



YEAR 8 – UNIT 1: IT'S A MYSTERY



It's A Mystery Knowledge Organiser – Year 8

Key Learning

What is a mystery story?

The word 'mystery' is derived from the Anglo-French *misterie*, or the old French *mistere*, meaning secret, mystery, hidden meaning. Additionally the modern French *mystère* and Latin *mysterium* had meanings of a secret rite, secret worship, a sacrament, a secret thing.

The History of the Mystery Genre

The roots of the mystery genre can be traced back to the 18th century, when stories of real-life crime, and the biographies of notorious criminals, were published in *The Newgate Calendar*. (Newgate was a famous prison in London). In the first half of the 19th century, readers could find sensationalist stories of crime and mystery in 'penny dreadfuls'

'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' (a short story written in 1841 by Edgar Allan Poe) is viewed by many people as the first classic mystery story.

Sub-genres

In 1887, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle introduced the character of Sherlock Holmes in his novel *A Study in Scarlet*. The famous detective went on to appear in many more short stories and novels published in popular monthly magazines such as *The Strand*. Today, the mystery genre has many different **sub-genres**. For example:

The cosy or manor-house mystery where a murder occurs and people who were in the house come under suspicion.

Hard-boiled detective fiction with tough private detectives investigating grisly crimes.

Police procedurals – detective stories written from the perspective of the police

Characterisation. How a writer creates a dynamic, realistic person.

Physical traits – what the character looks like

Dialogue – what the character says

Actions – what the character does

Point of view – what the character thinks

How other characters react to them

Key features of a mystery:

- A puzzling problem or crime
- A detective or investigator
- Suspects and a villain
- A trail of clues
- A final plot twist

Characters

You will find many different characters in a mystery story: victims, suspects and villains, but the most important character is often the detective – the person investigating the mystery itself. This could be: an amateur sleuth, a private investigator or a police detective.

Key Questions

Why are readers still fascinated by the mystery genre?

What are the archetypal characteristics of the mystery genre and how has it changed?

Is there an archetypal detective and, if so, what might that be?

Where is the success of this genre seen in popular culture?

A mystery needs to keep the reader turning the pages by building up tension and suspense. There needs to be jeopardy, memorable characters and a plot twist.

Key Terminology

Inference – a conclusion based on evidence

Deduction – the process of drawing a conclusion based on clues or experience

Tension – suspense caused by threat to the main character or a new aspect to the mystery

Red herring – a clue which is used to mislead the reader

Main clause – the main part of the sentence containing the subject and verb

Subordinate clause – a clause which is dependent on the main clause

Climax – the exciting part of the story where the mystery is revealed

Jeopardy - danger

Plot twist – an unexpected event such as the death of a suspect that sends the plot in a new direction



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**Key Learning – Psychological effects of war – exploring how war affects human beings and relationships**

The Great War, as it was called, was the first war of its kind and affected every community in Britain. In the aftermath of this global loss of life, writers found ways of coming to terms with this loss, whilst exploring the remarkable camaraderie which marked so many of those who fought. Sherriff, a soldier himself, sought to realistically portray what the war was like, providing dignity, honouring the countless fallen, as well as depicting the true horrors of the War.

Key Characters

Captain Dennis Stanhope – Commander of an Infantry Company. He represents the officers who commanded companies, often enduring the horrors beyond their capacity, but remained committed. He is brave, dutiful, commanding, compassionate yet deeply flawed. He is an alcoholic.

Officer Osborne – Stanhope's second in command. As a character he represents the 'uncle figure', those who joined the war later as they were older and were doomed to die. He is a stable, supportive force, loyal, respectable, as well as brave and determined.

Officer Raleigh – Stanhope's childhood friend, yet a number of years younger. He idolises Stanhope. He represents the generation with everything to live for but for whom death was a cruel end. He is naïve, enthusiastic and inexperienced.

Officer Trotter – He represents the ordinary, everyday officer; he is slightly socially inferior to Stanhope, Osborne and Raleigh. He is dutiful, brave and likeable.

Officer Hibbert – He represents those soldiers who were no longer dealing with the psychological horrors of war. He is portrayed as cowardly, unlikable and weak.

Colonel – the commander of the overall company. He has a minor role. He represents the leaders in the army who had clear military goals but seemed to possess little understanding or interest in the horrors the men faced daily.

New Key Vocabulary

Realism – A style of writing where the writer depicts a person, thing or situation in a way that is accurate or true to real life.

Dramatic Irony – when the audience knows something the characters do not

Foreshadowing – a deliberate hint of what will happen later in the narrative to create greater tension or suspense.

Juxtaposition – placing two things side by side for greater dramatic impact

Contrast – to show the differences between two subjects, places, people, or things

Symbolism – using an object or thing to represent an idea beyond its literal meaning.

Cliffhanger – an ending used at a dramatic moment leaving no clear conclusion

Tension – use of language and/ or structure to evoke worry, anxiety or fear

Digging Deep

How does war affect those who fight in it?

What role does camaraderie play in facing unimaginable horrors on a daily basis?

How have people responded differently to the play over time? Why?

How important do you think it is to have heroes in our lives?

Why is it important to continue to celebrate plays like this?

Plot:

The play opens with Osborne arriving at handover for Stanhope's unit to take over the dugout. Hardy, the CO leaving, references Stanhope's drinking problem but Osborne defends him. They refer to a big push coming soon. The others arrive and they get settled in. Raleigh arrives and it is clear that Stanhope is not pleased to see him. Stanhope and Osborne discuss Raleigh's arrival; Osborne clearly believes that Raleigh will go on liking Stanhope. We also meet Hibbert who is clearly on the edge of a nervous breakdown.

The next day dawns and they are discussing the attack. Stanhope tells the S-M to dig in no matter what. The Colonel arrives and orders Stanhope to send some men to 'get a German'. Osborne and Raleigh are chosen. Hibbert has a moment where he wants to quit; Stanhope almost shoots Hibbert but Hibbert agrees to stay. The raid on the Germans goes ahead. Osborne is killed. Raleigh and Stanhope argue about how to deal with the grief. Raleigh realises the losses of war. The day of the attack arrives. All are ready. Raleigh goes over the top and is fatally wounded. Stanhope gets to make him comfortable and say goodbye to him. The play ends with the dugout being exploded but we don't know if Stanhope survived or not.

Recommended reading: The war poems of Wilfred Owen, and Siegfried Sassoon. *Goodbye to all that* by Robert Graves; *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Remarque; *Sassoon's Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*. For more modern views of war, explore the poet, Simon Armitage.



UNIT 2 – JOURNEY'S END – Y8





UNIT 3: CAMPAIGN FOR A CAUSE – YEAR 8



Key Learning – Exploring the texts produced by a variety of charities

The big question in this unit is, ‘How can you make someone care about a cause and why do people give towards charity?’

Writers use a range of structural, presentational and language devices to present their messages effectively. You need to identify them and critically evaluate the effectiveness of these techniques across a range of campaign texts.

Key terms:

A cause is an aim or idea that someone supports because they strongly believe in it.

A campaign is a set of activities designed to achieve that aim.

Charity workers campaign to bring about change to make the world a better place. They do this by building public awareness, raising funds and persuading people to take action.

A charity can be defined as an organisation that raises money and acts to help those in need.

Examples of well-known charities that campaign to bring about change:

Oxfam, Red Cross, Great Ormond Street Hospital, British Heart Foundation, Help for Heroes, Save the Children, WaterAid, The Wildlife Trusts, Dogs’ Trust and Barnardo’s.

Further reading: many UK charities have websites, here are a few: Oxfam (www.oxfam.org.uk/), The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (<http://www.rspca.org.uk/home>). For up-to-date research into UK global charities, you could visit Charities Aid Foundation (<http://www.cafonline.org/>). For local volunteering opportunities aimed at people aged 14 and over, visit, charityvInspired (<http://vinspired.com/>)

Key Conceptual Vocabulary

Direct address - using the pronouns ‘I’ or ‘you’ to involve the reader by communicate directly with them.

Rhetorical questions – posing a question to make a point and encourage readers to think about the answer.

Emotive language – using words that provoke an emotional response from the reader.

Statistics – using numbers or facts to make a convincing point.

Direct speech – words, within inverted commas in a sentence, actually spoken by someone.

Reported speech – text that explains what someone said, without using their exact words.

Active voice – in a sentence with an active voice, the subject is doing the action. Example: The company employs women.

Passive voice – in a sentence with a passive voice, the subject is being acted upon. Example: The women are employed by the company.

Lists – a number of connected items or names written or printed consecutively, typically one below the other.

Repetition – using the same words for emphasis

Tripartite structures – the use of three to aid memory

Useful Information

There are over 180,000 registered charities in the UK.

UK charities touch the lives of millions of people – from those they help in times of need, to more than 800,000 paid charity employees. There are also approximately 1.5 million volunteers. Whilst charities raise money, lobby groups bring about change by seeking to influence decision makers like governments.

Individuals, as well as groups can campaign for change. Aged 15, Malala Yousafzai campaigned for girls to be educated in her country, whilst Greta Thunberg (also aged 15) become known globally for her environmental campaign.

Digging Deep

- Why are charities so popular?
- How are charities using social media and video to expand their reach?
- Should celebrities be used to campaign for causes?
- How might campaigning change in the future?



UNIT 4: ANIMAL FARM – YEAR 8



Key Learning – Animal Farm Year 8

Who is George Orwell?

Born Eric Arthur Blair, George Orwell adopted his pen name to protect the privacy of his family as he began his career as a writer. His literature is characterised by his disdain for totalitarian systems and dictatorships, taking preference for democratically elected governments which reflect socialist ideology. Late in 1936, Orwell travelled to Spain to fight against Franco's Nationalists. He was forced to flee in fear of his life from Soviet-backed communists who were suppressing socialist dissenters. The experience turned him into a lifelong anti-Stalinist. In 1945, Orwell's 'Animal Farm' was published. A political fable set in a farmyard but based on Stalin's betrayal of the Russian Revolution, it made Orwell's name and ensured he was financially comfortable for the first time in his life.

Key Characters:

- **Mr Jones:** He is a cruel, incompetent, and often drunk leader. His neglect of the animals is what first inspires the animals' violent revolt. Mr. Jones represents Tsar Nicholas II.
- **Old Major:** Old Major is the prize-winning boar who initially inspires the revolution. He represents a combination of Karl Marx (who established the original precepts of communism) and Vladimir Lenin (the intellectual force behind the Bolshevik Revolution).
- **Boxer:** Boxer, a powerfully-built workhorse, is kind and determined, but not very bright. Boxer commits to Animalism and works as hard as he can for the betterment of the farm.
- **Napoleon:** Napoleon is a large pig (a Berkshire Boar) who lives on Manor Farm. He is an early leader of the animal revolution. As he acquires more power, Napoleon becomes more cutthroat, using intimidation and fear to maintain control.
- **Snowball:** Snowball is an intelligent, thoughtful pig who truly believes in Animalism and wants to make the farm into a paradise for free animals.
- **Squealer:** Squealer is a persuasive pig on the farm known for his shrill voice. Squealer represents the propaganda which leaders were manipulating to obtain power during the Russian Revolution as well as during Stalin's rise to power.

Core vocabulary:

Power: the ability to influence and act according to your needs.

Marxism: a theory which believes that the conflict of the working and upper class in capitalist societies will eventually result in a revolution.

Communism: an economic system which rejects private ownership and distributes wealth/resources as according to individual need. This evolved from Marxism.

Totalitarianism: a system of government which is dictatorial and requires complete subservience to the state.

Dictator: a ruler with total power over a country, typically one who has obtained control by force.

Corrupt: having or showing a willingness to act dishonestly in return for money or personal gain

Your own campaign:

Research political campaigns throughout history. Why were leaders such as Hitler and Stalin successful? Do you think leaders like this still exist?

Write a diary entry from the perspective of someone influenced by a political agenda. Are they always aware of the true intentions of these leaders?

Practice your persuasive writing by writing a speech to promote a revolution. This can be on an area of your choosing! Could you persuade your peers to



UNIT 4: ANIMAL FARM – YEAR 8



Explore how Orwell presents leadership in Animal Farm.

Orwell, in his allegorical novella, Animal Farm, presents leadership as corrupt and dictatorial. Orwell primarily does this through the construct of Napoleon, a Berkshire boar, allegorical for Stalin. Indeed, Orwell writes that upon Napoleon's orders, 'The dogs promptly tore their throats out, and in a terrible voice Napoleon demanded whether any other animal had anything to confess'. The verb 'demanded' demonstrates Napoleon's recognition of his power as a dictator; he is not asking his 'comrades' for their support, but instead, is resorting to violence as a means to intimidate the animals into obeying his every command. Furthermore, the dogs act 'promptly', showing that Napoleon has instilled disciplined animals to enact his every order without hesitation – not too unfamiliar to a dictator. This display of intimidation heightened by the sense of loyalty shown by the dogs creates a link between Napoleon and Stalin during the purges; the secret police will act as their leader commands, without hesitation and without regard to how immoral this could be. Leadership is therefore shown to be a corrupt mechanism which enables powerful people to act immorally.

revolt against homework? How would you successfully persuade these people? **(Tip: Research what might persuade your age group, or demographic, in particular).**



UNIT 5: ROMEO & JULIET – YEAR 8



Key Learning – Romeo and Juliet 8

Who is Shakespeare?

Born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, William Shakespeare is regarded as the most famous poet and playwright in Britain. His plays, featuring a range of comedy, tragedy and historical elements, continue to influence modern media in many ways.

What is Romeo and Juliet?

Romeo and Juliet is one of Shakespeare's most famous tragedies. In this play, the two protagonists, Romeo and Juliet, are star-crossed lovers; the ancient feud of their families prevents them from being together, despite their emerging love. Despite this ancient grudge, these two teenagers try to break all boundaries so that they can be together. This entails betrayal, deceit and adding fire to the feud which dominates civilian life in Verona.

Key Characters:

- **Romeo:** The male protagonist of the play, from House Montague. Romeo's household is in a longstanding feud with House Capulet.
- **Juliet:** The female protagonist of the play, from House Capulet. Juliet's household is in a longstanding feud with House Montague.
- **Capulet:** The patriarch of House Capulet. He is stubborn about his ideologies and desires.
- **Tybalt:** Juliet's cousin; a fiery swordsman with excessive pride.
- **Montague:** Patriarch of the Montague household, committed to the feud with the Capulets.
- **Paris:** A handsome count betrothed to Juliet.
- **Mercutio:** Romeo's easy-going best friend. He is energetic and quick to involve himself in a brawl.
- **The Nurse:** Juliet's source of comic relief from the events of the play. A maternal character who is loyal to Juliet.

Core vocabulary:

Tragedy: A genre of play which ends in tragic – or upsetting – circumstances.

Fate: Our destiny which we may or may not have control over.

Star-crossed lovers: Two lovers who cannot be together due to circumstances outside of their power.

Soliloquy: A dramatic speech when one character is on stage alone, delivering their private thoughts to the audience.

Patriarchy: Male-dominated society; men have the most power and are recognised as the superior gender.

Dig Deeper:

Research modern films, media and plays which have been influenced by *Romeo and Juliet*. How do these pieces present a moral message?

Do you think that the issues within *Romeo and Juliet* are still relevant? Explore how grudges can still continue to dominate society today.

Imagine yourself as someone close to *Romeo* or *Juliet* after they have met their tragic demise. Write a persuasive letter to their parents outlining why their ancient feud is outdated and foolish.

Explore how Shakespeare presents love in *Romeo and Juliet*.

*Shakespeare presents love as something divine in *Romeo and Juliet*. In this tragic play, Romeo refers to Juliet as a 'holy shrine' whilst describing his own lips as 'two blushing pilgrims'. For Romeo, Juliet is something religious and to be worshipped; he is not just infatuated, but deeply committed to her love. By using this metaphor, Romeo suggests that Juliet is saint-like and expresses his eagerness to worship at her alter. This presentation of romantic love is idealistic, reinforcing how young Romeo is and reminding the audience that for the two young protagonists, love is not yet something which they have experienced. Undoubtedly, this will add to the sense of tragedy when the 'star-crossed' lovers realise that they cannot be together.*