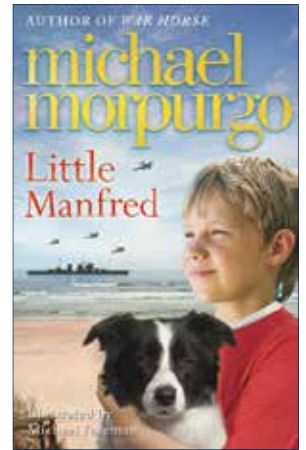


michael morpurgo



Little Manfred



Little Manfred – The Bismark

“All the way through our training in the Kriegsmarine, the German navy, Manfred was at my side. And then we found ourselves serving on the same ship. The Bismark. We could not have been more proud. We knew this was the finest battleship in the German navy, the fastest in the world, thirty knots, 50,000 tons. Every sailor in the Fatherland wanted to serve on her. It was a great honour and a privilege to be chosen to sail in this ship.”

(Little Manfred, Part 2, page 56)

In Part 2 of the story *Little Manfred*, Walter and Marty describe their experiences as sailors during the war.

The Bismark and The Hood were real battleships used during World War Two.

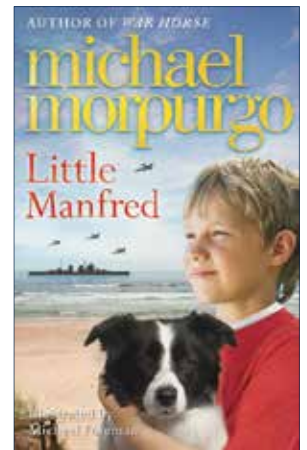
Using books and the internet, carry out some research about either The Bismark or The Hood.

When you think you have learnt enough about the battles they were involved in, write a report about one of the battles for a radio news broadcast for the public to listen to during the war.

michael morpurgo



Little Manfred



Little Manfred – A wooden dachshund, painted brown with red wheels

READ THE FIRST SECTION OF THE STORY TO THE CHILDREN:

'The sea was ten minutes away from the farm, no more. So there was hardly a day of my life that I didn't go down to the beach. It was my favourite place to escape to. Farm chores were definitely not my idea of fun – except bottle-feeding lambs or calves – but if there were sheds to muck out, and there always were, I'd make myself scarce, quick as a twick, and run off down to the beach.

The trouble was, that as soon as he was old enough, Alex would always follow me. Alex was my little brother and he talked a lot. He was seven by this time; I was twelve and liked to do my thinking and my sulking on my own. But wherever I went he went, and wherever we went, Mannie came with us – that's Manfred, our black and white sheepdog. We'd go swimming in the sea in summer, all three of us.

We'd chase the gulls whenever we saw them ganging up on the oystercatchers; we'd skim stones if the sea was calm enough – twenty-six bounces was my record – Alex had only ever managed two! Whatever we did, wherever we went, the three of us were always together.

All our friends thought Manfred was a funny sort of name for a dog. Apparently I'd called him after our toy dog, Little Manfred, a wooden dachshund, painted brown with red wheels. Mum had played with him when she was little. Then I'd had him to play with for a while, and now he belonged to Alex; only Alex wasn't that interested in him anymore, mostly because he'd grown out of him, but also because Little Manfred only had three wheels by now, and didn't work very well. Dad had trodden on him the Christmas before, by accident of course. So Little Manfred was "busted" and Alex never let Dad forget who'd done it. Dad was always saying he'd mend him, but he never did. So there Little Manfred had stood ever since Christmas, lopsided on the sitting-room windowsill, waiting for a new wheel.

For some reason I never really understood, Little Manfred always seemed more important to Mum than to anyone else. She really cried when the accident happened. I don't think I'd ever seen her so upset. I'd see her looking at Little Manfred so sadly sometimes, stroking his back almost as if he were a real dog. And at Christmas after the accident, she tied a red ribbon round his neck, "to make him feel better," she said.

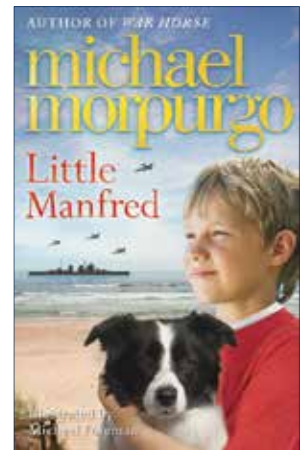
I didn't discover why she loved him so much or why he was called Little Manfred until one day in that summer of 1966.'

(Little Manfred, Part 1, pages 13-17)

michael morpurgo



Little Manfred



Little Manfred – A wooden dachshund, painted brown with red wheels

Activity 1:

Draw a picture of what you think Little Manfred looks like based on the description you've just heard.

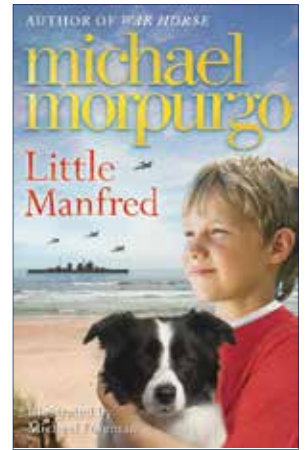
Activity 2:

In pairs, discuss why you think Little Manfred was so important to Mum. Feedback to the class.

michael morpurgo



Little Manfred



Little Manfred – A wooden dachshund, painted brown with red wheels

Activity 3:

Stay in pairs and both think of a possession you have that is important to you, or to a family member.

Without telling your partner what your possession is, take it in turns to describe it to them and see if your partner can draw a picture of it based on your description.

When you're describing your possession think about its shape, size, colour, the material it is made from and whether it moves.

When your partner has drawn it, can you tell your partner why it is special?

Activity 4:

Swap over and see if you can now draw your partner's special possession based on their description.

My possession	My partner's possession

michael morpurgo



Little Manfred



Little Manfred – Prisoner of war

'...we were moved down to a prisoner of war camp near here in Suffolk, to work on the farms and sometimes to clear the beaches of wire and mines. And this was how, in the end, Manfred and I were let out of the camp and came to be housed with a family in Mayfield Farm, and so we found ourselves living there with a farmer and his wife, Mr and Mrs Williams.' He paused then, and smiled at us. "And their daughter, a little girl called Grace.'

(Little Manfred, Part 2, page 84)

'To start with, I must say, they were just polite, but not at all friendly. I do not think they wanted us there at all. They did not like having to lodge us in the house – we were Germans after all. The war was over, but we were still the enemy. And little Grace, she would not even be polite. She did not speak to us for weeks; sometimes she used to stick her tongue out at us I remember. But Manfred, he managed in the end to make friends with her . . . '

(Little Manfred, Part 3, page 90)

After the war had ended instead of being sent home many prisoners of war were placed around the country, to clear up land and to help re-build the country.

Imagine yourself as the little girl or boy living on a farm in Suffolk. Suddenly you are told that a German prisoner is going to live with you whilst they do their work.

How do you feel? Are you frightened, anxious, excited? Do you want them to live with you?

What do they look like and what are they called?

Can they speak any English? If not, how are you going to communicate with them?

What work will they do?

Write a page in a diary describing the day they arrive.
