**“Dulce Et Decorum Est” by Wilfred Owen**

**Getting Ready to Read**

1. What do we already known about the Great War?

It has been said that poetry lies somewhere between prose and music. That being true, it’s really important to read poetry aloud. First listen to the poem being read aloud. Just as you do when you hear a new piece of music, try to listen for the overall sense of the poem. Now, listen to it being read aloud again, but this time read it in your head at the same time. Finally, take turns with a partner reading the poem aloud. Each of you should read the whole poem—don’t alternate by stanzas. Now by yourself, read the poem silently. Jot down any notes on the text that will help you to slow down, read carefully and make meaning. You might…

* Note a particular word or phrase that seems important
* Paraphrase a bit (put something into your own words)
* Raise a question
* Make a connection to some other text or bit of information. ‘
* Examples of imagery

**Stop and Discuss the First Two Stanzas**

1. Who is the speaker of the poem?
2. Look at the phrase “dim through the misty panes and dim green light.” What do you think the poet is referring to here?
3. Remember that imagery is language that helps us use our senses to picture what is happening. Go through the poem and see how many examples of imagery you can find. Highlight them.
4. In the boxes below, use the imagery you found to draw as carefully and with as much detail as you can the events that are occurring in the first two stanzas of the poem. If you really don’t want to draw, just state what’s happening.

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| First Stanza | Second Stanza | Final Stanza |

1. What is the poet’s tone towards the events he is describing in the first two stanzas? How does he want the reader to feel about those events? Remember that imagery can help to create a certain tone. You may want to consider imagery and diction (word choice) when finding evidence from the poem.

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| **The poet’s tone**  **How the poet wants us to feel** | **Evidence from the poem** |
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**Stop and Discuss the Final Stanza**

1. Reread the final stanza aloud. Where does the first sentence of the stanza end?
2. What scene is the poet describing in the first eight lines of this stanza?
3. Whom is the poet describing when he uses the words “innocent” and “children”?
4. Why do you think he chose these words?
5. The final words of the poem, Dulce ed decorum est pro patria mori, are Latin for “It is a sweet and proper thing to die for one’s country.” Now that you know this, try paraphrasing the last stanza of the poem.

* If you want to, you can go back and draw the final stanza of the poem is it is complete.

1. Notice that the poet speaks to the read here as “you” for the first time. How many times does he use the word “you”?
2. Why do you think the poet has switched from description (the first two stanzas) to direct address in the final stanza?
3. Remember that irony means using words to express the opposite of what you really mean or when events are the opposite of what’s expected. Why does it make sense to call the use of the the phrase “dulce et decorum est pro patria mori” ironic?

15. What might be the poet’s purpose and theme?

**Time to Write!**

**How does the imagery in the poem help convey the poet’s theme (message)?**

* Topic sentence: state your thoughtful answer to the question
* Context: Briefly, no more than a sentence or two, explain what the poem is about. Also make sure you have stated what the theme is otherwise no one will understand how imagery conveys it!
* Evidence: give specific quotes from the text (i.e. examples of imagery)
* Explain: How does each example of imagery help convey the theme?
* Conlude: So what?

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| **Wilfred Owen**  **Dulce Et Decorum Est** |  |
| 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 disappointed **shells** that dropped 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 **floundering** 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. | **Hags:** ugly, old unpleasant women.  **Flares:** small rockets which were sent up to burn with a bright light as a signal to signal  **Shod:** wearing shoes  **lame**: used to describe someone or something that can’t walk well.  **Fatigue:** extremely exhaustion  **Shells**: weapons that are a bit like small bombs  **Ecstasy:** extreme emotion  **Floundering:** being confused and not knowing what to do or moving with great difficulty in an uncontrolled way  **Lime:** a white chalky substance that can burn your skin  **Pace**: walk, march  **Writhing:** wiggling and twisting in pain  **Sin:** evil  **Corrupted:** ruined, destroyed  **Obscene:** disgusting and offensive in a dirty way  **Cud:** grass that cows chew  **Zest:** a lot of enthusiasm and interest  **Ardent:** eager, excited for, passionate |

**Wilfred Owen**

**Dulce Et Decorum Est**

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