Summarise the main features of Huxley's life that had an influence upon 'Brave New World' (part 1)

'Brave New World' Context

• Born (in 1894) into a family renowned for its contributions to science and literature
• 1908: started Eton and mother died of cancer (link: John experiences dreadful feelings of guilt about his mother's death that no-one can understand)
• 1914: tried to enlist but rejected because of eyesight; his brother Trevenen committed suicide by hanging (echoed in 'Brave New World' with John's death)

Why did Huxley become a pacifist, and what was the significance of this?

'Brave New World' Context

• He became disillusioned, first by the nature of WWI and then by the terms of the peace settlement
• His advocacy of non-violence became unacceptable to many of his readers once Germany began to invade other nations and the prospect of WWII grew nearer; it also made his move to California controversial - he seemed to be running away from enemies of freedom

Explain the significance of Huxley's move to California, and describe his life in America

'Brave New World' Context

• It was controversial; he moved to the very place whose mass culture and vulgarity he had so often mocked in his essays and novels
• He lived in Hollywood and tried to make money writing film scripts
• He pursued interest in mysticism and Hindu teaching, seeking to reconcile insights of Eastern spiritual thought with Western science, eventually advocating use of hallucinogenic drugs as a help in attaining enlightenment