**Making Words Count: Teaching & Learning Guide.**

These short films were made with the aim of inspiring young writers and historians through pin-pointing key moments in the lives of Forest authors. The films provide a personal and historical context to the writers’ work. The aim is to ‘bring to life’ writers from the past and provide a starting point for further research, teaching and learning. The ideas below are by no means exhaustive, and you are sure to have your own ideas. They are intended as a starting point for your planning around using the films along with extracts from the Reading the Forest Anthology in your classroom.

You can find out much more about each author at the Reading the Forest website Authors page: <https://www.readingtheforest.co.uk/authors.html> - just find the author then click on ‘Read more…’

Use the films/sections of films:

* For reading comprehension, precis and note taking.

What happened? – write a brief description of the film

What did you see? – draw/paint to represent the setting

How did it make you feel? What did you like, dislike? What questions do you have after watching the film? Can you make connections to other films/characters you have seen on screen?

* To provide stimulus for making their own autobiographical videos about their lives in the Forest of Dean today

**Catherine Drew**

Link with studying the Victorians.

Schools in Victorian times. Who went to school? Who didn’t? Which local schools were open at this time? Who would have attended and how long for?

Use sections of Catherine’s poem in the anthology (p56-69) to look at changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution in the Forest of Dean. What would it have been like to live through these changes? What changes have pupils’ parents, grandparents, carers seen in their lifetimes?

Write a playscript for the next scene between Kate and her mother Catherine Drew to celebrate the publishing of her book.

**Ada Trotter**

Another author to link with study of the Victorian period.

What was life like for women in Victorian times? Ada moves to Canada – was this common at this time?

Ada refers to her brothers’ letters. Write a letter about where you live.

Compare life for working class women and middle-class women like Ada. Would they have had the same opportunities?

Women and the vote. When did women gain the right to vote? Link with SMSC work on democracy and elections in Britain today.

**Leonard Clark**

This author’s love of nature and woodland shine through in this short film and would make a good starting point for discussion about woodland, forests and trees in your school’s local area.

Go out into the area if you can and write outdoors. Make and collect words and phrases to describe everything you can see, hear, feel around you. Take photographs and use iPads to record pupils talking about how they feel standing amongst the trees and nature. Make sketches and drawings of the surroundings. Share Leonard Clark’s nature poems ‘in situ’.

Use this to write: poetry, setting descriptions and stories set in forests, a non-fiction guide to your part of the forest detailing the flora and fauna to be found in it.

**F. W. Harvey**

This film links well with work on WWI and life in the trenches and on the battlefield and can help bring a local, personal voice to this topic.

Research the realities of life in the trenches for soldiers. Write a letter from Harvey to his mother in which he describes what he sees in the trenches and compares it to the nature and beauty of the Forest.

Work could also be linked to another Forest soldier Francis George Miles VC from Clearwell. More information can be found on the Victoria Cross website here: <https://vcgca.org/our-people/profile/851/Francis-George--MILES>

More information about the Gloucestershire Regiment can be found here: <https://soldiersofglos.com/the-gloucestershire-regiment/>

The film mentions Harvey’s friend Ivor. This is Ivor Gurney another Gloucestershire poet and composer. Listen to his Gloucestershire Rhapsody here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eqxo0rV2AFY>

“I’m homesick for my hills again” is taken from the poem In Flanders by FW Harvey. It was set to music by Ivor Gurney: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJFBaD9bot4>

Ask your pupils to discuss, share and write about what they would miss about living in the Forest of Dean if they had to leave. This could be linked with work around refugees and having to leave a place you love for a place of safety.

**Dennis Potter**

Social changes in the 20th Century. The film set provides evidence for a living room in the 1950s and can be visited at the Dean Heritage Museum. The film mentions the purchase of a television set- what would the family have done for entertainment before watching TV?

Link with the Winifred Foley film to teach/learn about Aspiration. What is a good life?

Dennis Potter left his beloved Forest of Dean to study at Oxford University. The film talks about how this was not easy for him- he feared not fitting in at university and not fitting in at home anymore. His aspirations to be a writer drove him on to change, grow and succeed while still holding his roots in the Forest dear.

What aspirations do your pupils have? What would be a ‘good life’ for them? This BBC teach video <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/assemblies-ks1-ks2-what-is-a-good-life/z4rxjsg>

**Winifred Foley**

This film could be used to supplement/enhance history work around social changes during 20th century.

For the first half of the 20th century, ‘domestic service’ employed the largest numbers of women of any labour market sector in Britain.

What did these positions entail? Where did young local women go to work?

As well as Winifred’s descriptions of domestic service in, ‘A Child in the Forest’, these oral histories recorded by the Voices in the Forest project are useful sources of evidence: <https://www.voicesfromtheforest.co.uk/domesticservice.html>

provides a range of questions for class discussion and the starting point for future work around careers, education and the qualities needed to achieve a ‘good life’.

**We value your feedback – please let us know if you have used these films, or any of the other resources on this site. Were they useful? Do you have any suggestions for how they might be changed or added to?**