The timeline of the play

White Poppies has a very interesting chronology (time sequence). If you look carefully at the timeline to your left you will see how it ranges between September 1913, and the present day.

The play focuses on the lives of a small number of young people from an ordinary mining village before, during and after the outbreak of the First World War. However, it is because of the investigations of a modern day teenager researching her family history, that the wartime story is brought back to life, remembered and fully acknowledged.

**Task one**

Colour code the timeline of the play using five different colours. You will need to complete the ‘key’ to make this clear.

This will help you to see how the play moves back and forth through time using ‘flash-backs’ (analepsis) and ‘flash-forwards’ (prolepsis).

The First World War started in __________ (month and year). It ended in __________ (month and year).

The Second World War started in __________ (month and year). It ended in __________ (month and year).

**Task two**

Answer the following questions below using full sentences.

1. During which time period does the majority of the action take place?
2. Why do you think the playwright chooses to link past events to the present day?
3. Why do you think we briefly see the lives of Will, Tom, Jenny, Mattie and Hannah just before the outbreak of war?
4. What is important about the events that happen in May 1941?
5. The closing scenes of the play are set in the present day? What effect does this have?

**Key**

- During the First World War
- Shortly after the First World War
- During the present day
- Before the outbreak of the First World War
- During the Second World War
**The timeline of the play**

**Linking the past and the present**

Throughout the play we learn how the lives of Tom Hedley and Jenny Lucas in 1914, and Jenny Clark in the present day, are linked. But even though the lifestyles and times of these characters are very different we can also see similarities between them.

**Task three**

Look at these quotations, taken from the first six scenes of the play. Complete the table, explaining what each quote suggests about the time and lifestyles of the characters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Similarity, difference or both?</th>
<th>Explain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘The party’s for Master Will. He’s off to college soon. But Master and Mistress said we could have our friends along to join in, ‘cos of the wedding.’</td>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>Like students in the present day Will is looking forward to going to college, studying and his future. It is not common for people in the present day to use terms like ‘Master’ and ‘Mistress’....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Eleven! Just think yourself lucky you weren’t your great granny – you’d have had to be up at six every day, rain or shine, weekend or no weekend.’</td>
<td>Difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘He got a place at the big university down in Cambridge you know, but he decided to join the army instead.’</td>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’d have loved to go on to grammar school but I had to leave when I was fourteen to help our auntie. She’s got a shop as well.’</td>
<td>Difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The only thing I do know is that Roger wanted your name to be ‘Jenny Hedley Clark’ - just like his was ‘Roger Hedley Clark’ - after an old family friend.’</td>
<td>Difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Jenny, here’s me pal, Tom Hedley.’</td>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The timeline of the play

#### White Poppies by Sue Saunders

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1914) ‘<strong>Tom:</strong> Well, I’ve got no dad. He was a miner, and he was killed in a big pit explosion when I was seven.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Present Day) ‘<strong>Mrs Clark:</strong> Just remember how little you were when your dad died ...’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘<strong>Jenny Clark:</strong> arrives home from school, takes off her tie, flings it on the ground, starts to eat a biscuit. She takes off her jacket, gets out her phone and dials.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘<strong>Will:</strong> Hope you like the books. There’s some maps and geometry, and some history, and a few novels. Oh, and a bit of poetry if you like that sort of thing.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘<strong>Jenny C:</strong> ... it’s for History. It’s a sort of project about the First World War ... No, not the Blitz, idiot, that was the second one. The First World War, when Titanic sank.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Task four

Concentrate on the first five scenes of the play. In no more than 300 words, answer the following question:

**Compare the lifestyles of Jenny Lucas (1914) and Tom Hedley with that of Jenny Clark (the present day).**

**You might like to think about:**

✓ what the characters do, think and talk about
✓ where they live, who they live with and who they are close to
✓ what we learn about them
✓ the language that they use
✓ why you think the playwright links the lives of the characters in 1914 to Jenny C in the present day.

You should use quotations to support your ideas.