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<th>TASK: Match the questions with the correct answer.</th>
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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.
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

This metaphor suggests that the soldiers are constantly facing death.

*dividend* – share/portion

The soldiers are all individual but they experience war and the fear of death together. Their differences do not matter when they are at war.

**Dreamers**

Soldiers are *citizens of death’s grey land,*
Drawing no dividend from time’s to-morrows.
In the great hour of destiny they stand,
Each with his feuds, and jealousies, and sorrows.
Soldiers are sworn to action; they must win
Some flaming, fatal climax with their lives.
Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin
They think of *firelit homes, clean beds and wives.*

There is a contrast between what the soldiers dream of and their lives at war. They dream of being safe and with people they love but in war they are facing death every day.

The second stanza has a first person narrator. This makes the poem seem more personal and makes me think this was written from a soldier’s perspective.

The verb ‘sworn’ shows that WW1 soldiers had no choice. They signed up to the army so they had to fight.

These adjectives make the war sound dramatic, violent and deadly.

There is a contrast between what the soldiers dream of and their lives at war. They dream of being safe and with people they love but in war they are facing death every day.

The poem ends with a list of familiar activities that we can all relate to. However, the word ‘hopeless’ implies that the soldiers will never experience these things again. This makes the reader feel great sympathy for them.

This poem is a sonnet. Sonnets are traditionally written about love but here Sassoon uses this type of poetry to write about death and suffering in war.

*Siegfried Sassoon*
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 war?

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.

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.

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.

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?

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?

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

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

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?

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?

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?