

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Questions about the story

- 1) What reason does the main character give for having volunteered to join the army? What reasons can you provide to explain the willingness of hundreds of thousands of young Canadian men to enlist during the First World War and fight overseas? Do men and women today join Canada's armed forces for the same reasons? Would those reasons change in a time of war?
- 2) When soldiers were not fighting in battles, how did they pass the time? From the passages in the story, outline a "typical day" of a Canadian soldier in the trenches.
- 3) What are some of the main character's concerns prior to going on sentry duty? How does he deal with his anxiety?
- 4) What is a "trench raid" and what incentives are offered to soldiers to take part in them? Why are these necessary? What is a "billet" and how do you explain its' appeal to front-line fighters?
- 5) How are German soldiers described in the story? Are they better or worse off than the Canadians living in the opposite trenches?
- 6) What techniques do the main characters in the story use to approach and enter the German lines during the night trench raid? What techniques do they then use to return to their own lines?
- 7) What is the purpose of a "sap"? What are the worst fears of the main character when tunneling near the enemy's trenches? Why does Corporal Hunter suddenly order the men to leave the tunnel?
- 8) How do the Germans launch their attack against the Canadians? How do Canadians defend themselves against this attack? Which side has won the battle?
- 9) How hazardous was it to live and fight in the trenches of the First World War? After reading the story, make a list of the types of dangers that soldiers faced while fighting in the trenches.
- 10) What has the main character accomplished over two days of fighting in the trenches? What do you think will happen the next day?

