

KS4 English, Paranoia in Fiction: the set texts out to get you! 'War of the Worlds' (all examination boards except OCR)

Curriculum relevance

This lesson addresses the following descriptor from the GCSE English Literature specification (for first teaching from September 2015):

Critical Reading: *"Using understanding of writers' social, historical and cultural contexts to inform evaluation"* National Curriculum 2013.

Main teaching points

This novel is considered the prototype for Science Fiction. H.G. Wells was to become known as a socialist and a utopian. He was, however, very pessimistic about human nature and the future.

Activities

Watch the video clips selected from the resource for this lesson at coldwarworlds.lgfl.net and encourage students to think about the following:

- "No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own." Using this quote and in the light of the footage viewed, how is spying and intelligence represented in the 'War of the Worlds'?
- View the augmented-reality artefacts "T-100 spy camera" and "Lockheed U2 reconnaissance photos". Does this bring the situation to life for students – how would they feel to be living in this time?
- You may wish to ask students to construct similar tasks around the other augmented reality artefacts within the resource – see coldwarAR.lgfl.net for the full range.

Context writing task

- The novel explores the threats to human beings. Using the LGfL video footage, find evidence for H.G Wells fears of the cold war.
- "For a time I believed that mankind had been swept out of existence, and that I stood there alone, the last man alive." Think about the structure of the novel. How has Wells shown the fears around communism?