

2015 specification
first exams in 2017 (2016 for AS)



Journey's End

Comprehensive Guide
for A Level AQA A English Literature

zigzageducation.co.uk

POD
10286

Publish your own work... Write to a brief...
Register at publishmenow.co.uk

Follow us on Twitter [@ZigZagEng](https://twitter.com/ZigZagEng)

Contents

Product Support from ZigZag Education.....	
Terms and Conditions of Use	
Teacher's Introduction	
Background to the Text	
Background to the Play	
Critical Reception	
Approaching the Text.....	
Hierarchy of Characters	
A Brief Overview of the Play and Army Ranks	
Detailed Summary and Analysis	
Characterisation (AO1, AO2, AO3, AO5).....	
Character Relationships.....	
Genre Conventions (AO1, AO2)	
Themes (AO1, AO2, AO3)	
Attitudes and Values (AO1, AO2, AO3)	
Language, Form and Structure (AO2)	
Historical and Social Context (AO3/AO4)	
Literary Approaches (AO1, AO2).....	
Glossary	
Further Reading	
Indicative Content.....	

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Teacher's Introduction

Who is the resource for?

This resource has been updated to support and extend sixth-form study of *Journey's End*, with particular reference to AQA A Level English Literature Specification A, Component 4.2. *Journey's End* is specifically listed as one of the six core set texts for the examination in which un-annotated texts are allowed in the exam room. There is no guidance on the use of the text. The exam is 2 hours 15 minutes, carries a maximum of 75 marks and is 40% of the total. If *Journey's End* is used as a set text in section A, then candidates may not use it in section B. If *Journey's End* is used as a set text in section B, then candidates may not use it in section A. If *Journey's End* is used as a set text in section A, then candidates may not use it in section B. If *Journey's End* is used as a set text in section B, then candidates may not use it in section A. If *Journey's End* is used as a set text in section A, then candidates may not use it in section B. If *Journey's End* is used as a set text in section B, then candidates may not use it in section A.

If *Journey's End* is studied for Component 4.2, it may not be used for the non-examined element of the course. If it has not been studied under Component 4.2, then it is on the list of texts available for Component 4.3 Texts across time.

It may also be possible to use the play in Component 3, the non-examined element of the course. The AQA English Literature specification, which covers post-1900 literature. There is guidance, a list of texts and a list of OCR website.

The focus of the resource is specifically on *Journey's End* as a drama, as this is crucial to the specification. Teachers and students should not lose sight of the key word 'aftermath'. The resource will also focus on this as and when appropriate.

Why Journey's End?

The recent anniversaries and commemorations of the First World War and its consequences have interested many people in that conflict, and for many students there will be personal connections. They, or their parents or relatives, may have visited war cemeteries in France and Belgium. There has been a wide range of different approaches to the war, both historical and dramatic.

From a literary perspective, *Journey's End* is a powerful and compelling piece of drama. It shows life in the front lines to life through a range of convincing characters; the play allows for different approaches and discussion points, and is accessible to students of a range of abilities.

What does the resource contain?

The resource contains:

- detailed scene-by-scene notes and analysis, together with exploration of plot and themes, supporting the teaching of the text
- topics for teacher-led and small-group discussion/exploration, linking to the wider reading, which is central to the specification; these allow individual students to explore particular interests within the specification and encourage further reading
- a number of optional extension tasks, aimed at the most able and most interested students, who want to develop their knowledge and understanding.

The play is fully set in its context, and the detailed analyses are supported by a glossary, examination practice, advice on coursework, as well as suggestions for further reading.

How to use the resource

Because the resource is comprehensive, it will be useful for the teacher to read through it to see which aspects are most useful, and to see how best to fit in what is offered here with their own teaching of the text. Students will have differing experiences and needs concerning context, so some will have met poetry from the First World War during their GCSE English course. The resource will be a peg on which to hang the text and its context.

Optional extension tasks:

These are, by their very nature, open-ended extension activities which not all students will be able to undertake and may be set at any time that the teacher thinks they may be suitable, although, given the need for considerable independent study, reading and research, it may be better to set them at the end of the sequence. The outcomes will depend on what the students actually produce: they may correct, supplement or extend a student presentation appropriately through questions.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Edition of the text

There are two readily available editions of the text, one from Penguin Books, and one from Heinemann. Throughout this Comprehensive Guide, references are to the Heinemann Plays edition (1996).

The authors

Emma Gardiner taught for 10 years in both secondary and post-compulsory education, specialising in English Literature and across a number of A Level English qualifications and specialising in the position of Curriculum Manager during her time at a sixth-form college in Essex.

Stefan Lewicki taught English and English Literature across the secondary age range, including nearly 20 years as head of department at a selective grammar school in Essex. This resource was updated by Stefan Lewicki in October 2019 to take requirements of new specifications into account.

How the resource meets the specification

Assessment objectives

These are the current assessment objectives, common to all examination boards.

- AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using appropriate terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.
- AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.
- AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts were written and received.
- AO4: Explore connections across literary texts.
- AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Here are AQA's further comments on the AOs:

- AO1 essentially requires informed and relevant responses which are accurate, using appropriate concepts and terminology.
- AO2 requires students to analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts, including on the structures of texts as a form of shaping.
- AO3 relates to the many possible contexts which arise out of the text, the contexts in which it was studied.

This specification treats AOs 1, 2 and 3 as broadly equal, given their relative weighting of 28% while AOs 4 and 5 each have a weighting of 12%.

AO4 involves connections across texts and sees possible meanings and interpretations in the contexts of the text itself (AO3 above) but also out of the wider and broader context of the study of period. Thus, even when an individual text is being investigated, it should be seen in a wider network of texts and contexts to which it connects.

AO5 completes the picture by acknowledging that if work in AOs 2, 3 and 4 had been done, the question then debate and interpretations will arise out of this work, showing that it is not a fixed process but a dynamic one. In non-exam assessment only, discussion must include, on at least one text, consideration of different interpretations of the text.

AOs 4 and 5 each have a weighting of 12% in all questions.

More may usefully be said here:

AO1: It cannot be sufficiently stressed that students need to be able to write in a way that shows that they can plan and structure an essay which is relevant through focus and use suitable and correct literary terminology which a sixth-form student may not be and fluent in the use of.

- Throughout this Comprehensive Guide we have used correct and appropriate literary terminology, and preparation for examination is considered, and also in the Indicative Content section, the terms in essay titles.

AO2 moves the student away from merely considering the content of a text, and to analyse it as a deliberate creation by a writer too. The writer makes constant choices for the reader (or in this case, audience) throughout their crafting of the text, and the student is manipulated by these choices.

- This assessment objective is particularly addressed in the following sections: Approaches to Text, Form, Structure and Language, and Literary Approaches.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



AO3: a work of literature cannot be considered in isolation from the time it was written, which prompted the writer to write it. Equally, there is a contemporary context to the text; for our purposes here, it may be the centenary of the events of the First World War. The text changes over time (and AO5 specifically mentions this).

- *This assessment objective is particularly addressed in the following sections: Background and Values, Contextual Analysis.*

AO4 looks at comparisons across texts, which is relevant in certain specifications. Once again, comparison should not only focus on content, but also on form; it should look at what is different as well as what is similar.

- *This assessment objective is not addressed, as Journey's End is a stand-alone set text.*

AO5: students need to remember the idea of different interpretations. When someone offers an idea or response, or challenges someone else's opinion, that is a different interpretation. It is relevant to mention it in an essay. It's a useful habit to get into jotting alternative interpretations of what supports one's own opinions.

- *This assessment objective is addressed in all the Discussion and Debate prompts. When a teacher and a teacher discuss an issue or character or situation in a text, there will almost always be different opinions and interpretations offered. Any of these which can be supported by textual evidence are 'valid interpretations'. A student does not need to agree with them, but should be able to explain and perhaps even take issue with them.*

Advice for teachers about the examination

You are likely to find that the main issue for students with this examination paper is not having enough time to do justice to all the assessment objectives, and your students are likely to be aware of this. Clearly, the first thing to emphasise is how to allocate the right amount of time to each question, given that there will be other essays on the question paper. Then, advice will be needed on the time slot between planning and actually writing the essay: too many students are too quick to start writing without spending enough time planning it. Fortunately, over the duration of the course, you can advise them how best to manage the time as well as give them an opportunity to practice.

They need practice in decoding the demands of the question, in focusing carefully on thoughts and feelings, and in how to use their wider reading effectively. Initially, it is best to work collectively as a class, framing an acceptable approach to the question together. It can be useful to break up the tasks into smaller segments and to have students work against the clock, to get them used to time pressure: 'You have three minutes to find three appropriate pieces of wider reading to use with this extract...'; 'You have two minutes to write the two opening sentences of your essay...'

When you get students to write an entire essay by themselves, it is very useful to have a copy of the mark scheme to each student's essay, so that they can see how well they are doing against the assessment objectives, and to get an idea roughly in which mark band their essay falls. This helps them to see what they need to do to improve next time. Regular in-class discussion of the mark scheme is helpful to students.

There are good resources available on the AQA website, including examiner-marked essays. These can be explored in class: students can try to identify how the candidate has or has not met each assessment objective, and thus inform their own work.

A web page containing all the links listed in the Detailed Summary Analysis resource is conveniently provided on ZigZag Education's website at zzed.co.uk. You may find this helpful for accessing the websites rather than typing in each link.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



BACKGROUND TO THE T

Background reading

Journey's End, by R C Sherriff, is a play set on the Western Front in the First World War, up to the final German offensive in March 1918. The play was written and first staged in 1929. Sherriff's novelisation of it were the bestsellers of the year 1929.

1929 is a key year, as it marks the tenth anniversary of the Treaty of Versailles in the end of the war, and is the date you often see on village war memorials as marking the end of the war. *Journey's End* was not the only work to appear in 1929: Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which recounts the war from a German perspective, was also published. Remarque's memoir of his service at the front, *Goodbye to All That*, as well as the (nowadays) popular play *My Darling Clementine* by R F Mottram. Just as we found it appropriate recently to commemorate the centenary of the First World War, so back then a significant anniversary prompted reflection and writing.

We need to consider many questions about the play, the dramatist's intentions, the historical events of the First World War, and class discussion will help students to develop their understanding and responses: if their understanding is clear, and their opinions have been tested against those of others and justified in argument, then they will be able to cope with a range of examination situations.

Moving into history

Why are many people, in Britain and other countries, still interested in the First World War over a century ago, and everyone who took part in it, from any country, is now dead? The world is now a completely different world, and yet the events and experiences of the war continue to fascinate us; new history books are written, TV series are produced, the battlefield sites of the war continues to reveal evidence, weaponry and human remains. The remains of 250 British and Australian soldiers killed in the battle of Fromelles were reinterred in a newly dedicated military cemetery in 2010. There has been a lot of writing in the last 20 years or so – mainly novels – written by novelists whose main purpose has been to allow them to recreate convincing battlefield and psychological scenarios. We find that modern writers treat their subject matter differently from writers closer to the actual events.

From their wider reading, students should eventually be able to judge whether writers of the First World War and shortly afterwards were mainly concerned to show readers the front were actually like – Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Henri Barbusse's *The Fire*, whereas more recent writers have explored different aspects of the war and its impact. What were they really interested in, in the Regeneration trilogy? Although Sebastian Faulks, in *Birdsong*, is more interested in the result of research, the horrors of trench warfare, was his main purpose this or interest in the war? What was it about the war and her characters that interested Susan Hill in *Strange Meeting*?

We are sometimes surprised by what seems to us the naivety of people at the time who believed that the war would 'end all wars' (and the French refer to it as '*la der des ders*' as in *dernière des dernières* wars) given the development of subsequent history. We must constantly remember that we have the benefit of hindsight, and be aware how this affects the way we see people and events and how we write about them. Our picture of the Second World War is often much clearer and more complete than our picture of the First World War, partly because there are still people in our families who lived through it, and partly because of the extermination of the Jews, which figures large in our knowledge and in our conscience. When we consider more carefully, it becomes clear that the Second World War was not the end of the First World War. The First World War had not ended in the way it did, with a perhaps flawed and certainly incomplete peace imposed on Germany. As a consequence, the unfinished business of the First World War was carried over, later, with even more horrific results.

Over the last few years, the final veterans of the conflict in England, France and Germany have died, and their deaths and funerals have been, perhaps rightly, the focus of much reflection. References to the war and views about what they lived through during the war can easily be found in the media. Harry Patch, the last surviving English combatant, who died in 2009, was very vocal about the war, and that war can solve nothing. A German shrapnel shell exploded over his comrades in his Lewis gun team in the Ypres Salient in September 1917: three of them died instantly and Harry was badly wounded.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



The media love anniversaries, as may be seen from the various commemorations and centenaries of the outbreak of the war, the Battle of the Somme and the Armistice.

One of the current specifications enjoins study of the First World War *and its aftermath*, about the implications of this rider. There are specific events such as the 1919 Treaty of Versailles which brought the war to a formal end and established the obligation of Germany to pay reparations for the destruction of large areas of France and Belgium. This is important because it can be seen as one of the reasons leading to the gradual economic collapse of Germany, and the rise of Nazi Germany. One of the policies was to undo what they perceived as the pernicious effects of that treaty.

For our purposes in the study of literature, it is crucial also to look at what happened to the survivors. We are all familiar with the huge numbers of dead, but those who survived had to continue living, with the memories of what they had been through, as well as, in many cases, the physical injuries and disfigurement they had undergone while fighting. Nor must we forget the impact on the mothers, wives, girlfriends and sisters particularly, as well as the elderly parents or young children who were left behind. Those who fought and died or fought and returned home, physically or emotionally scarred. Much of the writing written close to the time of the conflict; more recent works perhaps seek to explore the long-term impact.



Extension Task 1 (optional): Review other World War One literature and present summaries of novels, prose, drama and memoirs. If time permits and there is sufficient interest, each student could present a short summary.



Extension Task 2 (optional): Each country has a different view of, and different memories of, the war. Present how each of these nations viewed and remembers that war: Great Britain, the United States, France, Germany. Students or groups could present to the class.

The personal angle

However, it seems that one of the major reasons behind current and continuing interest in the war is its place in family history. At a time when people move from place to place several times in a lifetime, and with the passage of generations, a more deliberate effort is needed to keep in touch with one's past and the lives of previous generations. When one looks at the casualty figures – almost one million British and Commonwealth soldiers killed and several million wounded – it is easy to reckon that there will have been very few families in which someone's father, brother, son, nephew, uncle, husband or fiancé was not killed or wounded. In France, where the servicemen killed were buried close to where they fell, whereas the French allowed their loved ones home to family grave plots if they wished. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission maintains detailed records of the burial places (where known) or memorial inscriptions. People regularly travel to visit the graves of family members of several generations. In Britain, people visit war cemeteries or the Menin Gate, for example. It may be a somewhat flawed subject, but Stephen Wraysford's granddaughter's research into his past history and her discovery of his role in the First World War are very powerful: reread the chapter about her visit to the Thiepville battlefield. (This is the fourth section in Part Three of the novel; there are no chapters in Part Four.)

You may find some students already well-versed in stories of their ancestors' part in the war. Their interest in finding out – conversations with the oldest members of their family, or visits to the war memorial. If they have never looked closely at the war memorial in their village or in their local town, encourage them to go. It is very sobering to notice how many times the same family name appears on the memorial. It may be those of families who still live in the village. The same is true for the memorial to the fallen in public spaces in northern France.

Although Britain has been involved in a number of conflicts since 1945, these have been much less severe than the two world wars, and generations since then have grown up in a time of relative prosperity such as the nation has never previously known. Perhaps it is because we are so fortunate and such fortunate generations that we are fascinated by war and look back to our ancestors' experiences.

It's also important to bear in mind the differences in perspective on the First World War. For the British, it was a war of invasion and occupation; parts of it were occupied for four years by the Germans, who visited the occupied territories; large parts of northern France and Belgium were occupied. This experience clearly lay behind the French determination to punish Germany harshly after the war, and which laid the foundations for the Second World War. Inevitably, the experience of the war has been coloured by their experiences, and this is reflected in museums and memoirs.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



BACKGROUND TO THE P

Setting

Journey's End was first performed in 1928. It is set in the trenches at St Quentin, 1918 and events take place over four days. The play starts on Monday 18th March, days before Germany launched 'Operation Michael' – a direct attack on St Quentin. The threat of this attack provides an ominous mood of inevitable tragedy throughout. The play is set in the Officer's dugout on the Western Front – which was the battle line between the Allies and Germans which lay across northern France, Belgium and the Swiss border. Little territory was given or taken on this front, amounting to only a few miles in as much as six months of advances. The land in between the two front lines was 'no man's land' and sometimes the distance between the two was just a few feet.

Sherriff's intentions

The play offers a glimpse into the war experiences of British officers and depicts the nature of war. Sherriff based the play on his own experience in the Army, where he served in the Surrey regiment. He sought to offer not only a realistic look at the experiences of war, but also the physical and psychological effects of service on the front line. Written in 1928, after World War One, the mood of optimism which had prevailed shortly after the war had been replaced by a sense of disillusion. Authors like Sherriff began to write texts which revealed the horrors of war again, feeling that the current state of peacetime seemed to be less than permanent. With the writing of authors who experienced the war at first hand for a 'realistic' version of war, we know that these works are fictional and should be read with an awareness of the bias.

Sherriff's life

Sherriff was born in Kingston upon Thames in 1896. He initially had aspirations of becoming a writer, however, he was unable to attend university due to financial limitations. When Sherriff joined the military service and began a post in the East Surrey regiment. He largely fought in the trenches and had a six-month hospital stay after being injured in service. Sherriff was awarded the Military Cross for his service. He is known to have kept a diary throughout his service, which he later used as a source for the play.

After the war, Sherriff resumed his pre-war position at an insurance office and began to work on fundraising for his local rowing club. It was then that he wrote *Journey's End*. The title was taken from a poem of the same name by Humbert Wolfe which begins with the line 'Is my journey's done?', and Sherriff echoes much of the imagery of the poem in his closing lines. 'Suspense' and 'Waiting' as potential titles for his play.

Later life and work

With his financial problems behind him, Sherriff decided to pursue his ambition of becoming a writer once more and enrolled at New College, Oxford. However, he dropped out after a year to take the chance to write a Hollywood screenplay for *The Invisible Man*. Sherriff went on to have several screen successes after this, writing screenplays for the films *Goodbye Mr Chips* and *Busters*, the former winning him a coveted Oscar Award Nomination in 1940.

Sherriff died in London on 13th November 1975. Although he had many successes in his writing careers and wrote many other plays and prose texts, including a novelisation of *Journey's End*, he is most remembered and well known for his play.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



CRITICAL RECEPTION

Performance and critical reception

Journey's End was first performed at the Apollo Theatre, London and famously starred a very young Laurence Olivier in the role of Stanhope. After this performance, it moved to the Savoy Theatre where it had a two-year run. There was some controversy surrounding the play, which was rejected by a number of theatres in London who were worried that an all-male play, and one which was so negative about the war, might not be received well by audiences. However, despite its somewhat slow start, the popularity of the play soon gained momentum and Sherriff was earning around £1,000 a week from royalties.

Before it was first performed, George Bernard Shaw had given his opinion of the play as '[corrective] to the romantic conception of war', and said that 'As a "slice of life" – horrible, it be performed by all means'.

After its two-year London run, *Journey's End* transferred to Broadway. By late 1922 it was performing it in English and another 17 in other languages. It was revived in London in 1939. It continues to be regularly revived nowadays.

So, *Journey's End* is a drama which has survived for the best part of a century. Give the small and restricted group of characters, we may ask, why? Here we come up against why some texts survive and others do not. *Journey's End* is a powerful and moving drama which has survived for a generation and several more since it was first performed; clearly, it succeeds in connecting with contemporary audiences. It steps out of its own era:

The audience leaves the play not with nationalistic pride but with a weary uneasiness at the mature representation of trench warfare free from over-dramatisation. (From a review in the Oxford, 2001)

Though it hasn't been seen on Broadway in more than six decades, 'Journey's End' has a curious curiosity from an age of innocence, dusted off and spruced up for our ironic inspection. It is a theatrical rarity, an uncompromising, clear-eyed play about war – and not war as seen from the comfort of chambers of government, but war as a daily phenomenon for those who fight. (Review of a performance in 2007)

It tells it how Sherriff saw it, and because it comes with no agenda – either anti-war or pro-war – it is more powerful. The final moments of the production, both pointed and yet exquisitely devastating. (Review in The Guardian of a 2011 performance)



Discussion Prompt: What is your response to this powerful piece of theatre? Does it convey a sense of waste of life and potential?

It's also worth mentioning that the play was turned into a novel, also called *Journey's End*, but out of print, though second-hand copies may still be found. Clearly it was thought it should have the chance to read the story.



Extension Task 3 (optional): Track down a copy of the novel of *Journey's End*, read it and compare it to the play.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



APPROACHING THE TEXT

We must always remember that any work of literature is a deliberate construct – and R C Sherriff made deliberate and specific choices about many aspects of their work – and R C Sherriff chose to set his play in a specific historical context and at a specific time (he even chose specific scenes), his freedom is restricted: he cannot change the course of history, the place in the immediate lead up to, and the beginning of, the Spring Offensive of 1918, or the push in an attempt to change the course of the war.

Why did he set the play in early 1918?

In early 1918, the war has been going on for nearly four years; people are tired; soldiers have been fighting for several years:

You know, Raleigh, you mustn't expect to find him – quite the same... he's been through a lot of time. It – it tells on a man – rather badly – (p. 13)

There has been time for people at home to learn about the realities of the war; for families to hear of injuries and accounts of life on the front lines. Though we imagine it must be hard to imagine what new recruits are; Raleigh is very gung-ho:

How topping if we both get the MC! (p. 72)

Sherriff wants his audience to reflect on the differences in the attitudes of Raleigh and the other group of officers carefully in terms of attitudes, background, age and length of service. He uses these contrasts which will make for good theatre.

Why is the main focus of the play on officers?

Think about the job and the characters' position in relation to giving and carrying out orders. Officers are there to obey orders; they do not have any autonomy or any choice; ideally, they are to follow the fact that what their superiors order them to do is sensible and useful. Lower-ranking officers in the play – are in the middle: they are in the trenches almost all the time, living and working under immediate command. Casualty figures from the time show that such officers were often killed, especially since they were expected to (and themselves expected to) show leadership. Higher-ranking officers are generally some way behind the front lines, so relatively safe. They give orders which officers such as Stanhope are expected to carry out. These orders are often unrealistic. Colonel. They were less likely to be aware of the full horrors of combat and of the conditions in the trenches. You may now realise the particular, and individual, awkwardness of the position of the middle-ranking officers. Stanhope is so uncomfortable in his dealings with Stanhope – he is the piggy in the middle between the two ranking officers.

STANHOPE [...] didn't you suggest we altered our plans and made a surprise attack up the line after dark?

COLONEL Yes, I suggested that.

STANHOPE What did he say?

COLONEL He said the present arrangements have got to stand. (p. 66)

Sherriff also manages to reveal class issues through the character of Trotter, who is a private, like Osborne and Hibbert but who has clearly reached his position by rising up through the ranks. Trotter, who will have been trained as officers before being commissioned. Mason, the corporal, is a soldier (apart from walk-on parts) who figures and, despite his privileged position, is often in the ranks when the German offensive starts, as well as feed the officers:

STANHOPE When you've cleared up your kitchen, you must dress and join the line. (p. 93)

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Why is the whole play set in the same dugout?

Think about the intensity of the situation Sherriff creates here: the officers are confined to each other in a very confined space; tensions develop for a variety of reasons, pressures build up and there is no escape from each other. Even when characters go offstage, they go down into the dugout, or up into the trenches. You can see and hear the effect of orders being given, the stress on the men and particularly on Stanhope, and perhaps understand why he is so. Given the limitations of the theatre, it allows the director to have a very realistic effect.

Why was it written in 1929, and what difference does this make?

Think about the effect the play would have had in 1929. How much of the picture of the First World War have been new to the audiences at the time? They had perhaps spent the 10 years of the war, they had forgotten, and to escape those dreadful times. Would they have been shocked at the portrayal of cowardice? At the time it was written, it was a very realistic picture of the war.

In terms of the title of the AQA unit, *World War One and its aftermath*, we are at the end of the conflict, and just as we have recently reflected, for example, on the centenary of the end of the First World War, people in 1929 would have reflected on a decade previously. Incidentally, it's useful to recall that it was generally thought that the war properly ended until 1919 and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, which is why the war is given as 1914–1919 on village war memorials or memorial tablets in churches.

By 1929 it will have begun to appear that the Treaty of Versailles and other associated with the First World War to an end had not resolved all the outstanding issues, and indeed in some ways worse in certain areas.

How is this different from its impact now?

Students should think carefully about the idea of **hindsight**, and how it affects our view of the past.

RALEIGH *It all seems rather – silly, doesn't it? (p. 39)*

Our picture nowadays of the First World War is of pointless and unnecessary slaughter. The First World War happened, and there have been numerous wars since then, so it was inevitable. We find it hard to understand the patriotism of the men at that time, why they fought, why they were fighting for. The play gives us a genuine insight into the minds of people at the time.

Perhaps one of the best more general examples of the effect of hindsight is how George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* have changed. Before that date, it was regarded as a political and social decisions and trends were often measured in terms of moving forward. Today, nearly 30 years after that date, it has lost this power and is becoming a historical dystopian novels of the time.

Journey's End is a play; what makes it dramatic?

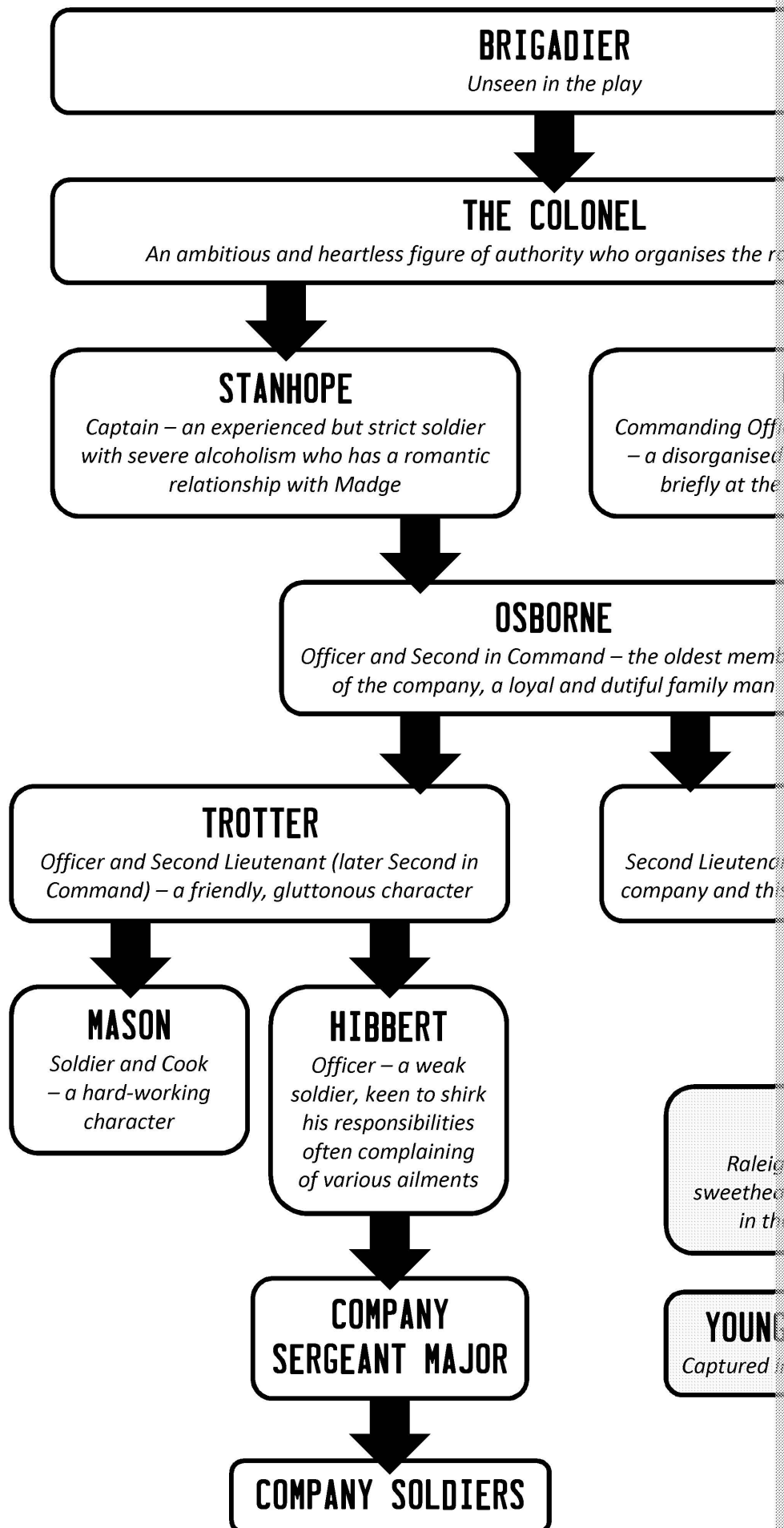
Because the action onstage never leaves the dugout, the events of the war are often experienced by the audience through sound and light – so we don't actually know what is going on. This is particularly powerful when the raid is taking place, and students should be encouraged to listen on the audience between the play script, which has the raid offstage, and the BBC. Then there are the conflicting personalities of the officers. The small group of characters that we get to know them and perhaps to identify with them. Watching Osborne, who is sent back from the raid, is very moving, but then so is the final scene, where we know that his injuries are fatal.

Note for teachers: This now marks the end of the sections written specifically with the AQA unit in mind, which follow are all 'student friendly' and can be given directly to students as necessary.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



HIERARCHY OF CHARACTER



INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PLAY AND ARMY RANKS

The play opens with Osborne taking over from Hardy and the arrival of a new young man, Raleigh. Raleigh's personal connection to, and idolisation of, Captain Stanhope is revealed through his trench life. On Stanhope's arrival in Act One, his dependence upon alcohol is clearly shown. This will reveal this weakness in the letters he sends home – causing Stanhope to expect private letters.

Into Act Two, the audience's views of Stanhope develop as the men continue to discuss their Captain. Raleigh's personal views on the war are also revealed. Raleigh is forced by Stanhope to hand over his private letter and Osborne reads it aloud, only to reveal Raleigh's comments of praise and admiration for Stanhope. The arrival of the Colonel interrupts these more personal matters and he instructs Stanhope that he is organising a raiding party – which he suggests Osborne to lead, while Raleigh will play a crucial role in dashing in and capturing a German prisoner. Raleigh is excited at the thought of his first raid.



As the final act begins, preparations for the raid are made. During the raid, the German Soldier is captured, but also killed. Other men are killed. Raleigh leads a successful raid but is in a state to speak. As the German prisoner is severely injured and dies, and that the rest of the company takes a direct hit.

Ranks and structure of the army

It is important to understand the ranks of the soldiers as you read through the play to understand the chain of command and understand why orders given by certain characters to others.

Ordinary soldiers progress as follows: **private**; **lance corporal**: this is an appointment made for a man chosen to take the place of a corporal who has been wounded or killed; **company sergeant major** and **corporal** are junior NCO (non-commissioned officer) ranks.

Sergeant major is the senior NCO rank; a sergeant major is a warrant officer, a rank above sergeant, giving him the rank. He is usually an experienced soldier, sometimes with a long service. **Sergeant** and **Warrant Officer** are senior NCO ranks and the highest ranks an ordinary soldier can reach.

Commissioned officers are appointed by a commission from the sovereign. **Second lieutenant** is the lowest rank of commissioned officer. Raleigh is a second lieutenant. **Subaltern** is a term used to denote any officer below the rank of captain, but particularly a second lieutenant. A **lieutenant** usually commands a small tactical unit on the battlefield, such as a platoon. A **captain** is commander of a larger unit, such as a company. Next is **major**, followed by **lieutenant colonel**, as in an assistant to the colonel; then **colonel**. A **brigadier** (general), in this play at this time, was the lowest-ranking general officer.



A **platoon** is a subdivision of between 30 and 50 men; a **company** is a subdivision of between 100 and 200 men.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



DETAILED SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

ACT ONE

INSPECTION COPY

KEY POINTS

- ✓ Takes place on Monday 18th March 1918
- ✓ Osborne takes over from Hardy and new officer Raleigh arrives
- ✓ Stanhope's drinking is revealed
- ✓ Stanhope alleges Hibbert's cowardice
- ✓ Stanhope makes decision to censor Raleigh's letters home

Summary

This act consists of a single scene, the main purpose of which is to set the scene in the dugout and introduce us to the characters. Hardy is tidying up (after a fashion) and the men are due to be relieved and move behind the lines after their tour of duty in the trenches. Stanhope is in a bit of a mood this because it means he and his men will be out of the way when the imminent battle begins. Osborne, who is Stanhope's second-in-command, officially takes over.

A new officer – Raleigh – arrives and Osborne is rattled when it transpires that he has been in the company and seems to have deliberately wangled his way into Stanhope's company; Osborne is also a bit of a drunkard. We meet Trotter, who at first acquaintance doesn't seem to be a soldier and is more interested in food than anything else; Hibbert, who seems to be swinging between being a coward and a hero, flies off the handle at the slightest provocation and who eventually drinks himself into a stupor. Economically, Sherriff has readied his audience for the action of the play.

Analysis (A01, A02, A03)

Setting

The setting of the play is crucial both in amplifying the tensions that we will see between the various characters and in allowing the audience a realistic glimpse into the poor conditions in the trenches. The play is set entirely in the 'dugout' and, although the audience has a sense of the trench above, this is never seen. In a stage direction prefacing Act One, Sherriff describes the dugout and its sparse nature. There is very little furniture – just beds, tables and some seating. His description 'a few tattered magazine pictures pinned to the wall' reveals perhaps a dual attempt by soldiers to alleviate boredom and to have a reminder of home. The 'tattered' nature of the pictures signals not only the poor conditions in the dugout but also the time they have been hanging. Like the magazines, Sherriff is also about to introduce characters who have been physically and mentally 'tattered' by the war.

Sherriff wanted the audience to have a sense of the closeness of the war through the stage directions which preface the play describe how the 'earth walls deaden the sound of the guns and far away, although the front line is only fifty yards ahead'. Through this description these men are the closest they physically can be to the war, it is an immediate threat that they cannot shield them from it, either through the earth walls or otherwise, are futile. This is a description of the act which describes 'through the stillness comes the low rumble of the guns'.

As Act One begins, Sherriff furthers his description of the dugout adding 'a litter of equipment hangs in a jumbled mass from a nail in the wall' (p. 1). The disorganisation witnessed between the characters, many of whom suffer from mental as well as physical trauma, in the short descriptions, Sherriff presents the dugout as a stark environment, chaotic, and

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Dramatic technique – use of light

Sherriff makes use of light as a dramatic technique throughout the play. In the opening of Act One, Sherriff describes only a ‘pale glimmer of moonlight’, ‘yellow candle flames’ and ‘the lighting the dugout’. The lighting is used symbolically to give the audience the sense of the soldiers, a foreshadowing of their inevitable deaths.

Osborne and Hardy – the handover

Hardy is the first character to appear in the play and, although his appearance on the first pages of the play, it is vital in many ways. We are introduced to him singing a song about boredom; however, the lyrics are quite revealing. He sings women’s names: ‘Maud’, ‘Maudie’, ‘Maudie’, not surprisingly considering the all-male environment he serves in. The line ‘Tick! start the day again’ is used by Sherriff to reveal the boredom and monotony experienced in the trenches, with little happening day to day. This line from the song also echoes the clock circles to mark the progression of time, which is revealed later in Act One.

Hardy is also used as a device by Sherriff to convey more about the nature of trench life: ‘damp floor – ‘Trouble is, it gets so wet doing it’ (p. 2); disinfectant in the water – ‘I’d like to see you?’ (p. 2); ‘rats gnaw your boots’ (p. 4); and the suddenness with which the men are killed: ‘nothing happens for hours on end; then all of a sudden... rifle grenades – Minnies – and pineapples’ (p. 2). All of this paints a vivid picture of the poor conditions and stress of trench life.

KEY TERM

Minnie From the German word *Minenwerfer* meaning ‘thrower of mines’, i.e. a trench mortar.

Hardy also reveals to Osborne that ‘there’s more transport than usual coming up’ (p. 2), suggesting that the death of soldiers is imminent, ‘Then I should think you’ll get it – right in the neck’ (p. 3). His casual attitude to the potential death of many soldiers, seems quite flippant and heartless here. Osborne asks Hardy, ‘Well, you won’t be far away. Come along, let’s do this handing over. Where’s the map?’ Hardy’s talk of death with such levity, one of many apparent differences between the two men.

One of the first apparent differences between the two men is in their work ethic. Hardy is seen as being unorganised, ‘a litter of papers’ (p. 1), and someone who shirks certain aspects of his job. Osborne, if he has checked the trench stores list, Hardy replies ‘No. I think the sergeant has done that he delegates work as much as possible but is not interested in checking whether it has been completed satisfactorily. In comparison, Osborne is keen to have a detailed handover of the trench, including officers, sleeping arrangements and the logbook.

Hardy’s final dramatic importance in the play is to introduce the audience to Stanhope’s opinions, to Osborne’s disgust. Hardy’s first mention of Stanhope is when he asks Stanhope, ‘boy? Drinking like a fish, as usual?’ (p. 4). Hardy sees this as ‘the natural thing to ask’ and that he feels Stanhope’s alcoholism to be his most defining characteristic and, central to the audience throughout the play. Hardy shows no sympathy for Stanhope; he believes that Osborne might make a better commander.

In this exchange, the differences between Osborne and Hardy become more apparent. Hardy and the officers timed how long it took Stanhope to drink a whole bottle of whisky, Hardy’s behaviour, accusing them of cheering him on for their amusement and likening the behaviour to ‘cock-fighting’ (p. 5). Osborne reveals his sense of morality and his personal loyalty to Stanhope. Hardy merely confirms his heartless nature when he justifies their behaviour by saying ‘something to liven people up’ and ‘Stanhope really is a sort of freak’ (p. 5).

The audience is allowed more insight into Stanhope’s nature when they learn that he was last on leave – perhaps suggesting that he has something to tell his family and friends. Osborne becomes increasingly annoyed with Hardy’s assault on Stanhope, ‘Don’t be an ass’ (p. 6) and reminding Hardy that Stanhope has been serving for ‘nearly ten years’ and that ‘his experience alone makes him worth a dozen people like me’ (p. 6). In the context of *Journey’s End* with other texts set during the First World War, it is worth observing

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



soldiers not being able to face going home on leave, or finding their time at home encountered in so many texts from the time. Men found it hard to enjoy any of the dangers and the camaraderie of the trenches; they did not want to, and often experiences of the war. Increasingly they experienced life in England as alien, and touch with what the war was really like.

The exchange also gives the audience an early insight into the closeness of the friendship Stanhope share when Osborne states *'You don't know him as I do; I love that fellow'*. Hardy exits the act, and play, without waiting to see Stanhope – although Osborne would like to see him before he leaves. Hardy's comments *'I don't specially want to see him in the trenches. I expect they are rather dirty. He'll talk for hours if he catches me'* (p. 7) reveals his standards in performing his duties and, along with his personal dislike for Stanhope, that Stanhope is intimidated by Stanhope and would rather leave than be publicly berated for having a cowardice is clear.

Hardy's final anecdote to Osborne is to describe a game the men have devised, to reveal to the audience the boredom that the men suffer. Hardy's revelation that the earwig in whisky to *'win ten francs'* (p. 8) only serves to further reveal his immoral character. Hardy's main dramatic role in this act is to provide an introduction to Stanhope's character to the audience's perceptions before Stanhope even appears onstage.

Comic relief – Mason

Journey's End could easily be analysed using the framework of the tragedy genre – with its flawed heroes and sense of inevitability. Like the authors of tragedies, Sherriff has also been careful to weave in moments of levity and humour which provide comic relief for the audience and a necessary, albeit momentary, respite from the otherwise tragic and gloomy nature of the play. One device Sherriff uses for this is the character of Mason. Mason reveals the *'rather unpleasant surprise'* (p. 16) he had when the tin of pineapple chunks he has opened for supper actually turned out to be apricots. This anecdote, along with Osborne's amused riposte *'Good heavens! It must have given you a turn'*, brings Raleigh, Osborne (and the audience) out of their melancholy discussion of war for this moment of jollity, at just the right time. Like Hardy, Mason's effect by Sherriff, to continue to craft an impression of Stanhope before the audience is clear (*'I know the captain can't stand the sight of apricots'* (p. 16)) and he is concerned through on a previous threat to him *'e said next time we 'ad them e'd wring my neck'* just how bad tempered Stanhope can be.

Osborne and Raleigh

The action of Act One continues with the arrival of Raleigh, described by Sherriff as *a well-built healthy-looking boy of about eighteen, with the very new uniform of a 2nd lieutenant*. It is clear and Sherriff highlights this, along with his youth. You will notice that Raleigh *'do – a bit'* (p. 10)) and Sherriff includes frequent pauses in Raleigh's stage directions to converse with Osborne, perhaps in awe of Osborne's higher status or taken aback. He often fails to answer Osborne's questions (*'Er – well –'* (p. 10)) or makes simple mistakes (p. 10)) – all devices used by Sherriff to convey Raleigh's nervousness and inexperience.

Despite this, when the topic of conversation moves to Stanhope, Raleigh becomes more confident in his speech – he obviously feels more comfortable discussing matters of a personal nature. Now he has a third character (after Osborne and Hardy) who shares their opinions on Stanhope, but he is still yet to appear onstage himself. Raleigh's view of Stanhope is one of absolute admiration; he reveres him as a hero. Raleigh states *'I was frightfully keen to get into Dennis' regiment. I thought I might get to the same battalion'* (p. 12) and it seems he used a family contact to get into the regiment. It quickly becomes apparent that the Stanhope who Raleigh reveres so much is the man he is about to meet. Raleigh remembers him as a brilliant sportsman, for his part in the war, Madge and, quite ironically, as someone who *'caught some chaps in a study with a bomb and nearly blew off. He gave them a dozen each with a cricket stump'* (p. 13).

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



In Act One, Osborne develops his relationship with Raleigh. He tells Raleigh 'You're my uncle' (p. 10) and he begins to develop a familial role with Raleigh. He offers him a trench and, secondly, on how he might find Stanhope a changed man after not seeing him for so long. *It – it tells on a man – rather badly –* (p. 12). Osborne does by now, that the war has changed Stanhope, perhaps irreversibly, and he discusses the impact it will have on Raleigh. Osborne and Raleigh's similar backgrounds also seem to cement their bond. Their discussion of public school shows their similar upbringing and Osborne's comment *seem a long way from here* (p. 11) suggests that he finds this reminiscence of their childhood both comforting and sad. Osborne seems to be a man who many turn to for advice and support. He is seen with Mason and Stanhope later in the act.

It also becomes apparent that Sherriff has cast Raleigh in the role of 'idealist'. He is naive about fighting in the war and being on the front line, clearly having been told nothing about the conditions that he will face. He agrees that he finds *'something rather romantic about the war'* (p. 11). His inexperience is shown in the numerous questions he asks Osborne.

Foreshadowing – the quiet

Like Sherriff's use of lighting, he refers to 'the quiet' throughout the play, again to foreshadow the fall on the whole company by the end of the play. The audience is given the sense of 'quiet before the storm'. In Act One, it is Raleigh who points out *'How frightfully quiet it is – anything so quiet as those trenches we came by'* (p. 12). The audience is definitely given the sense that something bad is about to happen.

Stanhope

Just as a scared Mason exits the act, hoping to avoid Stanhope's wrath at having abandoned him, Stanhope himself finally appears onstage. Much of Sherriff's description of him is positive – *'carefully brushed', 'good-looking'* (p. 17) – but he ends this stage direction by stating *'open air, there is a pallor under his skin and dark shadows under his eyes'* (p. 17), highlighting the physical toll which he is suffering. The care he takes over his appearance and his first lines relating to the *'fellows left the trench in'* (p. 17) reveal that Hardy's description of Stanhope was accurate. This is cemented when the first order he makes is to *'Bring some whisky!'* (p. 17). Notice that this is ordered before Stanhope sees the new officer.

Stanhope's woes continue when he realises that Raleigh is the new soldier who has just arrived. *'There is silence'* shows Stanhope's confidence dashed and he is *'dazed'* (p. 18). Despite this, Stanhope and Raleigh bond over their shared experience. Stanhope uses Raleigh to relieve the awkwardness of the situation and Stanhope himself (*'Come along Uncle! Come and sit here'*) to relieve the awkwardness of the situation. It is clear and no one seems quite sure how Stanhope is going to react. Stanhope uses the issue over the lack of pepper in their soup to vent his pent-up frustration and anger.

Trotter

Entering the play at the same time as Stanhope is Trotter. Trotter is described as *'fat and round; apparently he has put on weight during his war service, for his trousers appear to be on the verge of bursting at the waist'* (p. 17). It appears that, like the other soldiers, Trotter has a weakness which allows him escapism from the harshness of war through overeating. Indeed, his first line in the play is on this topic: *'Give me apricots every time I see a trench'* (p. 17).

Trotter's jovial attitude sets him apart from other officers and, alongside Mason, provides a source of relief to break the tension of the scene – for example, his 'cutlet' pun *'Well this one's a cutlet'* (p. 18). It seems that making jokes may also be a coping mechanism for Trotter.

Trotter's speech *'Quiet as an empty ouse'* (p. 20) reveals he has a working-class background, having been to public school, like the other soldiers have. However, his acceptance into the Company shows how new 'families' were created during wartime, ones which broke the traditional class boundaries. This is when he, in turn, welcomes Raleigh to the Company, taking Raleigh for his first experience of trench life. Trotter also shows that he has found ways to cope with the stresses of trench life, such as drawing *'a hundred and forty little circles on a bit o' paper, and expect that'll make the time go all right'* (p. 22). However, the audience is left again with a sense of foreshadowing, that Trotter will actually be blacking out the remaining hours of the day.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Hibbert

Introduced only briefly in this act, Hibbert is a character who still makes an impression on his supper due to *'this beastly neuralgia. The beastly pain gets worse every day'* (p. 24). His stage directions as being a weak character (*'gently rubbing', 'little laugh', 'faintly'*) make him a character that Sherriff introduces the theme of cowardice into the play. Stanhope *'worm trying to wriggle home'* (p. 25) and it is apparent that he thinks Hibbert is faking. He is not allowed the chance to return home. Even the thought that Hibbert might be trying to return home, Stanhope, who resolves to *'have a quiet word with the doctor'* and to ensure that all have *'an equal chance together'* (p. 25). Osborne provides more sympathetic understanding *'You can't help feeling sorry for him'* and reasoning with Stanhope *'I don't see how you can'* (p. 25). At this stage, it is left to the audience to weigh up how much they can trust Stanhope's opinions and to formulate their own view of the potential *'Little swine'*.

KEY TERM

Neuralgia Defined as an intense burning or stabbing pain caused by irritation of, or damage to, a nerve. It is usually brief but may be severe, and often feels as if it is shooting along the course of the nerve. Causes vary: chemical irritation, inflammation, trauma (including surgery), pressure on nerves by nearby structures (for instance, tumours), and infections may all lead to neuralgia. In some cases, however, the cause is unknown. It is most common in the elderly, but may occur at any age.

Stanhope and Osborne

The last section of the act cements Stanhope and Osborne's relationship as one of mutual loyalty. The otherwise abrasive Stanhope shows his more vulnerable side admitting his fear and his caring side as he offers Osborne the better bed. He shares his photo of Mary and even admits *'She doesn't know that if I went up those steps into the front line I'd go mad with fright'* (p. 27). It is clear that Stanhope's shock at seeing Raleigh leave are because he does not want his family and friends to see what kind of man he has become.

Stanhope's mood of melancholy and depression continues as he states *'I've had my share'* (p. 27), suggesting that he is worried that his luck might be coming to an end. Although things went well for him early in his service – receiving the Military Cross and being promoted to Captain – after he saw the true horrors of war *'in that awful affair on Vimy Ridge'*.

At the end of the act, it is Stanhope's selfishness and desire to keep his alcoholism secret that leads to the decision to censor any letters Raleigh might send home. In a speech full of paradox, he states *'What's that little prig of a boy matter? D'you see, Uncle? Wants to write home and I won't; d'you see, Uncle? He won't write. Censorship!'* (p. 29). Sherriff's use of a series of exclamations and repetition of *'d'you see?'* firmly reveals to the audience how fragile Stanhope is and that he is not above abusing his position of power when he wants to.

It is apparent to the audience that, by this stage in the act, Stanhope is likely to be in a state of denial. He tries to turn the situation into laughter and makes fun of Osborne cleaning up the trenches *'with little dustpan – with lace on it'* (p. 30). However, instead of creating humour, his joke amplifies the psychological damage the war has caused Stanhope.

The audience sees Osborne once again adopting the role of 'carer' as he tucks Stanhope into bed. This is evident in their jovial exchange *'Kiss me Uncle' / 'Kiss you be blown!'* (p. 31).

As Osborne blows out the candle and *'takes out from his tunic pocket a large, old-fashioned candle'* (p. 31), both acts become symbolic of the coming attack and foreshadow the end of the act.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



ACT ONE: ACTIVITIES

INSPECTION COPY

Discussion and Debate Prompts

1. What **information** does Hardy provide the audience with? Also note down what you think this information is essential for the audience.
2. What does the audience learn about Stanhope from Hardy, Osborne and McMahon on stage? Try to list both positive and negative traits and consider not only what is **implied** through character actions and reactions.
3. What does Osborne do to **help** other characters in Act One that make his actions fitting?
4. What **methods** do the different characters seem to have developed to help cope with the conditions in the trenches? Consider primarily Hardy, Stanhope and Trotter.
5. *Another little worm trying to wriggle home.* (Stanhope, p25)
You can't help feeling sorry for him. (Osborne, p25)

What are **your views** on Hibbert in Act One? How does his brief appearance show **cowardice and heroism** in the play?

Active Learning Tasks

In groups of three, **assign the following roles**: Hibbert, Stanhope and Director. Students of Hibbert and Stanhope must **act out** the conversation between the two characters. The Director reads the scene and coaches students in how to act. Perhaps you could try to act out the scene where Hibbert is shown as being genuinely in pain and once where it is hinted to the audience that he is not.

Read this article on trench life to help you further understand the setting of the play and the daily threats the soldiers were facing: <http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/trenchlife.php>

Consider the statistics of war casualties here: <http://www.firstworldwar.com/casualties.php>

Essay Questions

1. For what reasons might we consider Hardy to be the most essential character in Act One?
2. 'Act One reveals trench life to be stressful with little relief from any stress and strain.' Do you agree with this view of Act One of the play?

Extension Task 4 (optional)

Research the German Spring Offensive of 1918. What was the context, and what were the objectives? What did the Germans achieve, and how did the Allies respond? Why did the offensive fail? Aim to make a clear presentation to the group, and be ready to answer questions.

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



ACT TWO, SCENE ONE

INSPECTION COPY

KEY POINTS

- ✓ Takes place on Tuesday morning – 19th March 1918
- ✓ Osborne and Trotter discuss gardening over breakfast
- ✓ Stanhope reveals that the attack is due on Thursday
- ✓ Raleigh is bullied by Stanhope into handing over the letter he has written
- ✓ Osborne reads Raleigh's letter which is full of praise for Stanhope

Summary

The next morning is a fairly quiet one, although everything takes place against the German offensive. Further conversations between Osborne and Trotter, and Osborne's role as 'uncle', the unifying character who gets on well with everyone, generally putting others at ease as far as this is possible. We see how experienced challenges faced by a new arrival, and the strangeness of war, even to those used between Stanhope and Raleigh over the latter's letter home brings the issues of disintegration, and Raleigh's hero worship, to the fore.

Analysis (A01, A02, A03)

Use of light

Act Two, Scene One begins with description in the stage directions in which Sherriff again uses light in a symbolic manner. Sherriff describes '*a pale shaft of sunlight shines down the steps, but candles still burn in the dark corner*' (p. 32). Much can be said about the symbolic nature and dramatic importance of this description. Firstly, Sherriff suggests that the only natural source of light is outside the trenches. This '*sunlight*' becomes symbolic of life and hope and it is clear that, for the soldiers, the only hope they have of survival would be outside these trenches and, indeed, outside the war altogether. The phrase '*pale shaft*' signifies that any notion of hope of survival is fading for the soldiers; with the reported attack arriving in the next few days their chances of survival, like the sunlight, are weak and narrow. This idea is emphasised by a visual reminder that it is '*dark*' in the dugout. The description of the candles that are still burning takes on symbolic significance too. Although the fact that the candles are still alight offers some hope, as it reflects the fact that the characters are still alive too, the audience would be very aware of the finite nature of candles. Once lit, they inevitably must burn out and the light will be extinguished – suggesting that the same fate will soon befall the characters in the play.

Later in the scene, Osborne and Trotter are described in the stage directions as '*sunlight on the floor*' (p. 35). This again emphasises how little natural light is present in these quite unnatural and unnerving events which have already taken place and which will continue. It is clear that, as this pale square inevitably lessens and darkens, the lives of the

Trotter and Osborne

Once again, food is used as a dramatic device by Sherriff to create comic relief in this miserable and tense ending to Act One which the audience has just witnessed. This is more apparent at the opening to this act; even the thought of food seems to enliven Trotter as he '*gaily and rubbing his hands*' (p. 32). Trotter's anecdote about a plumber turned chef who was previously and who was famous for his thin stew '*Put a bucketful of 'is stew in a bag and it would go down in a couple of gurgles*' (p. 33), certainly creates humour for the audience. However, any sense of levity is only brief and fleeting here as Sherriff also has Trotter reveal that the

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Much is revealed about both Trotter and Osborne during their conversation at the trench. Trotter comments of Mason *'D'you realise he's washed his dish cloth?'* (p. 32) and *Osborne asked my wife for a packet of Lux. Then I gave it to Mason and suggested he tried it on his face.* The extent Osborne is willing to go to ensure that his soldiers have the best possible conditions is also how diplomatic and helpful it is. It would not take too much imagination to picture how Trotter might have dealt with this situation.

Trotter changes the topic of the conversation when he mentions that he *'was up to the wall just now, and damned if a bloomin' little bird didn't start singing! Didn't arf sound it?'* (p. 33). This brief anecdote, which Osborne never has the chance to respond to, is of great significance here. It is important to remember that Sherriff was using this to reveal to the masses what life was really like in the trenches. The audience watches and thinks nothing of hearing a bird sing – it is a daily occurrence, perhaps something so common that the sound even fades into the background noise of the day and is not really acknowledged. However, Trotter's surprise, indicated here by the use of the exclamation mark, and his comment that it sounded 'funny' reveal to the audience just how far removed from the real world the soldiers are, so much that they have little cognate with the seasons. In the trenches, the regular occurrences of nature no longer apply. Since the soldiers have also made reference to how quiet the trenches are, which is again suggested here as it means the sound of the bird stands out even more.

This sense of foreboding, and a reminder of the imminent attack, is further highlighted by *'standing up there in the dark last night there didn't seem a thing in the world alive'* (p. 33).

Talk between Osborne and Trotter of gardening – *'I 'ad a decent little grass plot in the garden back home in the summer'* (p. 35) – allows them to reminisce about their lives back home, clearly providing a sense of comfort, however momentary it may be. It also serves to remind the audience that the war and of what, and who, they will be leaving behind when their lives are taken. It has the men reminisce about something related to nature here, to suggest that the war is a stark contrast to the life they had back home.

Raleigh

At the beginning of the scene the audience is made aware via the stage directions that Raleigh is eating his breakfast. However, during all of this conversation between Trotter and Raleigh, he is silent and it is, in fact, easy to forget that he is even there. It is Trotter who brings Raleigh into the conversation, asking him *'Uncanny, wasn't it Raleigh?'* (p. 34). Raleigh is described as being 'only with 'Yes' (p. 34). Raleigh is far removed from the excited, enthusiastic character he was a short time ago. His eyes have been fully opened not only to the realities of the war but also to the glamorous and patriotic picture that was painted for him back home – but also to the fact that he has fallen from the heroic pedestal on which Raleigh had placed him.

Raleigh's dialogue during this part of the scene further reveals his unhappiness as he says *'ages', 'and yet I've only been here twelve hours' and 'I can't imagine the end of six days'*. The boredom in the trenches are clear here and, again, reference is made to how uncomfortable it is to take on a new dimension. The world the soldiers have to endure seems quite different from the one they came from.

Raleigh and Osborne – innocence vs experience

After Trotter exits the scene, Raleigh and Osborne are allowed the opportunity to talk. Raleigh reveals, as the audience expected, that trench life is nothing like he expected. Sherriff uses silence as a dramatic device when Raleigh comments *'It seemed so frightfully quiet about and talking in low voices'* (p. 37) – a subtle reminder again of the imminent attack. The German front line is *'only about seventy yards'* (p. 37) from their own front line and *'the breadth of a Rugger field'* (p. 37). The differing descriptions used by Raleigh and Osborne to describe the distance between the front lines are quite revealing about their characters. Raleigh uses a specific unit of measurement to describe the distance, making it seem more factual, with what we know of his education and training. Osborne's measurement is much more of a guesswork. However, he states that he *'always measures distances like that out here'* (p. 37). Through this, Osborne shows that he makes every effort to make links to his own experience.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



back home. This is perhaps one of the reasons why he is not as badly affected by memories of home are what keep him psychologically strong.

Talk then turns to 'rugger' and it is revealed that Osborne 'played for the English team on one great occasion' (p. 38). Raleigh reveals his inexperience when he becomes overly excited at this news, suggesting that the other soldiers 'ought to know. It'd make them feel jolly bucked' (p. 38). Raleigh doesn't realise that this news is of no significance at all to anyone in the trenches, a place where home is most often a distant memory and the only prevalent information would be any regarding the war. Osborne, amusedly, tries to point this out to Raleigh, stating 'It doesn't make much difference out here!' (p. 38) – a further reminder to the audience that trench life broke down the class barriers of society. Sherriff's link between 'rugger' and the war here is not a coincidence. Osborne played a 'game' back home, a 'game' here too – a player in the politicians' game of war. However, war is unforgiving, not a game of celebrity, glamour and recognition.

Raleigh's inexperience is made even more apparent to the audience when he states 'decent aren't they?' (p. 39). Surprisingly, in reply, Osborne offers an anecdote which is a different view – as he tells of how some German soldiers ceased fire to allow Osborne's men to be wounded men home and even 'fired some lights for them to see by' (p. 39). The audience is surprised at Sherriff's inclusion of such a positive story; however, it is immediately followed by a comment that 'Next day we blew each other's trenches to blazes' (p. 39). Sherriff is reminding the audience of the futility of war here, emphasised in Raleigh's comment that 'It all seems rather silly' (p. 39) which the audience is likely now to share.

Their conversation ends with the arrival of Stanhope. Raleigh retires to finish writing his letter on duty. Sherriff's use of dramatic irony here is clear and the audience is reminded of Act One and can foresee imminent tension and chaos in the dugout if Stanhope's news is bad.

Stanhope's news

Stanhope's arrival turns conversation back to the day-to-day running of the trench. Stanhope 'been having a good look around... we've got ourselves in a strong position here' (p. 41). He has arranged two wiring parties to strengthen the wire along the front, shows

Unfortunately, Stanhope also brings with him the news that he has been speaking to a German prisoner who 'gave the day of attack as the 21st' (p. 41), which Osborne reveals is 'tomorrow' (p. 41). Osborne realises that the attack will 'come while we're here' (p. 41) and is then silent. This seems quite an odd and certainly low-key reaction to the news created by the silence that follows and the audience is left to ponder what Osborne is thinking at this time. More of his thoughts are revealed when he states 'Well, I'm glad it's coming' (p. 41) and perhaps this is the truth of the matter. The audience has become acutely aware of the moves in the trenches and of the psychological effects of not knowing whether you will survive from one hour to the next and so they might empathise with Osborne's feelings.

The fate of the Company seems sealed when Stanhope also reveals 'that when the attack comes we can't expect any help from behind. We're not to move from here. We've got to stick it' (p. 41). Sherriff's portrayal of war as a game becomes clear here, as the audience realises that the soldiers are being tactically positioned in this game by the high-up officials – offered up as sacrificial lambs in the hope of making just a small advancement.



Stanhope soon notices Trotter's chart of circles, constructed to count down the time until the attack. His comments are very revealing about his philosophy and the fragile psychological state of the soldiers.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



to draw 'a picture of Trotter being blown up in four pieces' (p. 42). However, he quickly sees the point. He's no imagination' (p. 42). His further comment 'Funny not to have a nice' (p. 42) reveals that perhaps he secretly envies Trotter, who can remain sane in an arguably insane, activity. Stanhope, on the other hand, seems constantly plagued by war due to his overactive imagination as he pictures 'millions of bullets lying in pouches – and thinking.' (p. 43). Despite Osborne's reassurance that Stanhope has 'A bit of no imagination' Stanhope's fragile mental state is clear when he asks 'D'you ever get a sudden feeling of being far and farther away – till you're the only thing in the world – and then the world begins going on without thing in – in the universe – and you struggle to get back – and can't?' (p. 43).

Mason interrupts this reverie by bringing the men some drinks and his entrance returns the matters of home life again. However, thinking of home seems just to remind Stanhope of his problems. Stanhope writes anything negative in letters to his sister. Stanhope's overactive imagination describes his perception of a 'look' Raleigh gave him 'as if I'd hit him between the eyes' and Stanhope ignores Osborne's observation that he is just imagining things.

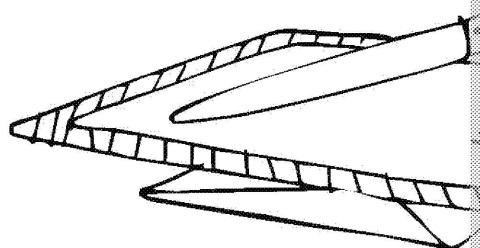
Stanhope's censorship

The main event of this scene occurs in the last few moments and lasts for only two minutes. The implications and consequences of Stanhope's actions become immeasurable. Raleigh leaves the letters to be collected and Stanhope's response is for him to 'leave it open'. The stage directions require for the delivery of this line suggests that, although Stanhope intends to censor the letter, when the time comes for action, his voice betrays his own doubts about what to do. Stanhope then hides behind army regulations as he simply states 'I have to do this'.

Raleigh's nerves are also evident as the stage directions describe him 'nervously', 'on this stage, the audience does not know the contents of Raleigh's letter, neither do we. We consider what they think *might* be in the letter as it affects how they view the difficulty of the play.

Raleigh's embarrassment provokes him to decide not to send the letter at all and at this point, the audience is shown Stanhope at his most unsympathetic. Stanhope burns the letter, verbally at first by turning it into an order 'Give me that letter! D'you understand that letter!' (p. 46). However, it becomes physical as Stanhope 'clutches Raleigh's wrist and burns the letter' (p. 46). Stanhope's desperation is clear in both his language and actions here. In a moment of shock as he 'stares wide-eyed at Stanhope, who is trembling and breathing heavily' (p. 46) Raleigh is not in control of either his mind or his actions.

This description of Raleigh and Osborne's comment, after Raleigh's exit from the scene, of 'Good heavens, Stanhope!' (p. 46) clearly reveals that Sherriff intends the audience to see Raleigh as the innocent victim and Stanhope as the heartless bully.



Stanhope maintains this firm nature only momentarily after Raleigh's exit and Sherriff describes him 'sitting down at the table with the letter in his hand. Then he throws the letter on the table and reads it' (p. 47). Stanhope is so embarrassed by his own behaviour that he cannot even bring himself to read it. It is up to Osborne to offer: 'Shall I glance through it – for you?' (p. 47). Osborne moves to the letter, where he reveals there is a section about Stanhope. The audience has, most likely, reached this conclusion by this point that Raleigh has not written anything even remotely negative about Stanhope, confirmed when Osborne reads Raleigh's words about Stanhope: 'He looked tired, but he was fighting so frightfully hard', 'A sergeant told me all about Dennis. He said that Dennis is the finest officer I ever saw. He simply love him', 'He's always up in the front line with the men, cheering them on with jokes and songs. He's a friend' (pp. 47–48). Not only has Raleigh not mentioned anything negative, but his letter shows his admiration for his hero and he even goes so far as to create lies for his sister, which Stanhope knows. Stanhope has thoroughly underestimated Raleigh who has been only a loyal friend.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



The final stage direction of the scene describes Stanhope 'with lowered head. He rises into the shadows' (p. 47) while 'the sun is shining quite brightly in the trench outside' (p. 47) and the effect of his actions. Light is used here to symbolise the decline of Stanhope's character. Stanhope is comfortable in the shadows, hiding from what he has just done and away from the trench. The behaviour. Once again, the only natural light is outside the dugout, suggesting that Stanhope is inside, under the cover of the shadows.

The audience is left with a simple feeling of regret and perhaps their own imagination of how Raleigh, Stanhope and the wider Company might be affected by Stanhope's actions. Consider some contextual information here too. Although, officially, censorship of letters was in place, there was actually an unspoken assumption that British Officers educated in the public schools never say anything they should not and so, in reality, letters probably were not censored. Stanhope is infringing an unwritten rule and this is something that Osborne did not agree with.

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE: ACTIVE

Discussion and Debate Prompts

1. Note down any instances of **humour** in this scene. Then make notes on the importance of these to the scene.
2. Look back at your notes for Question 2 from Act One, Scene One, where you listed the **positive** and **negative** aspects of **Stanhope's character**. Add to both of these lists evidence from Act Two, Scene One.
3. Osborne and Trotter engage in a conversation about gardening and a **May tree**. What is the **significance** of this conversation? What might the tree symbolise?
4. List all references to **silence** during this scene. Make notes on the significance of these.
5. *D'you understand an order? Give me that letter!* (Stanhope, p. 46)
Funny not to have any imagination. Must be rather nice. (Stanhope, p. 42)
 What are **your views** on Stanhope in this scene? Do you agree with Stanhope's actions? What letter?

Active Learning Tasks

In groups of three, **assign the following roles**: Raleigh, Stanhope and Osborne. Read the 'letter' section (pp. 46–48). The student playing Osborne should consider non-verbal communication. Stanhope should show his anger and aggression as clearly as possible. The student playing Raleigh should consider the effect of Stanhope's actions on the audience. Raleigh's shock, fear and embarrassment.

Visit the BBC website and take these virtual tours of the front line and the dugout. How does this affect your perception of life in the trenches for the soldiers?

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/launch_vt_frontline.shtml
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/launch_vt_dugout_intro.shtml

Essay Question

'In *Journey's End* Sherriff presents the view that an active imagination is a hindrance to survival in the front line.' Primarily focusing on Act Two, Scene One, discuss the extent to which you agree with this view.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



ACT TWO, SCENE TWO

INSPECTION COPY

KEY POINTS

- ✓ Takes place on Tuesday afternoon – 19th March 1918
- ✓ The Company is given orders to stand firm when the attack begins – no one is to leave
- ✓ Colonel informs Stanhope of proposed raid, to be led by Osborne and Raleigh
- ✓ Hibbert tries to leave due to sickness and Stanhope threatens to shoot him
- ✓ Raleigh is excited and thinks it an honour to be chosen for the raid

Summary

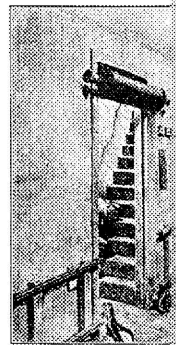
We see Stanhope's efficiency as a company commander as he gives his instructions for the expected attack to the Sergeant-Major. This exchange makes it clear to the audience what the company could actually do when under attack, and that they are very likely to be successful.

The focus of the action is sharply narrowed and focused after the Colonel's visit. He orders the company to make a night-time raid – a virtual suicide mission – on the German trenches in order to capture a prisoner and gaining information from him. Osborne and Raleigh are Stanhope's schoolmate, and the man who keeps him sane, and he knows they may not return. Stanhope deals further by the news of the raid being immediately followed by Hibbert's attempt to leave. Stanhope deals with this; we are invited to reflect on whether Stanhope has 'gone too far' in his actions. This shows another aspect of how good a commander he is. We then see Osborne's reaction to the news.

Analysis (A01, A02, A03)

Setting

The sombre tone that was set at the end of Act Two, Scene One is continued as Act Two, Scene Two opens. The stage directions reveal *'the sunlight has gone from the dugout floor'* with Stanhope lying *'by the light of a candle'* and the Sergeant Major standing *'blinking in the shadows'* (p. 48). Now even the small square of sunlight, which was described earlier in the play, has vanished and this becomes symbolic of the darkness that is enveloping the men. This could represent the moral and psychological darkness that Stanhope has descended into and also the imminent attack which will undoubtedly take the lives of the men. The trench is in almost complete darkness at this point in the play and it is not a coincidence that the darkest moment of the play, when Stanhope threatens to shoot one of his men, occurs at this time.



Stanhope and the Sergeant Major

Stanhope's conversation with the Sergeant Major is interesting because it allows the audience to see Stanhope clearly in his role as commander. All Stanhope can do is repeat orders and quickly picks up on the fact that the men will not be able to survive the attack. Stanhope tries to rally the Sergeant Major: he is confident in their success – *'then we keep beating the company's a lot better than "A" and "B" companies'*; and, finally, he is patriotic – *'they're going to get it'* (pp. 49–50). Stanhope is conveyed in a positive light here. This is dramatically significant as the audience is about to see Stanhope at his worst before the scene ends. It seems clear that the play conveys that it is the war that changes men and drives them to commit acts that they are not capable of before. Sherriff offers the audience a timely reminder that Stanhope is a competent commander, despite what is about to happen. It is also entirely possible that Stanhope is mocking in his attitude to the orders they have been given.

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



The Colonel and news of the raid

The Colonel's entrance to the scene serves to drive the action of the play forward – *'It seems almost certain the attack's to come on Thursday morning'* (p. 51) – in the Company. However, he also brings news that *'the general wants us to make the line opposite here'* (p. 51). Stanhope vehemently disagrees with the order, excluding (p. 52), but he learns that it has been settled that the raid will take place the following

Stanhope's positive characteristics are highlighted again by Sherriff as Stanhope asks *'sir?'* (p. 52), showing his bravery. However, Stanhope is deemed too important to suggest Osborne and Raleigh. Stanhope's objection to the latter being sent (*'It's just arrived'* (p. 53)) shows the responsibility he feels towards Raleigh, not just as a friend but as a soldier too. Stanhope quickly becomes resigned to the fact that he will not be able to change the order. He only weakly agrees with the Colonel that he *'supposes'* the raid is necessary. The Colonel's attitude at the dinner he has been invited to, a fish supper, shows the Colonel is more concerned with food than with the death sentence he has essentially just handed

News of the raid conveys to the audience Sherriff's criticism of how such decisions are made. Once again, news is passed to the men through a third party and the men behind the scenes are faceless – presented as unconcerned about wasting innocent lives in order to further the war. Through Stanhope's reaction, the audience sees that the men have no option but to accept the order of losing their lives is.

Stanhope and Hibbert

The next episode within this scene, between Stanhope and Hibbert, is perhaps the most tense of the whole play, the tension being heightened by the fact that it is also fairly brief and contains little dialogue. It is important to remember that Stanhope has already expressed his suspicion that Hibbert is faking his neuralgia as a ploy to be sent home from the war – something he considers disloyal and unpatriotic. Added to this, Stanhope is discontented by news of the raid. The audience also knows Stanhope as a character who is not afraid to take out his bad feelings on those who have done him wrong, as he has with Mason and Raleigh previously. Sherriff uses dramatic irony here, as Stanhope's mood but Hibbert is not. Hibbert's entrance would immediately put the tension on edge, as they realise Hibbert is the worst person possible who could have come



Hibbert opens the conversation with Stanhope; he states *'This is the last time I'm afraid I can't stick it any longer'*. Hibbert has been expecting to have this chance to leave while and the last thing he is going to do is leave. He tries to diminish the tension by suggesting that he suffers from neuralgia. *'I've got it like hell –'* (p. 54). Hibbert's request to leave to *'go into hospital for treatment'* (p. 54). The tension is heightened as Stanhope wonders how Stanhope will react

At first, Stanhope is quiet and resolved in the manner in which he speaks to Hibbert, speaking *'fiercely'* to him. He simply states to Hibbert *'You're going to stay here'* (p. 54). Having spoken to the Doctor and the Doctor has promised to send Hibbert straight back to the front, it is clear that Stanhope thinks Hibbert has chosen this moment to decide to leave the war and that Hibbert is trying to save his own life. Perhaps members of the audience might sympathise with Hibbert but to Stanhope this is unacceptable and he tells Hibbert *'You're going to stay here with us'* (p. 54). Hibbert's retreat to retrieve his, already packed, belongings causes Stanhope to *'steps, turns, and undoes the flap of his revolver holster. He takes out his revolver, and stands silent'* (p. 55). This is how Stanhope is standing when Hibbert returns. Stanhope's position is a silent threat to Hibbert that he will take whatever measures necessary to ensure Hibbert remains. Hibbert tries to persuade Stanhope to let him by, but Stanhope is firm in his resolve and merely tells Hibbert to remain and do his job.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



The conversation turns when Hibbert states *'I shall die of this pain if I don't go'* (p. 54). Stanhope's intention to leave is clear, but he still firmly maintains that the only reason he wants to leave is neuralgia is causing. To Stanhope, this level of cowardice cannot go unpunished and he threatens Hibbert with *'Better die of the pain than be shot for deserting'* (p. 55). Again, Stanhope's threats are questioned by Hibbert about what this means, he simply states *'You know what I mean'*. On this stage he has no real intention to shoot Hibbert and is hoping that this threat and the revolver in his holster will cause enough fear to change Hibbert's mind. However, Stanhope has no intention of carrying out this act and this, coupled with his poor mood, as described earlier, indicate that he is not pushing anything if pushed.

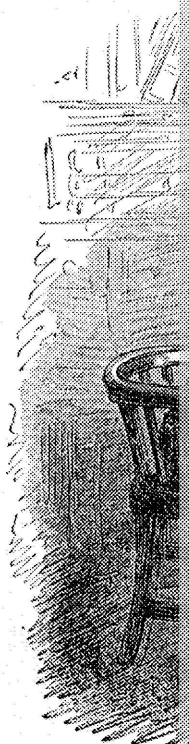
It is two actions by Hibbert which push Stanhope over the edge. Firstly, Hibbert's refusal to leave Stanhope (p. 55), an act which in itself Stanhope sees as insubordination. Secondly, Hibbert's decision to shoot him. At this, Stanhope issues Hibbert an ultimatum – he gives him 30 seconds to leave and says that, if he leaves, Stanhope will consider Hibbert a deserter and will shoot him. This builds to a climax as Stanhope begins counting down the seconds for Hibbert.

However, when Stanhope reaches five seconds, Hibbert states *'I swear I'll never go into those trenches again. Shoot! – and thank God – Go on! I'm ready –'* (p. 56). Hibbert's decision to die when he is 'ready' shows just how damaging it is for the men to wait endlessly to die at war, knowing that *'every sound'* (p. 57) could be the last thing they hear.

It is at this moment that Stanhope reacts differently to Hibbert. He *'places his hands on Hibbert's shoulders'* and *'smiling'* states *'Good man, Hibbert. I liked the way you stuck that'* (p. 56). Despite his lack of sympathy so far, here he displays empathy and he seems to understand how desperate Hibbert must be to leave the war, even to the extent that he would die rather than fight. Perhaps for the first time Stanhope draws some similarities between himself and Hibbert – the psychological effects that the war can have on a man and how this can change him into something unrecognisable. It is not Hibbert that Stanhope hates; it is the war and what it makes men resort to – Hibbert is desperate to leave, Stanhope is desperate to drink.

For the first time, Hibbert, breaking down, admits that it is the war he is trying to find a cover for this: *'Ever since I came out here I've hated and loathed it'* (p. 57). Despite his earlier refusal to leave Hibbert a few moments ago, he redeems himself here and states what the audience can hear: *'what you feel, Hibbert... because I feel the same'* (p. 57). Stanhope here is sensitive, he responds to Hibbert's remaining sense of loyalty and obvious need for companionship from the war. Stanhope's offer to go back up into the trenches with Hibbert (*'Shall we see if we can't get up there'* p. 57), and appeals to his masculinity (*'Could you ever look a man straight in the face and say you're a coward'*), his duty (*'then you can go home and feel proud'*), and his loyalty/comradeship (*'Don't you think you're a man like that?'* (p. 58)).

The exchange between the two men ends with Hibbert hesitantly agreeing *'I'll –'*. The agreement between the men that they will not reveal anything regarding their conversation. The audience will have had very mixed and changing reactions to Stanhope, but his decision to stay shows what an excellent leader he really is. Despite his flaws, he has achieved his purpose. The Company is fully staffed before the German offensive – evidence that he is a very good leader.



**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Talk of the raid

The mood of the scene lifts, as is common now, when Mason enters to serve Stanhope just come in, some tea and food. It is over the 'oniony' tea that Stanhope tells Osborne that it is he and Raleigh who must lead it. Osborne's repeated responses 'Oh' and and ultimate resignation to having to go on a raid. Stanhope and Osborne both know during the raid, perhaps even Osborne himself. Stanhope apologises 'I'm damn sorry all right, old chap' (p. 60). There is a mutual understanding between the men: Osborne has no say in the decision to make the raid or who to send and Stanhope understands life could be taken but, if it is, it will be an honourable death in the line of duty. Osborne Stanhope will easily be able to recruit further volunteers for the raid, a testament to themselves and the loyalty they have to Stanhope as their commander.

When Trotter enters, news of the raid is passed to him too. Trotter is the only one to raid openly, stating 'joking apart. It's damn ridiculous...' (p. 63). Osborne, showing his Trotter that he should ensure that he does not make such comments around Raleigh 'it's murder' (p. 63).

It is then revealed that Osborne has been sitting reading *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. This revelation is important in understanding Osborne's character. At this time of crisis and uncertainty, he is looking for an escape and he has chosen to read a children's story – perhaps highlighting his innocence and heightening the tragedy that is about to occur, that such an innocent life will be lost. Perhaps Osborne sees some parallels between Wonderland and fighting in the trenches – both places where the inhabitants feel out of place; normal rules no longer seem to apply and decisions are delivered by an autocrat with no regard for human life. Although Trotter declares 'I don't see the point in that!' (p. 64) when Osborne reads aloud from the text, Sherriff has deliberately chosen the song of the little crocodile that lures fish to their death with his smile to remind the reader that the men joining up to the war did so in the name of patriotism and the hope of glory, only to die without reason. Osborne's response to Trotter 'Exactly. That's just the point' (p. 64) heightens this presentation of the futility of war.

The scene, and indeed the act, end with two very different reactions to the upcoming due to his inexperience, finds the raid 'most frightfully exciting!' (p. 65), he considers specially chosen and is keen for the glory that the raid might bring him. Osborne says 'I want to get a letter off' (p. 65), knowing that this will most likely be the last. The audience is left with the feeling, as with a traditional tragedy, that the last act numerous deaths.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



ACT TWO, SCENE TWO: ACTIVE

INSPECTION COPY

Discussion and Debate Prompts

1. Look through the exchange between Hibbert and Stanhope. List all of the devices the Sherriff uses to create tension.
2. Look back at your previous notes on Stanhope, where you made a list of the traits of **Stanhope's character**. Add to both of these lists by including examples from Scene Two.
3. In what ways does Osborne present the theme of the **futility of war** during this scene?
4. How is Trotter's character developed at the end of this scene? Consider his actions on the raid and his views on Hibbert.

This neuralgia of mine. I'm awfully sorry. I'm afraid I can't stick it any longer. (Hibbert, p. 56: said when he is about to be shot)

What are **your views** on Hibbert in this scene? Is he really ill? Do you empathise with what he has had to do? Have you ever been in his position?

Active Learning Tasks (AO3)

In groups of three, **assign the following roles**: Hibbert, Stanhope and Director. The student playing Hibbert must convey his desperation; the student playing Stanhope must convey his strictness and, later, his compassion. The Director must help the actors find ways to convey the nuances of the scene both through their actions and their dialogue.

You can find out more about rules regarding the execution of deserters during the First World War here: http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/world_war_one/execution_of_deserters.htm

This website holds over four million records of men who fought in various wars, including the First World War. You could try entering your surname to see what records are found. Perhaps one of your ancestors was a soldier. http://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/records.asp?SE=go&KW=one_war_47&gclid=CLW25vySurICFY5TfAodKnAATg

Essay Question

'In Journey's End a number of parent-child relationships are evident, despite the absence of the parents. Which relationships do you think fit this description? You may want to offer some evidence from Act Two, Scene Two.

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



ACT THREE, SCENE ONE

INSPECTION COPY

KEY POINTS

- ✓ Takes place on Wednesday afternoon – 20th March 1918
- ✓ Colonel meets with the men before the raid
- ✓ Raleigh and Osborne reminisce about home before the raid
- ✓ A German prisoner is taken, but he reveals very little
- ✓ Osborne is killed during the raid and Raleigh is traumatised

Summary

The Colonel confirms that the raid must take place and at the specified time (in a sensible one, i.e. in the dark). We see the tension building up through the surreal conversation between Raleigh and the Colonel as they wait, their conversation lasting the exact number of minutes until the raid is set off. The raid takes place offstage (as it must) and the audience only experiences the aftermath: a prisoner is brought in and briefly questioned, and the Colonel is very pleased, although the men are going to extract much useful information from him. Only after this do we learn the names of several of the men. Raleigh is in shock; so is Stanhope, though the two men react differently.

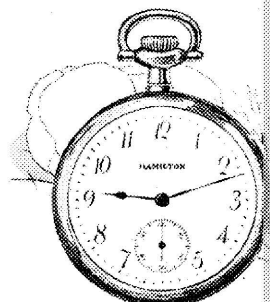
Analysis (A01, A02, A03)

Stanhope and the Colonel

Sherriff opens the act with a description of the lighting in the dugout: *'the earth was lit by a light that slowly fades with the sinking sun'* (p. 66). Despite being a description of the setting, Sherriff makes the event seem very unnatural here. The 'glow' offered by the sun's light contrasts with the description of the gunfire during the raid, and the use of a harsh adjective 'sinking' suggests the fading hopes of survival for the men.

Stanhope's anxiety about the impending raid is clear as he *'looks anxiously at his watch'* (p. 66). The dugout. This is the first of many references to time in Act Three, Scene One. He realises how quickly, as Stanhope realises that there is very little time left for any changes to be made.

When the Colonel arrives, Stanhope asks him on several occasions if he has suggestions regarding the raid. However, the Colonel tells him that *'the present arrangement is the best'* (p. 66) and that the raid cannot be postponed because his superiors have *'got some reserves'* (p. 67) and so they need the Colonel's report by seven. Sherriff is clearly portraying his views of the actions of high-up officials during the war, showing them as entirely unconcerned with any loss of life. Indeed, Stanhope's sarcastic comment that the superiors would be disinclined to move their meeting to later due to the planned dinner shows exactly what he and Sherriff feel about the decisions of these officials. Despite trying again to make a further suggestion regarding the raid, which may make his men safer, Stanhope eventually has to resign himself to the fact that he has done all he can and he cannot change the fact that the raid will take place imminently.



Further evidence of the Colonel's lack of regard for his own men is shown when he tells them that the prisoners who are taken are bought back to the dugout rather than headquarters: *'shell pretty heavily. I don't want the risk of the prisoners being knocked out before we've got them'*. The Colonel's differing priorities reveal his status as a higher officer. To him, his men are expendable. The German prisoner might tell them could potentially be game-changing, having effects on the war.

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



The Colonel mentions the 'red rags' (p. 68) that have been placed on the wire at the camp. These have been placed to signify where the hole has been blown, for the men to enter. There are several connotations of the rag here. The 'red' colour itself signifies blood, bringing to mind images of a bull fight, signifying danger and imminent attack. The taunting nature too: the Germans know that the British are coming for them and

Pre-raid anxieties

In this section of the act, the audience sees several different actions and reactions for the Colonel to talk to the men before the raid takes place, despite the Colonel getting out of it – 'Don't you think they'd rather be left alone?' (p. 69). It is clear that in talking to the men, shown in the stage directions: 'The Colonel lingers for a moment, then the Colonel clears his throat and speaks' (p. 69). The Colonel makes an attempt at saying some encouraging words, suggesting they will 'put up a good show', 'it may mean the Colonel will recommend you both for the M.C.' (p. 69). However, any positive effect these words have is lost when he orders 'Don't forget to empty your pockets of papers and things' (p. 69) to the men the reality that, although they are hoping to take a German prisoner, they are prisoners themselves and so they must remove anything that the enemy might find.

After the Colonel leaves, there is a very touching moment between Stanhope and Osborne as they say their goodbyes. Sherriff has crafted the moment with great subtlety and emotional intensity; much goes unsaid between the two characters but it is clear how much their friendship means to both men. Osborne, as previously discussed, recognises the dangers of the raid and is fully aware that he might be killed. For this reason, he decides to leave some personal belongings, including his wedding ring, with Stanhope – so that Stanhope can ensure that they are returned to Osborne's wife. The 'awkward little laugh' (p. 70) which Osborne gives reveals that Stanhope can only reply 'You're coming back, old man' (p. 70) – a statement which the audience, Osborne's leaving of his wedding ring becomes symbolic of the impact that that is all that might remain of him after the raid. This moment between Stanhope and Osborne is not only of the strong friendship they have forged but of all the close relationships and the necessity during wartime.

When Stanhope leaves Osborne and Raleigh alone, waiting for the last few minutes before the raid, the audience is offered another quite touching moment – creating melancholy and foreshadowing Osborne's death at the end of the act. As Raleigh and Osborne talk, Raleigh's incessant questions, Osborne's numerous questions, runs through what they will do during the raid and, as Raleigh copies Osborne's actions – 'I think I will, too' (p. 70). Osborne tries to keep the conversation light to distract Raleigh from asking too many questions, because he wants to keep buoyant despite the realisation that the raid is most likely going to be a suicide mission. Despite this, the tension is highlighted through the frequent silences and pauses mentioned in stage directions. Time suddenly seems to be moving very slowly: 'I wish we could go now / We've got eight

One of the attempts Osborne makes at changing the topic of conversation begins with him reciting part of 'The Walrus and the Carpenter', a song from *Through the Looking Glass*, the sequel to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Although here Osborne's recital of the story prompts the two men to distract themselves by talking about pigs, there is symbolic relevance in Sherriff's inclusion of this song: in the song, innocent young oysters are lured to the Walrus' home with the promise of a 'treat', only to be eaten by him and the Carpenter. The allegorical link to Sherriff's view of the nature of war, and how young men were lured in with promises of glory, is clear.

Talk of pigs allows the two men the opportunity to reminisce about home. However, as the audience realises that Raleigh's repeated invitations for Osborne to visit him back home will never happen. Also, Raleigh's anecdote about the time he and Stanhope used to spend together with no other company but each other, shows just how close they used to be – but this serves to highlight how much their relationship has broken down since Raleigh joined the Company and Stanhope



**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Osborne's glancing at his watch brings the two men back to reality and the topic of rewards which the men are being offered after the raid, namely a fresh chicken dinner. When they go up, Raleigh notices Osborne's wedding ring on the table. The fact that Osborne does not have it with him has left it there shows that he wants to fulfil his role as carer and protector to the last. Osborne's exclamation 'Oh' and the immediate stage direction describing *'There is silence. He puts down the watch perhaps for the first time, Raleigh realises the severity and reality of what they are about to do'* (p. 75) perhaps for the first time, Raleigh realises the severity and reality of what they are about to do.

Post-raid tragedies

As established earlier in Act One, the entire action of the play takes place in the cell. All of the action of the raid takes place offstage. Instead, Sherriff offers a detailed description of what is heard of the raid with the *'bursting smoke bombs', 'vicious rattle of machine guns', 'rattle of machine guns' and 'crash of falling shells'* (p. 76). Sherriff's choice of adjectives presents the raid as a violent and chaotic event. The description *'The machine-guns stop – rattle again and stop – rattle for the last time – and then silence'* (p. 76) gives a sense of finality, and the audience realises that they are about to find out which, if any, are still alive from the raid.

The reappearance of the Colonel increases the tragedy and tension of the moment. The Colonel is concerned with his own agenda, his first question being about how many prisoners were taken. Stanhope who asks to leave the interrogation, saying *'I want to go and see those men who were with me'* (p. 76) shows his loyalty to his Company, perhaps even redeeming himself in this moment for his earlier actions. No matter how he has behaved, it is clear that his men are his foremost priority. On several pages of dialogue later that the Colonel absentmindedly asks *'Oh – er – what about Raleigh? Is he safely back?'* (p. 79). It is then that Stanhope reveals that Osborne and six other men were killed in the raid. It is revealed that Osborne was killed by *'a hand grenade – while he was waiting for the machine-guns to stop'* (p. 79). He has died a hero's death and, as suggested previously, the manner of his death shows the Colonel as protector and carer seriously: he refused to leave the raid without knowing that Raleigh was safe. Raleigh took this opportunity to kill him. Stanhope's *'pale, expressionless face'* (p. 79) mirrors the Colonel's at what is definitely the most tragic moment of the play so far.

The tragedy of Osborne's death and the loss of such a great man is made even more unbearable through the Colonel's dealing with the German prisoner. The Colonel essentially learns nothing of any use from the young German boy who will only reveal the regiment he is with and when they were captured – information of no tactical use to the Colonel's superiors. However, the Colonel is heard muttering *'Splendid!'* (p. 78) to himself and he tells Stanhope *'We've got all we wanted... I must go right away and 'phone the brigadier. He'll be very pleased about it. It's a feather in our cap, Stanhope!'* (p. 79). Stanhope's resulting *'look of astonishment at the Colonel'* and bitter comment *'How awfully nice – if the brigadier's pleased'* (p. 79), which he repeats to the Colonel after revealing details of the casualties of the raid, show his sadness and mourning at the loss of the lives of his friends – a stark comparison to the Colonel's mood of triumph and elation. Sherriff sets Stanhope apart from the Colonel, again redeeming him in the eyes of the audience. Stanhope has been let down by his superiors and the audience realises that his closest friend, who has been let down by his superiors and the audience realises that his closest friend, will result in a further mental and psychological breakdown for Stanhope. Stanhope *'fidgets uneasily'* (p. 79) as he realises just how Stanhope must be feeling.

At the end of the scene, Sherriff once again shows that it is not only physical casualties but psychological damage too. Raleigh returns from the raid in deep traumatic shock, *'asleep'* (p. 79) and so traumatised that he is unable to speak, despite the Colonel offering him a Military Cross. Raleigh's hands are also described as *'bleeding'* (p. 79), a poignant image used by Sherriff to highlight how Raleigh's life was sacrificed only for his survival. Raleigh is forced to rise from his sitting position on Osborne's bed when Stanhope asks *'What's the matter?'* (p. 80), a cruel order given his current state of weakness but perhaps revealing the blame for Osborne's death on Raleigh, since it was Raleigh who Osborne was waiting for. The *'heavy guns booming'* (p. 80) which end the scene reveal that the fight is far from over. Despite the sacrifices that have been made and the innocent lives that have been lost, the Company cannot escape attack and the rest of the men have very little time left.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



ACT THREE, SCENE ONE: ACT I

INSPECTION COPY

Discussion and Debate Prompts (A05)

1. Look at the dialogue between the Colonel and Stanhope at the start of the scene. What is made apparent that this will be an ill-fated raid?
2. Osborne leaves his pipe on the table, still glowing, when he leaves for the raid. What might this hold?
3. Look at the Colonel's interaction with the German prisoner. What suggests he is sufficiently competent to be leading the interrogation?
4. Go back through the scene and list all mentions/references to time. How is time passing? Does this change throughout the scene? What effect does this have?

I want to go and see those men. (Stanhope, p. 77)

What on earth should I do without you? (Stanhope, p. 70)

What are **your views** on Stanhope in this scene? Has he now redeemed his previous actions towards Hibbert and Raleigh?

Active Learning Tasks (A03)

Write Stanhope's personal journal entry after the events of this scene. Consider what he might express on: the upcoming attack; the death of Osborne; the injury of Raleigh; the state of the troops.

Listen to audio of soldiers recalling their experiences of trench life by following the link below. Listen primarily to 'Trench Life' and 'Over the Top'. What do these memories add to your understanding of what it was like to fight in the war?

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/soldiers_stories_gallery

Read the poem 'The General' by Siegfried Sassoon here:

<http://www.web-books.com/Classics/Poetry/Anthology/Sassoon/General>

What similarities can you see between the opinions offered by Sassoon and by Sherriff?

Essay Question

Examine the ways Sherriff explores mental and physical conflict in the face of war. Discuss the techniques Sherriff uses to reveal his ideas.

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



ACT THREE, SCENE TWO

INSPECTION COPY

KEY POINTS

- ✓ Takes place on Wednesday night – 20th March 1918
- ✓ The men, except Raleigh, eat their celebratory dinner
- ✓ Hibbert annoys Stanhope and is sent to bed
- ✓ Trotter is made second in command
- ✓ Raleigh's actions anger Stanhope and he makes Raleigh leave

Summary

The atmosphere at the post-raid 'celebratory' meal is a strange one; Raleigh is frazzled and on duty, and the other three officers are enjoying a rare treat of decent food and drink. Under the influence of drink, Hibbert tries to be friendly, one of the lads, and the scene is as tense and awkward as we sense Stanhope and Trotter's dislike of Hibbert. Eventually Hibbert leaves; he then tells Trotter that he is now his second-in-command. From this point, Hibbert's behaviour becomes more serious and focused on his duties. When Raleigh finally leaves, he attacks him for eating with the enlisted men and for not wishing to eat his share of food saved for him. We realise how awful it is that these two men, who have both, in a way, been affected by the death of Osborne, are unable to empathise with each other...

Analysis (A01, A02, A03)

Champagne, chicken and women

The manner in which Scene Two opens is in direct contrast to the tense and tragic ending of Act Three, Scene One. A first glance over the opening stage directions offers a bright scene of 'uproarious laughter' (p. 80) and the men satisfied and content after a large meal ('now and then his hand steals gently over his distended stomach' (p. 81)). It could seem that Sherriff is trying to offer some relief after the recent scene of tragedy. However, a closer analysis of the stage directions reveals that this scene of frivolity is entirely unnatural and is masking the grief and trauma of the men. Although the dugout is described as being 'lit quite festively' (p. 80), of a brighter setting than has been seen so far, Sherriff describes this lighting as being 'of candles' (p. 80), suggesting that this light is not to be seen as symbolic of any happy or unnatural light. Also, although Stanhope is described as being in good humour, telling seemingly relaxed with his 'ruffled hair' (p. 80), the 'bright red flush on his cheeks' (p. 80) under the unnatural lighting that has been created, Stanhope's good mood has been unnatural due to excessive drinking over dinner. Indeed, not content with the 'two bottles of champagne' on the table, he quickly asks for Mason to bring whisky too. The audience is reminded of Stanhope's under and that he is using the dinner as an escape from his grief – something more apparent by the end of this scene. Despite the outward positivity of the scene, the attack will come in the next, last, scene of the play and that this is most likely

One interesting feature of the men's supper is Hibbert's behaviour. Outwardly, he is the opposite of the scared man who could not wait to leave, seen earlier. Here, he shares anecdotes and laughter with the men. However, the side of Hibbert that the audience sees is positive and, once again, he proves to be a character with whom it is somewhat difficult to connect. He tells the men with tales of his activities with women – 'I never forget picking up a couple of girls out to dinner' (p. 80); toasting to 'Good old legs!' (p. 81), and showing the men a collection of photographs he carries around with him – pictures of women which, Trotter suggests, 'satisfies' him. Hibbert seems concerned only with having a good time. It could be argued that he has mistimed his story behind the dinner or perhaps that he, like several of the others, is using it to escape from reality. Certainly, his stage directions would support the latter view as, behind all his talk, he is 'nervously twitching' (p. 81) with a 'pale face' and a 'high pitched and excited' (p. 81) laugh, as unnatural as the whole dinner itself – an act to mask his true psychological state.

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Raleigh's absence

The mood of the meal changes when Trotter states that it is a shame Raleigh did not come. The conversation quickly moves to talk of the raid. Hibbert reveals his lack of understanding of the situation, when he posits that Raleigh's absence is because he is *'too keen on his duty'* as saying *'he liked being up there with the men better than down here with us'* and *'you're a bit of a fool'* (p. 85) with no ability to read between the lines and empathise with how Raleigh is feeling about his absence from the meal. Trotter, however, shows that he does understand the situation and assesses that *'the raid shook 'im up more'n we thought'* (p. 85).

This topic of conversation proves unbearable for Stanhope who snaps *'Oh, for God's sake, don't think I want to talk about it!'* (p. 85) and wrongly blames Trotter for starting the conversation with *'Shut up!'* (p. 85). Talk of the raid and Stanhope's outburst ruin the good-humoured attempt by Hibbert to turn the conversation back to women, Stanhope will not listen. He turns on Hibbert, ordering him to bed and to *'Get out of my sight!'* (p. 86) when Hibbert tries to continue.

Trotter, again, shows his ability to empathise with others when he stands up for Hibbert because *'I reckon 'e only wanted to keep cheerful'* (p. 87). Trotter's own character is revealed by Sherriff as Stanhope claims that nothing upsets Trotter *'you're always the same'* reply *'Always the same, am I? Little you know –'* (p. 87). This suggests, as suspected, that Trotter's excessive eating are just his way of coping with the horrors of war. Stanhope then asks *'you're my second-in-command now, don't you?'* (p. 87) and the audience would agree that he is a replacement, especially when he assures Stanhope *'I won't let you down'* (p. 87). It is this role of Stanhope's confidant and carer/protector of the men just as well as Osborne that makes his reaction to Raleigh's return so significant.

Raleigh's return

Raleigh's return to the dugout prompts the second confrontation between Raleigh and Stanhope, fuelled by Stanhope's excessive alcohol consumption. Tension is created when Raleigh describes how he *'pauses'* and *'hesitates'* (p. 88); it is clear that he does not know what to expect from Stanhope. Stanhope is immediately confrontational, demanding to know why Raleigh is back (p. 88) rather than with the other officers. Raleigh attempts to offer perfectly reasonable answers but clear that Stanhope is not interested in Raleigh's answers – he bullies Raleigh, showing that he has lost control, his temper *'risen to a trembling fury'* and *'his hand trembles so violently between his teeth'* (p. 90). Stanhope even becomes quite monstrous *'his eyes wide open'* (p. 91). Raleigh, like the audience, can only watch on *'horrificed'* (p. 90). Stanhope is so grieving so heavily for his best friend that he can no longer hide his true emotions.

Mirroring Stanhope's earlier encounter with Hibbert, here he bullies Raleigh to break down emotionally, crying and revealing the reason he chose not to eat with the other officers *'I can't eat that – when – when Osborne's – lying – out there –'* (p. 91). However, his confession *'I'm awfully sorry, Dennis. I – I didn't understand'* (p. 91) – when Stanhope reveals the reason for his anger *'the excesses of the meal – to forget, you little fool – to forget! D'you understand! To forget! That's what a man can bear?'* (p. 91) do nothing to comfort Stanhope. There are several reasons for Stanhope's breakdown in front of Raleigh: perhaps his anger is fuelled by feelings that Raleigh's return reminds him of Osborne's death; perhaps Raleigh, coming from Stanhope's home, represents everything Stanhope has lost or is about to lose or, perhaps, in a twisted way, Stanhope only feels comfortable showing his real emotions in front of someone he considers to be his friend. Whatever the reason, Stanhope is now an entirely broken man. Either way, it is tragic that, at a moment when the two men could offer each other some support, they are unable to do so.

As the curtain falls on this scene, Sherriff reminds the audience of *'the impatient gunfire'* (p. 91). The personification of the gunfire here shows how it will only be a matter of time before more victims of the war and of the constant threat of attack that was such a part of life in the trenches. With a reminder that, in the final scene of the play, the attack on the dugout will take place, the audience is left with a sense of foreboding.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



ACT THREE, SCENE TWO: ACT I

INSPECTION COPY

Discussion and Debate Prompts (A05)

1. Make a list of the ways that Sherriff presents the strain Stanhope is under the scene. Look at stage directions, actions and dialogue.
2. What does talk of women reveal about the attitudes of Stanhope, Trotter and How might the audience react to this?
3. Look at Mason's brief part in this scene. How does Sherriff use him to remind alcoholism?
4. Examine stage directions for Raleigh during his confrontation with Stanhope Stanhope at this point in the play?

I reckon 'e only wanted to keep cheerful. (Trotter on Hibbert, p. 87)

Little worm gets on my nerves. / Doesn't he nearly drive you mad? (Stanhope on Trotter)

What are **your views** on Hibbert in this scene? Are you able to see him a more empathise with his behaviour? Or do you agree with Stanhope's view of him?

Active Learning Tasks (A03)

Reread the opening stage directions to the scene. Then write a short additional scene that takes place **before** the opening of Act Three, Scene Two. What have the men been 'uproarious laughter'?

Visit the National Archives to learn more about trench life. Here you can watch videos and preparations for battle being made. You can also read war diaries and letters. If this, do you think that Sherriff has created a realistic version of trench life in his play? <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/greatwar/g3/cs4/default.htm>

Browse some of the photos of WWI here and then choose one which you think would cover of a new edition of *Journey's End*. Why did you choose this picture? <http://www.firstworldwar.com/photos/trenches.htm>

Essay Question

Examine the importance of Trotter to the play. What contributions does he make?

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



ACT THREE, SCENE THREE

INSPECTION COPY

KEY POINTS

- ✓ Takes place on Thursday, just before dawn – 21st March 1918
- ✓ Trotter has woken early to prepare for the attack
- ✓ The attack begins and there are many casualties
- ✓ Raleigh is fatally injured and dies with Stanhope by his side
- ✓ Stanhope joins the fight and it is indicated that none of the Company survive

Summary

The German attack begins; Trotter is seen to be carrying out his new duties conscientiously. Hibbert loses his nerve and Stanhope has to spend valuable time coaxing and tricking him into the trenches. Things move very fast: Raleigh is mortally wounded, although he is not aware of it. Stanhope neglects his duties and spends the former's last few minutes with him, comforting him. As Stanhope returns to his duty in the trenches, the dugout is demolished by a direct shell hit, and the whole company has almost certainly been wiped out.

Analysis (A01, A02, A03)

The attack

The stage directions which open the final scene of the play set the scene for its tragic atmosphere: *'the candles are no longer burning'* (p. 92) and only a *'tiny flame'* (p. 92) provides any light. The diminished light is symbolic of the little time which the men in the Company have left. Stanhope realises that, when the lights are extinguished entirely, the lives of the men will be too.

It takes Mason some effort to rouse Stanhope from sleep, but it is revealed that Stanhope is already dressed, and he has woken the other men too. It seems clear that he is taking the attack seriously.

Sherriff includes two moments of humour here to relieve some of the tension of the scene: Stanhope followed by Stanhope throwing him a few coins and Mason's lack of understanding of the French *'Pâté de fois gras'* (p. 95) lighten the mood. However, Stanhope's order to the soldier to 'be a good boy' to the letter he is sending to the Battalion shows his real expectations for the company. Remember at this stage that the Company has been told that they must hold their own and not expect any other help and will see that Stanhope's conclusion is entirely realistic.

Alcohol has been Stanhope's life force throughout the play – the thing he uses to cope with the only thing that really keeps him going. The last bottle being drunk here is again for Stanhope. Stanhope's *'quavering hand'* (p. 96) betrays his nerves but, despite this, he never for a moment considers not going up to fight with the other men – he is determined.

Hibbert, however, reveals his cowardice once again in the last scene, pretending to be asleep and playing down the severity of the attack – all to avoid having to go up and fight. He accuses him *'You're just wasting as much time as you can'* (p. 97), but he is forced to go the way up. Throughout this exchange, the stage directions describe the sounds of the attack being heard, indicating that the attack has already begun. The fact that Hibbert can hear the attack and help the men creates a negative final impression of his character.



COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Raleigh's death

After Hibbert's exit, the Sergeant Major enters with news of the first casualties. It is evident that the men are outnumbered and that they are ill-equipped to deal with the war which Sherriff was keen to highlight. The stage directions reveal that the shouting is getting louder and therefore are getting nearer to the dugout.

The Sergeant Major returns to bring news that *'Mr Raleigh's been 'it, sir. Bit of shell's got his spine, sir; can't move 'is legs'* (p. 99). Although Stanhope has previously ordered the injured man to be moved to a larger, neighbouring dugout, for Raleigh he orders *'Bring him down here'* (p. 99). Stanhope, who has suffered a fatal injury and he wants to be there to comfort him as he passes. It is in this moment that Stanhope fully redeems himself, like the stereotypical tragic hero, for all of his past errors – just as he has made his peace with death.

Raleigh's is the only death that is seen onstage and it is clear that Sherriff did this for dramatic effect. Raleigh is carried in *'like a child in [his] huge arms'* (p. 100) and this simile is crafted to highlight his youth. Sherriff seeks to intensify the tragedy of Raleigh's death as a microcosm of all of the young lives lost during the war.

The severity of Raleigh's injury is quickly apparent, especially as the stage directions reveal that the Sergeant Major *'looks furtively at his palms, and wipes the blood on the sides of his trousers'* (p. 100). Stanhope's mood changes and, for the first time in the play, he addresses Raleigh using his first name *'Jimmy'* (p. 100). This more familiar term of address adds to the tragedy of Raleigh is about to die and endears Stanhope to him, as he tries to be as comfortable as possible for his friend.

At first, Raleigh does not seem to understand the severity of his injury, claiming *'I'm not hurt'* (p. 101). However, Raleigh's realisation that he is paralysed and the resulting silence perhaps indicate that he knows he is dying. Of course, it is entirely possible that Raleigh does not understand the extent of his injuries, as he is in extreme shock. Raleigh's last words, *'it's so frightful'*, serve as an indication of the dark and cold that is about to befall all of the men and the world.

After Raleigh's death, Stanhope *'stares listlessly'* (p. 102) across at his friend. Stanhope psychologically he has been entirely defeated by the war and, soon, he will be physically. The chance that Raleigh dies on Osborne's bed. The symbolism is clear and only increases as he must say goodbye to a second close friend.

Sherriff uses 'red' symbolically twice in this short section: after Raleigh's death *'the far side of the trench is red'* (p. 102) and a soldier enters, *'his red face wet with perspiration'* (p. 103). This represents the worsening events, the lives already lost and the further blood that is still to be shed. It also represents the setting as *'the stars begin to go'* (p. 102) and the audience realises that only unnatural light remains.

The end

Stanhope goes up to join the fight with the rest of the men and the play ends with the following stage directions. As Stanhope leaves, he *'lightly runs his fingers over Raleigh's tousled hair'* (p. 103), showing the depth of his feelings towards his young friend. Stanhope knows that Raleigh will be taken – but he remains loyal to his country and his men.

The stage now empty apart from Raleigh's body, Sherriff describes that the shock *'stabs out the candle-flame; the timber props of the door cave slowly in, sandbags fall and the trench is dark'* (p. 103). Throughout the play, the dugout has been personified and, being the single place where the men are safe, it represents the men themselves. Here, the violent verb 'stabs' suggests the violent death of the men. The dugout suffers a symbolic death by suffocation as the sandbags block its only source of light. It is clear that this is meant to represent the death of all the men in the attack taking place. The dugout is a symbol of hope and life throughout the play, and the fact that the dugout is destroyed further confirms the audience's realisation that there will be no survivors of the attack.

Sherriff ends the play with two further descriptions: the *'red dawn glows'*, reminiscent of the beginning of the play, and *'faintly there comes the dull rattle of machine-guns and the fevered splatter of rifle fire'* (p. 103). That, despite the horrific loss of such innocent lives, the battle continues and many more will die before the flames of the war are finally extinguished.



**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



ACT THREE, SCENE THREE: ACT

INSPECTION COPY

Discussion and Debate Prompts (A05)

1. What is Trotter's attitude towards the battle?
2. How does Stanhope manipulate events to ensure that Hibbert fights with the
3. How does Stanhope redeem himself in this scene, for his behaviour earlier in
4. How does Sherriff use the following symbolically in the final scene?
 - a. Light
 - b. Red
 - c. Osborne's bed
 - d. Gunfire in the background
5. *It's so frightfully dark and cold. (Raleigh, p. 102)*
The shock stabs out the candle-flame. (Stage directions, p. 103)

What are **your views** on the ending of the play? Do you feel it was a satisfactory ending? What responses did you have to the ending?

Active Learning Tasks (A04)

Imagine that, when Stanhope's sends his last message off to Battalion Headquarters, he writes a letter which he would like to be sent home to his family. Write this letter, considering what he might include in it. Would he still try to hide the horrors he has faced? Or will it be too much for him?

Read the poem 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' by Wilfred Owen. What similarities do you see in the presentation of war offered by both Owen and Sherriff? Do they share the same view of war?
<http://www.warpoetry.co.uk/owen2.html>

Essay Question

Explore the ways in which Sherriff crafts the ending of *Journey's End* to create a moving and dramatic close to his play.

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



CHARACTERISATION (A01, A02)

When we come to consider the characters as individuals, and in their relationships do below, it is important to remember that in a drama the characters present themselves named, introduced and described as they often are in a novel.

In your study of any of Shakespeare's plays, you will have seen how very few clues characters look like, or how they dress or speak or move. Similarly, there are very few clues in *Journey's End*. Consider how completely different Sherriff's presentation of his characters is: their age and appearance to assist a director in casting the roles, details about actors in creating their roles, and obviously their costume is dictated by the very nature of the play.

Remember, too, that the dramatist chooses the order in which he presents his characters. This is not how a novelist does it, but the effect is surely much more noticeable in a play). Perhaps the best example of this in *Journey's End* are the presentation of Stanhope through the conversation with Raleigh as he walks on to the stage, and then, after the raid, the way the Colonel interrogates the prisoners about their success before asking about casualties, and before noticing the trauma of the men.

Colonel

Although the Colonel's appearances onstage are relatively brief, we nevertheless get a sense of who he is. Sherriff viewed those officers who were not based in the trenches, the ones who were in command, as affecting the lives and deaths of the men up in the lines. His purpose is simple: he wants to tell Stanhope that his unit is to make a raid against the German front line opposite, via a prisoner who will give them information about the forthcoming offensive. Although the Colonel makes the decision about who to send, in fact he names Osborne and Raleigh as the ones to go. When he reappears again immediately before the raid, to say that Stanhope's request for a prisoner cannot be entertained (because of mealtimes at HQ), and he is there to interrogate the prisoner (but he does not seem to extract much useful information from the prisoner).

He is a go-between character in that he is a link between brigade HQ and the trenches. While he is in the line. He comes across as unfeeling and insensitive, in that he interrogates the prisoners before asking about British casualties in the raid, and tries to cheer up the obvious trauma of the men by promising him a medal.



Active Learning Task 1: Make a list of useful adjectives to describe various aspects of the Colonel. Find half a dozen useful brief quotations with which you could illustrate aspects of his character.

Hardy

Hardy is a captain, like Stanhope; the first character we meet, and one whom we meet again with the latter when he finally appears, for Hardy is clearly disorganised, untidy and has been managing the section of the line that Stanhope must take over. Hardy seems to be in a state of mind with Osborne. We see Osborne's loyalty to Stanhope, as well as his wish not to let Stanhope's sloppiness clearly angers him. Hardy also raises questions about Stanhope's character. We should have in mind when we meet him. Here is a standard writer's technique of presenting the varying opinions of others long before presenting us with the character himself.

Hardy is clearly very relieved that he and his men will not be around for the imminent raid. When he departs happily singing, we do not see him again, although we are later treated to a song by him.



Active Learning Task 2: Make a list of useful adjectives to describe various aspects of Hardy. Find half a dozen useful brief quotations with which you could illustrate aspects of his character.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Hibbert

Hibbert is an odd character in a number of ways. He avoids contact with the other officers like him. He thinks he is ill – or maybe he is ill – with neuralgia, and either displays or has them. Can we ever really be sure? It is clear that he desperately wants to be sent home as soon as possible, so that he does not have to face the German offensive. Hibbert faces a serious challenge: he cannot afford to be one officer down at such a crucial time. He is malingering and, in the crucial scene, just after the Colonel has brought the news of the raid, when Hibbert attempts to tell Stanhope he is going to see the MO to be treated, he refuses to let him go, and threatens to shoot him if he tries to leave, leading Hibbert to be interpreted as striking an officer. Unconventional tactics these may be, but Stanhope is an officer and showing him some sympathy, once he has ensured that he will not try to leave, has another crisis of nerves on the morning of the offensive, which perhaps confirms his oddity.

Under the influence of drink, as the officers – without Raleigh – eat the meal provided, Hibbert tries hard to be one of the lads, but fails, once again provoking Stanhope's ire. Once again, cowardice and duty come together in the character of Hibbert and we should be sympathetic about him, repellent though he may seem.



Active Learning Task 3: Make a list of useful adjectives to describe various aspects of Hibbert's character. Find half a dozen useful brief quotations with which you could illustrate aspects of his character.

Raleigh

Raleigh is a newly trained Second Lieutenant, fresh out from England, and so will have to learn how to survive in the trenches. He is eager and excited to be finally facing the enemy. It turns out that he went to school with Stanhope, although the latter was several years ahead of him. He has been back to the school as an officer, and inspired Raleigh, to whom he is clearly indebted. It is through whom Sherriff invites his audience to reflect on the nature of hero worship.

Raleigh has to come to terms with how different his schoolmate is after several years of war. He has drinking habits; he is clearly shocked by Stanhope's reaction to his letter home.

He is gung-ho about the raid, in contrast to Osborne, and it's interesting to observe how the two of them spend time together filling in the minutes until it's time to go. He is inexperienced in the experience of the raid, and the consequent deaths of Osborne and several of the other officers.



Active Learning Task 4: Make a list of useful adjectives to describe various aspects of Raleigh's character. Find half a dozen useful brief quotations with which you could illustrate aspects of his character.

Stanhope

Stanhope is a captain, and commander of the company, about 21 years old, and has completed officer training after leaving school, so counts as a veteran. He is a vicar's son. He has won the Military Cross, and has not taken home leave in the three years he has been in France. We gain the impression that he is an efficient and organised officer who looks after his men under his command. However, the effects of the war have taken their toll on him. He has turned to alcohol to calm his nerves and has a very short temper; we see how dependent he is on his friend (Osborne) to keep him on the straight and narrow.



Active Learning Task 5: Make a list of useful adjectives to describe various aspects of Stanhope's character. Find half a dozen useful brief quotations with which you could illustrate aspects of his character.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Trotter

Trotter is an officer but he stands out from the others because, unlike them, he has risen up through the ranks, whereas the others began their army careers as officers. Trotter is different from them; we see this through his accent, and his interests – his garden, and the cinema, and his entertainment. He is middle-aged and fond of food, having gained weight on army life. He is fondly mentioned in a number of conversations with his fellow officers. After Osborne's death, the German offensive due the next morning, it is inevitable that he will be made Stanhope's second-in-command for his new duties seriously.



Active Learning Task 6: Make a list of useful adjectives to describe various aspects of Trotter's character. Find half a dozen useful brief quotations with which you could illustrate aspects of his character.

Osborne

Osborne is Stanhope's second-in-command when the company arrives in the trench 'Uncle'; it is easy to see why. He was a schoolmaster in civilian life, and a sportsman, having played rugby for England once. He strikes up conversation with all the others save Hibberd, but that it isn't just conversation for the sake of politeness, it is genuine and friendly. It is a displacement activity for Osborne as it takes his mind off the immediacy of the war. He is something of a role model for others in his calmness and acceptance of his lot, even in the face of a raid in which he will be killed. He is a close friend of Stanhope, very protective of him, and left of his sanity.

Because he is such a likeable character, his death in the raid comes as a greater shock to Stanhope than someone he was talking with and leading the raid with only a couple of minutes prior to his loss of his main source of support and comfort.



Active Learning Task 7: Make a list of useful adjectives to describe various aspects of Osborne's character. Find half a dozen useful brief quotations with which you could illustrate aspects of his character.

Mason

Mason is the company cook, a servant of the officers in their dugout, and quite content with something of a cushy number in being the cook and 'gofer', since he doesn't have to fight. When the German offensive begins, he must also join the troops up in the trenches, a far less cushy class than the officers, and provides some much-needed comic relief to the serious atmosphere.



Active Learning Task 8: Make a list of useful adjectives to describe various aspects of Mason's character. Find half a dozen useful brief quotations with which you could illustrate aspects of his character.

Sergeant-Major

This character doesn't even have a name and he only appears very briefly, to give the company a sense of direction. His position is something of a bridge between the enlisted men and the officers, the Colonel being a link between the officers in the dugout and Brigade HQ. His duties are many, and things happen, so when Stanhope is trying to organise the dispositions of his men for the next offensive, and how they must try to react to various scenarios, he gives various instructions to the Major. We are surely intended to see what an impossible task the company is facing in this suicide mission.



Active Learning Task 9: Make a list of useful adjectives to describe various aspects of the Sergeant-Major's behaviour. Are there any useful brief quotations with which you could illustrate aspects of his character?

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS

It's important to consider relationships between characters as well as look at their ideas and opinions ready and evidence to hand to suit the questions you find for examination. It's certainly worth going through the text and logging all the different places, between whom, and what the central issues of the conversations are. We'll look at the key relationships in *Journey's End*.

Osborne and Raleigh

Osborne is the first of the officers Raleigh meets when he arrives, as Stanhope is. Their initial conversation is important. It establishes Osborne's friendliness; his reassuring attempts to prepare him for the inevitable shock of how different his hero Stanhope is. The second major interaction between them centres on the fact that they are both officers, which creates a bond between them, as well as heightening the differences in the way they think. Look very closely at the immediate lead-up to the raid, where they are both tense and have time to kill, to fill with empty talk, which yet isn't empty, because it's further evidence of the bond between them and Osborne's genuineness. Note, too, how their conversation lasts for the minutes they have to wait; in other words Sherriff creates this scene in real time.

Osborne and Trotter

Osborne and Trotter's conversations are in a way pure time-filling as they talk about their home life; there is, after all, an enormous amount of waiting between very short bursts of action. These conversations humanise the characters, fleshing out the portrait of Osborne into a real and believable character, too.

Osborne and Stanhope

Here is the key relationship in the play. Osborne is the avuncular schoolmaster, Stanhope is the sixth-former: it almost feels like a form tutor / tutee relationship. Osborne is older and has the right to interfere, to take over or influence decisions; he will make suggestions, and Stanhope will listen, as when he tries to defuse the thorny problem of censoring Raleigh's letter home. Stanhope is an officer and he knows and accepts the military discipline of duty and obedience. He is a hero, and Stanhope when he becomes drunk after the shock of Raleigh's arrival. Stanhope is a hero, and Osborne, and perhaps performs more effectively because he has a sense of being a hero. Certainly, even though he is battle-hardened, he is devastated by Osborne's death. Osborne is presumed killed along with the others during the German offensive, we have no idea what effects the loss of Osborne might have had.

Raleigh and Stanhope

Here is the really awkward relationship of the play. The hero-worshipper has made Raleigh his hero's company, unaware that his hero is a very flawed hero who is only just coping with home on leave because he knows he could not cope. Furthermore, our flawed hero is a hero in wartime, but under the conventions of the early twentieth century – courting the hero-worshipper relationship that must change from the friendship it was in school and civilian life. Stanhope is the issuer of orders who must be obeyed without question, and while Raleigh may not like it, it is hard to see his hero cracking up under the strain of three years at the front. The hero-worshipper, over Raleigh fraternising with the enlisted men after the raid, over their very different reactions to Osborne's death. And yet, after we have seen the torment within the relationship, Stanhope is mortally wounded at the start of the German offensive. Now Stanhope drops even further, to comfort the dying boy, from whom he skilfully conceals the awful truth of the war in the trenches after being summoned by a messenger, seconds after the death of his school friend. What century tragedy?

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Raleigh and Trotter

Trotter will get on with everyone in his cheery straightforward way, and he does on his first tour of duty in the trenches at night, showing him the small details he has his gas mask ready for immediate use, what to look out for, different types of enemy and friendly sort, a fact which Raleigh himself acknowledges.

Stanhope and Hibbert

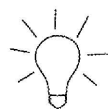
It's evident from the outset that Stanhope loathes Hibbert, who he has marked as absolutely cannot afford to lose an officer to sick leave at this crucial time. Stanhope's men and his country is contrasted with Hibbert's drive for self-preservation. Matched them with brilliant construction and timing by Sherriff, who has Hibbert make his sick immediately after Stanhope's support, Osborne, and school friend, Raleigh, the Colonel to lead the raid; they will do their duty – one aware of the likely outcome whereas Hibbert wants to shirk his. Stanhope's tactics are controversial, if not unorthodox, but Hibbert into a compromising situation, threatens to shoot him and then inveigles him else and doing his duty. But surely this is just another example of how good a commander he has retained the officer he needs. True, Hibbert bottles out again when the German attack again, Stanhope manages to shame him into going into the lines, because he cannot

Stanhope and Trotter

For Stanhope, Trotter is a reliable fellow officer on whom he can rely. He may find everything to do with food and eating rather tiresome and tedious, and occasionally makes this clear, but in the end he can rely on the man, and Trotter knows that he is a competent and efficient commander. After Osborne's death, he will do a decent job, focused above all on not letting Stanhope down.

Stanhope and the Colonel

As a commander of men, Stanhope understands the chain of command, and knows the orders. There is, nevertheless, a measure of awkwardness between them over the main matter of their interaction: the Colonel knows that Stanhope is an intelligent man and consequently feels awkward when relaying the instructions about the raid rather than under the cover of darkness in order to suit mealtime conferences but cannot refuse orders; he does his best to put forward alternative ideas and solutions which are rejected, although he does rub the Colonel's nose in the stupidity of it all, as when after the raid, enquires if all the men are back safely.



Active Learning Task: Students to create for themselves a mind map or diagram which shows the ways they respond to, and talk about, each other. It will be useful if they can find out how each speaks about the other (if there are any).

Essay Questions

1. How does Sherriff present the character of in the play? How do the characters change throughout the play?
2. Explore the ways in which the theme of personal disintegration is presented in the play. Which character you feel shows the most personal disintegration?
3. Explore the ways in which the theme of parent/child relationships is presented in the play.
4. Explore the ways in which Sherriff explores the emasculating effects of World War I. Which character do you feel has been most emasculated? How has this affected them?
5. Examine the ways in which Sherriff explores relationships between men in the play.
6. 'All characters in the play can be considered to display heroic qualities.' How would you assess the play?

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



GENRE CONVENTIONS (AO1)

In the first performance of the play, in 1928, Stanhope was played by the young Laurence Olivier, to great success, although initially theatre managers rejected it because they were concerned about the attractiveness to audiences of a play with no female characters, and were unsure whether they would want to see a play about the war.

The first run, at the Savoy Theatre, went on for two years. Suddenly, Sherriff was famous. He wrote the novelisation of the play himself in 1929. This has long been out of print, but second-hand copies can be found. The play was translated into many languages and a film version followed in 1930, and a German remake, *Das Andere Seite* (*The Other Side*), in 1931. The BBC Television Service transmitted a performance to mark Armistice Day in 1938. A new adaptation in 1988, which this is the one you are most likely to see if you are not in the UK, is a performance of the play. There are strong echoes of the play in the final series of *War of the Worlds*.

Our text is a play, and there are various conventions of the drama we should always be aware of.

Mention has been made of the use of extremely detailed stage directions, contrasting with a Shakespeare play, for example. Such details make the dramatist's vision very clear. The stage set, consequently the stage set, is specified in minute detail, reflecting the writer's own vision of the front; the appearance and behaviour of the characters is specified, restricting the range of interpretation. The whole effect is to reproduce, as exactly as possible, situation types and characters. The play is set in the First World War, and the dramatist's intention is for the presentation to be as realistic as possible.

We should be aware of the rapid development and increasing influence of the cinema. The play appeared around the time of *Journey's End*'s first performance. Cinema scripts specify details of production in great detail to ensure that the final film is exactly as intended, and the play is no exception.

Conversations are intended to be convincing, although censorship of the theatre in the early 20th century meant that the language characters used onstage was a great deal milder than that often heard at the time. The Shakespearean concept of the soliloquy has no place in realist theatre.

A dramatist can make effective use of sound and silence, too: as the entire play is set in the trenches, inhabited by the officers, only noise can be used to give an impression of conflict in the trenches; modern technology allows lighting also to be used to considerable effect. The entire time of the raid through light and noise, as we await the return of the men.

The message with a twentieth-century play is that we should not gloss rapidly over details. The play is full of important cues and clues: think of the power of the Sergeant-Major, who carried the wounded Raleigh down into the dugout, wiping his bloodied hands on his uniform.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



THEMES (A01, A02, A03)

As you read the play, and perhaps act out certain sections, clear ideas and themes. Knowledge of plot and character are the basics; ability to explore themes and ideas. We now consider some of these aspects of *Journey's End*.

Heroes and heroism

A broad and wide-ranging exploration of the nature of heroism, and what makes



Active Learning Task 1: Select someone you regard as a hero – in any respect or context – and try to justify your choice. Then narrow down your criteria to deeds of valour or bravery and again try to come up with suggestions for hero figures. If you study classics, you may well come up with the usual suspects such as Odysseus, Horatius and such like. What qualities do they possess? What did they actually do to achieve 'hero' status? Make a list.

Now consider whether anyone can be a hero in modern, mechanised warfare. What is different about the possibility for individual deeds of valour and bravery? Is there the possibility for individual combat? Can you be a hero if you kill from



When we come to consider the play itself, clearly Raleigh regards Stanhope as so Osborne discuss the idea of heroes and hero worship in some detail in Act One

OSBORNE *I believe Raleigh'll go on liking you – and looking up to you – that's all. There's something very deep, and rather fine, about hero worship.*

Why? What has he done to achieve this status in Raleigh's eyes? Do you regard him as one? And can we call Raleigh a hero after his individual efforts in the raid?

COLONEL *Very well done, Raleigh. Well done, my boy. I'll see you get a Medal for this! Splendid! (p. 79)*

Cowards

There are many well-documented accounts of men's fear at the front. Where is the line? What is a coward? Clearly, the character of Hibbert is set up by the dramatist to be among others. Is he really suffering from neuralgia, or is he merely pretending in order to sent back home? He is definitely malingering, i.e. using the idea of being unwell to avoid and to get out of unpleasant tasks. Clearly, he is afraid – he talks frankly about the confrontation in Act Two, Scene Two – and flight is a natural psychological response to feeling exactly the same:

STANHOPE *Because I feel the same – exactly the same! Every little noise up there – just as you feel... (p. 57)*

and yet he remains in post, committed to his duty. Osborne is clearly afraid before he conceals this from Raleigh:

OSBORNE *And now let's forget all about it for – [he looks at his watch] – for now. (p. 71)*

Can we go as far as to say that the psychological effect of being on the front line is to function effectively as an officer and that the logical thing to do therefore would be that he will not be able to endanger others?

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Psychological effects of warfare



Active Learning Task 2: You are on the front line for eight days, until your next period of leave. What will you have to do differently? What will you miss? What will you not be able to do? What will you do to keep yourself cheerful? Have you forgotten that, while you are trying to put up with all this, the enemy, away, will be doing their best to kill or maim you? Now, how do you feel?

It may be useful here to draw on some of your wider reading, particularly novels. What questions are often explored and described in much greater detail. What sort of experience do you get on the front line do you get from *Birdsong*, *Regeneration*, or *All Quiet on the Western Front*?

Coping mechanisms and displacement activities

In situations which are stressful, humans beings evolve mechanisms to enable them to function normally as far as this is possible. Displacement activities are used – consciously or unconsciously – to take the mind away from the stress.



Active Learning Task 3: What mechanisms do each of the main characters have to help them cope with the stress of war?



Active Learning Task 4: Displacement activities

- Do you have any displacement activities? Make a list of them and also the times and places when you do them.
- How far do they get in the way of your doing what you should be doing?
- Now consider each of the officers in the play and identify what you think are their displacement activities.
- Do you think these get in the way of their performing their duties effectively?

Stanhope drinks. He is turning into an alcoholic. Make a marginal note in the text each time he takes a drink. Is there anything specific that has made him take another drink? He brings six bottles of whisky with him when he comes to the front line, and these are all finished on the morning of the German offensive. If you calculate, and take into account the greater proof strength of alcohol in 1914, it is clear that there is never a moment in the play when he is technically sober. And yet he functions as an effective company commander, and it is clear that the whisky helps him to function.

STANHOPE *There were only two ways of breaking the strain. One was pretending I was ill – and going home; the other was this. [He holds up his glass.] Which would you pick, Uncle? (p. 28)*



Active Learning Task 5: Is Stanhope an alcoholic? Skim through the text (including stage directions) for references to whisky. Note, in particular, when Stanhope drinks and what prompts him to drink.

Raleigh is excited at finally getting to the front and the possibility of action, and he is perhaps too soon for him to need the kind of displacement activity we see the other officers using.

Osborne talks, a lot and with everyone. Stanhope and Osborne talk, Raleigh and Osborne talk, but Hibbert and Osborne do not. Talking takes his mind off the situation. He calls Stanhope 'Uncle' because he seems able to help them be more at ease, and because he has a copy of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* with him, and Trotter is shocked.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**





Active Learning Task 6: Make a list of all the one-on-one conversations which take place in the play (until Osborne's death) and note who takes part in them. Given that Sherriff could have chosen Osborne any book to be reading, why do you think he chose this particular one? And then, out of the whole book, why does Sherriff give him that particular poem to read out loud to Trotter? And why to Trotter?

Skim through the text, looking at all the conversations; list them all, with participants (e.g. Stanhope + Osborne). Note how many are Osborne and one other; look at the sequences of conversations and see if you can identify the reasoning behind Sherriff's construction of the play, and how he develops dramatic situations.

Now that you have the play broken down into sub-scenes, you could go on to construct a diagram of the action of the play, looking more closely at structure, episodes which are particularly dramatic, how and when Sherriff raises the level of tension, and so on.

Trotter eats, and likes his food, and likes talking about food. He is clearly not full enough of it. He's also a keen gardener, and this forms the basis for one of the conversations he has with Osborne.

Hibbert is plotting his escape. He does not interact with his fellow officers – it's significant that he is one who does not talk with Osborne. He spends a fair amount of time lying on his back, trying to see how most effectively he can convince a doctor (and himself?) that he is genuinely ill.

Mason has a cushy number: although only a private soldier, he is (relatively) safe from the front, cooking and cleaning for the officers, as long as he turns out passable meals, although he has a certain expendability when he cannot produce pepper at dinnertime and is worried when the officers want to be apricots. One can imagine that he is rather better fed than other private soldiers, and has a nervous, cockney sense of humour which eases his situation.

You will probably be able to talk quite eloquently about your own displacement from your home, as you are supposed to be revising for examinations. Do you check Facebook regularly?

Time hangs heavy

Our initial thought about warfare is probably that it is all noisy, hectic and action-packed. This is certainly what Raleigh imagines it will be like, and he is surprised at the quiet, when he first arrives.

RALEIGH *How frightfully quiet it is.*

OSBORNE *It's often quiet – like this.*

RALEIGH *I thought there would be an awful row here – all the time.*

OSBORNE *Most people think that. (p. 14)*

There is a lot of sitting around, waiting, expectation and anticipation. Action, when it happens, is usually sudden, chaotic and devastating. Remember that the action of the play is very slow. In that time, there is one piece of action – the raid, which lasts all of about three minutes. The rest of the time needs to be filled. This takes us back to talking and conversation and

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Survival

There is constant danger of death on the front line: if you don't learn the ropes you're injured. There's a lot of information for the audience about survival tactics, often from Raleigh – the new boy, standing in for the audience here – why one needs to run, wear one's gas mask satchel so that it's quickly accessible. Hibbert plotting to 'go' Osborne seems quite pathetic in the run-up to the raid as we perceive him anxious about the minute details of the timings of the raid and the different roles he and Raleigh are carrying out. Carrying out the script exactly to the last detail will mean that he will get back saved up mercilessly by doing this, and then follows it up with the 'pigs' conversation before the raid, which fills up the six minutes' waiting time for the start of the raid, in real time, and then goes through it with them.

Stress and tension

The officers are together in a very confined space, with all that implies about being in the front line: noise and smell of others being inescapable. Nothing says that you will get on with them: you don't have to like them, but you have to live with them, for several days. Stanhope is an alcoholic. Small things are easily magnified: Mason fears Stanhope's reaction to pineapple instead of pineapple for dessert, and Stanhope surely overreacts when he discovers the soup, sending a man to get some, at considerable risk. Raleigh's arrival and conversation with Stanhope; he can't get away from all that Raleigh reminds him of and that he has a gung-ho attitude surely annoys the others, who know what the front line is really like. 'I'm sick' is beautifully timed by Sherriff: it follows on immediately from Stanhope's leaving the need for a raid on the German trenches opposite, and the selection of Osborne that Osborne faces death, and he will lose his prop and support, and in comes Hibbert from it all. The confrontation and threat to shoot Hibbert flow naturally from the need to create the shock effect Sherriff wanted.



**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



ATTITUDES AND VALUES (A01)

So, why did Sherriff write the play?

We deliberately and repeatedly come back to this question, because you, as a student, have your own opinion here. What did Sherriff want to achieve? What effect do you think he hoped to achieve? Your views should develop and change with your growing knowledge and understanding of the play.



Discussion Prompt: Consider some of the following:

- Is he writing to inform his audience?
- Does he want his audience to remember the war and the men who fought?
- Does he want to provoke any thoughts or reactions in his audience?
- Is he concerned to tell the truth about the war?
- Does he want to entertain his audience? (Remember that theatre is a form of entertainment.)

Then and now

What sort of attitudes and values does Sherriff advocate in the play, and are they still relevant today? Can they resonate with an audience today? Following on from our examination of the attitudes and values of the characters, and then the themes and ideas which Sherriff presents, we are now perhaps in a position to step back a little and make some judgements.

Heroism

Although it becomes clear that heroism in twentieth-century mechanised warfare is very different from heroism in times past, when an individual could distinguish himself by his deeds, it is still there. Is Stanhope not a hero in the way that he has served his country unquestioningly for several years, at great personal cost to himself? If we think for a moment about what he would have left if he were to survive the war, what would he have left: how would he adjust to life after the war? Would he make a good husband for Raleigh's sister? Would he overcome his alcoholism? 'At the end of the title of the examination unit *The First World War and its aftermath*, and, although Sherriff does not show who you may have encountered who **do** consider what happened after.

Cowardice

Similarly, I don't think we can say that Sherriff offers a simplistic view about cowardice. Hibbert is a coward, and such simplistic assessments of men who did not cope with the horrors of the trenches led to the execution of hundreds of men during the war. Only within the context of the war, and the posthumous pardons issued in recognition of the fact that human beings are more complex than it was understood to be in the past. Hibbert, under the strain, he cannot function as an officer should; he is, therefore, no practical use to the army, and his decision that he ought to report sick and seek treatment is a perfectly understandable one, obviously, if too many officers behaved like that...

Survival instinct

Human beings have a strongly rooted survival instinct; this is also at work in Hibbert. In the television series of Joesph Heller's *Catch-22*, you can see in that comic novel the character Yossarian gets himself by recognising that it's insane to fly more missions. His understanding means that he cannot be insane!

A good soldier?

In the insane circumstances of being in the front-line trenches, what is a good soldier? We have a number of different officers and hopes that we will think about each of them. We have Stanhope's unconventional tactics in dealing with Hibbert's attempt to report sick and his support of the officer in the lines. Clearly, however you think about him, Stanhope is a good soldier. He maintains the morale of his fellow officers, supports his commanding officer through thick and thin.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



question the order that he lead the raid, even though he is clearly aware that it is very unlikely to return. Trotter is surely a good soldier by virtue of the fact that he is willing to die and become an officer, even though he is not from the traditional officer class. He is a man of a new status of second-in-command after Osborne's death, intent on rising to the challenge of Raleigh, who serves his country for only a couple of days before he is killed, who is a man with the experience of war – is he a good soldier?

Duty

In all of this, we cannot avoid the question of duty, and we also have to acknowledge that the idea of duty has changed, perhaps greatly, over the last century. And in the play, that sense of duty is a central idea of patriotism, which is never called into question, either by Sherriff or by any of the characters. If your country calls you up to serve, then you do, without question: you have that duty, you have a duty to the other men with whom you serve.

This shows in the care that Stanhope takes over his men, and also in Raleigh's desire to be a hero. It shows in Stanhope, who, while accepting that it's his duty to execute the raid, is also determined to protect the lives of his men, and argues the case for the raid to take place under cover of darkness. It also shows negatively in the behaviour of Hibbert, who feels no sense of duty towards the other men in the company, but is only focused on his own survival; this is perhaps the surest ground for criticism.

Patriotism

It is perhaps harder for us nowadays to understand fully the meaning of patriotism in the First World War. To them, it meant a willingness to do whatever their country asked of them, including, in a time of war, to fight and die if need be; it links in with the idea of duty.

The intense feelings of patriotism at the start of the First World War had subsided by the time the war to last for so long. There is more a sense of determination to finish what was started, that German aggression had to be stopped. It is interesting that, though many of the poets of the First World War question the conduct of the war, and criticise the conditions in the trenches, they do not question the war itself, the need to curb German expansionism, or the need for an Englishman to serve his country at the front.

The issue of whether patriotism is right or wrong does not really arise in *Journey's End*. The men are determined to do their duty no matter what, a feeling certainly inculcated at school, which all of the officers bar Trotter would have experienced, and this idea of duty is what Stanhope is trying to persuade Hibbert not to go sick.

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



LANGUAGE, FORM AND STRUCTURE

Language

Much has already been said with regard to language, form and structure in the Discussion section of this guide. However, below are some summative points which you may find useful. There are also some tasks and practice essay questions for you to complete.

- ❖ The language used by Sherriff is key in creating realism in the play. Language of public schooling, is used by many of the characters and the notable absence of slang, such as Trotter and Mason singles them out as being of a lower class than the other soldiers. This is shown through the frequent use of ellipsis and phonetic spelling in Mason's cockney accent.
- ❖ Language related to the war and the trenches is also essential in adding to the realism. Find a number of terms explained in the glossary.



Active Learning Task 1: Look back through the play and note down any words/phrases related to the war which you might not know the meaning of.

- ❖ Linking to form, Sherriff uses the stage directions to offer a description of each character when they first appear in the play. The language chosen manipulates an emotional response. Sherriff immediately presents some of the key characteristics of the entrant, e.g. Trotter's youth and confusion are conveyed. When you are writing your commentary, remember that the audience watching the play will not be aware of the stage directions. You use and refer to stage directions in your writing.
- ❖ With regard to language, it is also important to consider some of the symbols used. Refer to some of the symbols discussed earlier, e.g. Stanhope's discussion of worms in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.
- ❖ You may wonder why, given the stressful situations in which the characters find themselves, there is no 'strong language' used. Hibbert's 'beastly' when referring to his neuralgia is about as strong as it gets. No twenty-first century writer would produce such a 'clean' text. The answer is quite simple: censorship. Up until 1968, all plays had to be censored by the Lord Chamberlain before they were allowed to be staged and any 'unsuitable' language and references would be cut. So Sherriff is not presenting his audience with completely 'realistic' soldiers' language. On the other hand, his use of contemporary public-school and military slang is accurate and based on his own experiences.



AND CAME FACE TO FACE

Essay Question 1

How does Sherriff use language to create realistic characters and an authentic World War I atmosphere?

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Form

Significant form

Before we come to consider *Journey's End* itself, it will be useful briefly to explore This is an important idea to try to understand and discuss. In a nutshell, it recognises the difference between poetry, prose and drama as literary forms, in that each form works in a certain kind of audience, is consumed in a certain way, and can achieve certain effects; in other words, it focuses on the specificity of each of the forms. Once you become familiar with these forms, it becomes easier to see why *Journey's End* is a play and what it does best because it is

Poetry originally told stories – the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, *Paradise Lost* – and The rhythm of verse helped people memorise the stories in times when few could write. As other forms came to take over the role of telling stories (particularly the novel and short story), poetry also evolved, becoming more personal, expressing personal experience or perspective on an event or a feeling, as well as becoming rather boring for a minority pastime and interest. But a good poet can make us stop and think, and can make us feel vividly from her or his point of view, which is often a perspective which we can't experience is enriched by it.



Discussion Prompt 1: Pick your favourite war poem and examine and explain how the poet uses

Drama also developed in ancient times as a way of telling stories, but with a difference: it is enacted, represented by actors who spoke the actual words of the participants or characters to the audience. They could add expression, tone, gesture, movement and feeling, as they brought the characters and the stories to life. They acted out – represented – the events of the stories in a more immediate and more vivid to the audience.



Discussion Prompt 2: Think about the scene where Stanhope confronts Hibbert and threatens to throw him out scene where Raleigh dies in the dugout. What does being shown onstage add to each of these scenes?

But what drama cannot really do is long, interconnecting stretches of narrative based on the internal conflicts or thoughts and feelings of characters (though Shakespeare tried to do this in the soliloquy).

Prose fiction was the next development, and it did not occur until there were enough people with time to read stories and the education to read them, as well as the technology to print books. It allows a story to be consumed as the reader chooses – all in one sitting, an hour or so on a beach – whereas you have to watch a play from start to finish as it's put on in the theatre. You can go off and make a cup of coffee in the middle of it. Nor, if it's a halfway decent piece of fiction, does prose make great demands on the imagination through the medium of words. Nowadays, in a much more visual age, readers have a stock of cinema or TV-generated images, consequently, often find nineteenth-century novels 'too full of description'. However, prose can develop stories through much longer periods of time and take the reader inside the minds of their characters.



Discussion Prompt 3: What would the novel of *Romeo and Juliet* be like? Or the poem of *Journey's End*? How would the novel of *Journey's End* (which exists, though it has long been out of print) be different from the poem you are studying?



Discussion Prompt 4: Why can't the raid be shown onstage? If it were, what would be lost in the TV adaptation? What is gained, and what lost, by this?

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Form

- ❖ *Journey's End* is not a complex or experimental work; it is probably most useful if you must label it in this way at all, although there are reasons why the term 'realism' is a pinch of salt.
- ❖ The most important thing to remember, and continually to come back to, is that *Journey's End* is a drama, intended for live performance onstage, with all the advantages and disadvantages that the form carries with it. If you are in any doubt about this idea, remember what was said about significant form earlier. It will be a great mistake to write only about the plot of the play.
- ❖ Be clear about all the methods Sherriff uses to construct a highly effective stage drama; in particular, explore his use of light, sound and stage directions. Sharpen your understanding here, by comparing and contrasting theatre and television performances.
- ❖ The setting chosen by Sherriff is key in creating the dramatic tension of the play. The small, claustrophobic setting means that characters cannot escape interacting with each other. They are allowed no personal space and can go only into the dugout or up into the trenches. This means that personal disputes are frequent and tension is always building, usually to a climactic end. However, it is also important to remember that, equally, this confined setting also brings out the best in some of the men too as friendships are quickly formed and the soldiers show a sense of loyalty and duty to one another.



Active Learning Task 2: Make a list of descriptions of the dugout - just from information in the play.

- ❖ *Journey's End* is a play in the realism genre, something which you may like to think of as the latter half of the nineteenth century, playwrights in this genre attempted to show everyday settings and actors were encouraged to present their characters in a realistic way. It would be useful for you to watch one of the available versions of the play to see how to achieve this and what it adds to the play.
- ❖ As discussed throughout the Detailed Summary and Analysis section of the guide, one of the devices of the form is his use of stage directions. It is these which provide a sense of a claustrophobic setting and which convey some of the imagery and symbolism of the play. If you compare how complex and prescriptive Sherriff's stage directions are in his plays, for example, you will see the tightness of the control Sherriff exerts over the stage. While his stage directions are nowhere near as detailed as those of other playwrights we can see how dramatists are coming to have a much clearer visual picture of how the play should appear.

Essay Question 2

How does Sherriff use the form of his play to animate the battlefields of the First World War?

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Structure

- ❖ The play is relatively short and action takes place over a short time span of 48 hours, increasing the tragedy of the play, especially when the audience learns that the men are still there, essentially giving them only a few days left to live.
- ❖ The play is a realistic piece and some critics argue that this is reflected in the way it follows what could be considered a 'traditional' story structure. This could have been a technique used by Sherriff to further represent the chaotic and disorganised nature of war.
- ❖ You might like to research the structure of the genre of tragedy in more detail; the single setting and continuity of time/action are an example of Aristotle's three unities. The play could fit into the tragic genre in a number of other ways too.
- ❖ Although there is an ongoing threat of attack throughout the play, events from one scene to the next can often seem unconnected, meaning they do not necessarily lead naturally from one event to the next. Instead, Sherriff uses moments of high drama or tension to drive the play.
- ❖ Act One of the play is structured to open the play effectively, introducing the setting and the main characters. By the end of Act Three, when it is assumed that all the audience will have built up sympathies, emotional ties and bonds with the characters, the play ends.
- ❖ There used to be a convention that there a scene break was used in a play every time the characters onstage changed, i.e. when there was an entrance or exit. Obviously, this is a cumbersome and unwieldy number of scenes, and Sherriff has given us his own act and scene divisions at a play like this can be revealing.



Active Learning Task 3: Go through the play, noting each time there is a change of person or action that takes place with each different set of characters. Now that you have a detailed understanding of the play, why do you think Sherriff chose to order the events in this way and what the drama gains from this? Make sure you look very carefully at Stanhope's confrontations with Hibbert in Act Two, and at the end of the play.

- ❖ Remember that Sherriff has carefully constructed his play to elicit certain emotions and create specific moods. There are frequent moments of comic relief, usually provided by characters which allow the audience some respite from the tragedy of the play and they are often followed by a particularly tense or dramatic episode in the play.



Active Learning Task 4: In your copy of the play, mark C in the margin every time a moment of comic relief occurs, and T every time a moment of tragedy/tension occurs. Add up the number of occurrences for each and compare your findings. Are there any particularly tense scenes or acts? Where do they occur in the play?

Essay Question 3

How does Sherriff use structure in his play to manipulate the emotions of the audience?

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**




HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTE


R C Sherriff was born in 1896. He was educated at Kingston Grammar School in Surrey. During the war, he served as a Captain in the East Surrey Regiment from 1915 to 1917 and was killed at Passchendaele in 1917. He received the Military Cross for his service.

Dulce et Decorum est pro patria mori – Patriotism

Today we find it very difficult to understand the attitudes of people at the time towards the war, and their sense of duty. Why did hundreds of thousands of men volunteer to serve, and to die? Why did many of them welcome the idea of dying in the service of their country? In the early days of the war, we may think that perhaps they did not know what the war would be like and what conditions at the front would be like. But this lack of knowledge would not have lasted for long, and yet Britain managed its war effort solely with volunteers until 1916, unlike the other major powers involved, which resorted to conscription from the outset of hostilities.

 **Discussion Prompt 1:** Explore the issue of patriotism. What is it? What does it mean to you? (perhaps in the context of sporting events!) More seriously: would you be prepared to die for your country? In what circumstances, if at all, would you not?

The discussion will often narrow down to personal issues, especially nowadays, where the threat to one's own immediate family if threatened. But this was not why men volunteered in 1914 when Germany invaded, or even threatened with invasion, unlike Belgium and France.

 **Discussion Prompt 2:** Now move on to explore the more general issues, perhaps focusing on the 'last refuge of the scoundrel' (Dr Johnson) or 'War is not the answer'. Looking at both sides of the argument, were they standing for. It is useful to look at and try to understand the sentiments expressed in the poem. 'Dulce et Decorum est pro patria mori' should die...'



Our outlook has moved on: in 1914, idealism was possible. After 1939, attitudes were much clearer that Hitler needed to be stopped. But humanity does not become any wiser and saner as the twentieth century progressed, which is why, in our discussions, few students are overtly patriotic in the same way as they were. In the end, it becomes ever harder, as time passes, for us to understand what they did. But they did.

Your wider reading for the whole specification should help you explore a range of

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Class

This is a notoriously difficult issue to tackle, even today. Officers would very often have been through public schools, followed by officer training. This seems to be the case with all the officers in *Journey's End*, with the exception of Trotter. Stanhope and Raleigh were at school together, and 'Barford' is a fictitious public school. Osborne, as a schoolmaster, would have taught at one. From his speech and experiences as recounted while drunk in Act Three, Scene One, Hibbert was from a similar background. Trotter is clearly differentiated from the other officers by his speech, which is much rougher and more proletarian: he has clearly risen up through the ranks to officer status. This would seem to suggest something about his abilities as a soldier and an officer.

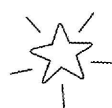
Mason, the cook, is a Private, and clearly cockney working class. You might consider Henry Newbolt's poem *Vitai Lampada* as a turn-of-the-century portrayal of the public-school attitude to war, country and patriotism.

We are in a time period when schooling was compulsory, but only up to the age of 14. Apprenticeship or work for those of the working class. Further schooling had to be paid for by the middle classes; upper classes were at public school; it is only from 1944 that the grammar schools developed, which allowed much wider access to further education.

We are also in a time period when many middle-class homes, as well as upper-class homes, had a servant class largely disappears as a consequence of the First World War – the middle-class Larkin's poem 'MCMXIV'. Women did not figure prominently in the economic life of the country; they were quickly called in to replace the men who went off to the front, and many women returned after the war when the men came back and wanted their jobs again. But their contribution was recognised and they won them the right to vote in 1918. There are many memoirs and accounts of their war experiences, their lines, and their responses to the war, and particularly to the loss of loved ones, and the impact of the war on their lives.

Shell shock

Shell shock – mental or psychological disorder caused by prolonged exposure to bombardment, also known at the time as 'combat stress' or 'war neurosis' – was a common condition during the First World War. Eventually, it rendered a man incapable of fighting. Nowadays, the psychological effects on men of being under fire in a war zone for a long time are known as PTSD – post-traumatic stress disorder. Because the condition was largely unrecognised at the time – which ranged widely from tiredness, headaches, giddiness, irritability and the inability to sleep or eat, nightmares, muscular tics and spasms and uncontrollable shaking – many soldiers were dismissed as shirkers or malingerers. They were liable to be put on a charge related to cowardice. Officers might receive treatment in hospital which is what Hibbert seems to be aiming for in depth in Pat Barker's novel *Regeneration*, which ought to form part of students' wider knowledge of the First World War.



Extension Task 5 (optional): This topic links to the character of Hibbert. Research the phenomenon of PTSD. Explain it to the group and show how it was treated (or not) during the First World War. You might also look at the poem of Wilfred Owen, reading Pat Barker's novel *Regeneration*, and looking up Craiglockhart House.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



LITERARY APPROACHES (AQA)

Realism

We have used the terms 'realism' and 'realistic' a number of times in our analysis. It is useful, at some point in the study of the play, to give some serious and explicit meaning to the words. We mean and understand by these terms, rather than to use them with the assumption that everyone shares the same understanding.

By way of contrast and example, a Shakespearean audience, for example, would not have understood the words. You could not, by any stretch of the imagination, describe any of Shakespeare's plays as realistic. Take as an example any play students are familiar with, and explore this idea.

It is only really in the nineteenth century that novelists and dramatists begin to try to create a world in which we might describe as true to life, in that characters behave in a way in which we might expect, and events occur which we can believe might actually occur, given the right circumstances. To do this, it, although it is to simplify rather, this trend begins to emerge as the science of psychology develops, and first scientists and then writers sought to try to see and portray how people behave.

Some of those in the audience when *Journey's End* was first performed would have not, but would have had family and friends who had. So there was a widespread belief that the war had 'really' been like, and Sherriff's play would not have been the success it was. It is unrealistic – untrue to life – picture of life in the trenches, and the war itself, or of the characters as credible human beings.

Some of the realism is achieved by 'anonymising': none of the characters were real. No specific life characters from the war are portrayed; he lets us know roughly where the play is set. The place where the characters are in is situated; only the dates are accurate, and need to be, to complete the picture. The officers are 'types': an older, avuncular figure, an experienced officer with a drink, a young man who is scared.

Some of the realism is created by attention to detail, and this is where the stage directions come in. Before we meet any of the characters in the printed text, the scene is described in detail. Sherriff expected the producer to ensure the stage looked like. There's almost no room for the director to have any personal interpretation of these instructions. Remembering that the audience of the time does not see the stage directions, it sees the finished product, which is a realistic picture of a World War British front-line dugout and section of trench.

Having said all of this, we must also remind ourselves that realism is, in the end, an illusion. It is still selecting what he wants us to see, with the aim of creating a certain response. The characters are not actual people who lived: it's not history. The action of *Journey's End* is the action we see on stage in performance lasts somewhat upwards of two hours: what happened before: what happened in them? Might it change our view of the characters and the events? They do not exist...

The purpose of exploring the realist illusion at some length is to clarify what we are seeing. It is also to remind students that the play is a work of art that is artifice, creation, made for a specific purpose in mind: a work of art is never innocent.

In the end, realism is the key head under which to consider the play. It was first in the cinema that realism was becoming a widely popular medium, and to which sound – 'talkies' – was added, thus opening up the possibility and expectation that audiences who would not have experienced specific events, could nevertheless enjoy the sensations as nearly as possible. The limitations of the technology available.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



GLOSSARY

Billets	Living/sleeping quarters assigned to soldiers on active service
Boche	A slang term for Germans, originally a French word, used as a especially a German soldier in World War One or World War Two
Dugout	Dugouts, usually sited close to the trench line – often within a trench – used as a form of underground shelter and rest for both troops. In dugouts would eat their meals, arrange meetings and often sleep rather than resting or lying in the open since they afforded some form of protection from weather and enemy shellfire. However, it was not unusual for enemy troops to get through to dugouts, killing or maiming all occupants. The best dugouts were of a variety and this type was almost exclusively used by senior officers. A dugout with a stairway extending to up to 10 feet (3 metres) below ground. Dugouts were used for meetings as well as rest and relaxation. Electric lights were used in dugouts as was wire bedding. [Definition from http://www.firstworldwar.com/atoz/dugout]
Fosse Way	British troops often gave key trenches, tracks and areas of the front line the name of their back home that they were familiar with.
Lancer's Alley	See Fosse Way
Lewis gun	The Lewis gun was an early light machine gun widely adopted by the British from 1915 onwards.
Lux	Proprietary brand of soap flakes, used for washing clothes
MC	Military Cross, a decoration for 'an act or acts of exemplary gallantry against the enemy on land to all members, of any rank in Our Army' created in 1914 for commissioned officers of the rank of Captain and above.
Mills bomb	The first safe grenade was the Mills bomb, invented by Englishman William Mills.
Minnie	From the German word <i>Minenwerfer</i> meaning 'thrower of mines'.
Neuralgia	Defined as an intense burning or stabbing pain caused by irritation of a nerve. The pain is usually brief but may be severe, and often feels as if it is coming from the nerve of the affected nerve. Causes vary: chemical irritation, inflammation, compression of nerves by nearby structures (for instance, tumours) can lead to neuralgia. In many cases, however, the cause is unknown. It can occur at any age.
No man's land	An area of land between the very front-line trenches of both sides, usually 30 metres across, but sometimes much closer.
Out of the line	After a few days on the front line, if conditions permitted, troops were sent out of the lines to rest and recover, before returning to the front line.
Pavé	Paved surface
Phosgene	Poisonous, colourless gas, used as a weapon during World War One. It was one of the most deaths related to poison gas during the war. When in the air, the smell is similar to that of freshly cut hay or grass. Some soldiers during the war stated that it smelled a little like may blossom. See Trotter in Act Two, Scene One.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Pince-nez	Glasses which are supported without earpieces, by pinching the bridge of the nose. It was popular in the nineteenth century.
Plate	Primitive form of dentures, where artificial teeth were fixed on a metal plate and inserted into the mouth
Prig	Someone felt to have precise ideas of right and wrong without being aware of their own blamelessness and critical of others failings
Realism	The idea that it is possible to present a story in a way which we believe is realistic in that characters behave in a way in which we believe real people would behave in which we can believe might actually occur.
Retire	Euphemism for 'retreat'; see Sassoon's poem 'Glory of Women'
Sap	A trench approaching a hostile position; often dug out at right angles to the main trench to allow closer observation or an attack on enemy front lines
Stand-to	Army officers believed that the most likely time for an enemy attack was at dawn. An hour before dawn every morning each company was given the order to stand-to. On the front line would stand on the fire-step with rifles and fixed bayonets. If it was considered too good for an enemy offensive, the sergeant would order the stand-down. Only the sentries remained on the alert. An hour before dark a similar routine took place. When the light had completely gone, the stand-down order was given. As officers were aware of these routines, a large number of attacks took place at dawn. This was especially true when German intelligence officers discovered that the front-line trench was being held by inexperienced troops.
Trench fever	First reported in the trenches of the Western Front in December 1915. It was a debilitating, bone-sounding condition trench foot, incidences of trench fever common in the early years of the war. In military terms, it proved one of the most significant problems. Medical authorities were keen to determine the root of the problem. It was eventually identified, and, until the final year of the war, baffled doctors. The main symptoms were fever, rashes, inflamed eyes and leg pains. Despite such wide-ranging symptoms (it was also associated with typhoid and influenza), the condition was not itself particularly dangerous, recovering after a few days although some cases required hospitalisation. The disease was identified as being transmitted via the bites of body lice.
Trench mortar	(toch emma) a portable mortar used in trench warfare to shoot shells over a short range
Very light	A flare fired into the air to temporarily illuminate the area over which it was fired
Vimy Ridge	The heights at Vimy Ridge, north of Arras, had been held by the Germans since the start of the war; attempts by the French to recapture them had failed. The successful attack on Easter Monday 1917 was finally successful, though at great cost
Wipers	British troops' nickname for the Belgian town of Ypres ('leper' because of the three major battles on the Western Front. Any 'foreign-sounding' name was considered difficult for English to pronounce got this treatment. Site of three major battles of the First World War. The third battle of Ypres (1917) was the Battle of Passchendaele
Wiring party	Groups of men sent out to carry out repairs to damaged barbed wire and other trench protection of one's trenches. Often carried out at night. See Sassoon's poem 'Wiring Party'

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



FURTHER READING

Because wider reading is an integral part of the course and the specification, you will be encouraged to read a range of First World War –related texts, and your teachers will recommend books for you. This list is not meant to be either exhaustive or exclusive.

R C Sherriff	Journey's End	Penguin Books 1983 0140
R C Sherriff	Journey's End	Heinemann Educational B
Adrian Barlow	The Great War in British Literature	CUP 200
<i>This series is aimed at sixth-form students of English Literature and is very useful background</i>		
Tim Cross (Ed)	The Lost Voices of WWI	Universit
<i>Collection of literary texts and contextual material from all the nations involved in the F</i>		
Paul Fussell	Wartime	OUP 198
Paul Fussell	The Great War and Modern Memory	OUP 197
<i>These two texts are detailed explorations of men's experiences of warfare, linked to their own. They are certainly worth dipping into, at the very least.</i>		
Pat Barker	Regeneration	Penguin
<i>Particularly enlightening in its exploration of the psychological effects of war on men</i>		
Vera Brittain	Testament of Youth	Victor G
<i>A classic autobiography. She worked as a nurse behind the front lines, and lost both her</i>		
Sebastian Faulks	Birdsong	Vintage
Susan Hill	Strange Meeting	Penguin
Joan Littlewood	Oh! What a Lovely War	Methuen
<i>Now classic play satirising commanders and attitudes, replete with the songs of the time</i>		
H Patch & R Van Emden	The Last Fighting Tommy	Bloomsb
<i>Biography of Britain's last surviving FWW veteran</i>		
Catherine Reilly (Ed)	Scars Upon My Heart	Virago
<i>Collection of women's poetry</i>		
Erich Maria Remarque	All Quiet on the Western Front	GP Putna
<i>Hard to imagine studying literature of the period and not meeting this novel; it's excellent in its own right and also because it focuses on ordinary soldiers. It's a classic film, too from the 1930s (avoid the 1930 version)</i>		
David Roberts (Ed)	Minds At War	Saxon B
<i>Excellent compendium of poetry and contextual material</i>		
Siegfried Sassoon	Memoirs of an Infantry Officer	Faber &
R C Sherriff	No Leading Lady	Victor G
<i>Sherriff's autobiography</i>		
Helen Zinna Smith	Not So Quiet	The Fem
<i>Recently rediscovered rarity from the 1930s, focusing on women ambulance drivers in the theatre of war on the Western Front.</i>		
Peter Whelan	The Accrington Pals	Methuen
<i>Focuses on one of the 'pals' battalions that was wiped out on the first day of the Somme</i>		
Other films and TV:	'Blackadder Goes Forth' (BBC), final episode of <i>Blackadder</i>	
	<i>The Blue Max</i>	
	<i>Paths of Glory</i>	

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



INDICATIVE CONTENT

NB For all essay questions, it will be helpful if, when working with students, you begin by focusing on identifying them and clarify what the examiners' expectations will be.

Act One

Discussion and Debate Prompts

Open-ended activity: responses will vary. Under (2), emphasise structure.

Active Learning Tasks

Personal response required.

Essay Question 1

For what reasons might we consider Hardy to be the most essential character for the audience in Act One? Particular points to mention and illustrate:

- Useful for someone else / outside the main action to introduce characters and set the scene
- We meet Osborne and hear about Stanhope's reputation, also about impending German offensive
- Contrast between Hardy's laziness and slapdash approach and Stanhope's approach
- Implications from Hardy being relieved to miss the German offensive

Key words: most essential: students need to make a judgement / voice an opinion
Remember it's a drama: is it an effective opening?

Essay Question 2

'Act One reveals trench life to be stressful with little relief from any stress and boredom.' How far do you agree with this view?

- List and explore all the details of trench life that are mentioned: shelling and sniping
- List and explore what the officers and men do to take their minds off things: drinking

Important that this act also raises the issue of displacement activities, which become more important as the play progresses.

Act Two, Scene One

Discussion and Debate Prompts

Open-ended activity: responses will vary.

Active Learning Tasks

Open-ended activity: responses will vary.

Essay Question

'In Journey's End Sherriff presents the view that an active imagination is a hindrance to soldiers.' focusing on Act Two, Scene One, discuss the extent to which you agree with this view.

- Which characters may be said to have an active imagination? Think particularly about Stanhope.
- If you think about the war too much, do you imagine all possible scenarios, including the possibility of death? Might this impede your military effectiveness?
- Is it, therefore, simpler/better to be focused on your duty?

Perhaps the question of displacement activities also needs reflecting on here.

Act Two, Scene Two

Discussion and Debate Prompts

Under (1), focus on theatre, under (3) perhaps introduce Owen's poem 'Futility' if you have time.

Active Learning Tasks

Open-ended activity: responses will vary.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Essay Question

'In Journey's End a number of parent-child relationships are evident, despite the absence of any relationships do you think fit this description? You may want to offer some focus on Hibbert/Stanhope'
This is a crucial scene, right at the centre of the play, featuring Stanhope giving instructions for the raid and then Osborne and Raleigh's reactions to the news, and finally, the confrontation

Parent-child relationships to consider:

- Stanhope and Hibbert, and why
- Stanhope and Raleigh, although this is less evident in this scene and much more evident in other scenes
- Osborne and Raleigh
- Osborne and Stanhope

Students will need to reflect on what the important aspects of a parent-child relationship are.

Act Three, Scene One**Discussion and Debate Prompts**

Open-ended activity: responses will vary.

Active Learning Tasks

Personal response required.

Essay Question

Examine the ways Sherriff explores mental and physical conflict in the face of war. Comment on the effectiveness of his ideas.

The raid, death of Osborne, traumatising of Raleigh, interrogation of prisoner and Stanhope's reaction.

Physical conflict obviously takes in fighting on the front; students will also remember the fight between Stanhope and Hibbert, where the latter strikes an officer out of panic or frustration.

Mental conflict takes in the tension between the sense of duty towards others, and patriotism, and the individual survival instinct, and we see this conflict played out in two different ways in the play.

Sherriff's techniques: he doesn't hide from the issues, however awkward they are; issues are not denied by the official powers during the war itself, and cowardice, which was summarily put down as mitigating circumstances. These issues can be seen as reflecting awkwardly on British official policy of balance, showing also great humanity at times in the interactions between Stanhope and Raleigh, and Osborne and Stanhope.

Act Three, Scene Two**Discussion and Debate Prompts**

Open-ended activity: responses will vary. Under (4), focus on theatre conventions needed to convey the scene.

Active Learning Tasks

Personal response required.

Essay Question

Examine the importance of Trotter to the play. What contributions does he make?

The meal after the raid.

- Trotter is different; he is from a different social class from the other officers, and has a different background.
- His displacement activities are talk – about his garden, and nature more generally, and his role in the war.
- He is helpful generally, especially to Raleigh when the latter first goes up on duty in the play, but also of being a little thoughtless/tactless at times, e.g. when talking with Osborne about the raid.
- His character develops in the final scene, when he's Stanhope's second-in-command and gives orders.

Act Three, Scene Three**Discussion and Debate Prompts**

Under (2) focus on structure, under (4) focus on theatre, particularly set and props.

Active Learning Tasks

Personal response required.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Essay Question

Explore the ways in which Sherriff crafts the ending of *Journey's End* to create a moving, memorable

Key words: 'crafts the ending' – focus on dramatist creating a play, creating effects, so need to think about the events of the final scene. Then also address all three prompts: moving, memorable, dramatic

- moving: Stanhope looking after Raleigh in his dying moments
- memorable: all the characters are presumed killed; we have no idea at all if their deaths are
- dramatic: pace of the action particularly important here: action at the start, Trotter slows down with Raleigh's death scene. The ending very sudden: shell hits as Stanhope

It might also be helpful to comment on the title of the play and how it fits in with the ending

Characterisation

Active Learning Task 1: The Colonel

Some useful words for describing the Colonel:

egotistical – unconcerned – tough – heartless – uncaring – determined – ambitious – skilled

Some possibly useful quotations for the Colonel's character:

- 'We've got all we wanted... I must go right away and 'phone the brigadier. He'll be very pleased with our cap'
- 'I've done all I can'
- 'Oh – er – what about the raiding party – are they all safely back?'
- 'Very well done, Raleigh. Well done, my boy. I'll get you a Military Cross for this! Splendid!'

Active Learning Task 2: Hardy

Some useful words for describing Hardy:

optimistic – lively – unorganised – untidy – neglectful – insensitive – philosophical

Some possibly useful quotations for Hardy's character:

- 'Sometimes nothing happens for hours on end; then – all of a sudden... rifle grenades and things like pineapples'
- 'Then I should think you'll get it – right in the neck'
- 'I had a few words to say to Master Hardy. You never saw the blasted mess those fellows were in!'

Active Learning Task 3: Hibbert

Some useful words for describing Hibbert:

scared – cowardly – frantic – crude – boastful

Some possibly useful quotations for Hibbert's character:

- 'I don't see how you can prevent a man going sick'
- 'If you only knew how awful I feel – please do let me go by'
- 'I say, I've never shown you these, have I?'
- 'worm'

Active Learning Task 4: Raleigh

Some useful words for describing Raleigh:

youngest in C Company – innocent – naive – keen – enthusiastic – compliant

Some possibly useful quotations for Raleigh's character:

- 'It's – it's not exactly what I thought. It's just this – this quiet that seems so funny'
- 'Were you and I picked specially?'
- 'I feel rotten lying here – everyone else – up there'

Active Learning Task 5: Stanhope

Some useful words for describing Stanhope:

stern – uptight – authoritarian – dutiful – patriotic – seasoned soldier – tactical – cruel –

Some possibly useful quotations for Stanhope's character:

- 'You see, he's been out here a long time. It – it tells on a man – rather badly –'
- 'Last time he was home on leave... he'd just got his M.C. and been made Captain'
- 'To forget you little fool, to forget! D'you understand? To forget!'
- 'Do you understand an order? Give me that letter.'
- 'He's a long way the best company commander we've got'
- 'You think there's no limit to what a man can bear?'

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Active Learning Task 6: Trotter

Some useful words for describing Trotter:

jolly – welcoming – humorous – married – honourable – decent

Some possibly useful quotations for Trotter's character:

- 'War's bad enough with pepper – but war without pepper –'
- 'You never get sick to death of everything, or so happy you want to sing'
- 'On the verge of bursting at the waist'
- 'I won't let you down'

Active Learning Task 7: Osborne

Some useful words for describing Osborne:

married with children – oldest in C Company – knowledgeable – tactful – understanding
amiable – helpful – father figure

Some possibly useful quotations for Osborne's character:

- 'The time has come, the Walrus said'
- 'The one man I could trust – my best friend'
- 'I spent all my time in the garden making a rockery. In the evenings I used to sit and to knit socks and play the piano a bit'
- 'If anything should happen would you send these along to my wife?'

Active Learning Task 8: Mason

Some useful words for describing Mason:

respectful – dutiful – tries hard – eager to please

Some possibly useful quotations for Mason's character:

- 'Your sambridges, sir. 'Arf bully beef and 'arf sardine'
- 'I ain't bin up in this part of the front line. Don't want to get lorst'
- 'E said next time we 'ad them e'd wring my neck'

Active Learning Task 9: Sergeant-Major

Some useful words for describing the Sergeant-Major

efficient – focused – respectful of Stanhope – dry humour

Character relationships

Essay Question 1

How does Sherriff present the character of in the play? How do the audience's views of this character change over the course of the play? Key words remind students to focus on the dramatist's craft, and the audience's views, so this is not a mere character study. Starting points: think about first impression of that character and what reaction he has elicited that reaction. Then consider key moments for that character in the play, and the

Essay Question 2

Explore the ways in which the theme of personal disintegration is presented in the play. Which characters experience personal disintegration?

Need to define / explain understanding of 'personal disintegration'; obviously a focus on men affected by the war. Main characters affected obviously Stanhope and Hibbert (are they affected? Start with Stanhope, who's been a front-line officer for the whole war and survived for Raleigh. Then you can measure Hibbert, and others if you like, against the effects of the war)

Essay Question 3

Explore the ways in which the theme of parent/child relationships is presented between characters in the play. See notes above, for indicative content on this title under Act Two, Scene Two.

Essay Question 4

Explore the ways in which Sherriff explores the emasculating effects of World War One. Which characters are emasculated? How has this affected them?

Quite a challenging title, this one: students will need to use a dictionary to come up with a definition of 'emasculated'. The obvious characters to consider are Stanhope and Hibbert, but one might also consider Raleigh. Stanhope has clearly suffered severe mental strain as a result of his experiences of warfare and his duty and functioning as an efficient and effective front-line officer. Hibbert, on the other hand, in a simplistic way, as a coward, unable to act his part as a man and do what is expected of him. If this is a simplistic interpretation, it will be worth contrasting the attitudes of 1918 and our

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Essay Question 5

Examine the ways in which Sherriff explores relationships between men in times of war.

Men alone together, at the front, under great stress, in confined and uncomfortable conditions of tension, which might feature more openly today, is almost absent: Osborne does remind us of the likewise Trotter is a married man. Hibbert, at the 'celebratory' meal after the raid, drunk and telling sad tales of womanising and shows his collection of pornographic photographs. But the men are not reasonably well. Consider the old idea that men are not supposed to show feelings and emotions in the light of this; equally consider the idea that males in a group are often thought to show emotions shown in the play? And where does Raleigh's hero-worship of Stanhope fit in?

Essay Question 6

'All characters in the play can be considered to display heroic qualities.' How far do you agree with this? Here is a question to make students reflect on what exactly they understand by 'hero' and what has been made of the difference between the classical definition and what is possible in the twentieth century. Handheld weapons contrasted with the ability to kill unseen from a distance. What constitutes a hero in the First World War? Stanhope has been awarded a medal; the Colonel tells Raleigh after the war that he is for the MC.

Is endurance now what counts, a man like Stanhope who has survived and been an effective leader for years, the model for a hero, with his sustained sense of duty and military competence?

Themes**Heroes and Heroism****Active Learning Task 1**

Open-ended activity: responses will vary. You are looking to develop understanding of characterisation (AO2, AO5) here.

Psychological Effects of Warfare**Active Learning Task 2**

Personal response required.

Coping Mechanisms and Displacement Activities**Active Learning Task 3**

Open-ended activity: responses will vary, but should include at least the following: Stanhope – food and drink; Trotter – food and talk; Hibbert – plotting to get away from the war; Raleigh – too soon for

Active Learning Task 4

Personal response required.

Active Learning Task 5

Personal response required.

Active Learning Task 6

Open-ended activity: responses will vary, but there should be a particular focus on dramatic language.

Attitudes and Values**Discussion Prompt**

Open-ended activity: responses will vary.

Language, Form and Structure**Language****Active Learning Task 1**

Open-ended activity: responses will vary.

Essay Question 1

How does Sherriff use language to create realistic characters and an authentic WWI setting?

Remember theatre censorship: bad language, crude language and obscenity of any kind were censored until the 1960s, so do not expect 'realistic' language. Aspects of language include military terminology, and the difference in language used by different social classes, contrasting the language of the characters in the play.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Form**Student Notes****Discussion Prompt 1**

Personal response required here: choose and present a poem.

Discussion Prompt 2

Significant form: students need to be focused on drama and the dramatic here.

Discussion Prompt 3

Hopefully, students will be able to see and explain how ineffective a novelisation of *Romeo and Juliet* is, due to the difficulties of presenting *Lord of the Flies* as a poem. They may have things to say about context that is relevant.

Discussion Prompt 4

Here, there needs to be some thinking about the limitations of theatre, and comparison with film or television. Focus on 'live performance'.

Active Learning Task 2

Open-ended activity: responses will vary.

Essay Question 2

How does Sherriff use the form of his play to animate the battlefields of the First World War?

Again, significant form has been mentioned earlier. The play is a drama, to be acted out live in a stage setting and in costume and with props, to create a certain effect. What can be achieved instead of a novel, for instance. Remember that *Journey's End* was also published as a novel, but performed on stage. What about poetry as a way of telling stories of war – the *Odyssey*, for example, is suitable for tales of individual heroism, but what else?

Students' responses will obviously be enhanced by seeing the play in performance, but if that is not possible, a video version is an excellent substitute, with sufficient differences to allow lively debate.

Structure**Active Learning Task 3**

Open-ended activity: responses will vary.

Active Learning Task 4

Open-ended activity: responses will vary.

Essay Question 3

How does Sherriff use structure in his play to manipulate the emotions of the audience?

Students need to be analysing the sequencing of the events which Sherriff presents. Drawing on the notes is useful here, so that it is easier to see what events precede and follow others; why are they important? How is dramatic effect gained from this careful planning of the action? Best section to consider is the announcement of the raid is followed by the confrontation between Hibbert and Stanhope. Other key moments, such as the sequence of events immediately after the raid, involving the Colonel.

Historical and Social Context**Discussion Prompt 1**

Personal response required.

Discussion Prompt 2

Open-ended activity: responses will vary. This activity can be broadened for opportunities to compare with sufficient time and a range of other texts available.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**

