

Journeys End Knowledge Organiser

Key Quotes

OSBORNE: He's a long way the best company commander we've got.

HARDY: Oh, he's a good chap, I know. But I never did see a youngster put away the whisky he does. D'you know, the last time we were out resting at Valennes he came to supper with us and drank a whole bottle in one hour fourteen minutes—we timed him.

OSBORNE: When a boy like Stanhope gets a reputation out here for drinking, he turns into a kind of freak show exhibit. People pay with a bottle of whisky for the morbid curiosity of seeing him drink it.

Stanhope: I thought it all out. It's a slimy thing to go home if you're not really ill, isn't it?

OSBORNE: I believe Raleigh'll go on liking you—and looking up to you—through everything. There's something very deep, and rather fine, about hero-worship.

Stanhope: He won't write! Censorship! I censor his letters—cross out all he says about me.

Colonel: You know quite well I'd give anything to cancel the beastly affair.

S-M [diffidently]: Yes, sir, but what 'appens when the Boche 'as all got round the back of us?
STANHOPE: Then we advance and win the war.

Stanhope! I've tried like hell—I swear I have. Ever since I came out here I've hated and loathed it. Every sound up there makes me all—cold and sick. I'm different to—to the others—you don't understand.

Don't you think it worth standing in with men like that?—when you know they all feel like you do—in their hearts—and just go on sticking it because they know it's—it's the only thing a decent man can do.

RALEIGH: But how can you when—?

STANHOPE: To forget, you little fool—to forget! D'you understand? To forget! You think there's no limit to what a man can bear?

RALEIGH: It all seems rather—silly, doesn't it?

Hardy: if you want to get the best pace out of an earwig, dip it in whisky

KEY TERMS

STAGE DIRECTIONS

SYMBOLS

SETTING

IRONY

CHARACTERISATION

Context Notes: Journeys End

The play has been described as, “without anger or bitterness *Journey's End* broke the conspiracy of silence about the war and showed the public what their men folk went through. It may not explain what it meant, but it certainly told what it was like.”

“A tremendously accurate portrayal of humanity under those pressures.”

Sherrif says: “It was very near to me when I wrote it because the 1914-1918 war hadn't been over very long and I'd spent the year as an infantry officer in the trenches in France. I'd gone out straight from school and I suppose one's impressions are more vivid when we're very young. For the play, I simply drew up on my memories of the men I served with and the things that happened to us.” It's completely real. Language is vital. Nothing is changed.

Journey's End is a play about World War I, which began in 1914 and lasted until 1918. The play is set in the British trenches.

Trenches were long, narrow ditches dug into the ground where soldiers lived. They were very muddy, uncomfortable and the toilets overflowed.

The Pals battalions of WW1 were specially constituted of battalions of the British Army comprising men who had enlisted together in local recruiting drives, with the promise that they would be able to serve alongside their friends, neighbours and colleagues, rather than being randomly allocated to battalions. Tragically this meant that often whole villages of young men were wiped out in one attack.

The total number of deaths is estimated at around 11 million military personnel. The civilian death toll was about 6 to 13 million, making it among the deadliest conflicts in human history. The average life expectancy for a WW1 Soldier was 6 weeks.

Themes – A theme is an idea or message that runs throughout a text.

Friendship and Human Interaction

Anticipation, Expectations, and Uncertainty

Time

Paradox of war

Fear and Coping

Repetition, Futility, and Perspective

Social class and hierarchy



Act 1-3 Summary

Act 1	Raleigh arrives as a new officer and first meets Osborne. As Osborne and Raleigh talk, Raleigh reveals that he knows Stanhope from before the war. Osborne realizes he should warn Raleigh that Stanhope has changed. When Stanhope enters the dugout, he's stunned to see Raleigh. Hibbert , enters and claims that he has neuralgia. During dinner, Trotter decides to make a chart representing the remaining hours until he and his fellow officers can leave the trenches. On a paper he draws 144 circles, intending to fill them in as the hours pass. When alone with Osborne, Stanhope declares that he's going to censor Raleigh's letters.
Act 2	The following day, the Colonel informs Stanhope that the German attack is set to take place on March 21st, in two days. Raleigh enters the dugout with a letter, and Stanhope tells him to leave it open so it can be censored. When Raleigh leaves, Stanhope asks Osborne to read the letter. Later that afternoon, the Colonel tells Stanhope that there will be a raid on the German trenches. The Colonel and Stanhope determine that Osborne and Raleigh should lead. After the Colonel departs, Hibbert enters the dugout and tells Stanhope that his neuralgia has progressed so badly that he believes he must go home. This enrages Stanhope who pulls a gun on him.
Act 3	The next day Osborne and Raleigh wait to begin the raid. The raid goes successfully, and they kidnap a young German soldier. This pleases the Colonel, but Stanhope soon learns Osborne has been killed. That night, Stanhope, Trotter, and Hibbert get drunk on champagne. Hibbert drinks more than he normally does, and tells Stanhope that Raleigh isn't celebrating with them because he's with the soldiers on watch. The next morning, the German attack begins. Soon Raleigh is injured and brought into the dugout. At first, he's in such shock that he doesn't register how badly he's been hurt. Shortly thereafter, though, he realizes he can't move his legs, and he starts calling Stanhope "Dennis." In turn, Stanhope calls him "Jimmy" and tells him he'll stay by his side. Stanhope goes to get a candle, and when he returns Raleigh has stopped talking. Stanhope stares at Raleigh's lifeless body, and then climbs the steps of the dugout. Moments later, a shell explodes nearby, snuffing out the candle by Raleigh's side.

Key vocabulary

Futile	(adj): Pointless or useless. Latin <i>futilis</i> 'leaky, unreliable' futility (n) futilely (adv)	Courageous	(adj) The ability to act even if scared. Latin <i>cor</i> 'heart' Courage (n)
Patriotic	adj) Being devoted to your country. Greek <i>patriotes</i> 'fellow countryman,' from <i>pater</i> 'father'. Patriotism (n); patriot (n)	Brutal	(adj) Acting with savage physical violence or great cruelty. Latin <i>brutus</i> 'heavy, dull, stupid, insensible, unreasonable' Brutality (n); brute (n)
Nationalist	(adj) Feeling of Identification with one's nation, especially to the detriment of the interests of other nations. Latin <i>natus</i> 'be born' Nationalism (n); nation (n)	Ambivalent	(adj) Having mixed feelings about something. Latin <i>ambi</i> 'be on both sides' + <i>valentia</i> 'strength' Ambivalence (n)
Chaotic	(adj) In a state of complete confusion and disorder. Greek <i>khaos</i> 'abyss, that which gapes wide open; vast and empty,'	Fatuous	(adj) Silly and pointless. Latin <i>fatuus</i> "foolish, silly" Fatuousness (n)
Insubordinate Insubordination	(adj) Defiance of authority. Latin <i>sub</i> 'under' + <i>ordinare</i> 'arrange, set in order'	Inadequate	(adj) Insufficient for a purpose. Latin <i>ad</i> 'make level' + <i>aequus</i> 'equal, even' Inadequacy (n)
Incompetent	(adj) Not having the necessary skills to do something. Latin <i>in-</i> 'not' + <i>competere</i> 'coincide agree'	Comradely	(adj) pleasant and friendly to other people Comradeship (n) comrade (n)

Main Characters – Consider what Sherriff intended through his characterisation of each of the below...

The Captain of an infantry company stationed in the trenches of St. Quentin, France during World War I. **Stanhope** is a young man, but he has already seen three years of combat and has gained the respect of his men, who see him as a brave leader. Indeed, the war has changed him greatly, turning him from a rugby captain and school hero into a hard-drinking man with shot nerves who can drink an entire bottle of whiskey, stumble to bed, and wake up and command an infantry the next morning. Stanhope was Raleigh's role model at school, and the two boys even spent summers together because their fathers are friends. What's more, Stanhope is romantically involved with Raleigh's sister, who's waiting for him after the war. Because of this, Stanhope is weary of Raleigh, as he thinks Raleigh will write letters to his sister and tell her that he (Stanhope) is a drunken mess. Stanhope says that he only has two choices: either he must fake sick and get out of the war entirely, or he has to get drunk enough to be able to ignore his crippling fear.

The second-in-command to Stanhope, **Osborne** is a bit older than the other soldiers, but he is well-liked. In fact, he actually helps keep Stanhope—his superior—psychologically grounded, making sure to take care of his friend when he's gotten too drunk. In many ways, Osborne serves as a fatherly figure to a number of the officers. For instance, he tells Raleigh to see enemy combat lights (called Very lights) as "romantic" in the way they light up the sky. This, he intimates, will help young Raleigh maintain a healthy perspective and some peace of mind. Still, Osborne is not without his own doubts, as he himself has trouble seeing the point of the war. At one point, he reads a passage of *Alice in Wonderland* aloud to Trotter, who says, "I don't see no point in that." In response, Osborne says, "Exactly. That's just the point." This, it seems, can be applied to the war itself, which keeps going on and on without actually changing. After every bombardment, soldiers like Osborne sit and wait for the next thing to happen—and the cycle repeats. Unfortunately, this cycle is finally broken for Osborne when he dies in a dangerous raid the day before the Germans stage a massive attack on the British trenches.

A young officer fresh out of school. **Raleigh** went to the same school as Stanhope, who is several years older than him. As such, he has always admired Stanhope—so much so that he asked a high-ranking relation of his to help him get placed in Stanhope's infantry. Raleigh remains eager and good-natured as he becomes accustomed to life in the trenches. When the Germans finally attack the British trenches, Raleigh is badly injured, and Stanhope stays with him until the end, finally dispensing with the formality of calling his friend by his last name. "Is that better, Jimmy?" he asks, but Raleigh has already shut his eyes forever.



The officers' cook. **Mason** is very obedient, constantly trying to accommodate toften ridiculous requests. His efforts often go unnoticed, and the officers talk behind his back.

An officer in Stanhope's infantry. **Hibbert** is so afraid of dying in the trenches that he pretends to suffer from an acute case of neuralgia (intense nerve pain). He seizes every opportunity to talk about his physical pain in front of Stanhope. When Hibbert presses Stanhope, he discovers that Stanhope is tired of soldiers faking various illnesses in order to excuse themselves from duty. During this conversation, Hibbert grows more and more hysterical, until finally he admits that the real reason he wants to leave is because he can't stand the stress and fear that comes along with being at war. To his surprise, Stanhope actually begins to empathize with this sentiment, revealing that he too feels this way. From this point on, Hibbert stops complaining of neuralgia, forming an unlikely bond with Stanhope, who helps him through by boosting his confidence and agreeing to work watch shifts with him. When the Germans finally stage their massive attack, Hibbert seems intentionally slow to join the fighting, but he eventually leaves the safety of the dug-out to face the enemy.



An officer in Stanhope's infantry. **Trotter** is jovial, irreverent, and gluttonous, frequently giving Mason—the cook—a hard time about the food served in the dugout. Although Trotter provides primarily comedic relief in *Journey's End*, he also taps into an important element of the play's thematic material by creating a chart that outlines the remaining hours he and his fellow officers have to spend in the trenches before going back to a safer, more removed area. Each time an hour passes, Trotter blackens one of the 144 circles he has drawn on the piece of paper, thereby making the passage of time more tangible than it might otherwise seem in the tense atmosphere of the trenches.



Stanhope's immediate superior. **The Colonel** is the one who tells Stanhope to expect the large German attack on March 21st. He is also the person who informs Stanhope of the high-ranking generals' decision to raid the German trenches before the attack. Stanhope, for his part, thinks this is ill-advised, and even the Colonel seems to have his doubts, but he does nothing to undermine his orders. Instead, he soberly instructs Stanhope to organize the raid, helping him come to the conclusion that Osborne and Raleigh should be the officers to lead it.

Hardy is the second-in-command officer stationed in Stanhope's trenches before Osborne and his group take over. Before Hardy leaves, he overlaps with Osborne so that he can "hand off" the duties. While "handing off," he and Osborne talk about Stanhope, and Hardy expresses his admiration for the man's ability to drink large quantities. He also suggests that Osborne should be the one leading the infantry, but Osborne brushes this off, saying that he'd "go to hell with" Stanhope if he had to.