


# Wilfred Owen: Investigating *Anthem for Doomed Youth*

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### Investigating *Anthem for Doomed Youth*

- ❖ Owen poses a question at the start of each stanza which he answers himself in the form of the narrative from the Western Front and that from the home front. These accounts are very different. How effective is Owen's use of questioning in involving the reader in the poem?
  - How does Owen use the detail of the front line to answer question one?
  - How does Owen use the detail of the home front to answer the second question?
- ❖ *Anthem for Doomed Youth* is an early poem but is among the most famous of Owen's works. Compare the synopsis of *Anthem for Doomed Youth* with the equally famous *Dulce et Decorum Est*.
  - How does the story each poem tells affect the impact it has on you as the reader?

### Investigating language and tone in *Anthem for Doomed Youth*

- ❖ Using coloured pens (perhaps red for positive and black for negative) either write out or underline the words with negative connotations in black.
  - With the red pen, list the words which might in another context have more positive resonances, for example, 'flowers'
  - Write a couple of sentences as a note to yourself on the impact that so much 'dark' language has on the tone of the poem and on you as the reader
- ❖ If you enjoy this sort of research you might find it of some significance to do a word count. How many words are there with positive connotations and how many with negative?

### Investigating structure and versification in *Anthem for Doomed Youth*

- ❖ Print off a copy of the sonnet from [texts.crossref-it.info](http://texts.crossref-it.info). Using a highlighter pen identify the rhymes in the poem.
  - Now look at the way in which Owen links ideas and phrases using different patterns of rhymes.
  - Try to describe what effect this has on how the poem makes you feel. Don't be afraid to say 'I think or I feel' as long as you can evidence this.

### Investigating imagery and symbolism in *Anthem for Doomed Youth*

- ❖ Make a list of the sound imagery which Owen employs in this poem
- ❖ Make a list of the visual imagery he creates.
  - Write a sentence or two on how effective each of the above techniques is in creating the mood of the poem.

### Investigating themes in *Anthem for Doomed Youth*

- The horror of war and the pity of war are two major themes in this poem. Compare the way in which Owen presents these important themes in *Anthem for Doomed Youth* with his poem *Futility*
- Look at the way in which Owen uses the two halves of the poem, both in *Anthem for Doomed Youth* and in *Futility*, to carry the themes.