



# Educator Resources

National Theatre of Great Britain and Bob Boyett present

# WarHorse

based on a novel by **Michael Morpurgo** • adapted by **Nick Stafford**  
in association with **Handspring Puppet Company**



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June 14–July 29, 2012  
Ahmanson Theatre

The Los Angeles engagement of *War Horse* is generously supported in part by Artistic Director's Circle members Kiki and David Gindler and Jeanette Shammas.

UCLA



# Welcome

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Center Theatre Group is excited to have you and your students join us for *War Horse*. A great play raises questions about the human condition, and a great educational experience allows students an opportunity to reflect upon those questions and begin to discover their own answers. To that end the material in Center Theatre Group's Student Discovery Guide and Educator Resources raises questions: questions about friendship and loyalty, courage and manhood, relationships between parents and children, between people and animals. Our goal is to provide you with a variety of entry points into the play, so that you can choose what works best for you and your students.

The Educator Resources and Student Discovery Guide are companion pieces that are designed to help you prepare your students to see the play and to follow-up the performance with options for discussion, reflection and creativity.

We have organized the Educator Resources into the following sections:

### Student Discovery Guide

The Student Discovery Guide provides students with background information about the play and the subject matter, as well as questions for individual reflection. Written to be student-driven, the Discovery Guide helps prepare your students for the performance.

### About This Play

This section includes a detailed synopsis of the play.

### Comprehension

This section includes background information about the subject matter of the play. We have selected the information that most directly connects to or informs what happens in the play. This section furthers and deepens the background information provided in the Student Discovery Guide. This section can be shared before the play and/or discussed after the performance. It can also be used to provide research topics for your classroom.



L.A.'s Theatre Company

Ahmanson Theatre  
Mark Taper Forum  
Kirk Douglas Theatre

601 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

## Connection

This section provides ways to explore connections between the ideas presented in the play, the students' lives, and the world we live in. Structured thematically, each section contains questions and exercises that may be used for reflection, discussion, and/or writing prompts both before and after the performance.

## Creativity

This section provides opportunities for your students to use theatre to explore and express. Theatre activities are included that examine both specific artistic aspects of the production, as well as delve deeper into the ideas and questions raised by *War Horse*. The activities and information in this section can be used both before and after the performance.

We know the hard work and dedication that it takes to bring students to see theatre. These materials are designed to support you in making the most of that experience. We applaud your passion for sharing theatre with your students, and thank you for sharing your students with all of us at Center Theatre Group. We look forward to seeing you at the theatre!

# About *War Horse*

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## Scene-by-Scene Synopsis

### Act I

Devon, England – August 5, 1912

In the open country, villagers gather for the market where livestock are to be auctioned. Lieutenant James Nicholls and Arthur Narracott (with his son Billy) examine a corralled colt, but do their best to conceal their interest from each other. Billy's cousin Albert joins the group, followed closely by his father Ted. Two things are obvious: Ted has been drinking, and the sibling rivalry between Arthur and Ted is vicious.

The auction begins with the colt: a hunter, half thoroughbred, half draught. Lieutenant Nicholls and Arthur quickly become the main contenders for the horse, until Ted shocks everyone and enters the bidding. Nicholls drops out, but Arthur and Ted continue to one-up each other. Ted finally wins the horse for an unheard of sum: 39 guineas – money that should have been used to pay the mortgage.

At home, Albert's mother Rose is stunned – what are they supposed to do with a colt? A hunter colt, no less. Even when it grows up it won't be capable of farm work. Her shock turns to rage when she finds out how much Ted spent, and that his brother tricked him into it. She's angry at Albert, too – he was supposed to keep an eye on his father, keep him from drinking and make sure nothing like this happened. Since he didn't, Rose makes it Albert's job to take care of the horse: all the feeding, grooming, and training. Once the horse is grown, they can sell him for a good price and pay the debt to the bank.

Albert names the horse Joey and they bond quickly. Through trial and error, Albert discovers how to communicate with Joey – what he likes to eat, what makes him nervous, what soothes him. The training sessions are more like play as Albert and Joey become best friends. Because of this mutual trust, Albert is able to ride, jump and teach Joey tricks, such as coming when Albert whistles and rearing up on cue. Albert decides to find a way to keep Joey, even if he has to pay the bank debt himself.



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### **JULY 29, 1914**

By the time Joey is two years old, he has grown into a magnificent horse. The whole village admires Albert and Joey on their daily runs through the surrounding woods. When Ted rejects Arthur's offer to buy Joey, Arthur goads him into making a bet – that Joey can be turned into a farm horse, that he will learn to plow, and in just one week. If Joey does, Arthur has to give Ted 39 guineas. If Joey can't plow, Arthur becomes Joey's owner.

In the middle of the night, Ted comes home from the bar where he made the bet with Arthur, drunk and determined to put the plowing collar on Joey. In the stables, Joey is terrified of Ted. He resists the collar and screams. When Ted uses a whip, Joey kicks him. Albert wakes up, runs out to the stables, and sees the confrontation. Albert demands Ted stop hitting Joey. Ted whips Albert, but Albert stands his ground. Rose breaks them up. Ted reveals the bet he's made with Arthur, and demands Albert teach Joey to plow. It is an impossible bet to win; a horse like Joey would need a year to learn to plow. But Albert agrees to try, on one condition: if Joey wins the bet and can earn his keep on the farm by plowing, Albert gets to keep him. Ted gives Albert his word.

Over the next seven days, Albert guides Joey through plowing a field. Joey's only ever known running free with Albert on his back; plowing couldn't be more different. Albert teaches Joey to wear a collar, bridle, and reins. Joey learns to take direction from Albert at the reins behind him, and to pull against resistance. These steps are challenging, but overcome with Albert's encouragement. Once the actual plough is attached, however, Joey's smaller size and build work against him – he can't keep his footing or break ground.

### **AUGUST 5, 1914**

The week is over. The whole village gathers in a field at dawn to see which Narracott brother will prevail. As bets are gathered, the beginning and end points of the course are marked. Albert and Joey wait at the starting line. Joey hadn't ploughed during the week, but Albert wills him to succeed on this day, the most important day, "Joey, you don't know, so I'm going to have to do the knowing for you... the rest of your life depends on this. So you get set to pull straight."

After a false start, Joey slowly makes his way toward the finish line, the plough cutting a straight line in the ground behind him. Everyone is incredulous and –

with the exception of Arthur and Billy – roots for Joey. When he succeeds, even those who originally bet against him celebrate.

Ted is ecstatic – he's beaten his brother, he's got Joey, and the 39 guineas he originally paid for him. Lightheartedly, Rose reminds him that he may have beaten his brother, but Joey belongs to Albert, and the 39 guineas go toward the mortgage.

Just then, the sound of church bells brings silence to the crowd – Great Britain is now at war with Germany.

#### **AUGUST 11, 1914**

On the local village green, the military is gathering forces – both men and horses – for the war effort. The men of the village are enlisting in large numbers, confident they'll easily defeat the Germans, and sure the conflict will be over quickly. Arthur brings Billy to enlist, but Billy is scared. Arthur gives him a family heirloom: a knife two generations of Narracotts carried into battle, and they survived. Arthur says, "You look after this and it'll look after you, and if you ever have cause to use it, me and your grandfather will be guiding your hand."

When Ted discovers that the military pays 100 pounds for horses suitable for an officer, he sneaks Joey out of the stables without telling Albert. Albert is furious when he arrives and discovers Ted has sold Joey to the army. Albert volunteers to join up, but he is too young. Major Nicholls, a horse lover and the officer who will be riding Joey, assures Albert that Joey will be well cared for and that his military service will be done in a few months. When saying goodbye to Joey, Albert promises, "I, Albert Narracott, do solemnly swear that we shall be together again, Joey."

#### **NOVEMBER 6, 1914**

In the military stables, Major Nicholls has to desensitize Joey to the sound of guns by firing rounds from his pistol into the air. Initially, Joey shies and runs, but he gradually gets used to it. When Major Nicholls and Captain Stewart discover that their regiment will be sent to France in the morning, they leave Joey and Stewart's horse Topthorn together to work out their aggression and establish a hierarchy. Topthorn is older, more athletic, and more experienced. With dominance sorted out, the horses become friends.

#### **NORTHERN FRANCE – NOVEMBER 11, 1914**

The men and horses have crossed the Channel and arrive in northern France. What they see upon arrival is not at all what they expected. The misery and pain of wounded soldiers is shocking. Major Nicholls distracts them by reminding them of their mission, “We are destined to be victorious!”

The cavalry’s first charge is the next day. They run directly into machine gun fire. Major Nicholls is blown off Joey’s back. Riding Topthorn, Captain Stewart finds Joey, grabs his reins and guides him to safety behind British lines.

#### **DECEMBER 25, 1914**

On the Narracott farm, Ted and Rose surprise Albert with a bicycle. Albert thanks his mom, but it is clear father and son are not speaking. Arthur arrives with a package for Albert from the post office – it’s Major Nicholls’ sketchbook, filled with drawings of Joey. Rose asks Arthur about Billy, but there’s been no word, although telegrams had arrived the previous day with sad news about several of the men from their town. Arthur wonders, “Maybe our village has been unlucky.”

Albert can only focus on the fact that Major Nicholls was riding Joey when he died. As soon as he’s alone, Albert rips a picture of Joey out of the sketchbook, gets on his new bicycle and rides away as fast as he can.

#### **EARLY MARCH, 1915**

From behind British lines, Stewart, Topthorn, Joey, an extremely shell-shocked Billy, and what remains of the cavalry prepare for another charge. Distant explosions and closer barrages of gunfire surround them. They have been told that British guns are shelling the barbed wire so the cavalry will be able to get through and then fight the enemy infantry in close combat. In the charge, though, gaps in the thick barbed wire are impossible to find. On Stewart’s command, Joey and Topthorn jump the wire.

## **Act II**

#### **EARLY MARCH, 1915**

After convincing the military that he’s old enough to enlist, Albert is sent to northern France as a member of the infantry. He meets David, and they soon become good friends. Their unit’s first task is to dig a long, deep trench. The Sergeant explains, “Six months we’ve been here and it could be another six

before we go home – so we’re going to burrow deep into those fields and make ourselves cozy in the clay! Trenches, boys: the deeper you burrow, the cozier you is.”

Behind German lines, German cavalry soldiers have confiscated a French farm and are using it to regroup after a battle. Many are wounded and they have prisoners to deal with – Stewart, Billy, Tophorn and Joey. Billy is extremely nervous, but Stewart cautions him to stay calm and quiet. Everyone is on edge, including soldiers from both sides who have seen so many of their friends die and the French woman whose home is being turned into a hospital and prison. Tensions are increased because no one speaks each other’s language. Billy, already shell-shocked, unable to contain his fear and overwhelmed by being shouted at in words he doesn’t understand, takes out his grandfather’s knife. The German soldier Klausen shoots and kills Billy on the spot. Major Stewart is taken away under guard.

Joey and Tophorn are brought to the farm. Captain Friedrich Muller is immediately taken with them, particularly Tophorn. He is obviously a horse lover, and Joey and Tophorn relax as he attends to their wounds. The unit doctor tells Captain Friedrich that the wounded soldiers must be taken to the hospital. The only way to make an ambulance is to harness Joey and Tophorn to the farmer’s cart. Friedrich knows it’s impossible for a hunter and a thoroughbred to pull a cart, but it’s the only option – and if it works, Joey and Tophorn can avoid going back to cavalry work and direct combat.

He tries to collar Tophorn first with no success. But Joey volunteers for the collar; once Tophorn sees Joey in the harness, he too is willing to wear it, but he’s still anxious. With Friedrich driving the ambulance cart, Joey leads Tophorn to the hospital.

That night, in a shallow crater between British and German lines, overhead shelling surrounds Albert and David. They are lost and separated from the rest of their unit. The Germans had successfully attacked their trench, causing complete chaos. With no idea what to do next or where to go, David decides to finish writing a letter to his girlfriend back home. As he does, Albert takes out the sketch of Joey he still carries with him.

Albert: I will find Joey, David. I will. He’s somewhere in this mess and I know he’s alive.



David: Whatever keeps you going. I've got me girl. You've got your horse.

Just then a German soldier drops into their crater, as shocked to see them as they are to see him. Without thinking, Albert shoots him. The gunshot draws enemy attention and they come under attack.

The next morning Friedrich, Joey and Tophorn return from the hospital to the French farm and find all of the German soldiers – doctors and soldiers with only minor wounds – dead. He notices a young French girl hiding; she reminds him of his daughter at home. The girl, Emilie, is cautious with Friedrich, but very interested in Joey. She doesn't speak German, and he doesn't speak French, but the horses provide them common ground.

Paulette, Emilie's mother and the owner of the farm, finds Emilie and is furious - she's warned her to never talk to Germans. Emilie begs to stay and feed the horses, but Paulette refuses. Both return to the farmhouse. Friedrich, finding food and water for the horses, longs to return home, to see his family, and to bring the horses home with him. He realizes he doesn't belong in the cavalry, and discovers a way to possibly make it through the war in one piece – he trades uniforms with one of the deceased soldiers, an ambulance orderly. It is a crime punishable by death, but Friedrich considers it worth the risk.

#### **JUNE THROUGH SEPTEMBER, 1916**

In a trench waiting for orders, Albert dictates a letter home to David. He focuses on good things – the new friend he's made, the new words he's learning, and that he's still looking for Joey. In a portion of the letter just for Rose, he admits that he's forgiven his father. He leaves the rest out – shellshock, grime, boot rot, lice, rats, human waste, and constant waiting for the order to go “over the top.”

On the farm, Friedrich begins to teach Emilie German. Emilie becomes more attached to Joey, easily learning to ride him. Friedrich also earns Paulette's trust. The three plan to escape occupied France and make their way toward Friedrich's home in Schleiden, just east of Belgium. Emilie will ride Joey, Paulette will ride Tophorn, and Friedrich, in disguise, will walk.

#### **SEPTEMBER, 1916**

Friedrich, Paulette and Emilie have chosen today for their escape, but they are stopped before getting to the road by a German gun team coming in the

opposite direction. Klausen is lashing two weakened horses as they struggle to pull an artillery piece. Joey and Tophorn are spooked; Emilie screams. As Friedrich and Paulette try to control the horses and calm the girl, Friedrich recognizes Klausen. Out of fear, Emilie clings to Friedrich and calls his name. Klausen demands to see Friedrich's face. Discovered, Friedrich is resigned to a fate of death, until Klausen aims his gun at Emilie and orders Friedrich to hitch Joey and Tophorn to the gun. Paulette and Emilie are sent back to their farmhouse while Friedrich reluctantly harnesses Tophorn to the gun. Klausen tries to lead Joey, but Joey charges him. When Klausen beats Joey, Joey knocks him to the ground. Friedrich gets in between them – Klausen recognizes that he needs Friedrich in order to control Joey and Tophorn. But he is very clear -Friedrich is only alive as long as the horses are useful.

As the gun team leaves, Emilie tries to run after them, calling for Joey.

### **OCTOBER, 1918**

Albert, David, and the other soldiers of their infantry have gone “over the top” and are slowly advancing toward German lines. Compared to the bombed out, dead zone they're currently walking through, “that stinkhole trench,” as David says, “seems like heaven now.”

The soldiers sing together to keep their spirits up and quell their fear, but it's quickly drowned out as the bombing begins. Soldiers are hit and fall all around them. Albert continues to advance as the bombardment continues. Joey and Tophorn are still pulling artillery for Klausen's gun crew, with Friedrich leading them. It has not been easy for them. In a moment of frustration and anger, Klausen nearly stabs the weakened horse Coco to death with Billy Narracott's knife; when Friedrich stops him, he drops the knife.

Tophorn has become quite ill, but only Friedrich and Joey know. The gun has yet again sunk into the mud and will require extra strength from the horses to get it out. But Tophorn cannot pull. Friedrich begs him, “Pull for two, you have to. Tophorn needs you now. Your lives depend on it.” Joey pulls with all his might.

Albert and his unit find themselves in territory recently vacated by the Germans. They notice deep tracks in the mud, indicating a horse team pulling a large gun. Emilie, alone and unable to speak English, appears out of the rubble but can't answer their questions about the gun or which way it was

going. The Sergeant orders Albert and David to take her to headquarters, while the rest of the unit follows the gun tracks.

Albert and David begin to lead Emilie away from the tracks when she discovers Billy's knife. Albert recognizes it immediately. Reality hits him – if Billy is dead, then Joey is probably dead, too. But David won't let him give up that easily, "Every last bloody man is dead or about to die, except let me tell you, you horse ain't! You think after letting you blither on about him day after bloody day, I'm gonna let you give up now?!"

Through the boys' argument, Emilie recognizes the name Joey, and the horse in the sketch Albert's carrying. She is unable to communicate with them, but trying desperately. Stray shrapnel flies between them and David falls lifeless onto his back. Emilie screams and runs away. Albert holds David's head in his lap and when a cylinder of tear gas lands nearby, fumbles to secure a gas mask over David's face before putting on his own.

#### **NOVEMBER 9, 1918**

Behind German lines, Joey and Tophorn are getting a rare break from their harness while Friedrich makes some repairs. Tophorn struggles to breathe, falls over, and lays still. Joey is very agitated as Friedrich listens to Tophorn's heart. Joey nudges and paws Tophorn.

Suddenly, a shell lands nearby. Those who aren't badly injured run for cover – all except Friedrich and Joey. More shells and a large rumbling sound get closer and closer. Friedrich tries to drag Joey away, but he won't leave Tophorn. A soldier tries to drag Friedrich away, but he won't leave Joey. A British tank rolls towards them. Friedrich tries again to move Joey and is shot by machine gun fire from the tank. Joey puts himself between the tank and Tophorn, challenging the tank. The tank advances and Joey flees.

Joey runs through rivers, farmland, deserted and bombed out villages. He jumps fences and trenches. When he finds water, he drinks. If he has to sleep, he does so standing up. When he hears the sounds of battle, he starts running again.

#### **NOVEMBER 10, 1918**

In the dark, Joey gets caught in barbed wire that hurts him badly. His attempt to free himself makes the injury worse. He's exhausted, confused, and in pain.

He can hear explosions and gunfire around him, but all he can see is mist. He's found his way into No Man's Land – the disputed area between British and German trenches.

Soldiers from both sides seem to notice him at almost the exact same time, and are equally shocked – how did a horse end up in the middle of No Man's Land? How the horse got there ultimately isn't as important to the soldiers as the fact that he's injured and that if they don't get to him, the other side will. Both trenches wave white flags, signaling a temporary truce, and send one of their own to the rescue.

Once in No Man's Land, Taf (from Great Britain) and Manfred (from Germany) realize very quickly that they will not be able to communicate using traditional language. Using hand signals and pantomime, they cut Joey out of the barbed wire and examine his wounds. To decide which side gets to keep him, they simply flip a coin. The whole venture is uncomplicated and successful. Taf says to Manfred when they part ways, "There are widows weeping everywhere because men couldn't talk like you and I just have." Manfred has no idea what he's talking about.

Safely behind British lines in a medical clearing station, wounded men and horses are attended to. Albert, his eyes bandaged, is examined by a doctor. Even though he's unable to see much more than shapes, the tear gas didn't do any permanent damage and his eyesight will recover.

Taf's unit brings Joey, who they call the No Man's Land Horse, into the same medical clearing station. The entire unit has become very attached to Joey and hopes he will heal from his injuries. But the veterinarian's examination determines that he's too sick to be saved, and will have to be put down. There's no time to waste; the veterinarian readies his pistol.

Albert isn't aware of the No Man's Land Horse and doesn't realize Joey is within hearing distance. But when talking with a nurse about his childhood horse, he says Joey's name loud enough that Joey hears him. As exhausted as Joey is, he reacts. When Albert whistles the way he would to call Joey, Joey becomes very agitated. Albert realizes what's going on and whistles again. This time Joey musters the strength to walk toward Albert. They are reunited.

**NOVEMBER 11, 1918**

Armistice Day – a bell chimes eleven times. The war is over.  
Rose and Ted stand in front of their farm. Albert rides up on Joey and  
dismounts. He embraces his mother.

The End.

# Comprehension

Comprehension | Connections | Creativity

This section includes background information about the setting and subject matter of the play.

We have selected the information that most directly connects to or informs what happens in the play. This section furthers and deepens the background information provided in the Student Discovery Guide. This section can be shared before the play and/or discussed after the performance. It can also be used to provide research topics for your classroom.

## “We Must Be Careful Not To Start A War, Eh?”

–*War Horse*

### Using Accents to Indicate Languages

In times of war, soldiers find themselves fighting against, and often alongside, people who speak different languages than they do. Portraying these situations on stage poses three main challenges: simultaneously conveying to the audience that there are multiple languages being spoken on stage; showing the audience that some of the characters on stage understand each other while others don't; and making sure the audience understands everyone and can follow all the action.

Sometimes the characters in *War Horse* speak in their native language. For example, when we first see Paulette and the German soldiers, they are speaking French and German, respectively. While the audience may not understand the literal dialogue, the actors' voices, actions, and the context of the scene – Paulette's farm being confiscated by the invading German army – provide all the meaning necessary to understand what's going on.

Mainly, though, this production uses very exaggerated accents to indicate that characters speak different languages. For example, in the excerpt below, Taf and Manfred speak English so the audience understands what both are saying, but with very thick accents, inviting the audience to believe that they don't understand each other.

*War Horse*, Scene 29

Manfred and Taf arrive at Joey. They study each other for a few moments. It's tense.

Taf : What do we do now?

Manfred: I don't speak English.

Taf : Two of us and only one horse, and I can't speak a word of German, see.

They concentrate on Joey. Help him. This is a novel sight for their comrades — enemies co-operating. A quiet descends.

Manfred: Everything is quiet.

Taf : We must be careful not to start a war, eh?

Manfred: I don't understand.

Taf : I can't speak German, Jerry, I said we must be careful not to start a war.

Manfred: He's lost a lot of blood.

Taf : He's bleeding, he needs a veterinarian.

Manfred: I don't speak English, he's lost a lot of blood.

Taf : A veterinarian, he needs a—

Manfred: Ah, yes, veterinarian. Yes, yes, we have a hospital behind our lines. That would be, how you English say, cricket. Cricket, Tommy.

He pantomimes hitting a cricket ball with a cricket bat, clucks his tongue.

Taf : What's that, cricket? I hope you don't think I'm English, Jerry? Me, I'm Welsh. Welsh. We don't play cricket, that's a game for the rotten English.

Rugby is my game, my religion.

Manfred: What about heads or tails?

Taf : What?

Manfred: Heads or tails, Tommy.

Manfred puts his hand in his pocket to pull out a coin. There is another shot from the British side.

British and German Trench Men: (down each line) Hold f re! Hold f re!

Manfred Heads ... or tails.

Taf : You mean —

Manfred: Heads ... or tails.

Taf : Heads or tails? That's heads, this tails?

Manfred: I toss, you call, yes?

Taf : What?

Manfred: (mimes tossing a coin) I toss, you call, yes?

Taf : I'll call, Jerry, you toss.

Manfred holds the coin aloft and turns a full circle so both sides can see it. There are shouts of encouragement from both sides. Then silence. Manfred f ips the coin.

Taf : Heads!

Manfred: My name's Manfred. Manfred.

Taf : Same to you, boyo. There are widows weeping everywhere because men couldn't talk like you and I just have.

Manfred: Bonne chance. Auf Wiedersehen.



When Manfred hands Taf the reins, cheers explode on the British side.

Taf : It's ours, lads! The no man's land horse — it's ours!  
Sergeant Thunder: Trez beans, Taf , trez beans!

Joey lets Taf lead him.

(From Scene 29. 10 November 1918, *War Horse*, Rehearsal Draft for Lincoln Center, January 3, 2011, pgs. 87-88.)

CHARACTER LIST – DIVIDED BY COUNT

**BRITISH**

Song Man/Woman  
**Lieutenant James Nicholls** (*later Major*)  
**Chapman Carter**, *auctioneer (later Sergeant)*  
**Albert Narracott** (*later Private, then Lance-Corporal*)  
**Arthur Narracott**, *Albert's uncle*  
**Billy Narracott**, *Arthur's son, Albert's cousin (later Trooper)*  
**Ted Narracott**, *Albert's father, Arthur's brother*  
**Allan** (*later Sergeant*)  
**Thomas Bone** (*later Trooper*)  
**John Greig** (*later Trooper*)  
**Rose Narracott**, *Albert's mother*  
Priest  
**Captain Charles Stewart** (*later Major*)  
**Sergeant Thunder** (*later Sergeant-Major*)  
Private David Taylor  
Sergeant Fine  
**Soldier (Shaw)**, *sentry*  
**Soldier (Roberts)**, *sentry*  
Taff, *sentry*  
Major Callaghan

**Annie Gilbert**, *a nurse*

**Martin**, *veterinary officer*

**FRENCH**

Paulette  
**Emilie**, *Paulette's daughter*

**GERMAN**

Soldier (Schnabel)  
**Soldat (Private) Klausen** (*later Gefreiter [Lance-Corporal]*)  
Hauptmann (Captain) Friedrich Müller  
Soldier (Brandt)  
Oberst (Colonel) Strauss  
Doctor Schweyk  
**Soldier**, *in crater scene*  
Unterof zier (Sergeant) Klebb  
Soldier (Schmidt)  
Manfred  
Soldier (Ludwig)

**ANIMAL**

Joey as a foal (Baby Joey)  
Joey  
Goose  
Tophorn  
Coco

#### ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

The *War Horse Education Pack* by National Theatre Learning can be downloaded for free from the National Theatre's website: <http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/40324/resource-packs/to-download.html>.

The *War Horse Teacher Resource Guide* written by Heather Lester for Lincoln Center Theater can also be downloaded free of charge from [http://www.telecharge.com/showimages/LCT\\_WarHorse.TeacherGuide.pdf](http://www.telecharge.com/showimages/LCT_WarHorse.TeacherGuide.pdf)

Handspring Puppet Company currently has two websites. Their new site, <http://www.handspringpuppet.co.za/>, is being built, but is still searchable and has current information. For more information, their old site is still running and may be searched: <http://www.handspringpuppet.co.za/>.

The National Archives has thousands of documents relating to the experience of Americans in the war. They have a unique collection and downloadable lesson plan relating to the 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry, also known as the Harlem Hellfighters: <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/369th-infantry/index.html>

BBC History has several different animated tours of WWI trenches and dug-outs, as well as what a day in the life of a soldier on the front might look like. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/>

In 1915, while the Ottoman Empire was fiercely battling the Allies, it was also engaging in the systematic removal of its Armenian citizens. Information, answers to frequently asked questions, and educational resources can be found on the Armenian National Institute's website. Facing History and Ourselves also offers lesson plans: <http://www.facinghistory.org/resources/collections/armeniangenocide>

The Imperial War Museum in London has a searchable website: <http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/40324/resource-packs/to-download.html>. You can view their current exhibit "Animals and War," or a simple search using key words "horse" and "war" brought up more than 4,000 items.

American Museum of Natural History's exhibit "The Horse" includes several multimedia elements covering everything from the biology of the horse to therapeutic riding. <http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/horse/?section=multimedia>

# Connections

Comprehension | Connections | Creativity

This section provides ways to explore connections between the ideas presented in the play, the students' lives, and the world we live in.

Structured thematically, each section contains questions and exercises that may be used for reflection, discussion and/or writing prompts both before and after the performance.

## Coming Home

At the end of *War Horse*, Albert and his horse, Joey, are able to return home to their beloved family on the farm in Devon.

- What do you think is in store for Albert and Joey? How do you think their life experiences in the battlefeld will inform their lives now that they have returned to the farm?
- Albert and Joey return to the place where the story begins. What new knowledge do they bring with them?
- “You can’t go home again” is a famous saying taken from the title of a 1940’s novel by American author, Thomas Wolfe. Within the story of this novel, the main character comes to the realization that:

“You can’t go back home to your family, back home to your childhood... back home to a young man’s dreams of glory and of fame...back home to places in the country, back home to the old forms and systems of things which once seemed everlasting but which are changing all the time—back home to the escapes of Time and Memory.”

- Do you think this is true? Why or why not?
- What else does “returning home” symbolize to you? (A return to the self? A return to the past? )
- Do you think it is necessary to leave home in order to find out who you really are? Explain.
- Do you have family and friends that have gone away and eventually returned home? Have you lived through this experience? Write about their stories/your story. (Why did they leave? What happened to them while they were away? When did they return and why?)
- What other stories do you know (plays, books, film) that involve the main characters returning home? Under what type of circumstances does the character return home? What are the consequences of that character’s return for himself/herself and for those around them?

## Creative Mission

Purchase paper that has a special quality to it (pleasing color, glitter embedded in the paper, novel texture). Pass a couple of sheets around the classroom and have students tear one piece of of one of the main sheets. It must be large enough to write on.

Students do not have to tear the piece in any particular shape. It can be a strip, it can be round, it can be abstract. The students rip the piece of paper in any way that they see fit.

- Once everyone has torn one piece of paper from a sheet, give each student about 1-2 minutes to write about the following prompt:  
Why does my creativity matter?
- Next, have them turn the torn piece of paper over and write for a minute or two about another prompt:  
What is the gift to the self? (when being creative)
- And once they have begun this, add to that prompt:  
What is the gift to the listener/group/audience/world?
- Once student writing is finished, inform students that they have just created their very own mission statement for the creative process. (This can be used to initiate any kind of creative work, whether it's their exploration of *War Horse*, or another class project.) Encourage them to keep this writing with their creative work. Or display the writing in the classroom.
- Ask for volunteers to read their mission statements aloud to the class.

# Creativity

Comprehension | Connections | Creativity

This section provides opportunities for your students to use theatre to explore and express.

Theatre activities are included that examine both specific artistic aspects of the production, as well as delve deeper into the ideas and questions raised by it. The activities and information in this section can be used both before and after the performance.

## Cultural Mapping

### OBJECTIVES:

- Students will gain knowledge of similarities and differences in their classmates.
- Students will be introduced to *War Horse* and begin to reflect on the play.

### EXERCISE:

Ask the students to move the desks to the side and stand in a circle. Describe the room as a map of the world. Identify Los Angeles in the space. Have students who were born in Los Angeles gather in that place. Have the other students group themselves according to their birthplace (north, east, south, or west of Los Angeles). Each group must determine two additional things that they have in common. Report back to the whole class. (Example: The members of the “north” group all like pizza and are the oldest in their families.)

Repeat activity using other divisions such as:

- Oldest, middle, youngest, only child.
- Speak one language, two languages, etc.
- Quotes from the production:

(Ask each student to stand by the quote that most intrigues them. Discuss in the group why they chose that quote. What intrigues them about it?)

### WAR HORSE CULTURAL MAPPING QUOTES:

- “Who’ll sing the anthems and who’ll tell the story?”
- “There are widows weeping everywhere because men couldn’t talk like you and I just have.”
- “History was written on the back of the horse.”
- “This war is meant to make men, but I’m half the man I was.”
- “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way it treats its animals.”

## Tableau/Frozen Picture

### OBJECTIVES:

- Students will practice using their bodies to communicate an idea or theme.
- Students will reflect on the varied interpretations of the theme.
- Students will reflect on *War Horse* through a physical exploration of its themes.

### EXERCISE:

Divide students into pairs. Student A is the artist. Student B is the statue.

Have student A create a statue out of B on the theme of “the future.”

Examples: Flying cars, world peace, destroying the environment, graduating from college. Statues can be realistic or symbolic, personal or global.

Have each student title their statue and present to the class.

Repeat this exercise with B as the artist and A as the statue.

Repeat with the themes of **Loyalty, Friendship, War, Horses, Courage, and Manhood**. Have each student sculpt an image that represents one of these themes.

Discuss what these ideas mean to your students and what these ideas meant to the characters in *War Horse*. Are they similar or very different?

## Tableaux War/Love

### MATERIALS:

Giant Post-its and markers

The class will create a list of words for *love* and a list of words for *war*.

The instructor will define the word “tableau”.

Webster’s dictionary defines it as: “a depiction of a scene usually presented on a stage by silent and motionless costumed participants.” It can also be described as a moment frozen in time, caught by the actor’s physicality, a frozen picture.



Have the class create a series of tableaux that respond to the word list. The instructor will call out a word and count to three. On three the class must be frozen in their tableau of that word.

Divide the class into small groups. In these groups, the tableau created will be guided through a before, during, and after sequence using three claps to move through time.

The instructor starts with the group tableau, then tells them that as they clap their hands three times, the actors should move backwards in time as their characters. They will not know where they will end up, but encourage them to notice the other actors and move as a group. By the time you get to three they are frozen. They have created a before.

Then use three claps to get them to the original tableau, the present. Again, they should move in character when they do this. Use the same technique to move them into a future tableau.

Now that they have established a past, present, and future for this play, you can ask the students who are observing to title another groups' piece. Also, actors who are observing can choose dialogue for the frozen actors. This activity allows an in depth and in the moment analysis of theme and story.

## Happy Accident – The Creative Process

Rae Smith is the scenic designer of *War Horse*. In 2005, when presenting a model of her set design to the creative team, she was told that the set would need a projection screen to be placed in the center of the stage and was asked how this would look. This request dismayed Smith, for she considered projection screens to be “nasty square things.” She opened her sketchbook, tore a strip of paper of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a page and tacked it onto her model of the set. In that instant, something very unexpected occurred. The torn piece of paper, with its asymmetrical qualities, began to suggest a variety of innovative ways that a projection screen of this unusual shape could be used. Smith says of this “aha moment”:

“It was a shape that could be a cloud or a vista looking down over a valley, or it could be a skyscraper. The shape actually defined the dark space above and below it and it seemed to give a landscape for the horses to be in. The random act of tearing the paper gave us our first beautiful and simple idea on how to tell the story.”

This happy accident eventually led to the creation of a 75-foot projection screen that is central to the scenic design of the play. Hundreds of images are projected upon it (all drawn by Smith) and evoke time and place for the audience. Smith further describes the role of the images:

“(They) were like establishing shots in a film, integrating the visual storytelling with the world of spectacle as much as possible and then passing it on down like a baton in a relay race to the actors.”

In addition, the torn-page moment was incorporated into aspects of the plot itself. One of the main characters, Albert, is searching for his horse, Joey, and carries a sketch of his horse with him. The creative team decided that the source of the drawing would be a page torn out of the sketchbook of another character, Captain James Nichols.

WRITING PROMPTS:

- Have you ever experienced a “happy accident” in the creative process, or in any problem solving process? If so, what happened? (Who, What, Where, Why, When?)
- Have you ever experienced an unexpected and positive result from a truthful reaction to a frustrating situation? If so, tell us the story.
- Imagine that Rae Smith swallowed her frustration and created a typical projection piece, a “nasty square thing,” to insert into her model of the set. How would this have affected the storytelling of *War Horse*?
- Why do you think this moment became a springboard for new ideas from the creative team of *War Horse*? What does it say about how the members of the production team think? How is this similar to, or different from, groups that you collaborate with (theatre ensembles, sports teams, small groups in class, families, peer groups, etc.)?

No one could have predicted the power and creativity contained in Rae Smith’s torn page moment. This event had an improvisational quality about it.

In an improvisational exercise, a person creates in the moment and responds to the stimulus of one’s immediate environment and inner feelings. Therefore, no one can know the result until it actually happens in front of him or her. Ms. Smith and the *War Horse* creative team responded to what was happening

in their environment and utilized their new insight to enhance the creation of their production.

Another improvisational moment occurred for the author of the novel, War Horse, Michael Morpurgo. He tells the story of chance meeting in a local gathering place in his hometown:

“I was in the pub, the Duke of York. ‘Are you writing another book, Michael?’ said the old man sitting opposite me by the fire, cradling his pint. I told him that I’d come across an old painting of a cavalry charge in the First World War. The British cavalry were charging up a hill towards the German position, one or two horses already caught up on the barbed wire. I was trying, I told him, to write the story of the First World War as seen through the eyes of a horse. ‘I was there in 1916,’ the old man told me, his eyes filling with tears. ‘I was there with the horses, too.’ He talked on for hours about the horse he’d loved and left behind at the end of the war, how the old horse had been sold off to the French butchers for meat. I determined then and there to tell the story of such a horse.”

“Improvise” Etymology:

From the Latin “improvisus” meaning “unforeseen, unexpected.”

Im (no) +

pro (before)+

vise, which comes from “videre” (see, look at, consider)

Hence...one cannot see beforehand; one cannot know what is going to happen

## Improvisational Exercises

Improvisation is the practice of acting, singing, talking, and reacting, of making and creating in the moment and in response to the stimulus of one’s immediate environment and inner feelings.

During all of the improvisational exercises below, emphasize with student actors:

- To think of their scene partners as geniuses, to know that their scene partners are the finest actors, and to treat them as such.
- To offer their scene partners “gifts.”

A gift is something that you say to your scene partner that describes the character he/she is playing.

This description is not about something physical, but, ideally, is a character trait that the actor can take on and play with during the course of the scene. For example, within the realm of a scene, if Anna says to John, “You seem really insecure,” then John can utilize this aspect of insecurity in everything he chooses to do as the character.
- If an actor gets lost or freezes up in an improv scene, encourage her/him to say something about her/his scene partner. This statement comes from something she/he is observing in the moment while playing the scene.
- Guide students away from talking about plot and events that are not happening on the stage at that moment. Once the scene becomes about what has happened in the past, of stage, or what will happen in the future, then the scene becomes less compelling. It is important to keep the actors focused on each other, not on exterior events.
- The object of the following exercises is not for students to be funny, or come up with clever things to say, but for them to be fully present in the scene that they are acting in, and to express feelings about, and observations of, their scene partners. Hopefully, humor will come out of the truth of the moment, not from a clever line.
- It might be a good idea to conduct some theatrical warm-ups as a group to enhance connection and communication among the actors before moving onto the improvised scene work.
- After each exercise or scene, process the experience with the actors. Ask them what was working and what didn't. Ask if they could feel when it was working and when it wasn't. When it wasn't working, what would've been a good strategy? (Say something about your partner.)

The following exercises will offer students opportunities to improvise, to respond in the moment to the environment and to their inner feelings.

### *Yes, and ...*

- Two actors are onstage.
- The teacher takes suggestions from the audience and gives the actors an environment to be in (the beach, a kitchen, a restaurant, a grocery store).

The choice of environment does not have to be clever. It only functions as a springboard for the actors and gives them ideas about business to pantomime in a scene. Ideally, the scene will be about the relationship the actors are cultivating, not the environment they exist in.
- The object of the exercise is for every statement made by the improvisers to begin with the words, “Yes, and....”

This compels the actors to fully take in what their partner has said, and, therefore, develop listening skills. Once the actor has acknowledged what has been communicated to her/him, then he/she gets to be creative and add to the scene.

In this particular exercise, it is very important for actors to agree with everything that is given to them by their partner in order to propel the action of the scene forward. If the actors begin to say “no” in any way to what his/her partner is offering, the improvised scene has no place to go. If the actors are saying “no” in the scene, you may let it go on for a bit, then stop and have them start again, so they can feel the difference and the audience can see the difference.

### *Finding Agreement*

- Two actors are onstage.
- The teacher takes suggestions from the audience and gives them an environment to be in.
- When conflict arises, the actors must find agreement immediately in the scene.

This approach may seem to be at odds with what actors usually explore in scene work. When studying a script, and rehearsing a scene, actors often explore and express the conflict occurring between the characters. An actor will examine what desires his/her character has, and how those desires differ from other characters in the story.

When conducting the above exercise, introduce the idea that eliminating conflict at the beginning of the scene means that the only place to go with the characters is the creation of relationship.

You can conduct two versions of each scene, one with conflict and one without. Ask students which scenes are more compelling to watch: scenes where conflict is the key dynamic, or scenes where agreement is quickly found and relationship is beginning to form.

### *Sounds Good To Me*

- Two actors are onstage.
- The teacher takes suggestions from the audience and gives them an environment to play in.
- One actor is allowed to say only three lines:  
    “Alright”  
    “Sounds good to me.”  
    “I’ll go along with that.”
- The other actor is free to say whatever comes to mind in the scene as he/she is relating to the other actor. This actor is the driving force of the scene, but must respond honestly to the lines coming from the other actor.

### *Role Switch*

- Two actors are onstage.
- The teacher takes suggestions from the audience and gives them an environment to play in.
- Before the scene begins, the teacher instructs the two students to listen well to what his/her partner says and does. When the scene is complete, the actors will have to switch roles and do the exact same scene again as the other character.

- The actors improvise a scene weaving aspects that they have practiced from previous exercises (yes and..., finding agreement, giving gifts, saying something about your partner).
- They repeat the scene, but switch roles.

### *Reflection Scenes*

- Eight actors come onto the stage.
- Two actors volunteer to improvise a scene first, and stand in front of the group.
- The instructor gets a suggestion from the audience for an environment.
- The two actors begin their scene, utilizing the elements that have been explored in the above exercises.
- The six actors behind them listen to the scene closely and get ideas for creating another scene.
- Once the first scene has gone on for a bit, and it feels as though the scene is over, one of the six actors runs across the stage in front of the two actors, effectively “sweeping” them back to the group.
- This actor begins a new scene that was inspired by something he heard in the first scene.

This new scene can be about anything from the previous scene. It does not have to contain the same plot, the same characters, etc. The improviser could take a reference, an image, a phrase that he heard in the previous scene and create a completely different world from that.
- A second actor from the group joins him onstage as he begins the improvised scene.
- Once it seems their scene is “done”, another actor “sweeps” them away and begins a new scene with a new scene partner that is based upon something he/she observed from the previous scene.
- Once all eight actors have had a chance to be in a scene, bring a new group up to the stage.

## Image Inspiration

**Albert:** I don't know...a book, or...it's drawing...a sketchbook..? (*Gasp of realization*) I think it's from Major Nicholls! Look! There's a picture of me and Joey!

**Rose:** Well I never. You and Joey?

**Albert:** Look! Look—'e sees 'im beautiful!

—*War Horse*

Sketch: traditionally, a rough drawing or painting in which an artist notes down his preliminary ideas for a work that will eventually be realized with greater precision and detail. The term also applies to brief creative pieces that may have artistic merit.

*War Horse's* production designer, Rae Smith, sketched the hundreds of drawings that are used for the projections we see during the show. View a virtual copy of her sketchbook, and other artistic work for the show, on her website:

[http://www.raesmith.co.uk/selected\\_warhorse.html](http://www.raesmith.co.uk/selected_warhorse.html)

She was able to draw upon her deep knowledge of art history and her visual art skills. She utilized many different genres when creating the sketchbook.

### DEFINITIONS FROM THE WORLD OF VISUAL ART:

- Art: objects and events formulated primarily (consciously or unconsciously) to evoke aesthetic responses; or, put more simply, forms made by people which because of the way they are created arouse emotional reactions in others.
- Realism: a style of art that is characterized by a denial of 'idealized' or 'romanticized' subjects and interpretations, and stresses the factual recording of more 'earthy' objects and events.
- Expressionism: a style which deliberately abandons 'naturalistic' and 'idealistic' approaches, and utilizes exaggerations and distortions



of form and color, which often result in a more direct and greater emotional impact.

- Surrealism: a 20<sup>th</sup> century movement, which emphasizes imaginative and intuitive interpretations of the subconscious.
- Abstraction: a device in art which alters or simplifies reality (nature) to facilitate the expressive purposes of the artist.
- Vorticism: a literary and artistic movement that flourished in England from 1912-1915. It attempted to relate art to industrialization. It opposed 19<sup>th</sup>-century sentimentality and extolled the energy of the machine and machine-made products, and it promoted something of a cult of sheer violence. Vorticist compositions were abstract and sharp-planed, showing the influence of Cubism and Futurism.

## *Seeing Through Looking Drawing Exercises*

Many students may not have been asked to draw anything for many years. Since students often use technology to locate and utilize pre-existing images for projects, this activity may seem novel to them and may surprise them in its engaging, creative focus. They will experience paying close attention to specific details through drawing. Ideally, they will be looking at objects in ways that they never have before. Dialogue should be conducted about how this translates to other arts disciplines and academic subjects. And the instructor should constantly remind students that this series of exercises is not about creating a “good” or “bad” drawing; it is about the experience of looking at a subject very closely and very deeply and communicating what you see through drawing.

Note: It is suggested that the classroom teacher model the following exercises for their students by engaging the exercises while they teach them. Students love to see their teachers be creative! Even if you consider yourself a mediocre visual artist at best, your students will respect you for modeling personal courage and for taking the journey with them. And you might be surprised by how much you enjoy it!

## Exploring Lines in Space

Before utilizing pencil and paper, students experience a kinesthetic exploration of drawing.

Students stand for this exercise.

- Each student identifies a specific spot in the room and points to it. (The teacher does this with them.)
- With their index fingers, students are to “draw” in the air a straight path from the point they have chosen to another point. This is defined as a “straight line.”
- The teacher instructs students to draw different kinds of straight lines (vertical, horizontal, diagonal).
- The teacher asks students to point to another spot in the room. (Teacher does this with them.)
- The teacher instructs students to draw a curved path from the chosen point to another. This is defined as a “curved line.”
- Students are asked to find yet another spot in the room and point to it. They are to draw zigzag lines, going from one point to another to another.
- Instructor asks students to find one last spot to point to. They are instructed to draw all of the different kinds of lines that have just been explored. However, when drawing a new type of line, they do not begin with a new point. This is called a “continuous line.”
- Students choose an object in the room to point to.
- Instructor asks students to trace, in the air, the exterior of this object with their index fingers. This is called a “contour.”

### PARTNER WORK:

(Note: The following takes place with partners standing 2-3 feet apart. They are, once again, pointing and “drawing” in the air. No touching is involved.)

- Students find partners.
- One partner chooses to be the purple partner; the other chooses to be the green partner.
- Students stand approximately 2-3 feet across from each other.

- Begin the exercise by having purple point to a spot on the outside edge of green.
- Without touching green, purple traces the contour of green, the same way that he/she just traced the contour of the object they pointed to in the previous exercises. (Side coaching from the teacher might include: “notice every detail”; “think about all of the different lines we just explored”; “take your time.”)
- The partners switch roles and green traces purple’s contour. (Repeat above side coaching.)
- Now, green turns his/her back to purple. Purple traces green’s contour.
- Partners switch roles (purple turns back to green. Green traces purple’s contour.) (The teacher may conduct discussion about the differences between facing your partner while drawing and not having eye contact with your partner while drawing.)
- Partners face each other again.
- Green strikes a pose. Purple draws the contour.
- And.... switch!
- Final pair exercise: Green faces purple. Purple draws all of the interior lines that are seen in green, in a continuous line (do not start from a new point.) Partners switch roles.

(Note: Exploring lines in space is a fantastic way for English language learners to gain new vocabulary. Physicalizing the above terms - straight, curving, contour, etc. - can bolster language comprehension.)

#### EXPLORING LINES ON PAPER:

“Creativity is allowing you to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep.” –Scott Adams

Now that we have drawn in the air, let’s practice on paper!

Students will have a drawing board, pencil and paper placed in front of them. (Note: Drawing boards can be made from corrugated cardboard and large clips. Pencils should not have erasers. Each board has five pieces of paper attached to it.)

A brief introduction to the materials will ensue:

- Drawing board: Looking down at a piece of paper lying on a table distorts the perspective of the artist. Students are encouraged to take their drawing boards in hand, and hold them at an angle that makes it easy to view the paper.
- Pencils: They have no erasers. Why might that be? Solicit responses from students. Brief discussion about not erasing “mistakes.” Suggest that students might try to view “mistakes” as opportunities to learn how they might improve next time. Or, they might try to see them as part of the artistic journey they are taking today.
- Paper: We are not throwing any of the paper away today. All drawings will be kept as documentation of students’ artistic journeys.

Now we begin to draw. Ask students to find a point to start from on the paper (like we just did in the beginning of the lesson when we were exploring lines in the air.)

Instruct them to draw in a continuous line (one with no new starting points) a...

- Vertical straight line
- Horizontal straight line
- A diagonal straight line
- A curved line
- A zigzag

Still using a continuous line, ask students to draw particular objects. Model this for students on the white board. Have one student tell you which objects to draw, and you do your best to draw:

- A cat
- A boat
- A house
- Other suggestions

Now, it’s the students’ turn as you call out objects of your choosing. When you are done calling out objects for them to draw, students sign their names at the bottoms of their papers. (If desired, students will put their drawing boards down on their desks, so that their neighbors can see their work, and they can see the work of others. However, no critique will take place. Students will merely observe.)

They will take this first sheet of paper off of their drawing boards.

#### SEEING THROUGH LOOKING:

The teacher instructs the students to take the second sheet of paper off of their boards and hold them up in the air.

Once everyone has shown the teacher that they have the blank paper in their hands, they are instructed to crumple the paper.

Teacher gives the students the following instructions:

- Set the crumpled paper on your desk.
- Draw the contours and interior lines of the crumpled paper in a continuous line. Students may approach this in a couple of ways:
  - They may choose to only look at the object, observe the detail, and not watch what they are drawing.
  - Or they may choose to go back and forth, from looking at the object to looking at what they are drawing.
- Remember, students are drawing one continuous line. No new starting points.  
Model this for students on the white board. As you are drawing the contours and interior lines of your crumpled paper, speak your process aloud: "I am going to start at this point. The first part of the contour is a straight diagonal line that is now turning into a curve as I go downward. Now I am going to draw this interior line that moves horizontally, from side to side, and it also begins to curve as I go up."

Students begin to draw images of the crumpled paper before them.

Give them about five minutes or so to do this.

Other side coaching could include:

- "This is not about drawing well or poorly. This exercise is about seeing as much detail as possible. We are working on making the eye to brain to hand connection."
- "If you get lost, just do your best. Choose a place to start again."
- "Take in as many details as possible."

When instructor calls time, students sign their names and put their drawing boards down. Students may silently observe the drawing of their classmates. Students are to keep their drawings of the crumpled paper on their drawing boards.

After drawing the crumpled paper, small boxes of raisins could be distributed to the students. They would then conduct an exploration of drawing the details in the raisins, utilizing the above approach.

#### STILL LIFE:

The teacher plays the role of model for the class. He or she stands in the front of the room, and students draw as many details, as many lines, as they can observe. They will do this in a continuous line.

However, there is a twist.

They will not be allowed to look at what they are drawing on the paper. This part of the exercise is all about looking at the model before them and taking in her/his details.

Students will begin by lifting up the paper on their drawing board, and putting their pencils under the paper, ready to draw on the next piece of paper. (This will prevent them from looking at what they are drawing.)

Students begin drawing, in a continuous line, the contours and interior lines of the model, their teacher.

Allow students about five minutes to draw.

At the end of time, students sign their names and put down their drawing boards.

Students may silently observe each other's work.

Students remove both drawings from their drawing boards and start with fresh pieces of paper.

The teacher asks that they raise the hand that they usually draw with in the air, clasping their pencils.

Teacher asks them to put the pencil in the OTHER hand.

Students begin to draw, in a continuous line, the contours and interior lines of their model, the teacher, with the hand that they are not used to using. (Allow about five minutes.)

Students sign drawings, put down drawing boards, and take note of each other's work.

Time permitting; students may now draw the model, their teacher, with the hand that they usually draw with, with full visual access to the paper.

Time permitting; ask students to choose their favorite drawing. Every student will bring his/her drawing to the teacher. Teacher will post the drawings (with tape?) on the board. Teacher will conduct an analysis of the drawings that are posted. Side coaching might include;

Which images have similar aspects?

Which images have bolder lines?

Which images have similar use of the space on the paper?

(Try to utilize methods of critiquing so that everyone's work is acknowledged. Make this a safe space for students to express in. Do not use language that indicates whether work is good or bad.)

Rae Smith began her work on the *War Horse* sketchbook by "sitting in her studio in Shropshire and relying only on her memory and imagination, (and) she became like a method actor pretending to be Nicholls in the act of drawing. The sketchbook quickly ran to more than 100 pictures as Rae embarked upon Nicholl's journey. "

Read more about her process and view selections from the *War Horse* sketchbook at:

[http://www.raesmith.co.uk/selected\\_warhorse.html](http://www.raesmith.co.uk/selected_warhorse.html)

She also describes her work this way:

"As he moved from Britain to France, the mood changed and I expressed his foreboding in the heavy use of charcoal. Then as he got involved in the carnage of war, the mud and the blood, these surreal battlescapes became reflected in a type of Expressionism and Vorticism. I felt, as a Vorticist, it was the artist's job to imagine themselves inside the vortex, the energy inside a dynamic, and the best way of doing that was being blown up by an enormous shell."

## Imagination Inspiration Exercise

Choose a character from:

- a play you are working on in class
- a book that you are reading
- a film that you love
- *War Horse* (other than Captain James Nicholls)

Write a description of that character (name, age, physicality, personality, strengths and weaknesses). Include the time and place that this character lives in.

Now, imagine yourself as that character and create through their perspective:

- Draw a sketch or create a piece of visual art
- Write a poem
- Write a description of an incident in your life
- Conduct any other creative activity that you can imagine your character doing

Present student work in class.

WRITING/DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- How does pretending to be someone else when you are creating a drawing or piece of writing affect the experience for you?
- Did you feel freer or more inhibited?
- Did unexpected ideas come to mind for you as you imagined what this person would create? If so, what were they?

Now, create a sketch, painting, poem, piece of writing from your own point of view, as yourself. Compare and contrast the experiences through discussion or writing.

## Process Drama

In Nick Stafford's adaptation of Michael Morpurgo's novel, *War Horse*, the character of Albert Narracott comes face to face with many of life's challenges. He is not quite a man, but no longer feels like a boy. His relationship with his parents is strained due to his father's alcoholism, and he is subject to



the many restrictions placed on young people by their parents and society. Albert's breaking point comes in the form of an unforgivable act by his father that causes the boy to lose his beloved horse. In his quest to get the animal back, Albert sees the horrors of war and learns more than he ever bargained for about friendship, loss, commitment, loyalty and sacrifice.

Most of us have a special pet or person from our childhood that we hold in our hearts. It is not difficult to conjure up the image and emotional attachment we hold for these relationships. The question is, how far would we be willing to go to protect these relationships from our past? What would we risk? Those are the questions Albert must come to terms with and act upon in *War Horse*.

#### AN EXPLANATION OF PROCESS DRAMA:

Process Drama is a way of exploring a theme or subject matter through dramatic exercises, linked together to create series of experiences mirroring an alternate world: the world of a play in this case. During the exercises, both students and teacher work in and out of role, bringing extra commitment and realism to the world being created. The idea is to allow students to fully explore the world of the play from their own point of view, gaining first hand experience and deeper understanding of a particular element, theme, or historical situation.

#### OVERVIEW:

The following exercises have been designed to be carried out in consecutive order as a "Process Drama," beginning with a conceptual discussion as a way to start the process of considering dramatic work and literature from a personal perspective.

The instructor or "guide" of a given process drama should have the students agree to guidelines before they begin the work (e.g., We all agree to participate and be physically and emotionally safe with one another's feelings).

In addition, the guide may choose to use a drum, whistle or some other noise-making device as a way to call for students' attention in dramatic fashion and to signal that the process is in transition from one segment to the next. The timing of each section can be as long or as short as is feasible and useful for your students.

**NOTE:** There are moments throughout the process drama where dramatic commitment will enhance the experience of the work, providing a deeper emotional exploration of the subject matter. In some cases, this work may cause teacher or student to feel uncomfortable or vulnerable due to its emotional nature. In certain cases, we have provided alternate ways to proceed with less vulnerability while staying engaged. However you choose to use them, these exercises are meant to enhance the enjoyment and understanding of *War Horse*. Please use the work in whatever way is most comfortable and beneficial for you and your students.

#### WARM UP / EDGE IN:

##### Discussion:

- Lead a discussion allowing students to freely offer opinions and facts about the subject: War. You may choose to ask some of the following questions as jumping-off points:
  - What is War?
  - Who Fights?
  - What is the price of war?
  - Who is affected?
  - How does war affect a small town versus a big city?

##### Consideration:

- Ask students to consider a special animal or friend from their childhoods that meant a lot to them.
- Ask students to picture that person or animal in their minds and try to remember as much as they can about them.
- Ask for some students to share some details about their friend.
- When a few people have shared, ask all students to write down five words to describe their own person or pet.
- Have students draw a portrait of the friend.
- Ask students to fold the paper and put it in a pocket for later.
- When everyone has put away their work, check in with students to see how it felt to remember such an important relationship.
  - Was it easy?
  - Hard?
- What might it feel like to lose that special person or pet?
- Ask students to write individual words or emotions on the white board to describe the feelings they might have if their friend were lost or in trouble.

### **SOUND CUE**

#### **Cover the space / Create the Environment:**

As students “cover the space,” walking around the classroom (clear of furniture) without making eye contact or engaging one another, Teacher In Role (TIR) as the Mayor of Devon, explains the following:

- We are in Devon, Ireland at the dawn of World War I
- Devon is a small, rural farming village
- You (the students) are the young people of the community
- Some of you will go off to fight; Some will stay behind
- All of you will sacrifice for this war
- No one will be spared the price of war

Explain that if students hear the “alarm” they are to meet in a designated corner of the room. Give them an example of what the alarm will sound like.

### **SOUND CUE**

#### **ENEMY / ALLY:**

##### **Part 1:**

- Tell students that now they must each secretly choose one person in the room who will represent their sworn enemy (They must do this without telling anyone—especially the chosen person).
- Ask students to walk around the space.
- Explain that students must stay as far away from their “enemy” as possible, never giving up the identity of the chosen person.
- When this has had a chance to play out for a bit, have the students freeze with a sound cue.

##### **Part 2:**

Now, students will need to secretly choose their “ally”—someone they can rely on to protect them no matter what the danger. The object now is for students to keep their allies between themselves and their enemies at all times—all without saying a word to anyone!

When the game has been played for a bit, freeze the students again and ask them to shake off the exercise by moving their bodies freely about the space.

**Assigning Importance:**

As students continue to cover the space, ask them each to identify a specific area that is their own space. It will represent their home, and it is where the person or pet they described earlier lives with them and their family.

Explain that when they are in that space, with that person or pet, everything is safe and happy. The troubles of the world seem a million miles away, and even the trouble at home doesn't seem so bad.

Ask students to sit or lie down in that space and think about all the qualities they love about their friend or pet.

**SOUND CUE**

**The Scare:**

- An alarm sounds!
- In role as the Mayor, the teacher gathers all the students in a corner of the room.
- With urgency and despair, the Mayor explains the following:  
**There has been an attack. The war has started. The fighting is happening and it is time for some of us to go and fight. Everyone must be careful and everyone must contribute. Some people and animals have already been taken. When there is more news to share, I will call this group of young people together again. Until then, all the young people are to return home and discuss the war with the ones they love the most.**

In small groups, students should discuss the implications of war.

- Would they want to go?
- What would they do if they had to go?
- What would it feel like to say goodbye to people leaving for war?
- What is at risk?

**SOUND CUE:**

**Missing!**

Out of role, ask students to separate and find their own space again. Tell the students that the person or animal they love most is missing, and they must try to find them.

- Have students walk around the space again and ask them to consider the following:
- How would it feel if your friend or pet was missing?
- What would you do to get them back?
- Remind students that they may use the words on the board as inspiration for the feelings they choose to consider as they walk around the room.

**\*Note:** Some students may choose to approach this last section as a serious dramatic exercise, while others may decide to simply mill about the space and think. Either is valid. Your own comfort level and that of your group should dictate the level of dramatic commitment.

#### **SOUND CUE**

##### **The Missing:**

As students continue to cover the space, ask them to start making eye contact with the other people in the room (but ask that they not use words yet).

They should look to people, begging with their eyes for help; asking without words where their pet or friend might be.

As students have a chance to experience this helplessness, explain that they can now begin to transition their looks into glares of suspicion and even accusation as they see people around them who may be responsible for taking away the person or pet that they love the most.

As students experience this last emotional reality, ask them to take out the portraits and descriptions they created earlier.

Explain that now they may use words and the portraits to question the people they meet about the whereabouts of their friend.

#### **SOUND CUE**

### The Departure:

In role as Mayor, the classroom teacher explains that:

**It was your father. He enlisted your friend/pet in the army. They are gone. I'm sorry. But, if you love your friend as much as you say you do, you know what you must do: You must go to war.**

Out of role, divide students into groups of 6. Explain that they will create a tableaux, or frozen stage-picture, showing the specific moment in time when they leave for war. These pictures may be literal (each person represented by an actor) or metaphorical in nature (abstract representation of the emotions felt). The only rule is that everyone in the group must participate.

In groups of 6, students will create tableaux of the departing moment in one of 3 ways:

1. Sneaking away in the middle of the night
2. A heartfelt goodbye with your mother, perhaps your father looking on
3. A stormy goodbye with your father, perhaps your mother looking on

Share tableaux

- Ask students to name each image
- Ask individuals from within the tableaux to say a single word describing their emotional state
- Ask students to shift their bodies and expressions to create the tableaux of the moment immediately after the departure

### SOUND CUE

#### At War:

Have students cover the space again. Using sound (drum, music, verbal cues given to individual students) to create an aural landscape that suggests war, share information about the physical environment with students. Students should consider how these environmental characteristics might affect their own bodies and facial expressions as they move about the space “exploring” the new environment of war:

- It is dangerous here—you must stay down!
- It is cold here—you are freezing

- There is not enough food for the soldiers—you are starving
- You are thirsty
- You are tired
- You are scared
- You are lonely
- There is great suffering among the your comrades
- People are dying all around you.

**\*NOTE:** You may choose to ask some students to play dying soldiers at this point. Their physical representation of the reality of war may enhance the overall process. It is important that some students remain in role as the central figure, however, so that the journey can continue. It is the reaction and experience of the living we are really exploring.

#### **SOUND CUE**

##### **Discovered!**

Teacher In Role as an enemy commander:

Collect all the students in the corner of the room and demand their attention. Announce that they have been captured, and you have some questions for them. If they answer honestly, you may choose to spare their lives! Explain that any of them may answer as long as they raise their hands and speak honestly.

- Why are you here?
- What did you hope to find?
- What did you think might happen if you were caught?
- Describe the person or pet you were looking for.
- Do you have any pictures of this person (or animal)?

At this point, students should share their portraits with you.

After some have shared, let them know that you remember this person (or animal). You understand how they must feel. You used to have a friend very much like them. You are touched by the loyalty these young soldiers have shown and you will take them to their friends now.

#### **SOUND CUE**

### Reunited!

In the same small groups they used earlier, students again create tableaux, this time of the moment of reunion between a young soldier and his/her friend/pet.

When each group has created a frozen picture, ask for all of the groups to freeze at the same time.

Highlight one group at a time, but ask the students from the other groups to stay in their poses, moving only their heads to better see the work of their classmates.

As before, ask students to name the pieces

Ask individuals from within the tableaux to say a single word describing their emotional state

**SOUND CUE** (Maybe a slow, thumping beat like tired soldiers trudging home)

### Return Journey:

Have students cover the space for a final time.

Explain that they are to report back to the ship that brought them there.

On their way, they may pass by some of the same sights they experienced when they arrived—the sounds, sights, and smells of war.

But things are different now, because they have their friend back.

### SOUND CUE (Gentle)

Ask the students to find a space on the floor where they can sit or lay quietly by themselves. Ask students to close their eyes and listen to the following environmental description:

- You are on board the ship
- Finally, it is just you and your friend
- You are out of harm's way
- Your journey is almost complete
- The water is calm, but you can feel the gentle swell of the sea
- You hear the sounds of sea gulls and the lapping of waves against the boat
- How do you feel?



Explain that as you tap students on the back, they should stand and write a word or phrase on the board next to the first group of words created before the journey.

### **SOUND CUE (GENTLE)**

#### **Homecoming:**

Explain that the students have arrived home. Have them cover the space, reviewing some of the same descriptions of Devon you used at the beginning of the drama.

Ask students if things look different now that they have been to war.  
How has the space changed?  
How have they changed?

Gently explain:

Your father has left. He is gone.  
You have made it back and you have changed.  
You have your friend back, but you have seen the horrors of war.  
You now know firsthand the pain of the world.  
Do you blame your father?

Ask students to write a letter to their father describing their journeys and how the events have changed them.

#### **Stepping out:**

Ask for volunteers to share their letters.

Let the students know that the process drama has come to a close.

Discuss the experience:

- Where did students feel most connected to the work?
- Where did they lose interest or concentration?
- How did they cope with each of those things?
- When things were functioning on the highest level, what accounted for the concentration and commitment?
- Ask students to read both lists of words on the board aloud.

### **FINAL SOUND CUE (Gentle)**

**In Closing:**

In a circle, ask students to take a moment to conjure an image of their friend or pet one last time. Going around the room, ask each student to share the name of their friend or pet. In unison (counting backward...3, 2, 1...) have the group say, "Thank you!"

## Breathing and the Floating Ribs

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

Projector, Computer and speakers

**ACTIVITY:**

As a class watch the portion of the TED talk:

"The genius puppetry behind *War Horse*: Handspring Puppet Company" about bringing a puppet to life. Discuss.

Next, have students stand in a circle to experience breathing for life and breathing for speech, as well as clavicular breathing and diaphragmatic breathing.

Here is a link to an article addressing the difference between clavicular and diaphragmatic breathing : <http://www.livestrong.com/article/190830-diaphragmatic-breathing-vs-clavicular-breathing/>

Next, put the students into pairs. Ask them to cup the floating ribs on the back of their partners to feel the way they move. The floating ribs are any of the two lowest pairs of ribs with no anterior attachment to the sternum (also called vertebral rib). If you place your hands on someone's lower back where the last set of ribs wrap around, you can feel movement. This movement allows space for diaphragmatic breathing.

Once the students have their hands on their partners floating ribs they will observe while their partner breathes, hums, lets out an ahh sound, and laughs. This is guided by the instructor so that the whole class is making the same sounds at the same time. The instructor will help the students identify the movement. After one partner has gone through the whole process, students switch.

Discuss the connection to the TED video, breath and bringing puppets to life.

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The drawing exercises are based on work done in October of 2011 during the Inner City Arts professional development series, "Creativity in the Classroom."

\*Improvisational exercises from iO West (improv Olympics) improvisational workshop, Spring 2012, conducted by Paul Vallencourt.

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