

Task 1: Below is a list of keywords, found in 'Goodnight Mr Tom.'

Choose five words and use them in your own sentences.

shock/ amazement, filled with fright / horror	
brusquely	blunt or curt in manner or speech
clammy	covered with a cold, sticky moisture; sickly
dilapidated	old and rundown as a result of abandonment
emaciated	extremely thin to the point of a wasting away of flesh
evacuated	to be removed from a place of danger
evacuee	a person who has been evacuated from a place of danger
flaxen	a soft yellow colour
fortnight	period of time covered by 14 days
jaundiced	yellowish tint to the skin that symptomatic of an untreated health condition
mackintosh	term for a raincoat
molycoddle	to treat with indulgent care; pamper / spoil
mottled	spotted or blotched in colouring
quagmire	situation from which escape is very difficult
recluse	person who lives in seclusion or apart from society
shell-shocked	sagacity ability to make good judgments
surreptitious	loss of sight or memory resulting from time at war
stupor	something done in a secret or suspicious way
unkempt	lack of physical and mental energy
vicarage	dishevelled, messy, and unclean
	the housing where a vicar or minister lives

Task 2: Read the information below. Answer the following questions:

1. Who came to power in Germany in 1933?
2. What were the British government afraid of?
3. How many school children and their teachers were evacuated?
4. How many mother and children were evacuate?
5. Pregnant women and many disabled people were also evacuated – why do you this was the case?
6. What was the date that 1.5 million people were evacuated and why? What started in 1939? What time was the order given?
7. What date was war actually declared (you might have to google this)?

Context – The British government was worried that a new war might begin when Hitler came to power in 1933. They were afraid that British cities and towns would be targets for bombing raids by aircraft. Evacuation tried to ensure the safety of young children from the cities that were considered to be in danger of German bombing - London, Coventry, Birmingham, Portsmouth etc. 827,000 school children and their teachers were evacuated along with 540,000 mothers and children under five. Up to 12,000 pregnant women and many disabled people were also evacuated. At 11.07am on Thursday 31st August 1939 the order was given to evacuate and 1.5 million people were evacuated in total.

Plot: William Beech is evacuated from London during World War II. He suffers from physical and emotional abuse from his mother and expects that Mr Tom will be the same. Tom, known to be rather grumpy by the rest of the villagers, soon realises William cannot read or write and they develop a caring relationship between one another. William eventually has to return to his old life again in November.

Themes: War, Loss, Love, Abusive Relationships, Power of Expression and Community

Setting: The book is set between 1939-1940, just as war has been declared. The novel beings in inner city London but the threat of mass bombings means children have to evacuate. William journeys to the small countryside village of Little Weirwold where he makes new friends, attends school and develops new relationships.

What can the book teach us?

Death of loved one is the hardest of all to face but learning to love again is possible.

Whilst there is much darkness, light and hope are always there. Learn to express yourself.

Quotes:

"If I painted the sky," she had said one day, "I could go through life paintin' nothin' else, for it's always changin'. It never stays still."

She had hoped that he had remained a serious child. The smile frightened her. It threatened her authority. She swallowed her feelings and stepped forward again, handing him her bag.