



## SCHEME OF WORK

**PERFECT FOR:** Ages 9+; a gripping and moving story set in Wales during the Second World War; role-play and writing in role; poetry and performance; researching coal mining; exploring the reasons for the start of the war; understanding the experiences of evacuees; joining three children on an exciting journey full of bravery and adventure!

### KEY FOR CROSS-CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES:

English: Reading Comprehension; Creative Writing;  
Poetry; Writing to Entertain and Inform

Design Technology & Art

Drama, Speaking and Listening

Science

Music

Geography

History

Food Technology

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# WEEK 1 (CHAPTERS 1–5): A DIFFERENT TYPE OF COUNTRYSIDE

The  
VALLEY  
of LOST  
SECRETS

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Reading: Comprehension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analyse an author's style of writing and identify different techniques and vocabulary used.</li> <li>- Describe relationships between characters.</li> </ul> <p><b>Geography</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Locate places and landmarks on a map.</li> <li>- Explore a location's physical and human geography.</li> </ul> <p><b>History</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Order and understand the main events that occurred during World War Two.</li> <li>- Use research methods to extend historical learning.</li> </ul> <p><b>Writing in Role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Write a diary as a character, considering thoughts, feelings and emotions.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Before reading, spend some time creating a spider diagram of words, themes and ideas linked to 'World War Two'. What do you think you already know about this period of time?</li> <li>2. How does the author present the landscape on page 2? How does the reality differ to Jimmy's preconceptions?</li> <li>3. Read Chapter 1 and use a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast Jimmy's and Ronnie's feelings. How are they similar? How are they different?</li> <li>4. Can you explain why a lot of people laugh on page 14?</li> <li>5. Read up to page 21. Why do you think some people are whispering about and frowning at Mrs Thomas? What are your first impressions of her?</li> <li>6. Why does Jimmy dig his fist into the pillow? What might he be thinking and feeling? (page 29)</li> <li>7. Use the information and description on page 37 to draw and label a picture of the Sunday School Hall.</li> <li>8. What does the verb 'grab' suggest about how Jimmy is feeling? Why? (page 39)</li> <li>9. How is Florence different? Why doesn't Jimmy recognise her? What role do you predict she will play in the story? (page 42)</li> <li>10. What are your impressions so far of Jimmy and Ronnie? Do you like them? What can you infer about their relationship?</li> </ol>	<p>The story is set in Wales. If you don't live in Wales, use a map to identify where in the world it is. What can you find out about its landscape and physical features? Can you create a fact-file and include information about its capital city, population size and tourist attractions?</p> <p>Create a timeline showing the main events that occurred during World War Two. You may wish to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• German forces storming the Polish frontier</li> <li>• Neville Chamberlain declaring war</li> <li>• The Battle of Dunkirk</li> <li>• The London Blitz</li> <li>• D-Day</li> </ul> <p>Rewrite the train journey from Ronnie's point of view. What might he be able to see and hear? How is he feeling about the journey and being evacuated? Remember to write in the past tense and in the first person. You could even create a name tag for Ronnie and illustrate your diary with special items he might take!</p>



# WEEK 2 (CHAPTERS 6–10): NOT ONE OF OURS

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Reading:</b> <b>Comprehension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Define vocabulary, thinking carefully about its meaning and impact.</li> <li>- Retrieve information.</li> </ul> <p><b>Drama, Speaking and Listening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand a character by completing a Role on the Wall activity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Design Technology &amp; Art</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design and create a 3D model of an Anderson Shelter.</li> <li>- Explore how to strengthen, stiffen and reinforce an Andersen Shelter.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The author describes Mr Thomas’s eyes as ‘shining like coal’. What might this mean? What image does it create in your mind? (page 45)</li> <li>2. Read page 47. How do you think Mr Thomas feels about the prayer? How do you know?</li> <li>3. Mr Thomas says he is ‘beyond redemption’. Can you write a definition for this word and use it to explore why he might think this? (page 51)</li> <li>4. Role-play the conversation between Mrs Thomas and Jimmy on page 56, thinking carefully about your body language and expression.</li> <li>5. Florence ‘smirks’ at Jimmy on page 61. Why? How is a ‘smirk’ similar to a ‘smile’? How is it different?</li> <li>6. Explain what leuan means when he says that ‘coal will fuel this war’. (page 66)</li> <li>7. Imagine you are Jimmy on page 73 and 74. Make a list of everything you can see, hear, taste, smell and touch.</li> <li>8. Can you identify two similes on page 75 and explain their meaning? How do they help us understand Jimmy’s actions?</li> <li>9. Read to the end of page 87. Do you have any predictions about the skull, who it might belong to, and why Jimmy found it in the tree?</li> <li>10. How important has the theme of ‘jealousy’ been so far in the story? Can you think of any moments in the story where a character’s actions have been motivated by jealousy?</li> </ol>	<p>Complete a Role on the Wall activity. Draw an outline of Jimmy. On the inside of your drawing, write down everything you learn about him in these chapters. On the outside, record any questions you might like to ask him. In a different colour, you could imagine you are Jimmy and write his answers.</p> <p>While you read, collect any Welsh words and names. As a class, keep a running glossary of all the new words you discover as you read. Can you find out what these welsh words mean? You may come across words like <i>mun</i>, <i>bach</i>, <i>cawl</i>, <i>mitching</i> and <i>cariad</i>. You could even listen to a recording of the Lord’s Prayer in Welsh.</p> <p>Using a shoebox, create a 3D model of the Thomas’s garden. Remember to include the Anderson Shelter and vegetable patch. Think carefully about how you can join and reinforce the materials you use. You may also wish to create museum cards to inform people about Anderson Shelters!</p>



## WEEK 3 (CHAPTERS 11–17): SKULLS AND SKELINGTONS

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SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Reading:</b> <b>Comprehension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Use clues from the text to infer information about a character and what they might be thinking and feeling.</li><li>- Use an Emotions Graph to explore a character's thoughts.</li></ul> <p><b>Poetry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Interpret and perform a poem, using expression, actions and musical instruments to convey meaning.</li><li>- Create a poem in the style of Robert Hull.</li></ul> <p><b>Food Technology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Follow a recipe and bake traditional Welsh cakes.</li><li>- Evaluate a finished product.</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Why does Jimmy change his mind about telling Duff about the skull? What might he be thinking and feeling? (page 91)</li><li>2. The old lady looks like she's 'sucking a lemon'. Why? What does this mean? Can you show a partner what her facial expression might look like? (page 100)</li><li>3. Explain why Ronnie gets a 'smiley look in his eye'. What might he be thinking and feeling? (page 108)</li><li>4. Read page 111. What do we learn about Jimmy's views of adults? Why might he feel like this about the adults in his life?</li><li>5. Mrs Thomas is described as being 'like a nervous bird'. What image does this create in your mind? How and why does the atmosphere in the room change when Jack Evans is mentioned? (page 120)</li><li>6. Look at page 132. Does Jimmy's response about Mr and Mrs Thomas surprise you at all? Do you think he would have said this at the beginning of the story?</li><li>7. Can you pinpoint a moment on page 139 when the mood changes? Why does it change?</li><li>8. Florence says, 'Phyllis doesn't.' What does this imply about her own mother? (page 141)</li><li>9. Use a table to compare the inhabitant's views about the evacuees. Which of the character's have a positive view of them and which have a negative? (Try to use quotations!)</li><li>10. How is the relationship between Florence and Jimmy changing and developing as the story progresses? Are there any other relationships that are changing too?</li></ol>	<p>Create an Emotions Graph to plot Jimmy's changing thoughts and feelings throughout these chapters. You may wish to refer to: <i>meeting Duff and his friends, showing Ronnie the skull, apologising to Florence, the Welcoming Party.</i></p> <p>Look at the poem <i>Deer Skull</i> by Robert Hull. Discuss what you like and dislike about it, anything that puzzles you and how it links to the story. Work in groups to perform the poem, thinking about how you can use your voice, actions and musical instruments to convey the feeling of the poem. You could even write your own poem describing the skull in the style of Robert Hull!</p> <p>The children are taught how to make traditional welsh cakes. Find a simple recipe to follow and bake your own welsh cakes. Perhaps you could write your own set of instructions for how to make these, or you could write an evaluation of your finished product, discussing its texture, taste and appearance.</p>



## WEEK 4 (CHAPTERS 18–25): SECRETS AND DARK DAYS

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SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Reading: Comprehension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Retrieve information.</li> <li>- Identify evidence from the text to support theories and opinions.</li> <li>- Use clues to make predictions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Design Technology &amp; Art</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore the work of Welsh artist Kyffin Williams and use the techniques he employed to create your own piece of art.</li> <li>- Explore the style and techniques employed by the artists who created propaganda posters and then use these to create a persuasive advert.</li> </ul> <p><b>Science</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify that humans and some other animals have skeletons and muscles for support, protection and movement.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does the author create a sense of tension and excitement on pages 143? Which words and phrases are particularly effective?</li> <li>2. Why do you think Florence needs a place to hide? (page 151)</li> <li>3. What do you think motivates Jimmy to reveal his secret to Florence? (page 153)</li> <li>4. What does Florence believe has happened to the skull? Can you tell a partner three of her ideas? (pages 161-162)</li> <li>5. Do you agree that Florence is 'the brains of the operation'? Why? Why not? Use evidence from the story to support your ideas. (page 164)</li> <li>6. Who is Mrs Ringrose? Can you describe her in three words and explain your word choices? (page 167)</li> <li>7. How does the author present the library in Chapter 22? Is it a welcoming or unwelcoming place? Why do you think this might be?</li> <li>8. Read up to page 192. What do you predict has happened to Ronnie? Where could he be?</li> <li>9. Why do you think the boys have Ronnie? What might they want him to tell them? (page 198)</li> <li>10. Read to the end of Chapter 25. What do you predict will happen next? Does the ending of this chapter make you want to read on? Why? Why not?</li> </ol>	<p>Spend some time looking at the artwork of Kyffin Williams. He often created pieces linked to the Welsh countryside and landscape. Consider how he applied the paint and the techniques he used. Using some photographs of Wales and its beautiful landscape, design and paint your own piece of artwork based on his work and the settings in the story.</p> <p>Explore a range of posters created during World War Two that were designed to encourage people to behave sensibly and watch out for German spies. What techniques did they use? Which slogans were popular? Design your own piece of war-time propaganda.</p> <p>The children find a book in the library about human anatomy. Can you draw and label a diagram of the human body, focusing on the skeleton? Identify and describe the role of various bones, including the skull and ribcage. What would happen if we did not have skeletons?</p>



# WEEK 5 (CHAPTERS 26–31): TRICKS

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Reading: Comprehension</b> - Explore vocabulary and carry out role-play to understand the relationship between characters.</p> <p><b>Drama, Speaking and Listening</b> - Understand and empathise with a character's thoughts, feelings and attitudes and express these through use of role-play.</p> <p><b>Writing in Role</b> - Empathise with characters by writing an inner monologue. - Explore the difference between what a character says and does. - Write a postcard, considering a character's thoughts and feelings/</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does reading the beginning of Chapter 26 make you feel? Why?</li> <li>2. How do you feel about Reverend Evans? Can you describe the relationship between Mr Thomas and the reverend? (page 208)</li> <li>3. What do you think the reverend means by 'this time'? How do you think he might say these words? With a sneer? A whisper? Have a go! (page 208)</li> <li>4. Why do you think Duff is 'shuffling from foot to foot'? What might he be thinking and feeling? (210)</li> <li>5. Role-play the conversation between Duff and Jimmy on pages 213-216, thinking about your expression and body language.</li> <li>6. Florence insists they pick up their rubbish before they go home. What does this suggest about her? (page 221)</li> <li>7. Why do you think the ribbon is so significant and important to Florence? (page 224)</li> <li>8. What 'big clue' do you think has just been revealed on page 227?</li> <li>9. How is the relationship between Ronnie and Jimmy to Mr Thomas's relationship with his brother? (page 232)</li> <li>10. Why do you think Florence 'whispers' on page 241? What might she be thinking and feeling? Have you ever felt like this before?</li> </ol>	<p>In a group of five, re-create the events from in chapter 26, up to page 202. One of you should play Jimmy, one should play Florence, one should play Ronnie, one Jack and one of you should play Duff. Perform the scene five times; each time considering another character's perspective. Think about how you will change your body language and voice each time.</p> <p>What might Jimmy and Mr Thomas be thinking and feeling on page 230? Choose one of the characters and write an inner monologue to show their feelings. Now, act out the scene in pairs, taking time to pause and share your monologue. Is there a difference between what your character is saying and feeling?</p> <p>At the beginning of the story, Jimmy sends a postcard to his Father and Nan, but what might he say about things now? Will he try and comfort his family in London or will he tell them the truth about what has been happening? Have a go at writing a postcard in role as Jimmy.</p>



# WEEK 6 (CHAPTERS 32–38): THERE WERE BONES

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SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Reading: Comprehension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and discuss the main themes in the story.</li> <li>- Create character profiles, exploring how the characters have developed.</li> <li>- Retrieve and summarise information.</li> <li>- Make comparisons within and across books.</li> </ul> <p><b>Music</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use your voice and instruments to create a soundscape.</li> </ul> <p><b>Design Technology &amp; Art</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a piece of artwork which represents and displays the main symbols throughout the story.</li> </ul> <p><b>History</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research the development and importance of coal mining throughout the UK.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Summarise the events in Chapter 32 in six sentences. Now can you do it in three sentences? What about one?</li> <li>2. The author describes the sirens as howling and moaning. What literary device is this and what effect does it have? (page 245)</li> <li>3. Why do you think Jimmy jerks away from Florence’s touch? What might he be thinking and feeling? Summarise his feelings in one word. (page 247)</li> <li>4. Mrs Thomas says that Ronnie is ‘a tonic’. What does she mean? Can you find some examples in the story? (page 261)</li> <li>5. Use the information on page 267 to summarise in one sentence what happened to Nye.</li> <li>6. What is the significance of the number 206? Why is this an important number? (page 273)</li> <li>7. Draw and label a picture or map of the setting, making sure you include all the important places and landmarks mentioned.</li> <li>8. Which character do you think develops the most during the story; Jimmy, Florence or Mr Thomas? Why?</li> <li>9. Which of these do you think is the most important theme in the story? Can you rank the themes from least important to most important? <i>Family, bravery, secrets, war, loss, friendship.</i></li> <li>10. Describe the following characters in one word and explain your word choice: <i>Jimmy, Ronnie, Florence, Duff, Mr Thomas, Mrs Thomas, Jack.</i></li> </ol>	<p>In a group, create an exciting and frightening soundscape to accompany the events of Chapter 32 and the terrifying cave-in. You could imagine the sounds inside the coal mine and outside, using instruments, your voices, and body percussion to create atmosphere.</p> <p>Coal mining is an important part of the valley. In a small group, conduct research into coal mining. Where in the UK were most coal mines located? Use a map to locate them. You could create a poster or PowerPoint presentation to inform readers about it, including how it worked, what it was like, and its dangers.</p> <p>Explore the illustrations throughout the book at the beginning of each chapter. What do you notice? Are there any recurring themes or symbols? What do you think each picture represents? Can you create a colourful piece of artwork to show the main symbols in the story? Try to include Florence’s ribbon, the book of human anatomy, the skull, Ronnie’s van and any others you can think of!</p>

