

# Britannica Lesson Plan:

## *Dulce et Decorum Est*

### WWI Poetry



<b>Subject:</b> English (History)	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Length of Session:</b> 2 days at 90 minutes each
-----------------------------------	--------------	--

**Prior Learning:** This lesson would fit well into a cross-curricular look at World War One but could stand alone as a practice in analysing poetry.

**Learning Objective:** Students will investigate a poem from World War I (Wilfred Owen's *Dulce et Decorum Est*) and examine the literary techniques used in a review. Students will also demonstrate their understanding of the techniques used by producing their own creative piece.

**Success Criteria:** Students should be able to support their review with examples from the poem as well as comment on the importance of Owen's own experience in shaping the poem. Students should also be able to appropriately use the discussed poetic devices in their own work.

**Suitable for the 2014 NC's KS3 focus on contemporary poetry, poetic conventions and understanding writing in context**

**Resources:** Students may need access to PCs with Internet connection, though a projector with the poem may be sufficient. Students may also want to research WWI for background information, but this will not be necessary for the success of the lesson. Copies of *Dulce et Decorum Est* and sticky notes would also be useful.

**Vocabulary:**  
Iambic Pentameter  
Rhyme (Rhyme scheme)  
Simile  
Imagery  
Five-Nines

**Organisation:** This lesson would work well for full class discussion or in small groups when analysing the poem. The reviews and poems would work best as individual or pair activities.

**Support Staff Activities:**  
If groups are formed during discussion, support staff could support these discussions. Students may also benefit from one-on-one time with support staff, especially while writing the poem.

**Britannica School and Image Quest resources/links:**  
**WWI Canon Practice image:** [http://quest.eb.com/images/153\\_2381825](http://quest.eb.com/images/153_2381825)  
**Trench image:** [http://quest.eb.com/images/115\\_2742807](http://quest.eb.com/images/115_2742807)  
**Trench image:** [http://quest.eb.com/images/300\\_1832822](http://quest.eb.com/images/300_1832822)  
**Gas casualty image:** [http://quest.eb.com/images/300\\_2288276](http://quest.eb.com/images/300_2288276)  
**WWI article:** <http://school.eb.co.uk/levels/intermediate/article/277797>  
**Chemical and biological warfare article:** <http://school.eb.co.uk/levels/intermediate/article/273622>  
**Wilfred Owen article:** <http://school.eb.co.uk/levels/intermediate/article/57795>  
**Poetry of WWI study guide:** <http://school.eb.co.uk/levels/intermediate/additionalcontent/learningmaterials?path=/studyguides/297/mainframes.html>

Time:	Teacher's Activity:	Students' Activities:
<b>Day 1</b>		
<b>10 minutes</b>	Have Image Quest pictures on the screen. Ask students to describe the way the soldiers feel in each picture as well as what's happening to them. Depending on interaction of students and their prior knowledge to WWI, you may need to assist by asking direct questions.	Have students respond to the pictures, which could be done as a full class discussion. Students could also write different ideas on sticky notes and stick them on a wall to be reviewed by the entire class.
<b>15 minutes</b>	Read through the poem, slowly, asking students to raise their hand when they hear a word that is unfamiliar. Highlight these words and write them on the board.	Split up the words that need to be found and have students fill in this information or look it up in the dictionary and then hand them in.
<b>30 minutes</b>	Collate all of the definitions and project them so students have them for easy reference, then support group discussions.	Ask students to analyse the poem for content and theme, thinking about the context as well. Students could also fill out a worksheet (attached) to help guide their discussions.
<b>20 minutes</b>	Lead a review of the discussions (or worksheet if used) to ensure student understanding.	Review the discussions as a full class (and worksheet if applicable), sharing major ideas about theme and context.
<b>15 minutes</b>	Explain to students that they will be writing a review of Wilfred Owen's poem (which will be finished during the second day's class). Ask them to begin brainstorming/ writing their reviews. Support students as necessary, prompting them to write about theme and context based on the worksheet.	Students should work individually or in pairs to begin working on their review of the poem, paying particular attention to the theme and context during this activity.
<b>Day 2</b>		
<b>10 minutes</b>	Read through the poem again, or ask a student to read it aloud.	Have students listen along, noting any particularly vivid passages. It may be helpful for students to have a copy of the poem.
<b>30 minutes</b>	Analyse the poem again with students, this time focusing on poetic devices – iambic pentameter, rhyming, stanzas, imagery and similes, etc. Guidance will depend on the students' level of knowledge of these poetic devices.	Discuss and take notes on the poetic devices that Owen uses and how they affect the reader and the theme.
<b>30 minutes</b>	Assist students with their review as necessary.	Students should incorporate their new knowledge into the review and work towards completion (finishing for homework is a great option).

Time:	Teacher's Activity:	Students' Activities:
20 minutes	Explain to students that they will be writing a poem about a controversial idea, using some of the same devices Owen uses. Depending on the level of your students, this could be a full class exercise.	Students (either individually or in a full class) should write a poem about a controversial idea, using some of the previously discussed devices that Owen uses.

**Plenary:** Ask students to come up with a question about the two lessons and write on a slip of paper, encouraging them to choose questions that they may not know the answer to themselves. Put these into a “hat” and ask the full class to answer the questions.

**Differentiation:** To support students, make sure groups are of mixed abilities. Any individual activities can also be done in pairs or groups to help support these students. Worksheets with poetic devices or room for other notes could also help these students.

**Extension Activity:** Ask students to ensure they use at least one type of each of the poetic techniques discussed (or another number of your choice).

**Assessment Opportunities:** Assessment of both the review and the poem would be good to check student understanding. Requirements of the review might include clarity of arguments, support of arguments (specific examples from the poem) and discussion of poetic devices. The poem evaluation might include effective use of poetic devices as well as ability to persuade readers’ to a particular view about a controversial topic.

# Wilfred Owen's *Dulce Et Decorum Est* discussion questions

1. Where are the soldiers going?

2. How do the narrator and the other soldiers feel?

3. How do the soldiers look?

4. How do the soldiers try to protect themselves when the gas attack occurs? What happens to the ones who cannot?

5. Do you think Owen's poem is patriotic? Please give reasons.

6. Why does Owen use graphic imagery?

7. Does the narrator feel that war is noble?

8. What experiences might Owen have had to inspire this poem? How did he feel about those experiences?

9. Why might Owen have written this poem?

10. What does the Latin phrase *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* mean in English (can use a web search for this)?