

michael morpurgo



War Horse



War Horse – Joey

'In the old school they use now for the Village Hall, below the clock that has stood always at one minute past ten, hangs a small dusty painting of a horse. He stands, splendid red bay with a remarkable white cross emblazoned on his forehead and with four perfectly matched white socks. He looks wistfully out of the picture, his ears pricked forward, his head turned as if he has just noticed us standing there.

To many who glance up at it casually, as they might do when the hall is opened up for Parish meetings, for harvest suppers or evening socials, it is merely a tarnished old oil painting of some unknown horse by a competent but anonymous artist. To them the picture is so familiar that it commands little attention. But those who look more closely will see, written in fading black copperplate writing across the bottom of the bronze frame:

Joey

Painted by Captain James Nicholls, autumn 1914.

Some in the village, only a very few now and fewer as each year goes by, remember Joey as he was. His story is written so that neither he nor those who knew him, not the war they lived and died in, will be forgotten.'

(War Horse, Author's Note, page 1)

Read War Horse and make a note of any significant events in Joey's life.

Who did he meet in his story?

What work did he have to do?

How did he get back home?

Using your notes to help you, create a timeline to represent Joey's life.

Include the names of any people or horses that were important at that time and include an explanation about what events took place during his life.

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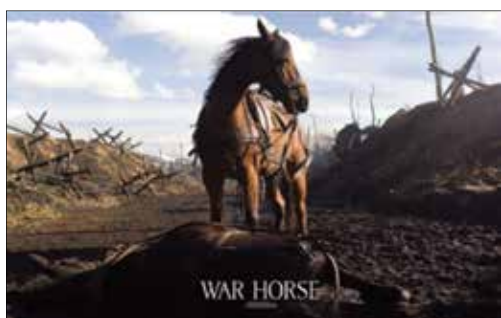
War Horse



War Horse – Military Animals

'Begging your pardon, sir,' he said. 'But I remembers you telling us when we first come here that a horse's life is p'raps even more important than a man's, 'cos an horse hasn't got no evil in him 'cepting any that's put there by men. I remembers you saying that our job in the veterinary corps was to work night and day, twenty-six hours a day if need be to save and help every horse that we could, that every horse was valuable in hisself and valuable to the war effort. No horse, no guns. No horse, no ammunition. No horse, no cavalry. No horse, no ambulances. No horse, no water for the troops at the front. Lifeline of the whole army, you said, sir. We must never give up, you said, 'cos where there's life there's still hope. That's all what you said, sir, begging your pardon, sir.'

(War Horse, Chapter 18, Page 151)



War Horse by Michael Morpurgo, gives us a wonderful insight into the realities of the war, not just for the soldiers but also for all of the brave horses who worked tirelessly on our behalf.

Horses are not the only animals that have been used to help fight wars.

Using books and the internet to help you, research other animals that have either been used in the past or are still used today to support the military.

Create a factsheet about 'Military Animals.'

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War Horse – Zoey

'And he walked away from me leading Zoey behind him. His head was lowered and he looked suddenly a shrunken man.'

It was then that I fully realised I was being abandoned and I began to neigh, a high-pitched cry of pain and anxiety that I shrieked out through the village. Even old Zoey, obedient and placid as she always was, stopped and would not be moved on no matter how hard Albert's father pulled her. She turned, tossed up her head and shouted her farewell. But her cries became weaker and she was finally dragged away and out of my sight...'

(War Horse, Chapter 4, Page 32)

War Horse is written from the perspective of Joey, about his life as a military animal.

Try to imagine you are Zoey, thinking from her perspective instead of Joey's.

Her companion and friend has been taken away and she has to return alone to work on a farm where life is hard, food is rationed and the young men, including Albert are going to war.

Write a paragraph as though you are Zoey.

Joey has returned with Albert from France and you are telling Joey about your own experiences of life whilst he was away.
