

Year 4 Knowledge Organiser **Summer Term**

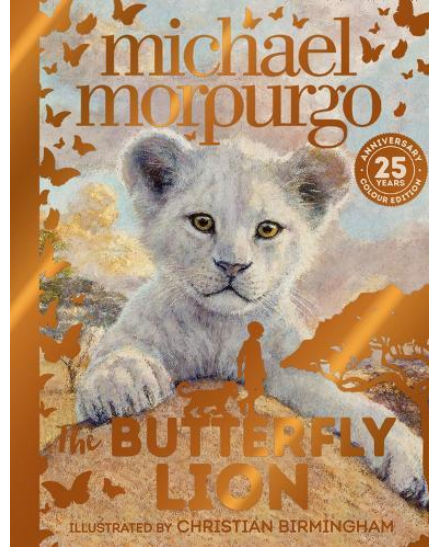
Book Study

TERMS Key Vocabulary

Veld	Open grassland in South Africa.
Savannah	A wide, grassy plain with few trees.
Cub	A baby lion.
Habitat	The natural home of an animal.
Endangered	When a type of animal is at risk of becoming extinct (dying out completely) because there are very few left.
Empire	A group of countries ruled by one nation (like the British Empire).
Soldier	A person who fights in an army.
Trench	A long ditch soldiers used for protection in War.
reunite	To meet, join, or come together again after a separation.
Journey	A trip from one place to another.

The Book

The Butterfly Lion



A moving tale of a young boy growing up in Africa, and his lifelong friendship with a white lion.

“All my life I’ll think of you, I promise I will. I won’t ever forget you.”

Bertie rescues an orphaned white lion cub from the African veld. They are inseparable until Bertie is sent to boarding school far away in England and the lion is sold to a circus. Bertie swears that one day they will see one another again, but it is the butterfly lion which ensures that their friendship will never be forgotten.

The Author

Michael Morpurgo

Michael Morpurgo is a celebrated English children’s author who has written over 120 books, many of which feature animals and explore themes like courage, trust, and friendship. Born in 1943 in Saint Albans, England, he studied English and French and worked as a teacher before becoming a full-time writer. Morpurgo co-founded the charity Farms for City Children, giving urban children a chance to experience farm life. His best-known books include War Horse and The Butterfly Lion, and he has also retold classic stories like Beowulf and Pinocchio. He has won numerous awards and was made an OBE in 2006.



CHRONOLOGY

When is this story set

Bertie's story

~1905–1910 – **South Africa:** Bertie's childhood on the farm, meets the white lion.

~1910–1914 – **London, England:** Boarding school

1914–1918 – **France (WWI):** Bertie fights in the war, faces danger, grows up.

After 1918 -England (Post-war): Bertie returns and reunites with the lion.

COMPARE Similarities and Differences

South Africa

A vast, open landscape with endless golden grass, bright blue skies, and blazing sun. The land feels wild and free, with distant hills and roaming animals.

London, England

A grey, crowded landscape filled with buildings, narrow streets, and cold, cloudy skies. It feels dull and enclosed, with little nature.

France (War setting)

A damaged, muddy landscape scarred by trenches and destruction. The ground is rough and broken, with smoke-filled skies and a sense of danger everywhere.



3 Facts about White Lions



1. White lions are rare and not albino; their colour comes from a genetic mutation.

2. They are native to South Africa, especially the Timbavati region.

3. White lions are excellent hunters and live in prides like regular lions.

SOURCES How We Know About life in the early 1900s

- Diaries and letters
- School records
- Books and stories from the time
- Photographs and films
- Maps
- Explorers' journals and reports
- Newspapers from the time
- Artefacts (uniforms, medals, equipment)

Why These Sources Matter

They help us understand how people **lived, felt, and experienced life**. They show us **real evidence** from the past. They help us compare the story with **real history**.



Virginia McKenna

Virginia McKenna (born 1931) is a famous British actress and passionate animal rights activist. She is best known for starring in the 1966 true-story film *Born Free* about a lioness named Elsa.

After filming, she dedicated her life to protecting wildlife and co-founded the Born Free Foundation to keep wild animals out of cages.

