
Vera Brittain's *Chronicle of Youth*

Vera Brittain is most famous for her memoir, *Testament of Youth*, which describes her experiences leading up to, during and after the First World War. *Chronicle of Youth* is the day-to-day diary from that time: much of which was used in the memoir.

Read through the following extracts from the diary:

- Opening – p.9 (1913): to the end of the entry for Monday February 24th.
- p.72- p.83 (1914): from Saturday 1st August to the end of the first paragraph of Friday August 14th.
- p.242-p.259 (1915): from Friday July 30th to the end of the paragraph that ends, '... it was all my fault.'
- p.322-p.328 (1915): from the paragraph that begins, 'After supper Turner & I ...' to the end of the section.

All page references: Phoenix Press edition, London, 2000

Make comprehensive notes on the following:

1. The form of Brittain's writing.
 2. The changing language and tone of the entries.
 3. Brittain's opinions about herself and the world around her.
 4. How you account for her view of the First World War.
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Having made these notes answer the following essay question:

Explore Vera Brittain's writing about her life and the First World War and the way in which the War makes an impact on her.

Consider:

- Language, form and structure;
- The writer's thoughts and feelings about war and contemporary society;
- The influence of the time of composition;
- The gender of the writer.