

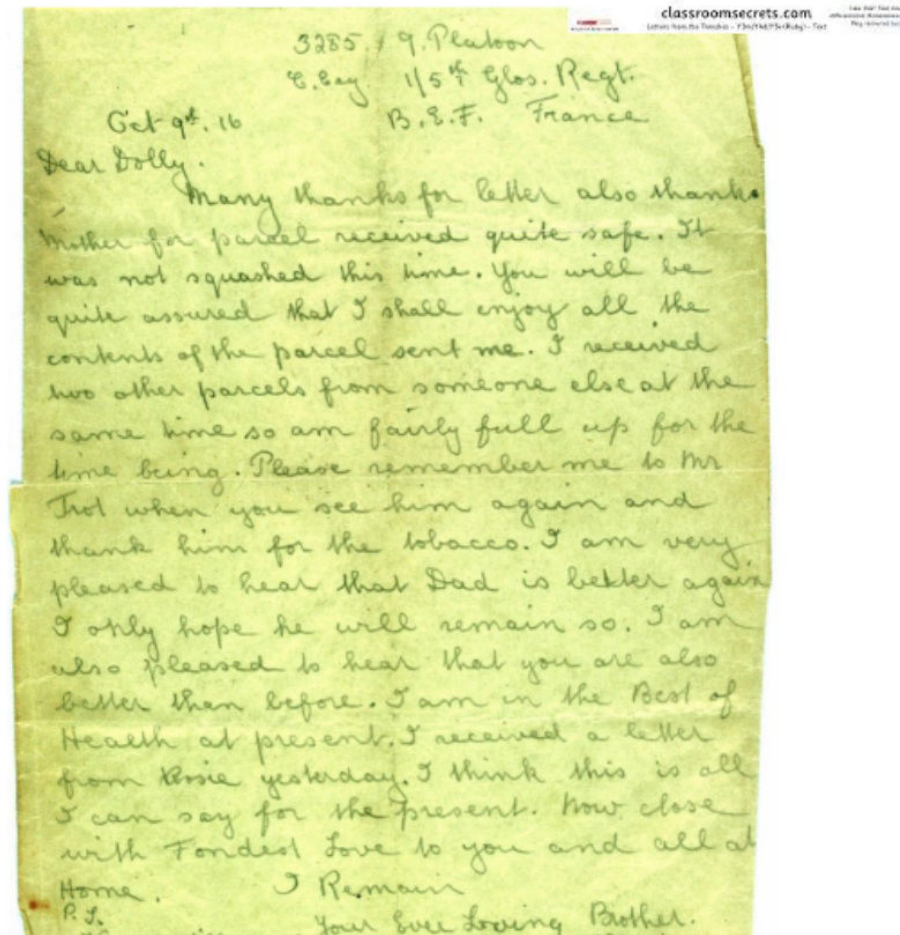
## Guided reading week 3

### Letters home.

When you joined the armed forces in WW1 you would rarely get home leave (a holiday where you could return home for a few days).

This meant that the only way you could communicate with your friends and family was by writing a letter or sending a postcard.

Soldiers wrote lots of letters back to their friends and family, telling them about events and what was happening



## Let's look at a letter sent by a soldier in 1916

B.E.F. France

February 21st 1916

Dear Sir,

*I was very pleased indeed to receive a letter from you yesterday, and am glad to hear that Christy is better. He told me he had to return to bed with a fresh cold when I heard from him last - about a fortnight ago. I fear he had a very rough time, although I must confess that many of us envied him when we heard he was in England again, his chest is not strong enough to stand the exposure.*

*People at home can never realise what it means to be in a narrow trench with mud and water up to our knees and often deeper! The first time we went into the trenches lots of our men got hopelessly stuck in the mud and had to be dragged out by their comrades. I thought it was rather a joke until I experienced the same thing myself. I cannot describe the awful sensation of feeling one's feet sinking deeper and deeper in mud which appeared in some places to be bottomless and to be quite powerless to help oneself! I actually had to be dug out with a spade! We thought more about the mud than the German bullets - although we got our share of those and quite a brisk shelling at times. However I am glad to say that we have said "Goodbye" to the trenches - for the present at any rate. We have been stationed at a village about 25 miles from the firing line for the past five weeks and past Wednesday we came still further back. We had a march of about 15 miles that day in weather which was by no means ideal. There was quite a gale blowing against us and we were wet through before we got halfway here. However the rain cleared off in the afternoon and our clothes had got nearly dry by the time we reached our new billets.*

*Trusting this will find Mrs Blathwayt and yourself in the best of health, and thanking you very much for writing.*

*I remain, Yours Respectfully,*

*James Hedges*

This is a copy of the actual letter he sent.

1487. C. Coy. 12th Gloucester  
R. C. I. France  
February 24th 1916.

Dear Sir,

I was very pleased indeed to receive a letter from you yesterday, and am glad to hear that Kinley is better. He told me he had had to return to bed with a fever cold when I read from him last. About a fortnight ago I fear he had a very rough time, although I must confess that many of us carried in when we heard he was in England and his chest is not strong enough to stand the exposure. I am afraid I have had no thrilling experiences up to the present and to my mind the worst part of the business - to begin with at any rate - was the awful state of the trenches. People at home can

never realize what it means to be in a narrow trench with mud & water up to one's knees & often deeper. The first time we went into the trenches I got up & ran & got hopelessly stuck in the mud & had to be dragged out by three comrades. I thought it was rather a joke until I experienced the same thing myself. I cannot describe the awful sensation of feeling one's feet sinking deeper & deeper in mud which appeared in some places to be bottomless & to be quite powerless to help oneself. I actually had to be dug out with a spade. We fought more about the mud than German bullets - although we got our share of those, & quite a bit shelling at times. However I am glad to say we have said "goodbye" to trenches - for the present at any rate.

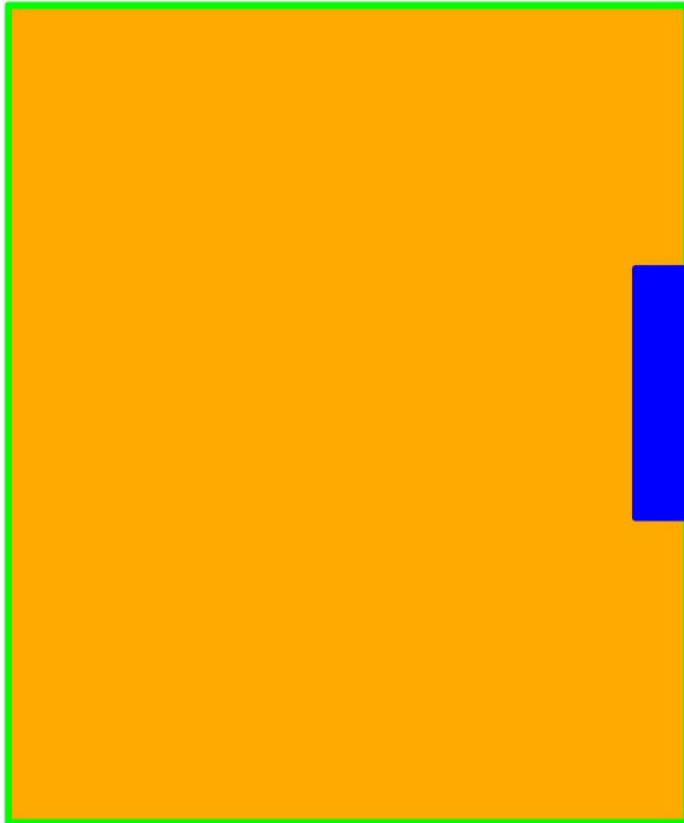
We have been stationed at a village about 25 miles from the firing line for the last five weeks & last Wednesday we came still further back. We had a march of about 15 miles that day in weather which was by no means ideal. There was quite a gale blowing against us, & we were wet through before we got half way here. However the rain cleared off in the afternoon & our clothes had got nearly dry by the time we reached our new billets. I hope this will soon be well enough to get home for a few days, & he will be

ago although I don't think they actually reached Blighty. I see compulsory service comes into operation on March 24th but it cannot affect many in England - every one from here who possibly could went & have enlisted. I am pleased to say I have been keeping wonderfully well since we have been out here & haven't even had a cold. The war seems to drag on, but I hope the end is not far off now & look forward to the time when we shall be all safely round the home fires again.  
Trusting this will find Mr. Blighty

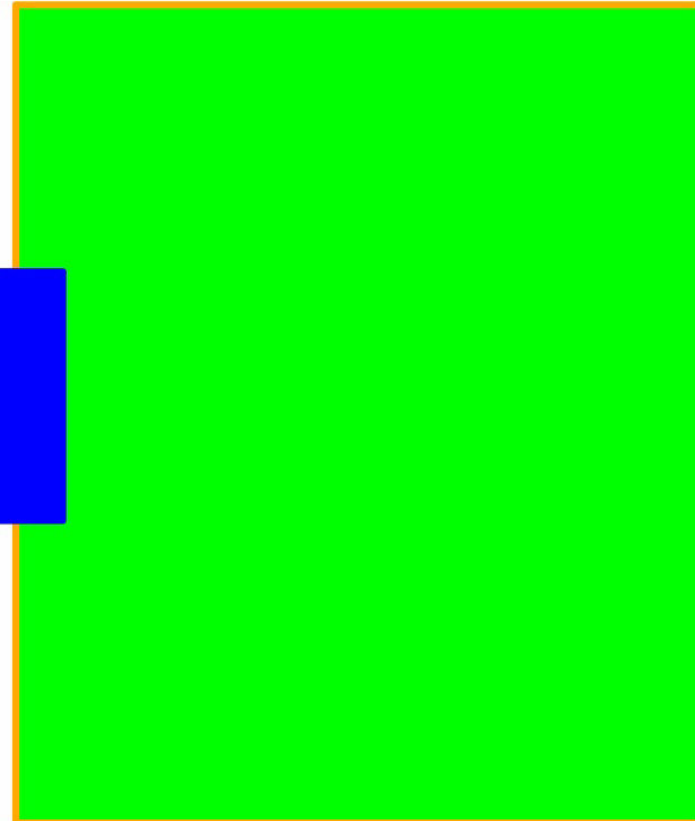
Have you ever received a letter?

How did it make you feel when you saw it and then when you opened it?

**Soldiers**



**Me**



Receiving  
a letter

**Inside the soldier.**

How will the soldier feel when he sends and receives letters?

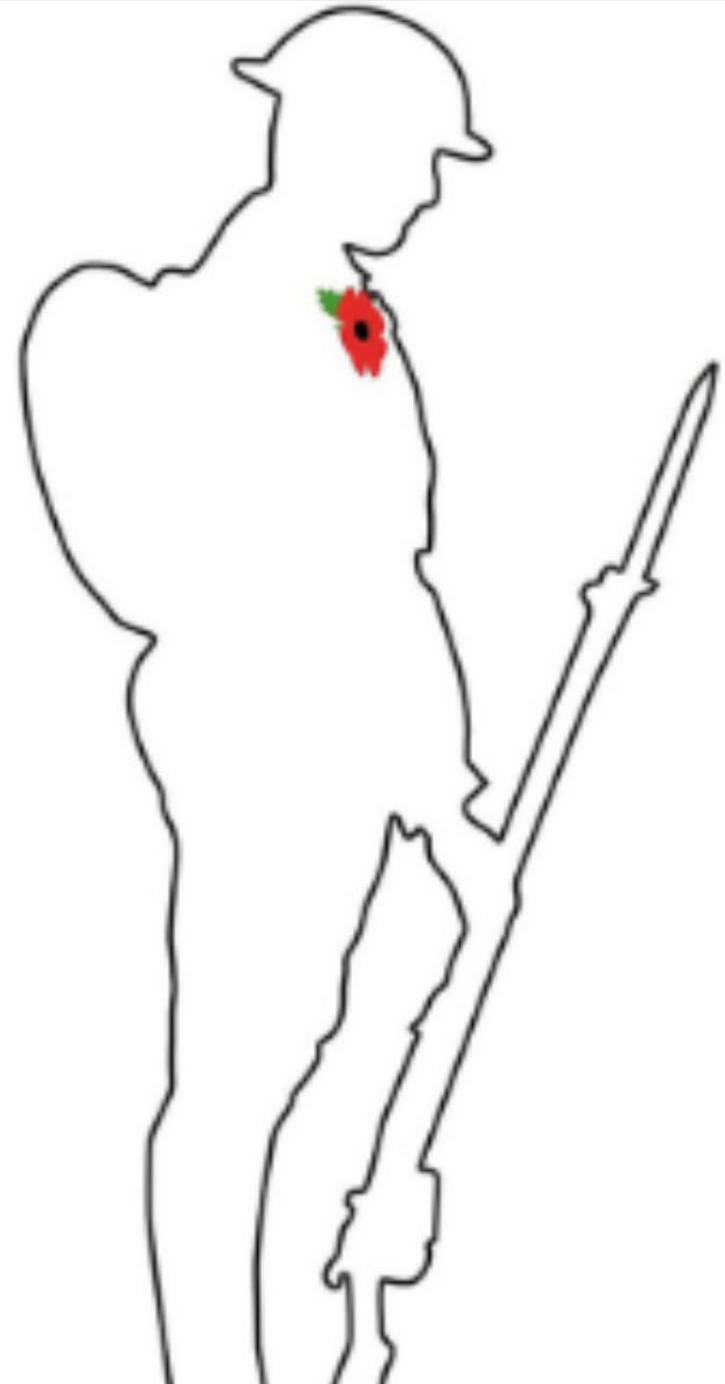
What sort of feelings will he include in his letters?

**Around the soldier**

What could the soldier write about?

What would he want to tell his family?

Do you think he will tell his family everything? Why?



*People at home can never realise what it means to be in a narrow trench with mud and water up to our knees and often deeper! The first time we went into the trenches lots of our men got hopelessly stuck in the mud and had to be dragged out by their comrades. I thought it was rather a joke until I experienced the same thing myself. I cannot describe the awful sensation of feeling one's feet sinking deeper and deeper in mud which appeared in some places to be bottomless and to be quite powerless to help oneself! I actually had to be dug out with a spade! We thought more about the mud than the German bullets - although we got our share of those and quite a brisk shelling at times. However I am glad to say that we have said "Goodbye" to the trenches - for the present at any rate. We have been stationed at a village about 25 miles from the firing line for the past five weeks and past Wednesday we came still further back. We had a march of about 15 miles that day in weather which was by no means ideal. There was quite a gale blowing against us and we were wet through before we got halfway here. However the rain cleared off in the afternoon and our clothes had got nearly dry by the time we reached our new billets.*

## Vocabulary

### Model

1. What does the word comrades mean in the sentence?
2. Which word is a synonym to pulled?
3. Give 2 things that the words **hopelessly stuck** suggests.

## Vocabulary

1. What does the word billets mean in the sentence?
2. Which word is a synonym to brisk ?
3. Give 2 things that the words **powerless** suggests.



*People at home can never realise what it means to be in a narrow trench with mud and water up to our knees and often deeper! The first time we went into the trenches lots of our men got hopelessly stuck in the mud and had to be dragged out by their comrades. I thought it was rather a joke until I experienced the same thing myself. I cannot describe the awful sensation of feeling one's feet sinking deeper and deeper in mud which appeared in some places to be bottomless and to be quite powerless to help oneself! I actually had to be dug out with a spade! We thought more about the mud than the German bullets - although we got our share of those and quite a brisk shelling at times. However I am glad to say that we have said "Goodbye" to the trenches - for the present at any rate. We have been stationed at a village about 25 miles from the firing line for the past five weeks and past Wednesday we came still further back. We had a march of about 15 miles that day in weather which was by no means ideal. There was quite a gale blowing against us and we were wet through before we got halfway here. However the rain cleared off in the afternoon and our clothes had got nearly dry by the time we reached our new billets.*

## Retrieval

### Model

#### 1. True or false

Men got hopelessly stuck in the mud

The village is 20.5 miles from the firing line.

I had to be dug out with a shovel

Water came up to our knees.

We moved further back on Monday

#### 2. Find and copy a phrase that tells the reader that the soldier did not believe that people were getting stuck in the mud.

## 1. True or false

We thought more about the German bullets than the mud.

We marched 15 miles in sunny weather.

The soldiers feet sunk deeper and deeper in to the mud

Our clothes dried by the time we got there.

We have said goodbye to the trenches for the moment.

2. Find and copy a phrase that tells the reader that the weather made the march difficult.

*People at home can never realise what it means to be in a narrow trench with mud and water up to our knees and often deeper! The first time we went into the trenches lots of our men got hopelessly stuck in the mud and had to be dragged out by their comrades. I thought it was rather a joke until I experienced the same thing myself. I cannot describe the awful sensation of feeling one's feet sinking deeper and deeper in mud which appeared in some places to be bottomless and to be quite powerless to help oneself! I actually had to be dug out with a spade! We thought more about the mud than the German bullets - although we got our share of those and quite a brisk shelling at times. However I am glad to say that we have said "Goodbye" to the trenches - for the present at any rate. We have been stationed at a village about 25 miles from the firing line for the past five weeks and past Wednesday we came still further back. We had a march of about 15 miles that day in weather which was by no means ideal. There was quite a gale blowing against us and we were wet through before we got halfway here. However the rain cleared off in the afternoon and our clothes had got nearly dry by the time we reached our new billets.*

## Inference

1. *I cannot describe the awful sensation of feeling one's feet sinking deeper and deeper in mud which appeared in some places to be bottomless and to be quite powerless to help oneself!*

**Explain how being in the muddy trenches affected the soldiers. Find evidence in the text.**

2. **How can you tell that the weather caused the soldiers problems?  
Find evidence in the text.**

## Inference

1. *However I am glad to say that we have said “Goodbye” to the trenches - for the present at any rate.*

**Explain how he felt when he knew that they were leaving the trenches. Find evidence in the text**

2. **Summarise the letter that James sent home. Can you include events and feelings finding evidence in the text?**

