

Studied - Poetry | Sample Answer

Poems often explore themes that challenge us to stop and think.

Title of poem: Dulce et Decorum Est

Name of poet: Wilfred Owen

(a) Select a poem you have studied and explain why a theme in this poem challenged you to stop and think. Use the poem to support your response.

'Dulce et Decorum Est' really made me stop and think about the effect of war on soldiers and their families. This poem is based around the theme of war and conflict. It describes the trauma that soldiers faced daily in World War I. After reading this poem I had to stop and think about how many people had to face these horrific events for years and the PTSD that they would carry home if they survived. In this poem a man dies in front of the poet, and unfortunately this was not a rare occurrence.

This war did not only affect the soldiers, but their family at home too. Even if they survived, they most likely would not instantly go back to the life they had led before, as they dealt with all this trauma. This made me think about the consequences of war on a personal tone, rather than the usual economic, statistical one.

(b) Do you think the poet uses language effectively in your chosen poem? Explain your answer, supporting your response with suitable quotations from the poem.

I believe the poet used language effectively in this poem. Wilfred Owen creates realistic images by his use of language throughout the poem. An example of this is when he describes the death of a soldier from a gas attack and says, 'as under a green sea I saw him drowning'. This is a simile as the soldiers are surrounded by green gas. He uses the words 'sea' and 'drowning' to create a vivid image of a soldier drowning in his own blood.

Another example of the poet's use of effective language is when he says 'Knock-kneed, coughing like hags. This visual imagery effectively gives the reader information on the soldier's bad health. This image is the opposite of what one thinks when visualising soldiers, and therefore straight away contrasts with the title 'Dulce et Decorum Est' - meaning 'it is sweet and righteous to fight for your country'. This informs the reader on what the poem will be about.