

Using Evidence
Interrogating
Analysing
Selection
Stop and Think
Interaction with the Text
Vocabulary
Repeated Readings
Note Taking
Close Reading
Questioning
Stemming
Background Knowledge



Machine Gunners – Learning Journey

THE BIG QUESTION:

How does conflict shape our experiences?

How would I answer our big question at the beginning of my journey?

START

Can I make predictions about characters?

I will practise selecting evidence to support my ideas on relationships.

I can begin to explain how conflict affects children.

THE MACHINE GUNNERS

I will develop my writing skills to create detailed and clear descriptions.

I have an understanding of how situations change characters.

I know what poppies symbolise.

I can choose words carefully when describing characters.

Close reading is thoughtful, analysis of a text that focuses on significant details or patterns in order to develop a deep, precise understanding of craft and meaning in *Machine Gunners*.



How can conflict shape our experiences?

Machine Gunners

by Robert Westall

CONTEXT

The *Machine Gunners* is a children's historical novel by Robert Westall, published by Macmillan in 1975. Set during the Second World War the story follows six children living in the fictional town of Garmouth which regularly suffers bombing raids by the German Luftwaffe. When Chas McGill finds a crashed German Heinkel 111 bomber he removes a fully operational machine gun and over 2000 rounds of ammunition.

BIG QUESTION

How can conflict shape our experiences?

DESCRIBING CHARACTERS

CHARACTER	CHARACTERISTIC	SYNONYMS
Boddser	guilty	bully / remorseful / shame / disgrace
Chas	caring	Warm-hearted / sneaky / brave / determined
Audrey	naive	tomboy / inexperienced / trusting / unsuspecting
Cem	snobbish	friendly / tough / blunt / thoughtful

1	Context and non-fiction: the Blitz. Chapters 1 & 2 main characters: The main characters and a diary entry. Audrey and her role
2	Children in WW2 & Zlata's diary- non-fiction. Chapter 3. Chas and his dad. Chas, Boddser & violence Chapter 4 accents and dialects. Stan Liddell. Chapter 5: Adults and how they react
3	Chapter 6, 7, 8, Information retrieval: description of an air raid. The fight. Rationing. Nicky and Anderson shelters. Goodnight Mr Tom extract. Representations of war. Events in Ch8 and summary writing
4	Chapter 9, 10, 11 Rudi and how he is presented. Chas and Rudi – character interaction. Summary writing.
5	Chapter 12. Comparing characters. Poem: Flanders Fields. Chapter 13 & 14. Boddser and Chas: their fight. Nicky and his family.
6	Chapter 15 & 16 investigating character & plot development. How the characters respond differently to the air raid. Rudi and how he is presented as a friend not an enemy. Tension and fear. New Experiences for children in war.
7	Chapter 17: predictions and reactions. Tracking action and preparation for the ending
8	Chapter 18: closure and review. Helga's diary and final diary writing