

Name:

Class:

Teacher:

# Ten to eleven



JOHNNY looked at his fob watch for the fifth time. Ten minutes to go, but he could still hear the commotion of the machine guns floating over the trenches. Surely they wouldn't be sent over the top – not now. In ten minutes, the Great War would be over. The armistice had been signed. And he had survived.

He hadn't always thought he would. Some days were tougher than the 15-year-old had ever thought possible. Signing up seemed like a good idea at the time. Adventure, travel, three meals a day. Mum begged him not to go, but didn't turn him in for being underage. She respected his ambition. With a kiss and a tear, she gave him Dad's watch and made him promise to come home. Johnny missed her. He missed his Sydney home. He missed Dad, who'd fallen at Gallipoli.

'Company, attention! Fix bayonets.' The commander's voice was sharp.

'What? They can't!' Johnny gasped.

'The ceasefire call hasn't come yet,' Tom said. Tom was Johnny's age and his best mate. Together, they had seen action. Too much of it.

Johnny trembled as he attached the blade to his gun. Maybe the call would come right now and the assault would be cancelled.

'One pace forwards.'

He knew he couldn't question orders. But surely the call would come! He looked at Dad's watch. Five minutes to go.

'Advance!'

Johnny was swept along with the surge of sweating men as they forced their way out of the trenches. Bullets whizzing past, he started to run.

Behind him, the trench phone rang.



Courtesy of the Australian War Memorial, P03236.349

## Task

In this activity, you will complete an extended personal response.

The short story *Ten to eleven* has been entered in a writing competition and you are one of the judges.

- Complete this survey to help decide which short story will win the competition.

## Glossary

**action verb:** A verb that indicates an observable action or happening. For example: The animals **are fed** every day.; The birds **fought** over the last crumbs.

**adjective:** A word that describes or modifies a noun. For example: the **small** box; a **sleepy** child; an **African** design; a **true** story; **three** merchants; a **harsh** winter; a **smoother** tone.

**audience:** The ‘ideal’ or intended group of readers that the writer is addressing. For example: students in the classroom, an individual or group, the wider community or people interested in travel.

**character:** A person, often imaginary, who is featured in a story, novel, play or film.

**descriptive language:** Language that is used to describe or build up images in the mind of the reader. For example: **The looming trees became a dark blur as we hurtled past them.**

**dialogue:** A conversation between two or more people, in daily life or in a story, novel, play or film.

**direct speech (quoted speech):** The exact words that are actually said by a specific person or character. Direct speech is always enclosed by quotation marks. For example: “**I need to go home now,**” said Joseph.

**everyday language:** Language that is used or encountered every day and is generally understood by most people. For example: **Our family is going on an overseas holiday next month.;** **Many children take the bus to school.;** **Many people work in the city.**

**narrator:** A person who tells or narrates a story.

**noun:** A word used to refer to a person, place, thing or idea. For example: **man, city, lake, freedom.**

**pronoun:** A word used in place of a noun or noun group. For example: **I, we, you, this, that, myself, anybody, each, one another, who, which, both.**

**purpose:** The reason why a text has been designed or created; the function or intention of a text. For example: to inform, persuade, entertain or instruct.

**saying verb:** A verb that shows that someone or something has spoken. For example: “**Come here!**” **said** the teacher.; The young boy **cried out** in his sleep.; She **whispered** his name.

**setting:** The place or time period in which the action in a story, novel, play or film occurs.

## Survey

1 Did the title grab your attention? Tick one box.

Absolutely

Very much so

Kind of

Not really

Definitely not

2 Did the text achieve its purpose of telling an interesting story about the Great War from the perspective of a teenage soldier?

Absolutely

Very much so

Kind of

Not really

Definitely not

3 Do you think the text would appeal to a teenage audience? Tick one box.

Absolutely

Very much so

Kind of

Not really

Definitely not

4 Does the writer use nouns to clearly identify people places and things that relate to the Great War? Tick one box.

Absolutely

Very much so

Kind of

Not really

Definitely not

5 Which example of descriptive language built up the strongest picture in your mind? Rate them in order from 1 (strongest picture) to 4 (weakest picture).

he could still hear the commotion of the machine guns floating over the trenches

With a kiss and a tear, she gave him Dad's watch

Johnny trembled as he attached the blade to this gun.

Bullets whizzing past, he started to run.

6 Explain why you chose your number 1 in question 5.

7 Give the writer some feedback about how the ideas in the story are organised.

✈ Was the main character and the setting introduced at the start?

✈ Did the Orientation make you want to keep reading?

✈ Did the information about Johnny's background add to the story?

✈ Did the series of events leading up to the final assault make sense?

Include reasons for your answers.

8 How effectively did the writer present the main character, Johnny?

- ✈ Did Johnny seem like a real person?
- ✈ Did it feel like you got to know what Johnny was like by the end of the story?
- ✈ Could you relate to the way Johnny felt at different times in the Narrative?
- ✈ Did you care about what happened to Johnny at the end?

Quote words from the text as evidence to support your answer.

9 The purpose of *Ten to eleven* was to tell an interesting story about the Great War from the perspective of a teenage soldier.

- ✈ Do you think the writer was successful in achieving their purpose?  
Give reasons for your answer.

- ✈ List three ways in which *Ten to eleven* was effective in achieving the writer's purpose.  
Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

- ✈ List three ideas for continuing the story or making it more effective.  
Use complete sentences and correct punctuation and spelling.

### Teacher comments