
WW2 Golden Skies - A Recount in Three Chapters

Recounting life in World War II By Obediah Stoneheart

Task 1:

Chapter one - Wrath of the Luftwaffe - a first person narrative

The sharp whistles of doom were all around us: two small children huddled in fear beneath our old, pine kitchen table. I could hear mother trembling on the cold stone steps to the filthy coal cellar. Menacing engine groans rumbled from above. No-one could protect us.

Father was long gone.

"Obediah!" mother cried, "Make sure you and Mabel stay there! Don't move a muscle!"

Before she could utter another word, a huge crash obliterated the ceiling. It rained rubble. Pieces of stone, heavy beams of wood and clouds of plasterboard flew at us from all directions. I grabbed at my quaking, screaming, crying sister, pulling her closer, whispering comforts, not daring to cry myself.

This was the final straw. Mother had already said it several times: the city was not a safe place for children. Somehow, I never thought she meant us. I thought she meant other children. But, with father gone, how could she alone keep us safe? We were streets away from the nearest bomb shelter and the air raids were becoming more intense and frequent.



Responding to the text:

Find any unknown words in the text you have just read and decode, explore and explain the meaning of the new vocabulary you have found:

Word:	Meaning:
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Read and retrieve: Copy a group of words from the first paragraph which show that the children were surrounded. (1 mark)

..... [1 mark]

Read and retrieve: Which **two** places did the family choose to keep themselves safe from the air raid? (1 mark)

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..... [1 mark]

Infer: As the air raid happens, why do you think their mother told Obediah and Mabel to stay where they were, instead of joining her? (1 mark)
Bonus word to use: **suggest** (1 mark)

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..... [1 mark]

Author's choice: Why do you think the author decided to tell this story? (1 mark)

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..... [1 mark]

Task 2:

Chapter one continued - Wrath of the Luftwaffe - a first person narrative

We spent the rest of the night in the church, which mercifully dodged the air raid that evening. (I hear it has now fallen to the deadly Nazi bombers.) Mother, who had sustained a cut to her forehead, stoically prayed for father and for our safety, even though to me, everything seemed hopeless and abysmal. Our mother was a rock of faith. The Reverend looked sadly upon us and the other homeless refugees, who huddled along the cold church pews.

Whimpers echoed up from the people grasping tiny candles, dotted everywhere like distant city lights, their sorrowful sounds soaring up to the ancient wooden eaves. The stained-glass windows were lifeless. Later, when she thought I was asleep, I heard mother whispering to the vicar. She returned to us with a sad smile, and without even saying it, I knew this was the last time we would be together in the city. I knew what the vicar had told her she must do.



It was time for us to leave. What will become of us?

Responding to the text:

Decode, explore and explain the meaning of new vocabulary:

Word:	Meaning:
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Read and retrieve: Name a part of the church from the text. (1 mark)

..... [1 mark]

Infer: Find the paragraph which begins: ‘We spent the rest of the night in the church’.
What do you think the word ‘stoically’ might mean, when describing their mother?
Give your reasons. (1 mark)

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..... [1 mark]

Choice: Why did the author end this episode with a question? (1 mark)

Bonus words to use ‘gives a sense of’ (1 mark)

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..... [2 marks]

Task 3:

Golden Skies - chapter two - Obediah's diary entry - Evacuation!

	Monday 28th September 1940
	Dear Diary,
	How quickly a week has passed! The city air raid is all but a distant memory now. By comparison, our life in the city seems like a dream - well, more of a nightmare compared to the idyllic countryside we now inhabit.
	Mother wrote today. She has been injured in the bombings, and now she does not regret her decision to send us to safety. I can vividly remember our departure, standing on that platform. The massive, monstrous steam train was like a dragon: hissing, puffing, spitting and Mabel was just as terrified as I (secretly) was.
	Mabel has stopped crying at night - at last, poor thing. She misses mother terribly. I have to put a brave face on it, but of course I miss her too. Wilton (our new home) is a tiny country village and we live on the nearby farm. On the train, Mabel was clamped to me for the whole journey like a padlock, but now she has started to explore the farm, and we may have made a new friend - although we don't know her name. She lives on the edge of the woods and sometimes waves and smiles. She looks a little older than me, 12-ish, I think.
	Mr and Mrs Tomkins, our new pretend parents, have warmed to us greatly since picking us up at the village hall. I felt like a lost parcel, standing there with Mabel, a few belongings in our battered case and labels around our necks. Then, two elderly, pleasant-looking people grabbed us into a friendly hug. Mrs Tompkins smelt of flowery soap like lavender; he smelt of pungent, stale tobacco and manure. They took us off in a rickety, horse-drawn cart to this cosy farm cottage. It is a small, sturdy home, with a smoking chimney and chickens running around like naughty children, panicking whenever you approach. We have all sorts of chores, but the Tompkins have promised us we may explore the woods this weekend if we behave and work hard. I think they want to see if they can trust us before they let us too far away from their apron strings.
	Those woods do look like they might be full of adventure... And I am intrigued to meet the smiling girl. Perhaps we will see her tomorrow?

Responding to the text:

Decode, explore and explain the meaning of new vocabulary:

Word:	Meaning:
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Read and retrieve: Copy a group of words which show that Obediah is hiding his fears. (1 mark)

..... [1 mark]

Read and retrieve: Mabel was ‘clamped to me like a padlock’. What does this suggest about Mabel? (1 mark)

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..... [1 mark]

Infer: What is your impression of Obediah as an older brother to Mabel? (1 mark)
Bonus words to use: **The impression I have of Obediah is...** (1 mark)

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..... [2 marks]

Author’s choice: What are the **features** of a diary entry? Try to find three. (3 marks)

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..... [3 marks]

Task 4:

Golden Skies - chapter three - Obediah's letter home

	27 Brigg Cottage
	Taunton
	SM1 2RD
	10 th October 1940
	Dearest Mother,
	Oh, how we are both missing you dearly! Mabel sends a hug and a kiss. I am sending you a very manly handshake and a strong salute, seeing as you have put me in charge of her. Of course, I am looking after her as you asked. We hope you are feeling much better and that life in the city is not too dangerous - surely your injuries have fully healed by now? We miss seeing our friends and we would give anything to see you again! However, as you will read below, we have been on quite an adventure...
	On the first night here with our new carers, Mr and Mrs Tompkins, Mabel and I laid our heads on the clean, soft, lavender-soaked pillows, quietly thanking God for our safety. After such a trying day, I am sure you can imagine that we went out like snuffed candles. The only thing that disturbed us was a strange thud in the distance which we took to be thunder. It was no such thing - as you will see!
	Even though neither of us slept at all well, the following morning a bright dawn flared through the window, awaking us early. We have come to realise this is quite a pretty little village, though this house is rather decrepit. Mr and Mrs Tompkins are so very kind - we are terribly lucky! After breakfast (and a few easy chores) they allowed us to explore our new territory. When we stepped out of the door and looked towards the dense woodland near the house, Mabel caught sight of the small figure we had glimpsed yesterday. You know how easily she makes new friends. She went off like a rabbit, crying, "Quickly! Let's see who that is!"
	Within minutes, we were chattering like best friends. Darcy, a short skinny blond thing, led us through a tiny hole in a thicket and showed us a path that looked ripe for exploration. She said she had something she simply must show us. And here, we were met by a sight that left us all gaping in shock! Read on - and I do hope you believe us!...

Responding to the text:

Decode, explore and explain the meaning of new vocabulary:

Word:	Meaning:
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Read and retrieve: Copy a group of words which show that the children went straight to sleep. (1 mark)

..... [1 mark]

Read and retrieve:

How does the first paragraph make the reader want to continue? Find evidence. (1 mark)

..... [1 mark]

Infer: Why do you think Obediah gives a firm handshake and a strong salute in the letter to his mother? (1 mark)

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..... [1 mark]

Author's choice: What are the **features** of a letter? Try to find three. (3 marks)

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..... [3 marks]

Task 5:

Golden Skies - chapter three - Obediah's Letter (continued...)

	We gasped and gaped in awe.
	A twisted, smashed metal carcass was strewn within the lower branches of a copse of smouldering oak trees. Through the glimmers of sunlight, we could barely recognise it as a crashed aeroplane. (Now we knew what that thud had been in the night!) It bore the sign of the Swastika. "It's the Nazis!" I warned them, in hushed tones, looking around for the occupant. (Fear not, mother - we were lucky this time!) Stealthily, we approached and peeped within the wreck, me leading, of course. Mabel screamed.
	"Is he dead?!" cried Darcy, crying uncontrollably. I thought Mabel was going to vomit, but she is made of sterner stuff and, before I could stop her, she reached out to touch the body.
	Noticing something odd - something shining - I climbed into the empty seat behind our dead enemy (even so, I was terrified!). The whole fuselage creaked and loosened, and I swiftly jumped down, rocking the plane.
	We were all set to flee and seek help when a metal box tumbled to the forest floor with a hefty clank. A flap opened: a pool of golden coins fanned out over the mud.
	"Treasure!" said Mabel, her eyes alight with gold. "Bless this greedy Nazi! He's made us rich!"
	That very afternoon, the local museum curator told us the coins are genuine, and better yet, we found them which makes us the owners! Oh mother! What fortune is this? We have wealth beyond our dreams! We are unbelievably rich! There is no need for you to work any longer, mother; come to us with haste! We can buy a place here, where it is safe. We can be a family once again!
	Your loving son and daughter, Obediah and Mabel xx
	

Responding to the text:

Golden Skies - chapter three - Obediah's Letter (continued...)

Decode, explore and explain the meaning of new vocabulary:

Word:	Meaning:
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Read and retrieve: Which words tell you that Obediah took the lead at the crash site.
(1 mark)

..... [1 mark]

Read and retrieve: How did the two girls react to their discovery? (1 mark)

..... [1 mark]

Infer: What does this suggest about the writer (Obediah) view of girls? (1 mark)

..... [1 mark]

Author's choice: If this was a more modern-day story, how do you think the role of the girls would be written in a different way? Think of two changes (2 marks)

In a modern version of this story, the girls would

.....

.....

..... [2 marks]
