on the next page. How old do you think the girl facing the camera is? What do you think the small girl on the right of the picture is saying to her older brother?

- In groups of 5, try and **recreate** this image. Make it three dimensional, so that your audience can walk around it and see the expressions of everyone in the group. 
- Imagine that the girl is looking back at her mother or father for the last time. In groups of 2, create an image of the girl and her mother or father. Try and **freeze this image**, so it is like a photograph.
- Now **rehearse** in your pairs a scene of what has happened ten seconds before this image. Your scene should end with the frozen image that you have created.
- Show your scenes to the group. How is each scene different?

What do you think each of the pair is thinking at this moment? Think about all the feelings that might be going through their head.

- On a piece of paper, **write down** one thought that you think one of them might be thinking. This could be as simple as one word, for example 'scared', or it might be a more complicated thought. It is up to you! 
- The workshop leader should now pick one pair to remain in their frozen image. The rest of the group will now **'thought track'** the child and their parent. Walk up to one of the frozen pair, read out the thought you have written down, and place it on the floor, within the image. You will start to build up an idea of the thoughts that might be running through the heads of both people. Are there any that seem unexpected?

EXTENSION: *Using the thoughts that you have just created, write two diary entries – one from the point of view of the child, and one from the point of view of the parent. How are they different?* 



EXERCISE 3: TOWNEES AND COUNTRY BUMPKINS

EXERCISE 3 (A): LAST ONE TO BE PICKED

When evacuees arrived at their destination, they were often ‘picked’ by host families, who almost always chose the cleanest, healthiest-looking children first, leaving some children without anywhere to go. How do you think it would feel to be left out like that? Is there anything in your life that is similar?

- Sit on chairs in a circle, with one chair in the centre. This central chair is the one that means that you will get picked last by a host family. Divide the group up into 3 equal groups: Cockneys , Brummies, and Scousers.
- When the person in the middle shouts out one of these names, everyone in that group has to swap seats. One person will have to sit in the chair in the middle, and start the game again. If anyone shouts ‘Evacuees!’ everyone in the circle has to change places.
- The person who is left in the middle chair after exactly 2 minutes (time it!) is the last person to be picked.



EXERCISE 3 (B): US AND THEM

In many places, evacuees and village children didn’t get on well at all, and fierce rivalries broke out between them.

- Walk around the room like you belong there again. Remember how comfortable and at home you feel. Think about how this makes you walk differently. Once again, imagine streets and houses near your home, which are familiar to you.
- Suddenly, you realise that you are somewhere that is unfamiliar. You don’t recognise any of the people nearby, or any of the houses and streets. You are alone in an unfamiliar place. Walk around the room like you *don’t* belong there.
- Get into pairs. One partner is ‘A’, the other ‘B’. ‘A’s walk around like they belong, ‘B’s like they don’t belong. How do you react to one another? How does it make you feel to be somewhere so unfamiliar, or to have loads of strangers invading your space?
- The teacher now explains that ‘A’ lives in the countryside and ‘B’ is an evacuee. With your partner, **discuss** what made these two groups of children different from one another. Why do you think they may not have liked each other?
- In your pairs, **sit back to back**. Imagine that an evacuee and a local child are meeting for the first time outside the gates of the village school. The local child has been told by their parents to be welcoming to any evacuees. The evacuee doesn’t know anyone. What would they say to each other? What would they



have in common? Improvise a brief conversation, still facing away from one another. Once you have done this, work on it in your pairs; start to act out the conversation, as well as just speaking it.

EXERCISE 3 (C): LETTERS HOME

For many evacuees, writing and receiving letters from home became their only way of communicating with their parents.

- Imagine that you are an evacuee, and that you are **writing your first letter home** after being evacuated. Tell your parents where you have been evacuated to (you can make this up, or have a look at the map in Exercise 1), and let them know about the things that are different in this new environment; is the food tasty? Are your hosts kind? Remember, every evacuee had a different story to tell. What is different about your new life compared to your old one? Do you think you would be honest with your parents, or would you make things sound better than they are to reassure them that you are alright?



EXERCISE 3 (D) DESCRIBING A COW

Many evacuees had never visited the countryside before, and were shocked and surprised by many of the things that they found there. Here is one evacuee's description of a cow, as broadcast by the BBC:

"The cow is a mammal. It has six sides, right, left and upper and below. At the back it has a tail, on which hangs a brush. With this it sends the flies away so they do not fall into the milk. The head is for the purpose of growing horns and so that the mouth can be somewhere. The horns are to butt with and the mouth is to moo with. Under the cow hangs the milk. It is arranged for milking. When people milk, the milk comes and there is never an end to the supply. How the cow does it I have not yet realised, but it makes more and more. The cow has a fine sense of smell, one can smell it far away. This is the reason for the fresh air in the country"

- **Read** the description above. How many times do you think the writer has seen a cow? How do you think children in the country would have reacted if they had read this description?
- There were many other things in the countryside that evacuees had not seen before. Try and **write a description**, similar to the one above, about something else that you might find in the countryside, imagining that you have never really seen it before.



EXERCISE 4 – RESPONDING TO THE PRODUCTION

EXERCISE 4 (A): CLASSROOM CRITICS

Once you have seen *Goodnight Mister Tom*, have a look at these questions and discuss them in your group.



- Did you enjoy watching *Goodnight Mister Tom*?
- How was the production of *Goodnight Mister Tom* different from your expectations?
- Did the characters look like you had expected?
- How did the set, costumes and lighting help to tell the story?
- If you have read the book, were there things that were different in the play?
- Describe two things about the production that you really enjoyed.
- Talk about something you would change if you were the director.

EXTENSION: Write a review of *Goodnight Mister Tom*, incorporating all the discussion points above into your article.



EXERCISE 4 (B) CHARACTER STUDY: ZACH

One of the most memorable characters in the play is Zach, the boy who becomes William's best friend.

In the box below, **write down everything** that you can remember about Zach from the play. Think about:



- The way the character moved
- The way he spoke
- The clothes he wore
- Anything that we learned about his past
- Anything he did or said in the play.
- Anything we learn about Zach from other characters in the play.
- Think of any words that you can that describe Zach's character.

Have a look at this extract of the script:

ENTER, AT SPEED ON A BICYCLE, ZACH, IN HIS
DISTINCTIVE MULTI-COLOURED 'JOSEPH' JERSEY.

ZACH: Calloo Callay!

HE NARROWLY AVOIDS WILLIAM, RINGING HIS
BICYCLE BELL.

Sorry! Wonky brakes!

WILLIAM BACKS AWAY, THEN HOVERS.

ZACH PARKS HIS BIKE WITH ABANDON AND
ENTERS THE POST OFFICE. MRS MILLER IS
BEHIND THE GRILLE. MR MILLER SERVES MR AND
MRS HARTRIDGE AS 'BACKGROUND ACTION'.

(APPROACHING THE GRILLE) Good day! Would you
be Mrs Miller?

MRS MILLER: (TAKEN ABACK) I would.

ZACH: Splendid. Your impressive emporium is highly recommended by
Aunt Nance.

MRS MILLER: Oh yes? Who's she when she's at home?

ZACH: Sorry. Doctor Little. I'm staying with her. (BRANDISHING A
POSTCARD) Can I entrust my postcard to your care?

This is the first time we meet Zach as a character. What can we tell about him from the way he enters and speaks in this scene?

As you will remember from the play, Zach and William become firm friends during their time together in Little Weirwold. When William returns to London, Zach is left in the village without his friend.

- Imagine that he writes a postcard to William, telling him all about the sorts of things he has been doing while William has been away. See if you can write the postcard in the way that you imagine Zach speaking. Remember, he writes in tiny writing to try and squeeze as much as possible onto each card – see if you can do the same!



EXTENSION: One of the saddest moments in the play is Zach's death in the Blitz. Over 41,000 people in London were killed by German air raids during 1940 and 1941, and many more were injured or made homeless.



How do you think Zach's death makes William, and the other residents of Little Weirwold feel? How will they remember him?

Think about your best friend, or someone very close to you. What are your favourite things about them? How would you feel if they moved away, or if you knew that you weren't going to see them again?

EXERCISE 4 (C): WILLIAM AND MISTER TOM

At the heart of the story of *Goodnight Mister Tom* is the relationship between the young boy, William Beech, and the old man, Tom Oakley. Both Mister Tom and William grow and change through the play, due to their relationship with one another. How do you think they change? Remember, it is not just William who changes! Think about the ways in which Tom is changed by his experiences.

- In the table below, try and come up with **as many words or phrases as you can** to describe the two characters at the beginning of the story. Try and be as imaginative as you can!



| MISTER TOM | WILLIAM BEECH |
|------------|---------------|
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| | |

- Create a **still image** of either Mister Tom or William at the beginning of the play, which demonstrates all of the characteristics you have outlined above. You can do this individually, or work in groups to 'mould' one person into the image that you think fits the character best.
- Now, working in pairs, create a still image of the relationship that Tom and William have when they first meet. This does not have to involve physical contact, but has to involve both characters in the image.
- Look at the work of other people in your group. Come up with some words to describe their relationship – is it cautious, caring, hostile?
- Back in your pairs, work on another still image of Mister Tom and William. This time, think about a particularly important moment in the play for these two characters. It might be a moment of joy (William's birthday) or a very difficult time (when William is in hospital). Create an image which represents this moment. Again, have a look at the work of other groups.



- Finally, make one more image, this time representing the relationship between man and boy at the end of the play. **How has this changed?**
- Once you have your three images, try and create a sequence of images, changing from one to another in a smooth and fluid movement. You might want to perform these to the group, perhaps with a piece of music playing.

Also available:

'Making Theatre: Goodnight Mister Tom Education Pack'

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND LINKS

There is a wealth of material both for young people and interested adults around the topic of evacuation; we have included a few starting points for further investigation. It will almost certainly be also worth contacting your local museum; every town, city and village had a different experience of evacuation, and it is always particularly interesting for young people to understand how these events affected their area.

Books about the Blitz and Evacuation for young readers:

Bawden, Nina, *Carrie's War* (1973)

Another classic children's novel following the experiences of two evacuees during the Second World War

Hobbs, P, *Don't Forget to Write* (2009)

The true story of an evacuee and her family during the Second World War

Kempe, A., and Holroyd, R., *Evacuees* (London, 1993).

A great introduction to the topic, involving some fantastic drama exercises.

Hughes, S, *The Lion and the Unicorn* (1998)

A story about the adventures of an evacuee for younger readers.

Westall, R. *The Machine Gunners* (1975)

An award winning novel about the experiences of children in the North East of England during the Second World War.

Websites with information and resources about Evacuation:

The Evacuees Reunion Association (www.evacuees.org.uk)

The Imperial War Museum (www.iwm.org.uk)

The National Archive

(www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/homefront/evacuation)

The BBC Archive (www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar)