**Lesson I- Understanding the Historical Context and Plot:**

**-Summary:** This lesson will be divided into three parts, with each section helping students to better understand and evaluate the period of history, the novel’s events, as well as Michael Morpurgo’s relationship with animals. Students will assess and analyse the time period, whilst also making connections to the novel as a whole.

**-Lesson Objectives:**

i- To understand the historical events surrounding the novel’s plot and how this influences the book and its characters.

ii-To identify the key events of the novel and why they are effective/ important within the narrative and genre.

iii- To reflect on Michael Morpurgo as a writer, and why he was able to write *War Horse* effectively.

**-Part 1: The Period of History:**

-We will start the lesson by discussing what students already know about World War One, before looking at a comprehensive timeline. We will analyse the events of the timeline and how they relate to *War Horse,* before then looking at first hand accounts of the war from those who lived during it. We will also look more specifically at the role of animals during the War, including Julian Grenfell’s poem ‘Into Battle’.

**-Part 2: The Events:**

-We will look at the main events of the novel (from Albert’s childhood, to Joey’s time in Germany, to the novel’s conclusion back in Britain) and what emotions, feelings as well as purposes these events convey. Students will have to reorganise the novel’s events which will be jumbled up, before discussing them. We will also evaluate the novel’s timeline in relation to the First World War, and how effective and realistic we think Morpurgo is.

-We will also watch the trailer of the film and see if we think the director/editors have summarised the main events and scenes in the same way that we would, as observant readers.

**-Part 3: Michael Morpurgo:**

-We will watch an interview where Morpurgo discusses the inspiration behind the novel, where we can better understand why this book may have been difficult to write, and his writing methods. We will also discuss if we know of any other books by Michael Morpurgo, and why he uses animals so often to talk about more serious subjects, such as war.

**-Homework:**

-Students will write an ~300 word persuasive piece on which event/ scene they think is the most revealing and effective in the novel, when understood within its historical context.

**Lesson II- Analysing the Characters:**

**-Summary:** This lesson will analyse the novel’s main characters and will be split into two sections, the first studying the animals and the second the humans. Students will analyse each character, their role in the novel, as well as looking at how they described. Students will then draw their own conclusions on the characters based on the analysis in the lesson, as well as evaluate the power of animals in the novel.

**-Lesson Objectives:**

i- To form opinions and understand the novel’s main characters as well as their literary roles.

ii-To analyse the descriptive language used to create the characters, and how it is effective.

**Part 1- The Animals:**

-We will look at excerpts from the book introducing the different horses, where we will compare and contrast the personalities of Joey, Zoey and Topthorn. We will also evaluate the language used, as well as why horses are such effective creatures to explore, and how they offer a different perspective to that of dogs, for example. We will also look at horse illustrations, different book covers and the horses from the film version, to see if we think they match our imagination.

**Part 2- The Humans:**

-We will analyse the humans in a very similar way, focusing on Albert, Ted, Captain James Nicholls, Emilie and her Grandfather. We will then decide which character we empathise with the most, including the animals. We will also do some speedwriting, where students will create a new animal character (not a horse) and how they think this character could fit into the novel.

**Homework:** Students will describe their own horse and rider during wartime, taking inspiration from multiple characters in the text, and considering physical as well as emotional character traits.

**Lesson III- Assessing the Main Themes:**

**-Summary:** This lesson will outline all the novel’s most important themes, where students will assess why each theme is important and why Michael Morpurgo chose to focus on these ideas. Students will analyse why these themes are important in historical war fiction, and where else these themes appear in literature.

**Lesson Objectives:**

i-To understand and recognise the novel’s most influential themes, and why they invaluable within the plot.

ii- To assess the importance of these themes in a war time situation, as well as in other literatures.

iii-To explain which theme is most important and defining in your view.

**Part 1- Identifying and Understanding Themes:**

-Students will identify the novel’s main themes, where each theme will be evaluated in turn regarding importance, as well as how Michael Morpurgo chooses to construct it. Before reading excerpts, students will watch the National Theatre’s trailer of the dramatic production of *War Horse,* to see if they can see some of the themes being re-enacted in front of them. Students will be posed with hypothetical questions, such as how different the themes would be without Joey as the narrator, or if the book was set in another country or period of war history. Students will also analyse excerpts which engage with the themes particularly well, such as Emilie’s kindness, or Joey’s bravery in his first battle experience. We will also evaluate Morpurgo’s use of symbolism to strengthen his creation of his themes.

**Part 2- The Themes’ Wider Context and Purpose in *War Horse* and Beyond:**

-Students will discuss the importance of these themes within the overall genre of war fiction, and why they are so valuable. Students will also be asked to make connections to other war novels and/or animal-focused novels, and why these themes are so universally important. Within this part of the lesson, students will be asked to write an extra scene during a speed-writing session, where they will be encouraged to reflect different themes within their writing, such as kindness, bravery and fearlessness. Students will then provide their final opinion, as to which theme they believe is the most influential in the novel.

**Homework:** Students will create a synopsis for their own war book (focusing on an animal re-telling still), where they will convey themes as evidently and effectively as they can within the detailed summary, without being too explicit.

**Lesson IV- Investigating Language, Structure and Style:**

**-Summary:** This lesson will assess multiple areas of language which make the novel exciting, as well as effective. Students will firstly go through the techniques, before then analysing them in the novel. Students will do several close-analysis exercises from novel excerpts, where they can work individually and collaboratively to better understand Michael Morpurgo’s literary decisions.

**Lesson Objectives:**

i-To understand the different linguistic and structural techniques within *War Horse,* and why they are effective.

ii- To understand how to not only describe as effectively as Morpurgo, but how to also analyse language in a PEE paragraph.

**Part I: Close Analysis Within Excerpts:**

-Students will firstly brainstorm and define a variety of linguistic as well as structural techniques, where all terms and concepts will be defined before we analyse the text in depth. Students will then read several excerpts from the novel, from the calmer descriptions during Joey’s childhood in chapter two, to the war zone scenes, such as in chapter ten. Students will compare and contrast the language and structural decisions within each extract, whilst also providing their opinion regarding how the different scenes make them feel/react as a reader. We will aim to go through 3-4 extracts, which use a variety of language and discuss different settings as well as moments of action.

**Part II: Describing and Critically Evaluating:**

-Students will firstly do some speedwriting (around 50-100 words), creating a new action scene and focusing on also applying the techniques discussed. Students can use characters from the novel, as well as their own creations. Then, we will discuss our writing, before moving onto how to form the PEE paragraph, as well as how to write one whilst assessing the effectiveness of language. We will look at an example of a PEE paragraph which discusses a use of language in W*ar Horse.*

**Homework:** This task will be split into two short sections. Firstly, students will be asked to write another ~100 word action scene, using as many of the linguistic and structural techniques as effectively as possible, building from their previous work. Then, students will be provided with three extracts on the final PowerPoint slide and will be asked to write three very short PEE paragraphs (~50 words each) assessing the effectiveness of one of the extract’s language and structure.