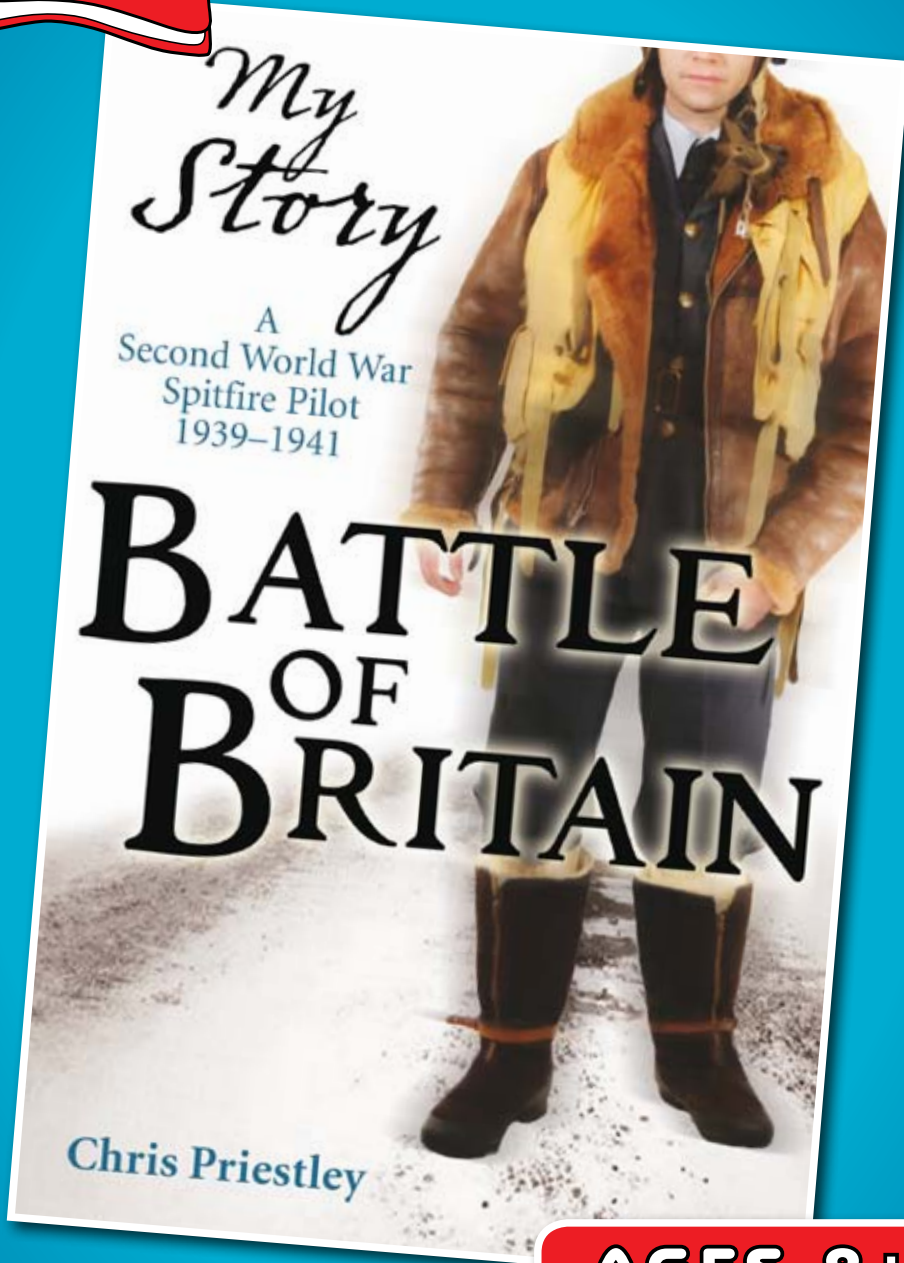




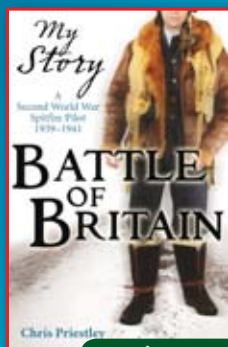
 SCHOLASTIC

Book Talk



AGES 8+

Engage and inspire your pupils with a Book Talk!



Look out for this book at your Fair!

AGES 8+

Price	£5.99
Case	Read On
Author	Chris Priestley
Illustrator	Laura Carlin
Publisher	Scholastic Children's Books

Using this book in your classroom

Themes

This book gives a gripping first-person account of what it was like to be a fighter pilot in the **Second World War**. It prompts readers to think about the **nature of war** and **patriotism**. It also prompts reflection on the power of **friendship** and **family relationships**.

Summary

Harry Woods is still only nineteen in 1939 when he is called up to serve as a Spitfire pilot with the RAF. Everyone tells Harry how glamorous his job is – but it doesn't feel that way to him. He has to battle with nausea and fear as well as excitement every day, as he waits for the call to scramble to his aircraft and take off to fight against German Heinkels and Messerschmitts. The Spitfire is a good aircraft, but the German planes are deadly too. Many of Harry's friends and fellow pilots are killed or badly injured – like his friend Lenny, who loses a leg when his Spitfire is shot down in battle.

This exciting story gives fascinating insights into the daily life of a Spitfire pilot during one of the most dangerous phases of the Second World War – the Battle of Britain in 1940. It is a thought-provoking and balanced account which clearly reflects the excitement and joy of flying, as well as the horrors of war. Young readers will be left with lots of thoughts and questions about what it was really like to be an RAF pilot at this crucial moment in history.

Did you know?

- As well as being a writer, Chris Priestley is a painter, illustrator and cartoonist.
- His father was 19 years old in 1940 – the same age as Harry Woods – and served as a soldier in the British Army.

The Story Session

1. Introducing the book

- Talk about the Second World War and share any prior knowledge that the children have about it. Ask: "What do you think it would be like to be a Spitfire pilot? Would it be exciting or terrifying – or both?" Talk about how young the Spitfire pilots were – many were only teenagers. Encourage the children to think about how they would feel if they or someone they knew were in this position.
- Read Chapter 1 out loud, and discuss Harry's feelings and his excitement at the idea of flying. How do the children think his feelings might change during the story? Return to their predictions later to see if they were right.

2. Reading the story

Read Chapter 2. Talk about the reasons Harry and Lenny give to explain why Britain is at war. Why do the children think Harry and Lenny drink 'to freedom'?

- Encourage the children to read the rest of the story independently or as a class. Pause after each chapter to talk about how Harry's feelings change – his fear and nerves mixed with his excitement and love of flying. Ask the children to look out for information about the other people in the story (e.g. Harry's parents, Lenny, Edith, Peter etc.) and identify how they feel about the war.
- As the children read, invite them to look out for examples to show how Harry's use of language is different from the way we speak today – e.g. "there's going to be a scrap," "message received," "all that rot".
- At the end of the book, talk about the role Harry and his RAF colleagues played in the war. Could it have been won without them?

3. Follow-up

- "Mum and Dad ... said I was part of history now. I wrote back and told them so were they. So was Edith. So was Lenny. Harriet. We all were." Ask the children to think about this quotation (from page 107). Do they think Harry was right that everyone played a part? Ask the children to research the different roles played by civilians, doctors and nurses, the RAF and the Army in the Second World War. Ask: "Whose role do you think was most important? Is it even possible to single out one group as the most important?"
- Ask the children to think about what they would ask Harry and what they would tell him if they could meet him. Encourage them to plan a role-play conversation in pairs, with one taking the part of Harry. Alternatively, they could write a letter to Harry telling him what they think of what he did.
- There are many useful websites which the children could use to research the Battle of Britain and the role of the RAF in the Second World War. The Imperial War Museum websites would be a good place to start: www.iwm.org.uk and <http://duxford.iwm.org.uk>.

YOU TELL US

- Did you use these notes to have a Book Talk in class?
- Were they helpful?
- Are there any changes you'd like to see to make them more useful?

We're always happy to hear your comments, so please email us!
Please email: bookfairs@scholastic.co.uk