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TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT

Evie's War

By Anna Mackenzie

They offered up the innocence of a generation . . .

Edwardian England: for Evie, newly arrived from New Zealand, it proves a genteel world of tea parties, tennis and snobbery — and of the burgeoning suffragette movement . . . until Europe is set aflame by a war that will engulf half the world.

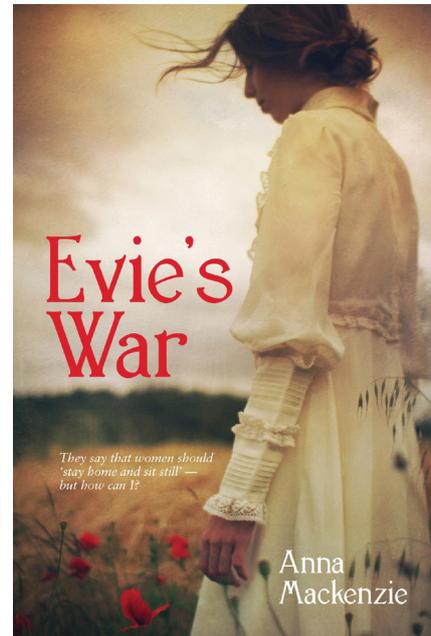
Unwilling to stand on the sidelines Evie volunteers, her commitment — to service and to friendship — leading her ever further from the protected world of her childhood. As her innocence is stripped away, can she hold onto her identity, her belief, her love?

Delicately crafted, meticulously researched, this poignant novel does not hide the hard truths about the 'War to end all wars' — but it is Evie's strength and innocence that carries us through.

RESOURCE KIT CONTAINS:

- Before Reading
- Themes
- Settings
- Language Features, Structure and Narrative
- Characters
- Comprehension/
Creative Responses

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Readership: 13+



Anna Mackenzie is an award-winning author, a teacher of creative writing and a magazine editor. This is her ninth novel.



Before Reading

1. What does the cover picture indicate about the book's content?
2. When and where might the story be set?
3. What does the title suggest to you?
4. Read the author's dedication (p. 5). If you wrote a book, to whom would you dedicate it and what would the dedication say?
5. As a class, discuss what you feel about war? Do you think war is ever justified? Why/why not? Would you join up? Why/why not?

Themes

1. Discuss the following themes and find examples from the book which illustrate each of the following:
 - the chaos of war
 - coping with death, grief and loss
 - family relationships and friendships
 - secrets, intrigue and scandals
 - romantic love
 - patriotism
 - sacrifice and loyalty
 - courage and strength
 - humour and humanity
 - fortitude and perseverance in adversity
 - Edwardian mores and the changing society
 - the role of women in war and women's enfranchisement
 - religion and belief of God in war
 - the search for personal identity and one's place in the world
2. What do you think is the main theme of the novel? Write an essay on your choice.

Setting

The book is set in England and Europe during World War I.

Language Features, Structure and Narrative

1. What do you think the genre of this book is? List the aspects that are indicative of this genre.
2. The story is told in the first person. Why do you think the author chose to do this? Was it effective? Choose a passage and rewrite it in third person narrative.
3. This novel is written in diary form so readers only learn about Evie's thoughts and opinions. How effective do you think this narrative style is? What are the limitations of using this point of view?
4. Figurative language is used to convey ideas that might otherwise be difficult to express, such as simile and metaphor. Examples of these are: 'blushed like a beet' (p. 105), 'the grief of this War spreading around the Globe like a creeping canker' (p. 242) and 'my heart feels swollen to bursting with grief' (p. 186). Find more examples from the book.
5. The author uses animal imagery in some similes, for example, 'as though I were a mole, newly climbed to the light' (p. 245) and 'I have been like a cat on eggshells all day' (p. 285). Find other examples from the book. Then think of ten other animals and create a simile for each.
6. The author uses nature imagery in some similes, for example, 'his men mown down by machine-gun fire as if they were wheat being scythed' (p. 142) and 'petals of pale purple spreading like little stars' (p. 225). Write a poem about a force of nature using three similes.
7. What figure of speech are the following examples of: 'the War is a large and unwanted guest who sits glowering at our table' (p. 134) and 'Arthur's smile jumped all over his face' (p. 344).
8. What figure of speech are the following examples of: 'huffed and hmed' (p. 98), 'tippity-tap' (p. 102) and 'rattling, clanking' (p. 251) Find another example from the book. Write a poem or descriptive paragraph which includes the words.
9. VAD (p. 78), NCO (p. 80) and ANZAC (p. 110) are examples of what figure of speech? Find other examples from the book or think of three more examples relating to war vocabulary.
10. Evie uses capitals throughout her diary entries, for example: 'Tour the Continent' (p. 85), 'Ultimate Sacrifice' (p. 87) and 'Uterior Motive' (p. 101). Why do you think the the author has chosen to do this?
11. What figure of speech are 'fabulous fun' (p. 93) and 'Brave Boys' (p. 179) examples of? Think of this figure of speech for ten other letters of the alphabet.
12. The author uses symbolism and idioms in the book. What are the phrases below typically symbolic of? What is the origin of these phrases? Research their origin. Choose ten phrases and draw cartoon interpretations of them.
 - lead us into choppy waters (p. 85)
 - had been much in the thick of it (p. 98)
 - on tenterhooks (p. 107)
 - God will turn a blind eye (p. 112)
 - out of my league (p. 114)
 - she is a Dark Horse (p. 114)
 - causes my brother's hackles to rise (p. 114)
 - I vented my spleen (p. 117)
 - working like a Trojan (p. 119)
 - as if all the stuffing had gone out of him (p. 122)
 - I am in the doghouse (p. 148)
 - took the wind out of Sister's sails (p. 149)
 - in quite desperate straits (p. 177)
 - fixed me with a gimlet eye (p. 187)
 - he took the bull by the horns (p. 189)
 - it does make my blood boil (p. 201)
 - innocent as a lamb (p. 217)
 - water under the bridge (p. 233)
 - run about like a March hare (p. 234)
 - prove my mettle (p. 249)
 - safe as houses (p. 268)
 - talked at nine to the dozen (p. 298)
13. There is a lot of colloquial and informal language in the book. Define the following words from the book:
 - swish (p. 109)
 - jolly good (p. 109)
 - buck up (p. 112)
 - tosh (p.116)
 - chums (p. 131)
 - good sports (p. 141)
 - a ninny (p. 162)
 - chivvy her along (p. 187)
 - plonk (p. 266)
 - up on her pins (p. 268)
14. This novel contains many words you may

not have come across before. Find out what these words mean and create a glossary for the novel. You may like to add other words from the novel that are new to you.

- asperity (p. 109)
- cajoled (p. 100)
- cognisance (p. 178)
- covetously (p. 200)
- droll (p. 89)
- effusive (p. 103)
- ennui (p. 86)
- expunge (p. 95)
- fractious (p. 118)
- frenetic (p. 83)
- gambit (p. 193)
- harried (p. 176)
- insouciant (p. 162)
- jingoistic (p. 293)
- laggard (p. 252)
- malingerer (p. 125)
- maudlin (p. 157)
- mollified (p. 206)
- nebulous (p. 267)
- nefarious (p. 224)
- recalcitrant (p. 77)
- reticent (p. 85)
- saccharine (p. 118)
- unsullied (p. 177)
- vitriol (p. 258)

15. There is a lot of military and war-related vocabulary in the book. Define the following words:

- bayonet (p. 98)
- bi-planes (p. 109)
- chlorine gas (p. 88)
- Hun (p. 88)
- No Man's Land (p. 156)
- shell shock (p. 189)
- shrapnel (p. 246)
- tanks (p. 180)
- trenches (p. 109)
- trenches (p. 180)
- U-boats (p. 89)

16. There are a lot of medical terms in the book. Define the following words:

- amputee (p. 86)
- asphyxia (p. 265)
- bronchial ailment (p. 179)
- carbolic (p. 100)
- compound fracture of the femur (p. 106)
- enteric fever (p. 293)
- Eusol dressings (p. 264)
- gangrene (p. 264)
- haemorrhages (p. 130)
- impetigo (p. 273)
- neurasthenia (p. 293)
- picric solution (p. 264)

- pleurisy (p. 287)
- pneumonia (p. 197)
- prosthetic limbs (p. 194)
- respiratory (p. 152)
- scabies (p. 273)
- septic wounds (p. 263)
- suppurating (p. 81)
- TB (p. 178)
- tincture of opium (p. 147)
- trench foot (p. 218)

Characters

1. Think of three adjectives to describe the following characters: Evie, Winifred, Mother, Edmund, Uncle Aubrey, Charles, Lady Braybrooke and Arthur Lindsay.
2. Charles describes Evie as 'so thoroughly Laudable, Estimable and Admirable' (p. 195), who possesses 'true goodness and generosity' (p. 205) and a 'soft and caring heart' (p. 205). Find examples of when she displays each of these qualities.
3. Choose an important event from the novel and describe Evie's reaction to it.
4. Evie states, 'I have just looked back through my diary. How innocent I seemed, even a year ago. As for two: I cannot believe myself the same person, or the World the same place' (p. 171). What do you think Evie learns over the course of this novel? How do you think she has changed by the end of the book? How do you think her view of herself and the world has changed?
5. Compare and contrast the lives, personalities and opinions of Evie and her mother. Use quotes from the novel to support your points. If, and how, does their relationship develop and change through the book? What are the main events which contribute to the development? Choose and analyse how one character from the book is influenced by another character, for example Winifred and Lady Braybrooke.
6. What are the different pressures on Evie, Edmund and Winifred throughout the novel? What factors lead to the decisions they make and how do they cope with the situations they find themselves in?
7. What does the novel say about friendships and/or family and their importance during difficult times? List examples of episodes when friends and/or family are either a help or a hindrance to Evie.
8. There are a number of strong, independent

women in this novel including Lady Braybrooke, Winifred and Sister Duncan. How and why do you think each of these women help Evie?

9. Do you think Evie is a realistic character? Why or why not?
10. Draw a picture of one of the characters based on their physical descriptions, for example, Mr Lindsay (p. 99) or Sister Duncan (p. 270).
11. Which character do you particularly like or dislike? Why?
12. Which character do you most identify with? Why?

Comprehension/Close Reading Questions

1. What are your initial impressions of Evie based on the first three pages of this book (pp. 10–13)?
2. Why is Lettie and Mr Lindsay's friendship broken off on the ship (p. 16)? What does this tell us about the society and the time Evie lives in?
3. Why does Evie feel her mother would not approve of Miss Bartlett's zeal (p. 29)? What does this tell us about her mother's attitudes?
4. What is Evie doing when news comes through that Germany has declared war on Russia and what is her reaction to the news (p. 31)? How does this affect the significance of the title of the book?
5. How does Aunt M's reaction to how Evie looks in her uniform highlight their different attitudes to women and their place in society (p. 90)?
6. What does Corporal Lindsay's letter tell Evie about his experience of trench warfare (p. 109)? Why do you think Evie wanted to keep the letter to herself?
7. What does the mention of Uncle Aubrey having a telephone installed tell the reader about means of communication in the time the book is set (p. 124)?
8. What does the note from Colonel A tell the reader about Evie's personality (p. 126)?
9. What is the 'crux of the matter' in Harry's long letter (p. 127)? What does it inform the reader about 'social stigma' in Edwardian times and how does it explain Evie's parents reaction to, and treatment of, Harry (p. 127)?
10. Knowing that she is advised to 'couch such letters in the most idealised terms' how does this affect Evie's feelings on reading Captain Elliot's letter about Harry's death (p. 140)?
11. How does Evie react to seeing Captain Miller again (p. 143)?
12. Evie ponders when Matron tells her she is to go home 'what a lot of places that single small word encompasses' (p.153). Which places do you think she could mean?
13. Why does Mrs Invers put her dogs down (p. 155)? What does this tell the reader about the atmosphere of wartime England?
14. In which ways does Evie think Winifred has changed since they saw each other 'only a matter of months ago' (p. 187)? What is the cause of these changes?

15. Why do you think Mrs Miller disapproves of Evie's 'Colonial Background' (p. 207)? What do Evie and Charles think about her views?
16. What are Evie's, Charles's and her mother's attitudes to her working after she is married (p. 219)? What do their attitudes tell the reader about each of their views and personalities?
17. What are Eugenie's plans for the lawns of Deans Park (p. 221)? Why is she making such plans?
18. What events make the idea of marriage suddenly 'tangible' to Evie (p. 235)? How does Evie seem to feel about the marriage?
19. Why does Evie burn the telegram Mrs Miller sends (p. 239)?
20. How does Evie feel about replacing Winifred at the front (p. 249)? What recent events have driven her to even consider such a decision?
21. How does Evie feel about the Sister in Charge at Zuydcoote (pp. 273–274)? How does she compare to other Matrons and Sisters in the various hospitals Evie has worked in throughout the war?
22. How does Evie help Edmund after he is wounded (p. 284)? How does he feel about her helping him?
23. Why does Evie forget it is her birthday and why does she write 'I am twenty-two and feel ninety' (p. 286)?
24. What items have been rationed and how does Evie react to her mother's lecture about rationing (p. 302)? What does this tell us about Evie and her mother's different experiences of war?
25. What accusations are levelled against Evie because of her attitudes towards German prisoners (p. 318)? What does this indicate to the reader about Evie's personality? How does the Sister deal with this event?
26. What did Evie do to be deemed a 'hero' and what is her reaction to this new status (p. 331)? In what ways are her actions recognised?
27. Why does Winifred call Evie 'a goose' who cannot see past her own nose (p. 337)?
28. Why is Evie so relieved to get back her diary (p. 339)? What does she say about the value of recording one's experiences and why might she feel this way (p. 339)?
29. In what ways have several local ladies 'changed their tune' towards Evie (p. 340)? Why have they done this?
30. What does the final sentence tell us about Evie, Arthur and the world around them (p. 347)? Do you think it is a fitting ending? Why/why not?

Creative responses

1. Study the maps at the front of the book (pp. 6–7). Enlarge the map on page six and mark on it Evie's travels and adventures from her time as a nurse during World War I.
2. Many place names are mentioned in the book, for example, Cambridge (p. 125), Verdun (p. 149), Amiens (p. 156), Southampton (p. 165) and Saint-Omer (p. 272). Find ten places that are mentioned in the book. Locate these places on the relevant city, country or world map. Choose one of the places mentioned and design and create an entry for a travel book for this place as it is today. Include information such as population size, geography, history, things of interest, weather, etc. Research and compare these details with how your chosen place would have been in 1914.
3. Evie describes exterior and interiors, including Charles's village (p. 208) and the tents on the front line (pp. 322–323). Find other examples of descriptions of exterior and interior spaces. Draw one of these based on the descriptions, then describe and draw an exterior and interior space of your choice.
4. Winifred works for the 'well run' Red Cross (p. 141). Does this organisation still exist today? Find out about others who have suffered as victims of recent conflicts. How are they being helped? What agencies have been set up? How can you help? In groups, create a charity to help. Design a marketing campaign to raise awareness of your charity. Think of the type of language you would use in your campaign, such as persuasive writing for radio and television advertisements or informative and business writing for pamphlets to distribute, etc.
5. Evie is quite overcome when she and Winifred visit a memorial erected to honour the soldiers and civilians killed in Folkestone (pp. 248–249). Find out if there is a World War I monument in your local area. Locate it on a map. Visit it and study the names and writing on it. Write a descriptive paragraph about your emotional response to this monument, keeping the book and Evie's experience in mind.
6. Sister gives Evie a newspaper clipping about

New Zealand forces in the Dardanelles (p. 88). Choose this or another major event or battle from World War I to research. Write a news article for a social media website or your local newspaper in a current, modern journalistic style. Think about what type of language, sentence and paragraph structure, headings, etc, you would use. Research and note the ways that journalism today differs in style from Edwardian times. List the main stylistic differences.

7. Evie notes that the soldiers she treats at the front line arrive from the trenches 'in an even filthier state. The mud that clogs their clothes and hair and skin has a particular smell; I should not be surprised if it should haunt me for the rest of my life' (p. 188). Research World War I trench warfare and the conditions. Imagine you are brought to Evie's hospital after fighting in the trenches. Write a letter to someone at home and describe your trench warfare experience, using all five senses.
8. Letters were a major part of correspondence during World War I and are mentioned throughout the book. Choose one of the letters from the book and write an expanded and uncensored version, such as the letter the injured Lieutenant would have written to his fiancée to call off their wedding (p. 77) or one of Arthur's 'lifeline' letters to Evie (p. 310).
9. Choose one of the games that are mentioned in the book that the characters entertain themselves with, for example, draughts (p. 107), charades (p. 217), quoits (p. 298), cribbage and spillikins (p. 128). Create a pamphlet in an Edwardian style showing the rules and how to play it.
10. Evie and Arthur go to a Charlie Chaplin movie (p. 311). Research this actor and the movies he was in. Why do you think his movies were so popular during the war? Watch one of his movies and write a review.
11. Some of Evie's diary entries are short, and the meaning or the action is inferred. Choose a short entry and write an expanded version of it, for example, 23rd November (p. 274).
12. Read the author's acknowledgements (pp. 348–349). List the main reasons that you think motivated Anna Mackenzie to write the book.
13. The author acknowledges that *Evie's War* is 'a work of fiction and its characters are entirely fictional. Where historic figures appear, any personality characteristics attributed to them are my own invention' (p. 349). Choose one of the historic figures below to write a short biography about in the style of an encyclopedia entry:
 - Emmeline Pankhurst (p. 28)
 - Emily Davison (p. 28)
 - Nurse Edith Cavell (p. 121)
 - Queen Alexandra (p. 134)
 - Prime Minister Asquith (p. 142)
 - Major-General Russell (p. 153)
 - Lord Kitchener (p. 165)
 - Mr Lloyd George (p. 197)
 - Emperor Franz Joseph (p. 194)
 - Archduke Charles (p. 194)
 - President Wilson (p. 203)
 - Mr Lenin (p. 272)
14. In pairs, research the role women played in the women's organisations created in response to the war that are mentioned in the book, such as, the Women's Emergency Corps (p. 37), the Girls' Friendly Society (p. 104) and the Scottish Women's Hospitals (p. 148). You can use a variety of ways to present your responses, for example, PowerPoint, charts, posters, storyboards and written reports.
15. In groups, create a timeline for Evie and Edmund that shows the main events of the novel for each character, and/or place the main events of World War I on a timeline, including those mentioned in the book.
16. Design your own cover for the novel, including writing a blurb.
17. Do you think the novel could be successfully adapted into a dramatic film? Write a letter in support of the film for possible investors and include which actors you would like to star in the film and the reasons behind your choices. Look at some movie posters. Notice the pictures and the words. Design a movie poster to advertise the film.
18. Write a dramatic monologue from Evie's point of view, retelling the experiences she's had in the book, including her discovery that Charles has died (pp. 239–249). Perform it for the class.
19. Rewrite one of the climactic diary entries as a video script and/or a movie storyboard.
20. Find other books dealing with World War I, for example, *When Our Jack Went to War* by Sandy McKay (Longacre, 2013). Write a comparative review, to compare and contrast the book with at least one other dealing with this theme.
21. Write a review of the book, aiming it at the readership of your favourite magazine, newspaper or website. Consider the following questions:
 - Which characters appealed to you the most?

The least?

- How did the story make you feel as it unfolded?
- What ideas in the book awakened your interest?
- What did you dislike, or find boring?
- Do you think this is a significant book?
- Why is this book important for today's readers?

Visit the author's website for more information about the background to writing the novel – www.annamackenzieauthor.com