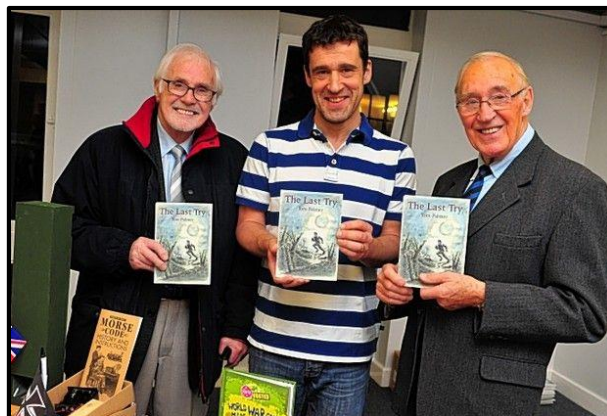


Dear teacher or librarian,

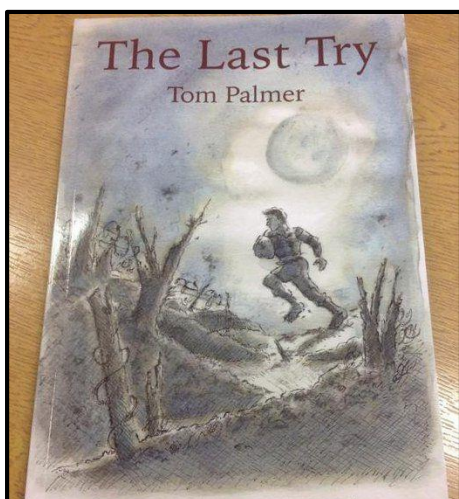
We've put together this easy to use pack full of activities on Tom Palmer's *The Last Try*.

Inside you will find class and individual activities, including literacy tasks, history and geography resources and art projects. Activities range from those suitable for standalone lessons to longer term engagement.

Below is a list of contents, each labelled with the subject they are most suitable to be taught within.



Wherever you see this symbol, you can photocopy the page and use it as a pupil hand out or worksheet.



The Last Try tells the story of Jack Harrison, a real life WW1 soldier from Hull. Jack was only 26 years old when he travelled to France to join the war efforts, bravely leaving behind his young wife and their infant son. Jack was a star rugby player for Hull FC, despite coming from a family of loyal Hull Kingston Rovers supporters. This story takes you through Jack's life as a young adult, and follows his journey from the bombed streets of east Hull to the front line in France.

Tom is a big rugby fan and has written several books on the sport for various age groups, including the Rugby Academy series and *Scrum!*, a book about loyalty and tough decisions. Tom also writes books about football. You can find out more about his books and access more resources here: <http://tompalmer.co.uk/>

Tom specialises in promoting reading, even though he explains that he didn't always do that well at school. Through sport, he found his way into reading, and eventually began writing about it too. He hopes his books will help other young readers find a way into loving books through sport. You can request a visit from Tom to your school by going to his website.

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The Last Try - Chapter 1 reading comprehension exercise



Read the following text then answer the questions in the spaces below:

After the match Jack joined his teammates for a drink. It would be rude not to join the lads and Jack wanted to be part of the team on and off the pitch. The bar was small and uncomfortable, full of broad-shouldered rugby players and smaller older men in suits and hats; the air was thick with smoke.

Jack would have the one drink. And not a hard drink, because he never drank alcohol. He was too interested in being fit for rugby.

And - after that - Jack had work to do. A lot of work. He was in his last year at York Training College, studying to become a teacher. If his dad thought he'd been sitting around all afternoon drinking - and not working - he'd be furious. And Jack didn't want to cross his dad. Or his mum. They'd given up a lot to get Jack and his sisters to stay on at school, and to go on to train for a profession.

One of the best professions.

To be teachers.

That was what his parents wanted for him. And that was what would happen. There was no way Jack was going to let them down. His dad had done extra shifts every month in Earle's shipyard in Hull for nine years since Jack was twelve to pay for his education. And his mother had taken work in. Ironing. Sewing. Anything to earn extra money to give their children a chance to be someone, to achieve something.

1. What does Jack mean by wanting to be part of the team 'on and off the pitch'?

2) What might the rugby players in the bar look like?

3) What is a hard drink?

4) Why was Jack at college?

5) What is one of the best professions, according to the text?

6) What did Jack's parents want for him?

7) Where did Jack's dad work?

8) Name two things Jack's mum had done to earn money.

The Last Try - Chapter 5 reading comprehension exercise



Read the following text then answer the questions below:

The summer had been beautifully hot. Everyone said it was the loveliest for years. And that was good news for Jack and Billy Batten. They had had this day planned for weeks. August 4th. A trip to the seaside with Lilian and two of Billy's children, Billy junior, aged five and Sydney, aged three. Taking the train to the coast. Fish and chips on the beach.

A family day out.

Jack and Lilian met Billy and the children near where they had been staying in east Hull. They walked towards North Bridge into town. But when they arrived at the bridge, the road was closed to allow a long boat carrying barrels to slide underneath.

Jack pointed out to the children how the bridge worked. They stared open-mouthed as a great section of road lifted up, then came down, a large gap in between.

'How does it do it?' Billy junior asked.

Jack explained, squatting to be level with the five year old. He pointed out the wheels and the pulleys and how the boat needed space to travel below the road.

When he'd finished, Jack noticed Lilian smiling at him.

'You'll make a decent father, Jack,' she said, her eyes sparking.

'I hope to,' Jack stood up and the three adults stood together in an embarrassed silence.

1. What did everyone say was the loveliest for years?

2) What had Jack and Billy had planned for weeks?

3) What are Billy's children called?

4) What are they going to eat on the beach?

5) What sort of day out will this be?

6) Why was the bridge closed?

7) What did Jack do to be the same height as Billy junior?

8) What does Jack hope to do?

The Last Try - Chapter 14 reading comprehension exercise



Read the following text then answer the questions below:

The trenches were full of water after a sudden storm. Every man was soaked to the skin; every piece of clothing they wore was sodden. But now the sky was clear again. The strangest night. But that was nothing compared to the shells coming down. Every few seconds an ear-splitting scream, then an explosion. More mud thrown on top of the men. And around them, the stench of the unburied bodies of men rotting. Men they knew. Hell on earth. But there was no time to climb out of the trenches to recover their bodies. The German assault was too overwhelming. And the British had plans of their own. Jack was put in command of his company. The men would want a man just awarded a Military Cross to lead them on such a mission. The top brass had heard about his role in taking out the German sniper - and capturing him. The mission: to take the ground between the British trenches and Oppy Wood, two hundred yards ahead of them. Very early morning. No light. The wood was invisible in the darkness and hidden also by the smoke and flames from the shells coming from both sides.

1. Why were the men wet?

2) Why was it the strangest night?

3) What was causing the loud noises?

4) What could the men smell around them?

5) Why couldn't the men climb out of the trenches?

6) What had Jack recently been awarded?

7) Who do you think the top brass might be?

8) Why was there no light during the mission?

Who's who in The Last Try

Teacher's prompt:

Photocopy and cut out the character cards below. Assign a character to each pupil and ask them to think about what sort of person that person might have been.

Ask:

What was important to this person?
What might they have been thinking about when the bombs began to drop?
What sort of life did they lead?
Who might they have looked up to?

Do:

Take the hot seat! One pupil is selected at a time to become their character. They can use costumes and props if they wish.
This character is interviewed by the rest of the class. The class should aim to find out more about the character's personality, their thoughts, traits, and how they felt in particular situations.

Example:

A pupil may ask Jack: "Were you thinking about your family while you were capturing the sniper?"
"What would you have done if the sniper had seen you? Would you have protected yourself or your troops first?"
"How did it feel the first time you played for Hull FC and scored against your family's team?"

Differentiate:

Provide questions as prompts for lower ability pupils to ask the character in the hot seat. Try and encourage them to develop these questions further on their own. Can they easily continue engaging with the character's response?

Jack Harrison

You are married to Lilian and together you have a son named Jacky. He is only eighteen months old when you go to war.

You have spent your short career working as a teacher but have also been a star rugby player for Hull FC. Your father is a strong supporter of Hull KR, and this has caused some difficulties.

As soon as the country is at war, you know it is your duty to volunteer to fight the Germans.

Mr Harrison

You are Jack's father and a lifelong supporter of Hull KR. You feel very uneasy about your son playing for the rival team, Hull FC, but can't help being proud of him.

You work at the local shipyard, and have spent years working extra-long days to save enough money for Jack's future. More than anything you wanted him to have a more successful life than you.

Lilian

You are Jack's wife, and mother to young son Jacky. Jack is your childhood sweetheart and you can't imagine life with anyone else.

When he announces he is going to fight in the war, you know it is what he needs to do, but you are very nervous about his safety, and about looking after your son in east Hull, which is getting heavily bombed.

Mawson

You meet Jack aboard the ship to France, where you have both just volunteered to fight in the war.

You went to school together but haven't been in touch since then, but you are both secretly relieved to see a familiar face now.

It is your sense of humour that keeps Jack going in the difficult times he faces at war.

Billy Batten

You are Jack's best friend and rugby teammate.

You spent time with Jack and Lilian before the war, and days out with your children taught Jack how much he would like to become a father himself.

Together, you secure win after win for Hull FC.

Jackie

You are Jack and Lilian's son. You are only eighteen months old when your father goes to war and you see him for the last time.

After this, you are raised by Lilian, a young widow grieving for her childhood sweetheart.

Your first years of life are spent living through heavy bombings in east Hull.

Memorial project

Imagine you are a lost soldier, presumed dead, like Jack. How would you like to be remembered?

Teacher's prompt:

Using the links below, ask pupils to research war memorials and begin to think about the sort of things used to remember soldiers by.

This activity can form a longer term project by not only designing a memorial, but making a miniature version of one too.

Ask:

- Should a memorial be a permanent feature in a public place?
- Do you like memorials that can be removed and kept individually, like the Poppies at the Tower of London?
- Should a memorial be placed somewhere the public can go to visit?
- How should a war memorial make you feel?

<https://poppies.hrp.org.uk/>
<http://www.iwm.org.uk/>
<http://www.hullwebs.co.uk/content/l-20c/conflict/ww1/ww1.htm>
<http://www.hull-peoples-memorial.co.uk/>
<http://www.greatwar.co.uk/memorials/ww1-memorials.htm>



Do:

- Using coloured pens and pencils, design a memorial on paper. Each memorial should be labelled, explaining what materials are being used and why the design has been chosen.
- Using materials such as wood, newspapers, paint, glue, cardboard, fabric and household rubbish, make your memorial design in a structure large enough to display in your classroom.

Extension:

- Where will your memorial go? Can you think of somewhere it could be featured in Hull? Research parks, open spaces and other public areas and choose a location for your memorial. Then, write a paragraph explaining why you have chosen that area, and who might go there to visit the memorial.
- Remember to think about the following: Is this place easy to get to? How would I get there? Could someone in a wheelchair access my memorial site?

A great day out

In *The Last Try*, Jack and Billy have a family day out planned. They want to take Lilian and Billy's two children to the seaside, and walk into town to catch the train to the coast. When they arrive at the train station, they find all the trains are being used to move troops to the south of the country, and have to change their plans.

Think:

Imagine you are going to war. Before you leave, you plan one last great day out with your closest friends and family. Where would you go? What would you do?

Do:

Write down a description of your day out. Include street names if you can, and describe what you would do at the places you want to visit.

Research the places you have selected. What was there in 1914? How has the area changed since then?



This image shows a glimpse of what Princes Avenue in Hull looked like during WW1

Home projects

Here are a list of suggestions to keep pupils busy with The Last Try at home. Set these as homework tasks or suggest pupils have a go at some of these activities during the school holidays.

Interview a soldier

You don't have to go back in time to WW1 to find a real life soldier. Many people choose to go into the army as a career, and you may know someone who has. Write some interview questions and go and talk to them about their experiences of serving their country.

Visit Eden Camp

This modern history theme museum will show you up close what Human Torpedoes look like and visit a replica officers' tearoom. Based near Malton, this museum will take you through the social history from 1914, as well as teaching about the conditions of WW2 too.

Grow your own poppy

See if you can find some poppy seeds at a garden centre and plant them in your own pot to watch them grow. You don't need a garden to grow flowers, you could keep them in a plant pot by your doorstep! You could look up why poppies are symbolic of the war.

Find out what your family were doing in 1914

By visiting your library and Hull History Centre, it's possible to trace your family history. By doing this, you could find out about your relatives from over a hundred years ago, and see if they were involved in the war.

Cook trench food

Soldiers didn't have the option of going to the supermarket for their meals, they often had to eat what could be easily stored and cooked in small tins while they were on duty and fighting from the trenches. Find out what a typical meal would have been for soldier and try cooking it at home.

How old are the houses where you live?

Do you live in a modern house? You might not think so, but many of Hull's houses were not there in 1914 and your street probably looked very different. See if you can find any images online of what your street looked like, and what was standing where your house is today.