



★

**GREAT WAR, FLAWED PEACE,
AND THE LASTING LEGACY
OF WORLD WAR I**

★



THE UNITED STATES
WORLD WAR ONE
CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

PRITZKER
MILITARY
FOUNDATION

NHD
NATIONAL
HISTORY DAY

POETRY OF WORLD WAR I



GUIDING QUESTION: How did soldiers tell their stories of World War I?

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WHY?

This lesson is designed to give students an understanding of the experiences of two different soldiers during World War I through poetry.

OVERVIEW

Students will analyze and interpret a specific poem from World War I and read about the life of another soldier to create a poem.

OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to

- › Analyze and interpret a poem related to World War I; and
- › Create a poem about a World War I soldier.

STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.5 Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

DOCUMENTS USED

PRIMARY SOURCES

Horace Pippin, *The End of the War, Starting Home*, 1930-1933
Philadelphia Museum of Art (1941-2-1)
<https://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/46280.html>

Wilfred Owen, "Dulce et Decorum Est," 1921
The Poetry Foundation
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46560/dulce-et-decorum-est>

SECONDARY SOURCES

Barry Hudock, "Trench Warfare Inspired World War I Artist,"
January 2018
VFW Magazine
<https://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/communicate/press-media/wwi-centennial-news/4006-trench-warfare-inspired-world-war-i-artist.html>

The First World War Poetry Digital Archive
University of Oxford
<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/>

"How to Write a Bio Poem"
Read Write Think
http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson398/biopoem.pdf

"The Poetry of World War I"
The Poetry Foundation
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/70139/the-poetry-of-world-war-i>

Silent Heroes
National History Day
<https://nhdsilenthheroes.org/>

Veterans History Project
Library of Congress
<https://www.loc.gov/vets/>

MATERIALS

- > Six Step Poetry Analysis Sheet
- > Poetry Presentation Rubric
- > Computers with internet capability
- > Headphones
- > Projector

ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- > Make one copy of the poem, “Dulce et Decorum Est” for each student.
- > Make one copy of the poetry framework for each student.
- > Set up classroom technology. If desired, create a [Flipgrid](#) for this task.
- > Test all online resources before class.
- > If grouping, arrange students into pairs or small groups.

PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY ONE: WORLD WAR I POETRY (30-45 MINUTES)

- > Project or display the expression, *Dulce et Decorum Est pro patria mori* (“It is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country”) from the Roman poet Horace. Ask students to share their opinions on this quote.
- > Distribute copies of the poem “Dulce et Decorum Est” by Wilfred Owen and the Six Step Poetry Analysis Sheet to each student.
- > Read the poem aloud.
- > Allow students to work with a neighbor to complete the Six Step Poetry Analysis Sheet.
 - » **Teacher Tip:** Have students highlight, circle words, ideas, imagery, etc. in Wilson’s poem that they find important for their in-class discussions.
- > Share key elements and interpretations with the class.
- > Display the Horace quote again (“It is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country”) and ask students to share what they believe and if their opinions have been in any way affected by reading and analyzing the poem.

ASSESSMENT

- > Project Horace Pippin’s painting, *The End of the War: Starting Home* and distribute the Horace Pippin Biography to students.
- > Allow students to read the biographical information about Horace Pippin.
- > Direct students to using Pippin’s art and the secondary source to create a bio poem about Horace Pippin.
 - » **Teacher Tip:** Students can create open-ended poems about Horace Pippin. If desired, teachers can direct students to the How to Write a Bio Poem format instructions from Read Write Think. Students can complete this assessment independently or in small groups, at teacher discretion.
- > Allow students to record their poems and share them on a class website or via Flipgrid or present their poems to the class live.
- > Give students time to watch the recordings of other students and provide constructive feedback.
- > The Poetry Presentation Rubric can be used to score this assessment.

METHODS FOR EXTENSION

- > Students may explore print or online poetry collections such as the The First World War Poetry Digital Archive at Oxford University or the “The Poetry of World War I” at The Poetry foundation.
- > Students may explore the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress or National History Day’s Silent Heroes website for more information about the experience of service members to create poetry in honor of that person.

HOW TO WRITE A BIOPOEM

READWRITETHINK

Biopoem Sample

(Line 1) First name	Rosa
(Line 2) Three or four adjectives that describe the person	Determined, brave, strong, loving
(Line 3) Important relationship (daughter of . . . , mother of . . . , etc)	Wife of Raymond Parks, mother of all children
(Line 4) Two or three things, people, or ideas that the person loved	Who loved equality, freedom, and the benefits of a good education
(Line 5) Three feelings the person experienced	Who hated discrimination, loved to stand up for her beliefs, and loved to help others
(Line 6) Three fears the person experienced	Who feared that racism would continue, feared losing the opportunity to make a difference, and feared that young people might lose opportunities to develop strength and courage
(Line 7) Accomplishments (who composed . . . , who discovered . . . , etc.)	Who changed history as she accomplished great strides for equality and encouraged excellence for all
(Line 8) Two or three things the person wanted to see happen or wanted to experience	Who wanted to see love triumph and see an end to all bias and discrimination in a world in which respect is freely given to all
(Line 9) His or her residence	Born in Alabama and living in Detroit
(Line 10) Last name	Parks

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WILFRED OWEN, "DULCE ET DECORUM EST," 1921
THE POETRY FOUNDATION

"Dulce et Decorum Est" (1921)

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.

Note: The Latin phrase, *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* is from the Roman poet Horace. It means, "it is sweet and fitting to die for one's country."

SIX STEP POETRY ANALYSIS SHEET

CREATED BY MARION TOUZEL; USED WITH PERMISSION.

Directions: Carefully read the poem. Complete each question thoroughly. Use direct quotes with thorough explanations to verify each answer.

1. Speaker

Who is the speaker? _____

To whom is s/he speaking? _____

What kind of person is s/he? _____

2. What is the **occasion**? (Why is the speaker speaking?)

3. What is the central purpose of the poem? Choose one.

- > To reveal human character
- > To express a mood or emotion
- > To tell a story
- > To convey some idea
- > To impart a vivid scene impression

How does the poet achieve this purpose? For instance, if the poem's central purpose is to impart a vivid scene impression, then the poet has probably made use of similes, metaphors, personification, or imagery, etc. Explain using examples from the poem.

SIX STEP POETRY ANALYSIS SHEET

CREATED BY MARION TOUZEL; USED WITH PERMISSION.

5. **Tone** – The attitude a poet takes toward (choose one) the audience (reader), a subject, or a character. Describe the tone of the poem. How does the poet achieve this? Give specific lines to prove your theory.

6. **Mood** – (Atmosphere) the overall emotion or feeling created by a work of literature that affects the reader. Often easily identified in one word – horror, happy, sad, carefree, etc. Describe the mood of the poem. What technique does the poet use to achieve the mood? Give specific evidence.

HORACE PIPPIN BIOGRAPHY

On February 22, 1888, Horace Pippin was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, to Daniel Pippin and Christine W. Pippin. His parents worked as domestic servants and his grandparents had been slaves. When Pippin was three, the family moved to Goshen, New York, where he attended a segregated one-room schoolhouse. In school, Pippin often got in trouble for sketching when he was supposed to be working. At age ten, he entered a magazine art contest and won a prize of art supplies. It was around this same time that Pippin's father died. Pippin left school when he was 14 in order to help care for his ailing mother. He also worked as a hotel porter at the St. Elmo Hotel in Goshen, New York. In 1911, Pippin's mother died.



Horace Pippin, *The End of the War, Starting Home*

Pippin moved to Paterson, New Jersey, where he worked packing and crating furniture and pictures and then as an iron molder. In 1917, Pippin enlisted in the all-black 15th New York National Guard Regiment. It was renamed the 369th Regiment when they arrived in France and became better known by its nickname, the Harlem Hellfighters. They earned this steely nickname for their dogged determination in fighting during World War I. At one point, they were under fire for 130 days without relief. Pippin kept a diary during this time and in it he made notes and sketches about his daily life. Images of doughboys, barbed wire, bomb bursts, gas-masked soldiers, and aerial dogfights filled his journals.

Pippin served in the trenches and was shot in the shoulder by a sniper. He lost so much blood that he could not move. A French soldier was coming to his aid, when he was also shot; he died and fell on top of Pippin who could not move to get out from under him. Finally help arrived and Pippin was transported on a stretcher, but it took some time before he made it to a hospital. His arm was almost fully paralyzed and rendered useless and he had a steel plate in his shoulder. Pippin was awarded the Croix de Guerre for his service and he was discharged and returned to the U.S. in 1919.

At that time, Pippin was one of many African American soldiers who hoped that by serving in the military, they would be seen as equals in society. Unfortunately, the racism prevalent in the United States before the war had not altered. Pippin returned to West Chester, Pennsylvania and collected a disability pension. On November 21, 1920, he married a widow, Ora Jennie Featherstone Wade, who also had a young son. Ora was a domestic servant and Pippin helped her by delivering laundry and doing odd jobs. He was a scoutmaster and Pippin and his wife both sang in the church choir. He was active in the American Legion and formed a band.

Pippin's war injury made it difficult for him to continue sketching, but he realized that he could use a hot poker on wood to draw. While he also tried to use charcoal to make sketches, he was not successful. After some trial and error, he found that he could hold a paintbrush in his partially paralyzed right arm and move the arm with his left hand. In this way, he was able to start to use oil paints. It took him three years to create a painting about World War I called *The End of the War: Starting Home*.

HORACE PIPPIN BIOGRAPHY

Though Pippin had no formal training as an artist, his work started getting attention and he enjoyed some fame and won many awards. He was celebrated for being one of the first African Americans to achieve this level of success for art. In his artwork, Pippin showed some of the social injustices and racism he experienced in his own life. When his stepson enlisted in the Armed Forces during World War II, Pippin was concerned that not much had changed for African Americans since he had served.

Pippin's wife struggled with her mental health and moved into an institution where she lived for the rest of her life. Pippin suffered a stroke and died on July 6, 1946. He was buried in Chestnut Grove Annex Cemetery in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Horace Pippin is remembered as a brave and patriotic soldier and an accomplished artist

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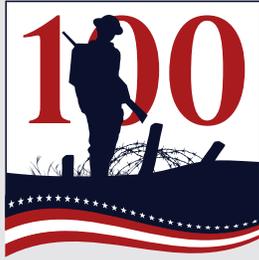
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POETRY PRESENTATION RUBRIC

	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Emerging
Content	Relevant, telling, quality details give the reader important information that goes beyond the obvious or predictable.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but one key issue or portion of the poem is unsupported.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but several key issues or portions of the poem are unsupported.	Supporting details and information are typically unclear or not related to the topic.
Voice	The writer seems to be writing from knowledge or experience. The author has taken the ideas and made them "his or her own."	The writer seems to be drawing on knowledge or experience, but there is some lack of ownership of the topic.	The writer relates some of his or her own knowledge or experience, but it adds nothing to the topic.	The writer has not tried to transform the information in a personal way. The ideas and the way they are expressed seem to belong to someone else.
Conventions	Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes one or two errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes three or four errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes more than four errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.
Presentation	The spoken pace (rhythm and voice punctuation) fits the poem and sounds natural to the ear.	The speaker occasionally speaks too fast or too slowly. Almost all of the pacing (rhythm and voice punctuation) sounds natural, but one or two parts are stiff, awkward, or difficult to understand.	The speaker tries to use pacing (rhythm and voice punctuation), but it is often noticeable in several parts that the pacing is stiff, awkward, or difficult to understand.	The spoken pace (rhythm and voice punctuation) is stiff, awkward, or difficult to understand.



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