

September

key words:

Futile

Incessant

Merciless

Melancholy

What are we learning? To understand a new poem

Why are we learning this? To prepare for literature paper 2

Title: none – annotating anthology

5 a day recall questions in your books please

1. What is a bayonet?
2. Complete this line from Bayonet Charge
'Bullets smacking the _____ out of the air'
3. Bayonet Charge is told in the first person perspective. True or false?
4. Remains is written as a *m_n_l_g_e*
5. Which war is Bayonet Charge about?

5 a day recall questions in your books please

1. What is a bayonet? **A blade attached to the end of a rifle**
2. Complete this line from Bayonet Charge
'Bullets smacking the **belly** out of the air'
3. Bayonet Charge is told in the first person perspective. True or **false**?
4. Remains is written as a ***monologue***
5. Which war is Bayonet Charge about? **WW1**

THE TITLE



3

INDEPENDENT
WORK



What are the connotations of the title? Is there any way you could link this to themes of **POWER** and **CONFLICT**?

Exposure

Wilfred Owen – summarise key points onto your anthology

Wilfred Edward Salter Owen was born 18 March 1893 in Oswestry, Shropshire. After school he became a teaching assistant and in 1913 went to France for two years to work as a language tutor. He began writing poetry as a teenager.



In 1915 he returned to England to enlist in the army and was commissioned into the Manchester Regiment. After spending the remainder of the year training in England, he left for the western front early in January 1917. After experiencing heavy fighting, he was diagnosed with shellshock. He was evacuated to England and arrived at Craiglockhart War Hospital near Edinburgh in June. There he met the poet Siegfried Sassoon, who already had a reputation as a poet and shared Owen's views.

Reading Sassoon's poems and discussing his work with Sassoon revolutionised Owen's style and his conception of poetry. He returned to France in August 1918 and in October was awarded the Military Cross for bravery. On 4 November 1918 he was killed while attempting to lead his men across the Sambre canal at Ors. The news of his death reached his parents on 11 November, Armistice Day.

What is the poem about?



1

QUALITY
AUDIENCE



Wilfred Owen's poem focuses on the misery felt by World War One soldiers waiting overnight in the trenches. Although nothing is happening and there is no fighting, there is still danger because they are exposed to the extreme cold and their wait through the night is terrifying. The eight stanzas are gripping because the speaker describes the trauma of living and struggling in such poor conditions. There is a sense of despair and of lost hope.





Stanza One:

Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds that knife us . . .
Wearied we keep awake because the night is silent . . .
Low drooping flares confuse our memory of the salient . . .
Worried by silence, sentries whisper, curious, nervous,
But nothing happens.

What is happening in this stanza?

Questions:

1. What is Wilfred Owen saying about the effect the weather has on the soldiers in the first line? How does he present this effect? Highlight words and phrases he uses to help him get his point across.
2. Why are the soldiers nervous about the silence?
3. Why is ellipsis used after the first three lines?
4. Why does 'nothing happen'?



Stanza Two:

Watching, we hear the mad gusts tugging on the wire,
Like twitching agonies of men among its brambles.
Northward, incessantly, the flickering gunnery rumbles,
Far off, like a dull rumour of some other war.

What are we doing here?

What is happening in this stanza?

Questions:

1. What is the wind like if Owen is presenting it as 'mad gusts'?
2. How is Owen trying to present soldiers through the line 'like twitching agonies of men'?
3. What is Owen saying about the 'rumbles' of the 'gunnery'?
4. Which line suggests Owen and the soldiers with him are not participating in any battles? What could they be experiencing instead?
5. What is the effect of the rhetorical question?



Stanza Three:

The poignant misery of dawn begins to grow . . .
We only know war lasts, rain soaks, and clouds sag stormy.
Dawn massing in the east her melancholy army
Attacks once more in ranks on shivering ranks of grey,
But nothing happens.

Questions:

1. What tone is created in the first line? How is it created by Owen?
2. Why does Owen use a triplet in the second line of this stanza? What is he saying about the weather?
3. What is the 'melancholy army' that dawn is 'massing in the east'?
4. Who are the 'shivering ranks of grey'? Why does Owen make this word colourless?
5. Why does Wilfred Owen repeat 'But nothing happens'? Who/what is he criticising?



Stanza Four:

Sudden successive flights of bullets streak the silence.
Less deadly than the air that shudders black with snow,
With sidelong flowing flakes that flock, pause, and renew,
We watch them wandering up and down the wind's nonchalance,
But nothing happens.

What is happening in this stanza?

Questions:

1. Why does Owen use sibilance in the first line?
2. What is Owen saying is the most deadly thing soldiers have to face?
3. What is Owen saying in the phrase 'the air... shudders black with snow'?
4. What are the flakes doing in the third line? What does this tell us about what the soldiers are experiencing?
5. There is nothing to do for the soldiers to do but 'watch'. What exactly are they watching?

What is the writer's message?



4

PAIR
WORK



Take it in turns to finish these sentences by telling your partner what you think:

Wilfred Owen seems to be telling us...

The conditions the soldiers faced sound...

Owen reminds the reader that nothing happened because...

The tone of the poem is...

5 a day recall questions in your books
please

1. Wilfred Owen served in WW1. True or false?
2. Which poem features a yellow hare?
3. What is sibilance?
4. How many stanzas does Exposure have?
5. Why might it be so long?

5 a day recall questions in your books please

1. Wilfred Owen served in WW1. **True** or false?
2. Which poem features a yellow hare? **Bayonet Charge**
3. What is sibilance? **Repeated 's' sounds**
4. How many stanzas does Exposure have? **8**
5. Why might it be so long? **It could represent time dragging for the soldiers**

Annotate the stanza

Stanza Five:

Pale flakes with fingering stealth come feeling for our faces—

We cringe in holes, back on forgotten dreams, and stare, snow-dazed,

Deep into grassier ditches. So we drowse, sun-dozed,

Littered with blossoms trickling where the blackbird fusses.

—Is it that we are dying?

What is happening in this stanza?

Questions:

1. What is Owen saying about the effects of the flakes in the first line?
2. Why does Owen use the word 'cringe'? What are the soldiers doing in the second line?
3. Highlight the natural imagery. How is nature presented here?
4. What do readers learn about these soldiers in the final line of the stanza?
5. Why is there a pause before the final line?

Annotate the stanza

Stanza Six:

Slowly our ghosts drag home: glimpsing the sunk fires, glozed
With crusted dark-red jewels; crickets jingle there;
For hours the innocent mice rejoice: the house is theirs;
Shutters and doors, all closed: on us the doors are closed,—
 We turn back to our dying.

What is happening in this stanza?

Questions:

1. Identify the metaphor in the first line and explain why Owen has decided to include it.
2. What are the crusted 'dark-red jewels'?
3. What is Owen saying happens during the night?
4. What can you say about the imagery of closing doors? What is Owen saying?
5. What do we learn in the final line of the stanza?

Annotate the stanza

Stanza Seven:

Since we believe not otherwise can kind fires burn;
Now ever suns smile true on child, or field, or fruit.
For God's invincible spring our love is made afraid;
Therefore, not loath, we lie out here; therefore were born,
For love of God seems dying.

What is happening in this stanza?

Questions:

1. Look at the first two lines of the stanza. What do the soldiers no longer believe in? Why?
2. What has happened to love and hope?
3. Look at the fourth line of the stanza. What is Owen saying these men were born for?
4. Look at the final line of the stanza. What does it mean?

Annotate the stanza

Stanza Eight:

Tonight, this frost will fasten on this mud and us,
Shrivelling many hands, and puckering foreheads crisp.
The burying-party, picks and shovels in shaking grasp,
Pause over half-known faces. All their eyes are ice,
But nothing happens.

What is happening in this stanza?

Questions:

1. What is Owen saying about the frost?
2. How does the cold physically change the soldiers? How can it be described?
3. What does he mean 'their eyes are ice,'?
4. Why end the poem on 'but nothing happens'?

Wilfred Owen's purpose

Why might Wilfred Owen have written the poem? Complete each analytical verb with a different idea:

Wilfred Owen may have written the poem:

-to criticise

-to teach

-to warn

-to reveal the importance of

-to celebrate

Do you think Wilfred Owen is right when he says nature is more deadly than the enemy?

Extension:

Complete a PEEL style analytical paragraph in response to the question below:

How does Wilfred Owen present the soldiers' experience of war?

Owen presents war as...

By using phrases/words such as... he suggests that...

The reader is made to feel...