 On the Road – resource 19

The Secret Life of Walter Mitty

Highlight the following techniques in the story in different colours:

* simile
* metaphor
* onomatopoeia
* alliteration
* imagery

Questions:

1. “Walter Mitty” was published in 1939, the year after World War II began. Can you see the influence of this major event in the story at all? Quote the line in the story that helps to indicate this.
2. do you think the title of the story is appropriate? Why or why not?
3. what are Walter Mitty’s secret lives? Draw a star next to each of the paragraphs in the story that detail his secret lives.
4. describe the journey that you believe Walter Mitty takes during this short story. Why do you think he is taking this journey?
5. how would you describe Walter Mitty? In what way does he represent the typical everyday individual?
6. do you consider Walter Mitty to be a hero? Why or why not?
7. do you believe that this story is ultimately funny or tragic, and why? Does it have to be one or the other?
8. what do you think the central message of this short story is?
9. why do you think this story is such a famous and well-loved short story?