



**Topic: Goodnight Mister Tom –
English**

Year: 6

NC Strand: Reading fiction

What should I already know?

I have explored and understood new vocabulary within a text. I have summarised the main ideas of a text by recalling the most significant events. I have identified and commented on how language, structure and presentation have contributed to the meaning of the text. I have discussed and evaluated in detail how authors use language and its impact on the reader, using evidence from the text to support my views. I have planned, evaluated and redrafted written work. I have used grammatical features such as perfect verb forms, relative clause, adverbs and adverbials to great effect. I have written for different purposes and audiences.

What will I know by the end of the unit?

Key characters, their actions in the novel and their characteristics
 Key events, themes and ideas of the novel
 How to use a range of strategies to decode and learn new vocabulary
 How language, vocabulary choice, grammar and text structure present meaning
 How historical settings can influence and shape writing
 The impact of the author’s language and structure on their understanding
 How to apply what they have learnt from their reading to their own writing
 How to use vocabulary, grammar and text structure for effect
 How to write for different purposes and audiences

Key vocabulary

aghast	shock/ amazement, filled with fright / horror
brusquely	blunt or curt in manner or speech
clammy	covered with a cold, sticky moisture; sickly
dilapidated	old and rundown as a result of abandonment
emaciated	extremely thin to the point of a wasting away of flesh
evacuated	to be removed from a place of danger
evacuee	a person who has been evacuated from a place of danger
flaxen	a soft yellow colour
fortnight	period of time covered by 14 days
jaundiced	yellowish tint to the skin that symptomatic of an untreated health condition
mackintosh	term for a raincoat
mollycoddle	to treat with indulgent care; pamper / spoil
mottled	spotted or blotched in colouring
quagmire	situation from which escape is very difficult
recluse	person who lives in seclusion or apart from society sagacity ability to make good judgments
shell-shocked	loss of sight or memory resulting from time at war
surreptitious	something done in a secret or suspicious way
stupor	lack of physical and mental energy
unkempt	dishevelled, messy, and unclean
vicarage	the housing where a vicar or minister lives

Main characters

Tom Oakley	Protagonist - Mr Tom is in his 60s. His wife and baby son died 40 years earlier. Villagers see him as grumpy and reclusive, but he is a kind man.
Sammy	Sammy is a collie dog owned by Mr Tom.
William Beech	Protagonist - This eight-year-old boy from London is sent to Little Weirwold after a huge threat of bombing raids from the German Air Force.
Zacharias Wrench	Zach is a flamboyant and artistic boy who is also an evacuee. He is kind and always encourages William.
George Fletcher	After being unsure to begin with, he becomes one of William and Zach’s closest friends. He is down-to-earth and very different to Zach.
Carrie and Ginnie	They are almost impossible to tell apart but very different in personality and interests.
Annie Hartridge	This is William’s school teacher who becomes proud of William and all of his achievements. She has a mothering presence in his new life.



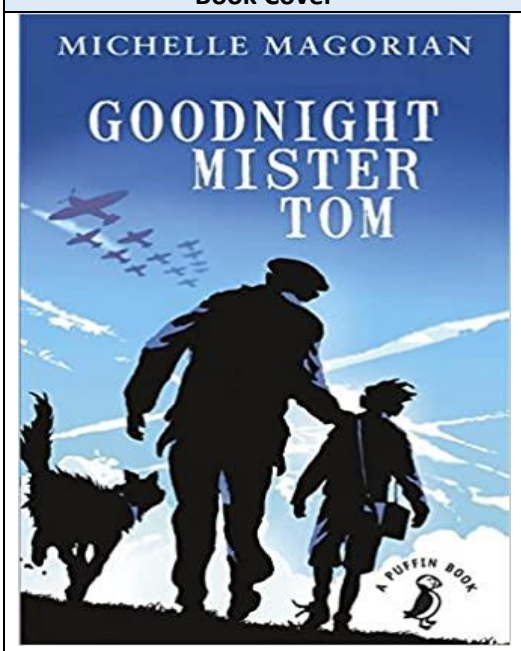
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Emilia Thorne	She is the school librarian in charge of putting on plays.
William’s mother	Antagonist - William suffers greatly from his physically and emotionally abusive mother. However, we see she is likely to have had a sad, unfortunate life and has dealt with her pain by becoming abusive.
Charlie Ruddles	Charlie makes sure everyone is putting the effort in during this time of war and takes the role of Air Raid Warden.
Geoffrey	Geoffrey lives in the believed-to-be haunted house at Spooky Cott who is a soldier that has returned injured back from war

Book Cover



Key Information

Name of Book: Goodnight Mr Tom	Date
Published: 1981	
Author: Michelle Magorian	
Genre: Historical Fiction	

Context

Context – The British government was worried that a new war might begin when Hitler came to power in 1933. They were afraid that British cities and towns would be targets for bombing raids by aircraft. Evacuation tried to ensure the safety of young children from the cities that were considered to be in danger of German bombing - London, Coventry, Birmingham, Portsmouth etc. 827,000 school children and their teachers were evacuated along with 540,000 mothers and children under five. Up to 12,000 pregnant women and many disabled people were also evacuated. At 11.07am on Thursday 31st August 1939 the order was given to evacuate and 1.5 million people were evacuated in total.

Important Information

Plot: William Beech is evacuated from London during World War II. He suffers from physical and emotional abuse from his mother and expects that Mr Tom will be the same. Tom, known to be rather grumpy by the rest of the villagers, soon realises William cannot read or write and they develop a caring relationship between one another. William eventually has to return to his old life again in November.

Themes: War, Loss, Love, Abusive Relationships, Power of Expression and Community

Setting: The book is set between 1939-1940, just as war has been declared. The novel begins in inner city London but the threat of mass bombings means children have to evacuate. William journeys to the small countryside village of Little Weirwold where he makes new friends, attends school and develops new relationships.

What can the book teach us?

Death of loved one is the hardest of all to face but learning to love again is possible. Whilst there is much darkness, light and hope are always there. Learn to express yourself.

Quotes:
 "If I painted the sky," she had said one day, "I could go through life paintin' nothin' else, for it's always changin'. It never stays still."

She had hoped that he had remained a serious child. The smile frightened her. It threatened her authority. She swallowed her feelings and stepped forward again, handing him her bag.



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Extended Learning

If you have been interested in this tale, you may consider reading:

- *My Secret War Diary by Flossie Albright by Marcia Williams (Walker)*
- *The Lion and the Unicorn by Shirley Hughes (Red Fox)*
- *War Boy by Michael Foreman (Pavilion)*
- *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas by John Boyne (Definitions)*
- *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain by John Boyne (Corgi)*
- *Rose Blanche by Roberto Innocenti (Red Fox)*
- *The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank (Puffin)*
- *Carrie's War by Nina Bawden (Puffin)*
- *Blitzcat by Robert Westall (Macmillan)*
- *Number the Stars by Lois Lowry (HarperCollins)*
- *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit by Judith Kerr (HarperCollins)*
- *Hero on a Bicycle by Shirley Hughes (Walker)*
- *Whistling in the Dark by Shirley Hughes (Walker)*
- *Billy's Blitz by Barbara Mitchel Hill (Andersen Press)*
- *The Emergency Zoo by Miriam Halahmy (Alma Books)*
- *Rose in the Blitz by Rebecca Stevens (Chicken House)*
- *Time Train to the Blitz by Sophie McKenzie (Usborne)*