



Advanced | Exemplar Essay

## Dulce et Decorum Est

### The Honor, Horror, and Sacrifice of War



#### Claim and Focus

The essay makes a clear, arguable claim about the purpose and message of the poems ("Each poet tries to influence the reader's perspective on war by developing a persuasive point of view through their language and imagery") that thoroughly addresses the demands of the prompt.



#### Analysis and Evidence

Several pieces of relevant and valid evidence from each poem are provided to support the claim. Explanations of each author's persuasive techniques are thoughtful and clearly tied to the purpose of each poem. The analysis is balanced and thorough.



#### Organization

Effective transitions are regularly used to show how ideas relate and progress throughout the essay ('to begin with,' 'as a result,' and 'on the other hand'). Purposeful and well-developed paragraphs for the introduction, body, and conclusion are arranged within a structure that enhances the analysis.



#### Language and Style

The essay establishes a formal style and objective tone that is maintained throughout. Varied sentence structure and precise language address the complexity of the topic ("imagery," "stanza," "tone," "elevates"). Few errors are present, and they do not interfere with meaning.



#### Using Exemplars in Your Lessons

Exemplar essays are tools to take abstract descriptions and make them more concrete for students. One way to use them is to print the clean copies of the essays and allow students to use the rubric to make notes or even find examples of important elements of an essay - thesis statements, introductions, evidence, conclusions, transitions, etc. Teachers can also use exemplars to illustrate what each score point within a trait 'looks like' in an authentic student essay. For additional ideas, please see "25 Ways to Use Exemplar Essays" by visiting the Curriculum Resources page in Help.

## Dulce et Decorum Est



### Notes

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### The Honor, Horror, and Sacrifice of War

War. It's a word that represents death to some. Others may think of it as pride and being brave. No matter what, war brings many emotions and feelings to people who have experienced it in their lifetime. The poems "Dulce et Decorum Est" by Wilfred Owen and "Who's for the Game?" by Jessie Pope present very different opinions about being a soldier and the effects that war can have on a person. Each poet tries to persuade the reader's perspective on war by developing a distinct point of view through their language and imagery.

To begin with, war is not everything the government makes it out to be. Unfortunately, war can have a very negative effect on one's mind. "Dulce et Decorum Est" expresses this perspective, that war has a number of negative side effects. In the first stanza, a decently large amount of these side-effects are found. "Bent double, like old beggars under sacks, Knock-kneed, coughing like hags...Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots, But limped on, blood-shod." Clearly, the author is stating that being in the war can have painful outcomes. Although the soldiers are weary, weak, and exhausted they still continue on. This is established by the negative phrases used in the poem ("knock-kneed," "limped," and "blood-shod") and the powerful imagery describing the sights, sounds, and feel of the horrific setting in which the soldiers were made to be in. The poem helps readers understand the struggle that the soldiers went through and the terrifying memories that, if you were lucky to survive, you can't ever forget. Ultimately, the grim life of war is presented to the readers with the tone of these phrases and the word choice of the poet.

Additionally, the last stanza of the poem extends the horrors that the soldiers



experienced. It warns the reader if he could "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" that you wouldn't think war was so honorable and patriotic. Owen cleverly makes this point in the last lines in the poem by telling the reader to remember "The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est Pro patria mori." The author demonstrates his point of view and the purpose of the poem by calling this quote "the old lie." In spite of war being glorified by the media or government at that time (as shown in the opposing poem), this author shows the harsh truth about war. Many citizens see war as a rite of passage, but in this case Owen demonstrates the awful truth and reality of war, an "old lie" that is fed to soldiers without revealing the true, horrific realities of the battlefield.

On the other hand, Jessie Pope's poem "Who's for the Game?" has a different point of view regarding war. War is depicted as a honorable rather than a nightmare and the tone of the poem is noble and inspirational. War is a duty that every citizen that lives in America should consider. For example, the text says "And who wants a set in the stand? Who knows it won't be a picnic- not much- Yet eagerly shoulders a gun?" This shows that they're admitting that the war most definitely won't be easy, but it makes the reader feel like a coward if they don't join the service. Furthermore, joining this fight should be an honor and a duty for one's country. One way the authors shows point of view is by asking many questions regarding whether one has the confidence to fight for your country. "Who'll grip and tackle the job unafraid? And who thinks he'd rather sit tight?" Pope also uses words with a fun, light-hearted feel to describe joining the war. He calls war a "game" and a "show" and literally calls it fun by saying, "Who would much rather come back with a crutch Than lie low and be out of the fun?" He even structures the poem to have an upbeat rhythm, like a fun inspirational song. In addition, the author claims that those who sit tight are not doing their civic duty and fighting for their country. Pope almost makes those who would



"rather sit tight" feel bad about not wanting to fight in the war! All in all, this poem is persuasive in nature as its main goal was to encourage men to join the war effort.

To conclude, both poems convey very different tones and perspectives on the topic of war. Wilfred Owen's poem portrays war as a harsh and grim atmosphere, one where, if the soldiers come home, they will forever be haunted by the images and experiences of the battle. Pope's poem elevates war to simply a heroic act, insisting that the young men are obligated to become soldiers and stand up for their country that is in danger and needs help. Each poem tries to influence the reader to agree with its point of view of fighting for your country. The two texts are completely different in every way, from the way they're worded, to the structure. Reading the poems together allows the reader to determine his own feelings about the honor and sacrifice of war.