HARDENHUISH SCHOOL

Year 8 | War Poetry
The Anthology



Name: .....

Teacher: .....

What is **war poetry** & why am I studying it?

What is war poetry?

We will be studying poetry written during the First World War, during which time millions of people died, or were terribly injured, and countless people lost loved ones. The poets played their part in this war by writing about their experiences whether they were in combat or not. Some poets used their poems to promote war and fighting for their country, while some poets explored the devastating emotional and physical consequences of conflict, and the terrible loss of life it resulted in.

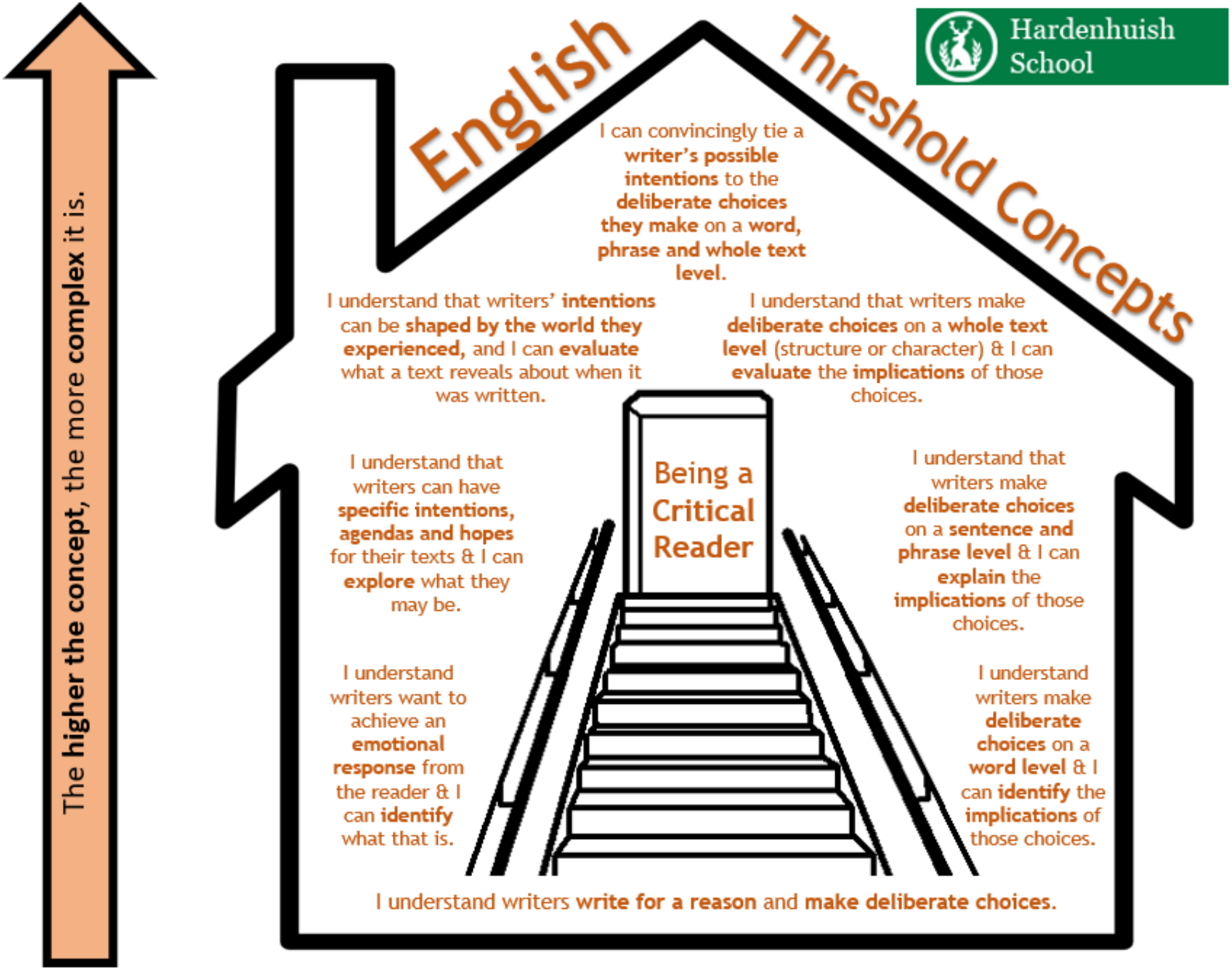
Why am I studying war poetry?

By studying War poetry, we are given a **historical and social** insight into what it was like for those fighting in the war, or those living during wartime. This gives us a better understanding of the past, and how it shapes the present. As well as this, it gives us an **emotional** insight, as poetry helps us express the things that are painful or difficult to understand.

Because WWI was a total war, no one was left untouched by it, and many people took to writing about what they were feeling and witnessing. By studying war poetry, we have access to intense feelings such as suffering, grieving, love, fear, duty, which are universal emotions that carry across generations. By studying war poetry, we build on our **empathy**, not just for those who experienced WWI, but for all those experiencing wars, danger, and violence today.

On a practical level, this unit will help you to **develop skills** that will be vital in Year 9, as well as in 10 and 11. For GCSE, you will study and be examined on an anthology of poems much like this and sharpening your skills of **analysis, interpretation and context** will be crucial.

What **concepts** do I need to grasp as part of this unit?

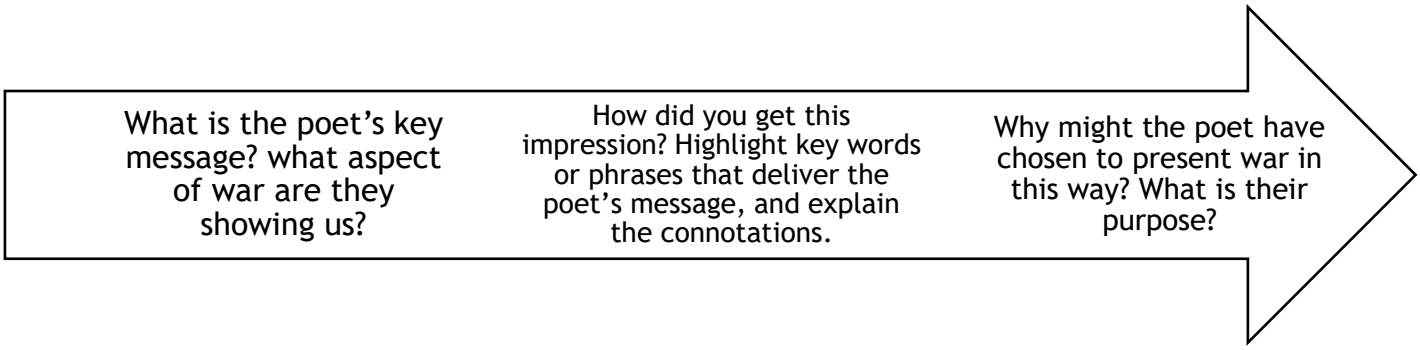


What **skills** do I need to showcase in this unit?

	Grade	My work can be described as...	What *Can I explain what the writer's ideas are and where they explore them?*	How *Can I explain the deliberate choices the writer has made in their writing and their intended effect?*	Why *Can I explain the writer's intentions and how they may have been shaped by the world they experienced or wanted to create?*
Into = you demonstrate at least 1 skill within a certain level. Some = you demonstrate more than one skill within a level. Most = you demonstrate most of the skills within a level. All = you demonstrate all of the skills within a level.	9	Perceptive & critical	- Your argument is **perceptive and connected**, structuring your essay in an effective way with an introduction, topic sentences and conclusion to create a **golden thread** which is **precisely shaped to the question**. - Your ideas are **perceptive and demonstrate a critical examination** of the text. - You spot **patterns** in the text and use **clustering of references** to extend or contradict an idea. - Where relevant, you make **perceptive connections** between texts, seamlessly comparing the writers' aims, intentions and choices.	- You **identify a range of deliberate choices** the writer has made and **critically examine the implications**, considering how their choices may be connected. - Your **depth of analysis is convincing**, unpicking the words, sentences and symbols a writer has used as well as their whole text structure. - You often offer **alternative interpretations** and **spot patterns** when explaining the effects of the writer's choices.	- You show **perceptive understanding** of the **bigger concepts and less obvious ideas** your writer is commenting on & tie those to specific moments & deliberate choices the writer has made in the text. - You show **perceptive understanding** of the **world the writer experienced** and **convincingly tie this to their intentions, critiquing** what the writer is trying to **reveal, criticise or change** about that world through the **choices they have made.**
	7-8	Thoughtful & developed	- Your argument is **thoughtful and detailed**, demonstrates through your introduction, topic sentences and conclusion essay which are all **shaped to the question**. - Your ideas about the text are **subtle and demonstrate thoughtfulness**. - You select **thoughtful** moments in the text, **linked moments together** to create a **developed and considered** argument. - Where relevant, you make **thoughtful connections** between texts, comparing the writers' aims, intentions and/or choices.	- You **identify a range of deliberate choices** the writer has made and **evaluate the implications**, considering how their choices may be connected. - You **thoughtfully analyse** the words, sentences and symbols a writer has used. - You sometimes offer **alternative interpretations** when explaining the effects of the writer's choices.	- You show **thoughtful understanding** of the **bigger concepts and ideas** your writer is commenting on & tie those to specific moments in the text. - You show **thoughtful understanding** of the **world the writer experienced** and tie this to their **intentions, evaluating** what the writer is trying to **reveal, criticise or change** about that world.
	5-6	Clear & consistent	- Your argument **answers the question clearly**, through things like your introduction and topic sentences. - Your ideas about the text are **clear and undeniable**. - You select **specific and relevant** moments in the text that **clearly support your argument**. - Where relevant, you make **clear connections** between texts, comparing the writers' intentions or choices.	- You **identify a range of deliberate choices** the writer has made and **explain the implications clearly**. - You **clearly analyse** the words and phrases a writer has used. - You use words like **'because'** and/or **'as'** to clearly explain the effects of the writer's choices.	- You show **clear understanding** of the **bigger concepts and ideas** your writer is commenting on. - You show **clear understanding** of the **world the writer experienced** and tie this to **specific moments in the text**. - You **clearly explain** the writer's possible intentions.
	3-4	Showing some understanding	- Your argument is **sometimes focused on retelling the story** but, at times, **linked to the question** you've been given too. - Your ideas about the text are **sometimes obvious or hard to understand** but starting to become clear. - You select **some specific moments in the text** that help to **support your argument**. - Where relevant, you make **straightforward connections** between texts, comparing what the writer says or does.	- You identify **deliberate choices** the writer has made and start to **identify the implications**. - You **sometimes analyse** the words and phrases a writer has used. - Your **explanation doesn't always match** the reference you give or the argument that you've made.	- You show **some understanding** of the **bigger concepts and ideas** your writer is commenting on. - You show **some understanding** of the **world the writer experienced**. - You **identify** some of the writer's possible intentions.
	1-2	Simple & limited	- Your argument is **focused on retelling the story**. - Your ideas about the text are **basic or untrue**. - You mention **some specific moments** in your text, but they **aren't always relevant to the question given**. - Where relevant, you struggle to **compare** texts and may look at texts in isolation instead of making connections between them.	- You implicitly identify a **deliberate choice** the writer has made but don't explain the implications if it. - You don't analyse the writer's choices but instead **use quotations like a list** to prove your ideas	- You show **basic understanding** of the **bigger concepts and ideas** your writer is commenting on. - You make **simple comments** on the world the **writer experienced**. - You show limited understanding that writers write with an intention in mind.

How do I analyse war poetry?

Essentially, you need to try and answer these questions:



But you'll need to use some subject-specific vocabulary in your analysis too. What is your understanding of these terms?

Poetic Technique	Definition
Alliteration	
Metaphor	
Simile	
Personification	
Onomatopoeia	
Oxymoron	
Symbol	
Sibilance	
Enjambment	
Caesura	

Which poems will I study?

Below is a list of the poems you will study. There is space for you to reflect on each poem after you have studied them. You might want to ask yourself which one is your favourite and why? Which one did you like least and why?

Poem	Page #	Reflection
Keep the Home Fires Burning	8	
Who's for the Game?	9	
The Soldier	10	
In Flanders Fields	11	
Dulce et Decorum Est	13	
The Mother	15	
Suicide in the Trenches	16	
What Reward?	18	
To the Soldiers of the Great War	19	
To Germany	20	
Aftermath	21	

How can I **elevate** my vocabulary when talking about the war poetry?

Key Word	Definition
Patriotism (or to be patriotic)	Devotion to one's country, and intense support of it.
Jingoism (or to be jingoistic)	Extreme and often aggressive patriotism
Idealism (or to be idealistic)	To believe something to be extremely perfect, even unrealistic
Anglicise	To make something English
Propaganda	Information or media that is often biased or misleading, used to support a political cause or point of view
Hegemony	The leadership or dominance of one state or social group over others
Conscription	Compulsory enlistment into state service – usually the armed forces
Futility	Pointlessness or uselessness
Gallantry (or to be gallant)	Courageous behaviour, especially in battle. It can also mean very polite behaviour from men.
Detachment	The state of being distanced or removed from something emotionally
Defiance	Resistance to something
Psychological	Affecting the mind and related to the mental and emotional state of someone
Desensitised	To feel less emotion towards something. In a war context, to not feel shocked or upset at cruel or violent scenes.
Adversity	Extreme difficulty and challenge to overcome
Reverence	A feeling of intense and meaningful respect for something
Nostalgia	A somewhat sad or regretful longing for the past
Visceral	Deep physical detail which is often graphic and can be violent
Commemorate	To remember and show respect for someone or something

Keep the Home Fires Burning by Ivor Novello and Lena Guilbert

They were summoned from the hillside, they were called in from the glen,
And the country found them ready at the stirring call for men.
Let no tears add to their hardships, as the soldiers pass along,
And although your heart is breaking, make it sing this cheery song:

Keep the Home Fires burning,
While your hearts are yearning,
Though your lads are far away they dream of home.
There's a silver lining, through the dark clouds shining,
Turn the dark cloud inside out, 'till the boys come home.

Overseas there came a pleading,
"Help a nation in distress."
And we gave our glorious laddies, honour bade us do no less,
For no gallant son of freedom to a tyrant's yoke should bend,
And a noble heart must answer to the sacred call of "Friend".

Keep the Home Fires Burning,
While your hearts are yearning,
Though your lads are far away they dream of home.
There's a silver lining, through the dark clouds shining,
Turn the dark cloud inside out 'till the boys come home

This British **patriotic** song became very popular during the war. It was composed by Ivor Novello, and Lena Guilbert wrote the lyrics. During the war, she opened her home up to soldiers to recover. She was killed in an air-raid in 1918.



Who's For the Game by Jessie Pope

Who's for the game, the biggest that's played,
The red crashing game of a fight?
Who'll grip and tackle the job unafraid?
And who thinks he'd rather sit tight?
Who'll toe the line for the signal to 'Go!'?
Who'll give his country a hand?
Who wants a turn to himself in the show?
And who wants a seat in the stand?
Who knows it won't be a picnic – not much-
Yet eagerly shoulders a gun?
Who would much rather come back with a crutch
Than lie low and be out of the fun?
Come along, lads –
But you'll come on all right –
For there's only one course to pursue,
Your country is up to her neck in a fight,
And she's looking and calling for you.

Jessie Pope (1868-1941) was an English poet who used her patriotic poems to **encourage young men to join the army.** She focusses on ideas of valour and bravery in her poems.



The Soldier by Rupert Brooke

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.
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Rupert Brooke (1887-1915) was an English poet and soldier who wrote hopeful, **patriotic** poetry about the war, which contrasts to the more despairing poetry that was published later in the conflict.



In Flanders Fields by John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

John McCrae (1872-1918) was a Canadian poet, artist, physician and soldier, and who worked as a surgeon during several battles in the war. It is believed that he wrote this poem to remember his close friend, who had been killed.



Dulce Et Decorum Est by Wilfred Owen

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime.—
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*
Pro patria mori.

Wilfred Owen (1893-1918) was a poet and soldier, and one of the leading poets of WWI. His poetry focuses on the hopelessness and horror of war, as well as the massive waste of young lives.



The Mother by May Herschel-Clarke

If you should die, think only this of me
In that still quietness where is space for thought,
Where parting, loss and bloodshed shall not be,
And men may rest themselves and dream of nought:
That in some place a mystic mile away
One whom you loved has drained the bitter cup
Till there is nought to drink; has faced the day
Once more, and now, has raised the standard up.

And think, my son, with eyes grown clear and dry
She lives as though for ever in your sight,
Loving the things you loved, with heart aglow
For country, honour, truth, traditions high,
—Proud that you paid their price. (And if some night
Her heart should break—well, lad, you will not know.

May Herschel-Clarke (1894-1955) was an English poet and writer. She was a feminist and wrote about women and work in local publications. During the war, she wrote anti-war poetry that criticised the suffering it caused.



Suicide in the Trenches by Siegfried Sassoon

I knew a simple soldier boy
Who grinned at life in empty joy,
Slept soundly through the lonesome dark,
And whistled early with the lark.

In winter trenches, cowed and glum,
With crumps and lice and lack of rum,
He put a bullet through his brain.
No one spoke of him again.

You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you'll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go.

Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1867) was an English poet and soldier. He used his poems to expose the horror and brutality of trench warfare, as well as to criticise generals and politicians.



What Reward? by Winifred M. Letts

You gave your life, boy,
And *you* gave a limb;
But he who gave his precious wits,
Say, what reward for him?

One has his glory,
One has found his rest.
But what of this poor babbler here
With chin sunk on his breast?

Flotsam of battle,
With brain bemused and dim,
O God, for such a sacrifice
Say, what reward for him?

Winifred M. Letts (1882-1972) was an English poet, novelist, and playwright. During WWI, she worked as a nurse in Manchester, where she used her poetry to highlight the suffering of soldiers both during war and upon their return.



To the Soldiers of the Great War by Gerrit Engelke

Rise up! Out of trenches, muddy holes, bunkers, quarries!
Up out of mud and fire, chalk dust, stench of bodies!
Off with your steel helmets! Throw your rifles away!
Enough of this murderous enmity*!

Do you love a woman? So do I.
And have you a mother? A mother bore me.
What about your child? I too love children.
And the houses reek of cursing, praying, weeping.

I was a soldier. I did my job.
Thirsty, sick, yawning, on the march or on guard,
Surrounded by death and missing home –
And you? – were your feelings so unlike mine?

Tear open your tunic! Let's see your bare skin;
I know that old scar from 1915,
And there on your forehead the stitched-up gash.

But so you won't think my pain is less,
I open my shirt. Here's my discoloured arm.
Aren't we proud of our wounds, your wounds and mine?

*enmity = hostility or opposition

Gerrit Engelke (1890-1918) was a German poet and soldier who wrote about the suffering of ordinary Germans, and used his poetry to urge those on both sides to forget about national pride and see the humanity in each other.



To Germany by Charles Sorley

You are blind like us. Your hurt no man designed,
And no man claimed the conquest of your land.
But gropers both through fields of thought confined
We stumble and we do not understand.
You only saw your future bigly planned,
And we, the tapering paths of our own mind,
And in each other's dearest ways we stand,
And hiss and hate. And the blind fight the blind.

When it is peace, then we may view again
With new-won eyes each other's truer form
And wonder. Grown more loving-kind and warm
We'll grasp firm hands and laugh at the old pain,
When it is peace. But until peace, the storm
The darkness and the thunder and the rain.

Charles Sorley (1895-1915) was a Scottish poet who fought for Britain in the war and died at just 20. He had studied in Germany and much of his poetry reflects his anguish at the hatred, violence, and loss of war.



Aftermath by Siegfried Sassoon

Have you forgotten yet?...
For the world's events have rumbled on since those gagged days,
Like traffic checked while at the crossing of city-ways:
And the haunted gap in your mind has filled with thoughts that flow
Like clouds in the lit heaven of life; and you're a man reprieved to go,
Taking your peaceful share of Time, with joy to spare.
But the past is just the same--and War's a bloody game...
Have you forgotten yet?...
Look down, and swear by the slain of the War that you'll never forget.

Do you remember the dark months you held the sector at Mametz--
The nights you watched and wired and dug and piled sandbags on parapets?
Do you remember the rats; and the stench
Of corpses rotting in front of the front-line trench--
And dawn coming, dirty-white, and chill with a hopeless rain?
Do you ever stop and ask, 'Is it all going to happen again?'

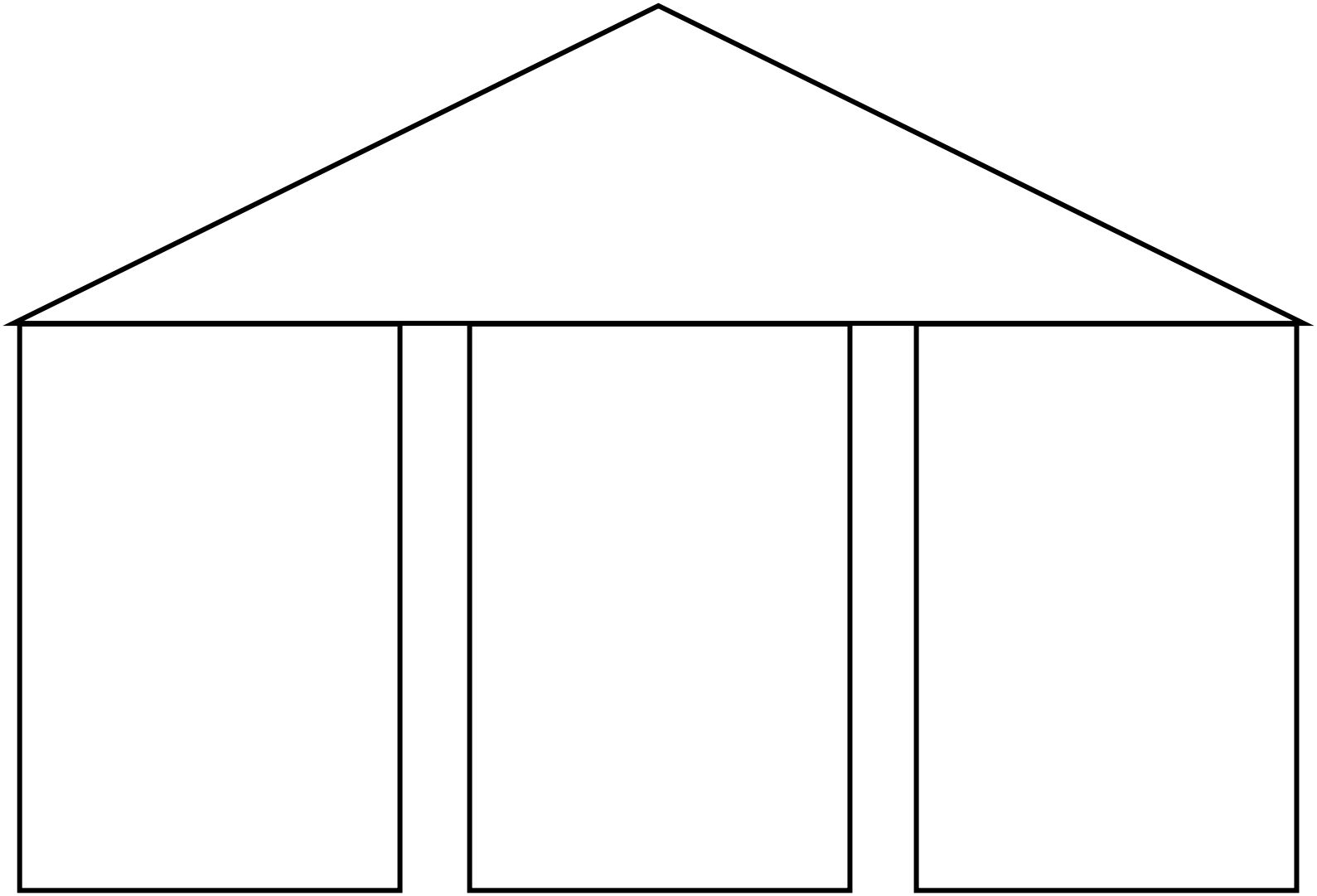
Do you remember that hour of din before the attack--
And the anger, the blind compassion that seized and shook you then
As you peered at the doomed and haggard faces of your men?
Do you remember the stretcher-cases lurching back
With dying eyes and lolling heads--those ashen-grey
Masks of the lads who once were keen and kind and gay?

Have you forgotten yet?...
Look up, and swear by the green of the spring that you'll never forget.

Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1867) was an English poet and soldier. He used his poems to expose the horror and brutality of trench warfare, as well as to criticise generals and politicians.



War poetry: Mini-Milestone



Write your mini-milestone question in this box.

What does a successful essay look like with war poetry?

The Question:

Space to annotate each response below:

Grade 5 Exemplar

Grade 8 Exemplar

A Guide to Writing a War Poetry Essay

How do I write an introduction?

Step 1: Write a statement that clearly answers the questions and introduces your main arguments.

Step 2: Briefly mention the moments or methods that support your argument.

Step 3: Link back to the writer's wider message showing awareness of their intentions when creating their texts.

How do I craft a topic sentence?

Writer	Construct in the text	Fancy Verb	Extended Fancy Verb (optional)	Ideas and Concepts
Both poets use… *Sassoon uses…* *While Poet A uses… Poet B instead uses…*	repetition metaphor imperatives verbs nouns	*to illustrate* *to represent* *to emphasise* *to symbolise* *to exaggerate* *to heighten* *to teach us* *to insinuate* *to humanise* *to criticise* *to question* *to ridicule* *to dispute* *to condemn* *to present* *to undermine*	*the importance of…* *the significance of…* *the value of…* *the idea that…* *the plight of…* *the need to…*	This column is the biggest really – what do you want to say about the poem?

Where do I go from there?

1. Form your topic sentence using the generator above!
2. Give your reference and evidence. Try to cluster together evidence if you want to push for higher marks. *We see this when…*
3. Explain the effects of your evidence and how exactly it supports your argument. Make sure you use 'because' in your explanation and try to zoom in on key words and ideas to develop your analysis. *This suggests_____ because…. The word ____ has connotations of _____ so the writer may have wanted the reader/audience to…*
4. Offer another interpretation. What else could be suggested from your evidence? How might someone else interpret it? *However, this could also suggest…*
5. Link back to the writer's intentions and wider message. *The writer may have wanted to teach us/highlight/criticise…*