

GCSE English Literature for OCR
resource sheets

Journey's End

R C Sherriff

Activities by D. C. Coleman

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The following pages consist of teacher's notes and classroom support sheets for *Journey's End* by R C Sherriff. These resources are to help students who are studying *Journey's End* as part of the OCR GCSE English Literature specification. These pages can be freely downloaded and printed out as required. This material may be freely copied for institutional use. However, this material is copyright and under no circumstances can copies be offered for sale. The publishers gratefully acknowledge permission to reproduce copyright material.

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Introduction

Studying a Play

Reading a novel or a poem is primarily a private activity, whereas a play is written to be *performed* by one group of people for another. When students study the text of *Journey's End* for the OCR Drama Unit, they should always remember that it was written for actors to perform to a theatre audience. The more actively the text is read (and performed) with other people, the more fully it will be understood and its impact on the stage enjoyed. Each time students read (and perform) the play, they should think about the dialogue and how it should be said by each character in each situation, and about the significance of actions described in the stage directions.

OCR Drama Exam Tasks

Students have to choose one question to answer from a choice of three. The first of the three choices will always be extract-based. The extract is usually one to one and a half pages in length with the questions focusing directly on the extract (referring to 'this moment' or 'this extract', or using the word 'here'). These questions do require an understanding of the whole text, but close attention to the printed extract is the key requirement for successful answers.

At least one task will focus on a broader topic than the extract-based question. Questions often ask for a response to a character or a relationship, but not just as a neutral character study where you show what you think of the character and why, but more as a weighing up of what the character adds to the impact of the play.

The Drama texts are the only area of the specification which can offer an empathic/re-creative task inviting students to write as one of the characters. Such questions will not necessarily be set, but they often appear as the third choice. Empathic questions are a popular and successful option for many candidates who enjoy the opportunity to think and feel as a character at a particular moment in the play rather than adopt the more conventional essay approaches.

The page references in these resource sheets refer to the Heinemann Plays edition of *Journey's End* as prescribed in the OCR GCSE English Literature specification, ISBN 0435-23290-8.

Synopsis

The action of *Journey's End* covers less than three full days in March 1918, the last year of the First World War. It is set in a dug-out in the British trenches in France.

The first act takes place on a Monday evening as 'C' company is arriving to relieve Captain Hardy and his men and expecting to be in the trenches for six days. Hardy informs Osborne, Captain Stanhope's second-in-command, that a major German attack appears imminent. Preparations for, and discussion of, this attack form the backbone of the play. Life in the front line has affected Stanhope, who is able to cope with it only with the help of whisky. Early in the play, he and his fellow officers are joined by Raleigh, who was at school with Stanhope and hero-worshipped him there, and who, Stanhope fears, will reveal to friends and to Raleigh's sister Madge, to whom Stanhope is almost engaged, what he has become. This fear leads Stanhope to insist on his right to censor all letters, including Raleigh's, only to discover when Osborne reads aloud Raleigh's private letter home that, far from being critical of Stanhope, Raleigh's letter is full of his praise.

News arrives that the German attack will take place on Thursday morning. Hibbert complains of neuralgia to Stanhope and demands to be sent back for medical treatment. Stanhope, knowing that Hibbert is merely pretending to be ill because of fear, threatens to shoot him and persuades him to stay and face the raid and his terrors. The Colonel arranges for a raid to be made on the German front line on the Wednesday afternoon, the plan being to snatch a German soldier to provide information about the Thursday attack. Osborne and Raleigh have the task of leading the raid. The raid is successful in that a young German soldier is snatched, but Osborne is killed. The effect of his death is devastating on both Raleigh, whose shock and grief make him unable to join the officers for dinner that evening, and on Stanhope, whose grief drives him to fury – first with Hibbert, then with Raleigh.

In the last scene, the officers, apart from Stanhope, leave the dug-out to meet the German attack. News comes to Stanhope that Raleigh has been wounded. He orders that Raleigh be brought down to the dug-out, where at this charged emotional moment, their friendship shines through. Whilst Stanhope is finding a candle and a blanket for him, Raleigh dies. Stanhope is immediately called away and the play ends with the dug-out taking a direct hit.

Getting to know the play

Activity 1

Put the following twelve events in the order in which they occur in the play.

Order	Events	Page number
	Captain Hardy dries his socks	
	Osborne reads Raleigh's letter to Stanhope	
	Raleigh first comes into the dug-out	
	The German soldier is brought into the dug-out	
	The Colonel says he will recommend Raleigh for a Military Cross	
	Stanhope makes Trotter his second-in-command	
	Osborne is killed	
	Osborne reads part of <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> to Trotter	
	Trotter decides to draw 144 little circles on a bit of paper	
	Hibbert tells Stanhope to go to bed	
	Hibbert shows off his picture post-cards	
	Raleigh dies	

Getting to know the play

Activity 1 answers

Order	Events	Page number
1	Captain Hardy dries his socks	1
2	Raleigh first comes into the dug-out	9
3	Trotter decides to draw 144 little circles on a bit of paper	22
4	Osborne reads Raleigh's letter to Stanhope	47
5	Osborne reads part of <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> to Trotter	64
6	The German soldier is brought into the dug-out	77
7	Osborne is killed	(reported on) 79
8	The Colonel says he will recommend Raleigh for a Military Cross	79
9	Hibbert shows off his picture post-cards	82
10	Hibbert tells Stanhope to go to bed	86
11	Stanhope makes Trotter his second-in-command	87
12	Raleigh dies	102

First appearances

Activity 2

Who are the following, and what are their first words in the play?

- 1** *a soldier servant comes out of the tunnel from the left with a table-cloth over his arm and a plate with half a loaf of bread on it.*

Character: _____

First line: _____

- 2** *a small, slightly built man in the early twenties, with a little moustache and a pallid face.*

Character: _____

First line: _____

- 3** *a red-faced cheerful-looking man ... intently drying a sock over a candle-flame.*

Character: _____

First line: _____

- 4** *he is no more than a boy; tall, slimly built, but broad-shouldered. His dark hair is carefully brushed; his uniform, though old and war-stained is well cut and cared for ... there is a pallor under his skin and dark shadows under his eyes.*

Character: _____

First line: _____

- 5** *a bareheaded boy, in field grey, sobbing bitterly.*

Character: _____

First line: _____

- 6** *is middle-aged and homely looking. His face is red, fat and round; apparently he has put on weight during his war service, for his tunic appears to be on the verge of bursting at the waist.*

Character: _____

First line: _____

- 7** *a tall, thin man comes slowly down the dug-out step, stooping low to avoid the roof. He takes his helmet off and reveals a fine head with close-cropped, iron-grey hair. He looks about forty-five – physically as hard as nails.*

Character: _____

First line: _____

First appearances

Activity 2 answers

- 1 Character: Mason
First line: Excuse me, sir. (page 8)
- 2 Character: Hibbert
First Line: Everything's fairly quiet. (page 24)
- 3 Character: Captain Hardy
First line: One and Two, it's with Maud and Lou: (page 1)
- 4 Character: Stanhope
First line: Has Hardy gone? (page 17)
- 5 Character: The German soldier
First line: Mercy – mister – mercy! (page 77)
- 6 Character: Trotter
First line: Ha! Give me apricots every time! (page 18)
- 7 Character: Osborne
First line: Yes. They're just coming in. (page 1)

Additional activity

Ask students, in pairs or small groups, to discuss:

- what each description tells us about the character
- what sort of clues their first lines give us about their characters.

Thoughts of home

Not surprisingly, the characters in *Journey's End* often refer to home and life away from the war.

Activity 3

For each quotation below, circle the name of the character who says the given line or lines and give a reason for your choice.

- 1 'I knew a Raleigh. A master at Rugby.'

Raleigh Hibbert Osborne Stanhope

Reason: _____

- 2 'Last time he was on leave he came down to the school: he'd just got his M.C. and been made captain.'

Raleigh Hibbert Osborne Trotter

Reason: _____

- 3 'My wife reads the papers every morning and writes and tells me.'

Osborne Mason Hardy Trotter

Reason: _____

- 4 'Did I ever tell you the story about the girl I met in Soho?'

Hibbert Stanhope Mason Trotter

Reason: _____

- 5 'Just behind our house there's a stream called the Highland; it runs for miles – right through the middle of the forest. Dennis and I followed it once as far as we could.'

Stanhope Osborne Raleigh Hardy

Reason: _____

Thoughts of home *(continued)*

Activity 3 *(continued)*

- 6 'I spent all the time in the garden making a rockery. In the evenings I used to sit and smoke and read – and my wife used to knit socks and play the piano a bit.'

Trotter Osborne Mason Hardy

Reason: _____

- 7 'Sort of made me think about my garden of an evening – walking round in me slippers after supper, smoking me pipe.'

Mason Osborne Hibbert Trotter

Reason: _____

- 8 'I'd rather 'ave a decent picture of Margate Pier.'

Trotter Mason Stanhope the Sergeant-Major

Reason: _____

- 9 *(turning over the pages of a magazine)* 'This show at the Hippodrome has been running a long time.'

Raleigh Stanhope Osborne Hibbert

Reason: _____

Thoughts of home

Activity 3 answers

- 1 Line: 'I knew a Raleigh. A master at Rugby.'
Character: Osborne (page 11)
Reason: He himself is a school-master.
- 2 Line: 'Last time he was on leave he came down to the school: he'd just got his M.C. and been made captain.'
Character: Raleigh (page 12)
Reason: He was three years below Stanhope at Barford.
- 3 Line: 'My wife reads the papers every morning and writes and tells me.'
Character: Trotter (page 20)
Reason: Only he and Osborne are married as far as we know, and this does not sound like Osborne.
- 4 Line: 'Did I ever tell you the story about the girl I met in Soho?'
Character: Hibbert (page 86)
Reason: In character only for Hibbert; see story about the girls.
- 5 Line: 'Just behind our house there's a stream called the Highland; it runs for miles – right through the middle of the forest. Dennis and I followed it once as far as we could.'
Character: Raleigh (page 73)
Reason: New Forest reference; and he is the only character to refer to Stanhope as Dennis.
- 6 Line: 'I spent all the time in the garden making a rockery. In the evenings I used to sit and smoke and read – and my wife used to knit socks and play the piano a bit.'
Character: Osborne (page 44)
Reason: Married, smokes pipe, references to reading and piano-playing.
- 7 Line: 'Sort of made me think about my garden of an evening – walking round in me slippers after supper, smoking me pipe.'
Character: Trotter (page 35)
Reason: Reference to garden; 'voice'.
- 8 Line: 'I'd rather 'ave a decent picture of Margate Pier.'
Character: Trotter (page 83)
Reason: Voice
- 9 Line: *(turning over the pages of a magazine)* 'This show at the Hippodrome has been running a long time.'
Character: Osborne (page 44)
Reason: Not clear, but general interest in theatre back in London. See 6 above.

Passing the time

Activity 4

When Raleigh arrives at the dug-out, he comments on how quiet it is at the Front Line. Osborne tells him, 'We are, generally, just waiting for something. When anything happens, it happens quickly. Then we just start waiting again.' The officers and soldiers find different ways of passing the time. Which character do you associate with the activity in the left-hand column?

Activity	Character
Darning his sock	
Writing a letter	
Lying on his bed, smoking	
Talking	
Pretending to be ill	
Thinking and talking about food	
Reading	
Earwig races	
Shooting a rat	
Drinking whisky	
Eating a fresh chicken and drinking champagne	

Passing the time

Activity 4 answers

Activity	Character
Darning his sock	Hardy
Writing a letter	Raleigh
Lying on his bed, smoking	Hibbert
Talking	Most (perhaps notably Raleigh and Osborne, pre-raid)
Pretending to be ill	Hibbert
Thinking and talking about food	Trotter (and Mason)
Reading	Osborne
Earwig races	Hardy
Shooting a rat	Hardy
Drinking whisky	Stanhope
Eating a fresh chicken and drinking champagne	Stanhope, Trotter, Hibbert

Additional activities

Meals and snacks

Of all these activities, perhaps Sherriff focuses most on **eating**.

- In Act 1 the officers 'enjoy' a meal served by Mason (pages 18–24).
- At the beginning of Act Two, Raleigh, Osborne and Trotter are at breakfast (pages 32–34).
- In Act Two scene 2 Stanhope and Mason discuss onion tea (page 59) and Mason brings bread and jam in for Osborne and Mason on page 61 (reminding Trotter of a 'poem').
- In Act 3 Scene 2, Stanhope, Trotter and Hibbert have just had dinner. Their reactions to the dinner, and Raleigh's reactions when he arrives, make up the whole scene. Mason's 'sambridges' are first referred to on Page 93 and again on page 95.

Mason is the character responsible for meals and snacks, and Sherriff is able to use him to provide **humour**, especially in moments when he is on stage with Trotter.

- 1 Ask students, in pairs or groups, to consider how Sherriff makes the meal in Act 1 amusing. (Why is the lack of pepper such a serious issue?)
- 2 Ask students, in pairs or groups, to consider how Sherriff makes the dinner in Act 3 Scene 2 so different from the meal in Act 1.

Conflict: Stanhope and Hibbert

In most plays there is conflict: this could be a struggle or fight between characters, or within an individual character. It may be a physical struggle, but in most cases it is a clash between characters over what they want.

In *Journey's End*, there is a **physical** conflict, in the very obvious **war** between the British and the Germans. Osborne is killed, off-stage, by a grenade; and the six men who die with him on the raid are probably killed by machine-gun bullets. Raleigh dies onstage of a shell wound to his back. The play ends with a shell falling on the dug-out.

There is also **physical** conflict when Hibbert strikes at Stanhope on page 55. Stanhope breaks the stick and prepares to shoot Hibbert for striking an officer and deserting.

However, there is also **conflict between characters** here. Hibbert is determined to leave the Front Line; Stanhope is determined he stays.

Activity 5

Read pages 54–9. To help you understand the characters better, imagine that you have been asked to act out the conflict between Stanhope and Hibbert. To prepare for this you would firstly make preparatory notes. Once you have completed this you could then, in pairs, act the conflict out.

Make notes on the following:

- how to act the part of Hibbert, considering:
 - how to bring out his terror: stage directions develop from 'quietly' to 'fiercely to hysterically'; to 'quivering'; 'in a whisper'; 'Bursts into a high-pitched laugh'; 'hoarsely'; 'crying without effort to restrain himself; to 'quietly'; 'eyes roving vacantly in front of him' and 'goes timidly towards his dug-out'.
- how to act the part of Stanhope, considering:
 - why does he behave as he does?
 - would he have shot Hibbert?
 - what you make of his reactions at the end of page 58, 'pouring himself out a whisky and saying, 'That's all right' on page 59.

Notes on Hibbert:

Notes on Stanhope:

Conflict: Stanhope and Raleigh

There is a constant conflict between Stanhope and Raleigh, caused by Raleigh being posted to Stanhope's company. It begins on page 18, when Stanhope considers Raleigh's arrival to be more than a coincidence, making him afraid of what Raleigh will think of him and what he might write about him to Madge. It ends movingly at the end of the play when Raleigh is brought, dying, to Stanhope in the dug-out.

One very powerful moment in this conflict starts on page 88 when Raleigh comes into the dug-out after missing the dinner on the night of Osborne's death, and ends on page 91, the conclusion of the scene.

Activity 6

Read pages 88–91. To help you understand the characters better, imagine that you have been asked to act out the conflict between Raleigh and Stanhope. To prepare for this you would firstly make preparatory notes. Once you have completed this you could then, in pairs, act the conflict out.

Make notes on the following:

Raleigh

- why Raleigh was not at the dinner
- Raleigh's feelings about Osborne
- his likely thoughts about Stanhope
- the punctuation of his speeches
- the stage directions.

Stanhope

- his feelings about Osborne
- his feelings about Raleigh
- the punctuation of his speeches
- the stage directions.

Notes on Raleigh:

Notes on Stanhope:

Conflict: Stanhope, Raleigh and Osborne

Activity 7

There are also moments in plays when the conflict is **internal**. One such moment in *Journey's End* comes when Stanhope decides at the end of Act Two Scene 1 (top of page 45 to end of Scene, page 48) that he will censor Raleigh's letter to Madge. He has the right to censor the letter.

- 1 Why did officers censor letters?
- 2 What are Stanhope's reasons for wanting to censor Raleigh's letter? Are they military reasons or personal reasons?

The conflict within Stanhope is that he knows he has no true reason as an officer to read the letter, but is afraid that Raleigh might comment about him personally. During this moment of conflict, Osborne expresses his disapproval and Raleigh is so embarrassed that he wants to put the letter away. The words and actions of both Osborne and Raleigh suggest that Stanhope is wrong to try to censor the letter, but Stanhope insists.

Activity 8

Read pages 45-8. To help you understand the characters better, imagine that you have been asked to act out the conflict when Stanhope decides to censor Raleigh's letter. To prepare for this you would firstly make preparatory notes. Once you have completed this you could then, in pairs, act the conflict out.

Make notes on the following:

Osborne

- his words
- the stage directions
- how he might read the letter

Raleigh

- his view of Stanhope
- what he says
- the stage directions

Stanhope

- his worries
- his words and the way he says them
- the stage directions

Notes on Osborne:

Notes on Raleigh:

Notes on Stanhope:

Quotations

Activity 9

Try to fill in the gaps in the quotations below from memory. Then decide who the speaker is; who he is speaking to; when; what about; and why the quotation is important in the play.

The first one has been done for you.

- 1 'You don't know him as I do; I _____ that fellow. I'd go to hell with him.'
'love'.

Speaker Osborne to Captain Hardy

Occasion towards the beginning of the play (page 7). He is talking about Stanhope, who has not yet appeared in the play.

Importance It shows the close bond between Osborne and Stanhope and the admiration Stanhope's fellow-officers have for him. The bond is broken by Osborne's death in the raid, adding to Stanhope's agony and leading to Stanhope's confrontation with Raleigh over the dinner.

- 2 ' _____ you little fool, _____ ! D'you understand? _____ !

Speaker _____

Occasion _____

Importance _____

- 3 'Do you understand an order? _____'

Speaker _____

Occasion _____

Importance _____

- 4 'Well, _____, (*he smiles*) you got one quickly.'

Speaker _____

Occasion _____

Importance _____

- 5 'Then I suggest _____ to direct the _____ and _____ to make the _____.'

Speaker _____

Occasion _____

Importance _____

Quotations (continued)

Activity 9 (continued)

- 6 'I mean, after all, war's bad enough with _____ (noisy sip), but war without _____ it's, it's bloody awful.'

Speaker _____

Occasion _____

Importance _____

- 7 'One was pretending I was ill, and going home; the other was this. (_____.)

Speaker _____

Occasion _____

Importance _____

- 8 'God! You little swine. You know what means, don't you? _____!'

Speaker _____

Occasion _____

Importance _____

- 9 'I'm awfully proud to think _____!'

Speaker _____

Occasion _____

Importance _____

- 10 '(He takes _____ from his tunic pocket and puts it on the table. Then he pulls off his _____.) If anything should happen would you send these along to my wife?'

Speaker _____

Occasion _____

Importance _____

Quotations

Activity 9 answers

2 'To forget.'

Speaker: Stanhope to Raleigh (page 91)

Occasion: Raleigh missing the dinner on the evening of Osborne's death.

Importance: It reveals to the full Stanhope's feeling about the war.

3 'Give me that letter.'

Speaker: Stanhope to Raleigh (page 46)

Occasion: Censoring Raleigh's letter that Stanhope fears will reveal the truth about him.

Importance: Showing Stanhope's concerns and highlighting the conflict that Stanhope fears with Raleigh.

4 'Jimmy'

Speaker: Stanhope to Raleigh (page 100)

Occasion: Immediately before Raleigh's death.

Importance: It shows the true feeling Stanhope has for Raleigh as he uses his first name for the first time in the play, in its familiar form too.

5 'Osborne; raid; Raleigh; dash.'

Speaker: the Colonel (page 53)

Occasion: organising the raid.

Importance: Osborne will die and Raleigh will be devastated.

6 'Pepper'

Speaker: Trotter to officers

Occasion: Dinner (page 20)

Importance: how significant eating is to Trotter and the state of their nerves over apparently trivial things.

7 '*He holds up his glass.*'

Speaker: Stanhope to Osborne (page 28)

Occasion: Responding to Raleigh joining his company.

Importance: Stanhope making clear his fear and how he deflects it.

Quotations (*continued*)

Activity 9 answers (*continued*)

8 'Striking a superior officer.'

Speaker: Stanhope (page 55)

Occasion: Persuading Hibbert not to go down the line to seek treatment for his 'neuralgia'.

Importance: Illustrating what men are driven to through fear of war.

9 'he's my friend.'

Speaker: Raleigh in letter to Madge (page 48)

Occasion: Censoring letters through fear of what Raleigh might say.

Importance: Revealing Raleigh's admiration, and exposing Stanhope's fears.

10 *a letter and his watch; ring*

Osborne: his actions (and speech) giving items to Stanhope (page 70)

Occasion: Before the raid

Importance: Indicating Osborne's awareness of the danger, and his trust in Stanhope. Poignancy as far as the drama is concerned.)