



SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Biographical Task - Siegfried Sassoon



1. Which university did Sassoon study at?	a. Mad Jack
2. Where was Sassoon sent when he first became a soldier?	b. Craiglockhart Hospital
3. What was Sassoon's nickname during the war?	c. The Daily Herald
4. Where did Sassoon publish a letter accusing the government of deliberately prolonging the war?	d. Matfield in Kent
5. What was Sassoon's son called?	e. Cambridge
6. Where did Sassoon grow up?	f. The Times newspaper
7. Where did Sassoon meet fellow poet Wilfred Owen?	g. George
8. Which newspaper was Sassoon the literary editor of after the war?	h. France

TASK: Match the questions with the correct answer.

You will see that Sassoon's written communication skills were very impressive. He was not only a poet but also the editor of a newspaper. He also showed great resilience in difficult times during World War One.

Contextual Tasks – Siegfried Sassoon



Following in the footsteps of Sassoon,
by travel writer and poetry enthusiast,
Poetry Pam

As I finally reached my destination just as the glorious sun was setting in the faultless sapphire sky, I looked proudly at the sign that greeted me....'Welcome to Matfield.' I had always been an admirer of Sassoon's work so to come to the village where he was born in 1886 was an amazing experience for me. I was keen to learn more about where Sassoon was born and so decided to stay for a day of exploration....

After a good night's sleep and a hearty breakfast at a local b&b, I made my way to Cinderhill Woodland. This stunning natural scene is on the western edge of Matfield and I arrived in no time at all. It has 12 hectares of grasslands, heathlands, streams and woodland to explore. I can just imagine the joy Sassoon must have felt playing in this beautiful place as a child; I wondered if he was even inspired to write some of his early poetry here.

Next I strolled out onto the village green (the biggest in Kent!), where I noticed a single tree with two plaques at the bottom. The sculptor Theresa Thornycroft (Sassoon's mother) planted this tree on the green to mark the end of World War One in 1918. Sadly, it was blown down in a hurricane in 1987 and had to be replaced. It is a moving reminder of the lives that were lost in the war.

As the day drew to an end, I couldn't resist a trip to Matfield House, a Grade 1 listed Georgian house built in 1728. It is now home to the Garthwaite family and they welcome visitors to explore their historic house between April and September.

Questions

1. Where was Sassoon born?
2. Where can visitors enjoy walks in 12 hectares of countryside?
3. What is special about the village green?
4. Who planted a tree to commemorate the end of World War One?
5. Why did the tree need to be replaced in 1987?
6. Who currently owns Matfield House?
7. When can you visit Matfield House?

Looking for a peaceful break from your hectic city life? Then look no further!

Escaping the chaotic nature of your busy life is essential to your happiness and here at Matfield Minibreak Masters, we have the perfect place for you....

Matfield is a small village in Kent and you could not find anywhere more tranquil, beautiful and peaceful. It is part of the borough of Tunbridge Wells and along with another village called Brenchley, it makes up the parish of Brenchley. Brenchley is the older of the two villages and Matfield developed some years later around its village green, which is the largest in Kent.

It really is a rural paradise with plenty of orchards and farmland offering beautiful views and opportunities for long walks. Many of the houses surrounding the green date back to the 18th century and lots of them still have the old timber beams on their exterior. If you time your minibreak just right, you might even see Santa at the Matfield Christmas Fayre, which takes place in the village hall.



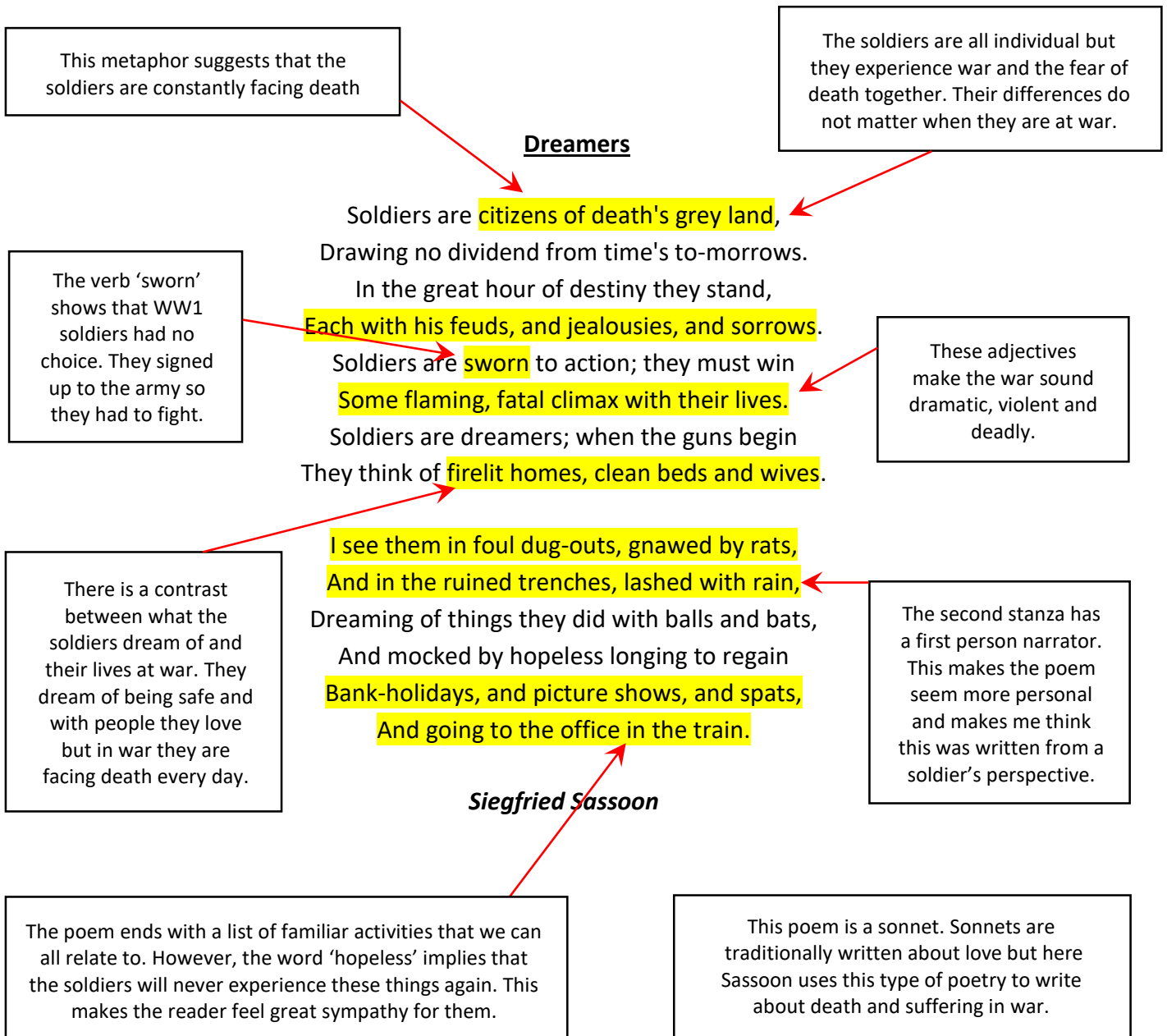
There are plenty of places to stay, all of which offer excellent value. For example, there is Crittenden Farm Cottage, the Bull at Brenchley and Friars Mill. There are also many places for you to eat and drink, such as Gray's Tearooms and Bar and The Castle Inn. You really are spoilt for choice.

So come on, what are you waiting for? Call us now at Matfield Minibreak Masters and let us organise your ultimate relaxation experience.

Questions:

1. Which county is the village of Matfield in?
2. Which villages make up the parish of Brenchley?
3. Where is the largest village green in Kent located?
4. Give one example of something you could do in Matfield.
5. What do some of the houses have on their outside walls?
6. Where does the Christmas Fayre take place?
7. Give an example of a place you could stay in Matfield.
8. Give an example of a place you could eat in Matfield.

Reading Tasks - Siegfried Sassoon



*dividend – share/portion

Why do you think Sassoon chose to call the soldier 'Jack'? What does this imply about the number of mothers who would have had this conversation during the

What provides some comfort for the mother in stanza one? Do you think she really means these words?

The Hero

'**Jack** fell as he'd have wished,' the mother said,
And folded up the letter that she'd read.
'The Colonel writes so nicely.' Something broke
In the tired voice that quavered to a choke.
She half looked up. '**We mothers are so proud
Of our dead soldiers.**' Then her face was bowed.

What differences are there between the Officer's and the mother's behaviour during this conversation? Why do you think the Officer behaves in this way?

Whose perspective do we get here? Why do you think Sassoon gives us the perspective of the mother and the Officer?

Quietly the Brother Officer went out.
He'd told the poor old dear some gallant lies
That she would nourish all her days, no doubt
For while **he coughed and mumbled**, her weak eyes
Had shone with gentle triumph, brimmed with joy,
Because he'd been so brave, her glorious **boy**.

What effect does the word 'boy' have here? How does it make you imagine the soldier?

What do you notice about the language used to describe how Jack really died? What effect does the full stop in the middle of the line have on the reader?

He thought how 'Jack', **cold-footed, useless swine**,
Had panicked down the trench that night the mine
Went up at Wicked Corner; how he'd tried
To get sent home, and how, at last, he died,
Blown to small bits. And no one seemed to care
Except that **lonely woman with white hair**.

What do these adjectives tell you about the type of soldier Jack really was? How is this different from what the Officer told his mother?

Siegfried Sassoon

Why do you think Sassoon only reveals the truth about how Jack died at the end of the poem? What effect does it have on the reader?

How does Sassoon create an emotive (moving) image of the Mother in this final line?

You will need to use your written communication skills during this activity as you need to make sure you answer the questions in a clear and focused way. You could also use your initiative to come up with original ideas independently.

Writing task – 'The Hero' by Sassoon: The Officer was right to lie to the soldier's mother about what happened to him. How far do you agree with this statement?



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