

Wilfred Owen: Investigating *Exposure*

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Investigating *Exposure*

- ❖ The lack of action in *Exposure* makes it stand out from many of Owen's other poems. Remind yourself of *The Last Laugh* and *The Sentry*, both of which describe action.
 - Compare how Owen describes the war in *The Last Laugh* and *The Sentry* to the way he presents it in *Exposure*.
- ❖ The incident which inspired *Exposure* was also the background for *Futility*. Both are poems of despair. How does Owen suggest similar settings for each poem?
 - How does Owen communicate the despair of the situation differently in each poem?

Investigating language and tone in *Exposure*

- ❖ Owen describes the weather as the enemy in *Exposure*. Make a list of the words and phrases Owen uses about the weather in *Exposure* which are linked directly to war.
- ❖ How does Owen use the contrast between cold and warmth to create the pity of war in this poem?

Investigating structure and versification in *Exposure*

- ❖ The burden of *Exposure* is carried by the short half line at the end of each stanza. How does the pathos of each hanging line contribute to the pity of war expressed through the poem?
- ❖ How does Owen's use of pararhyme in *Exposure* contribute to the poem's power?

Investigating imagery and symbolism in *Exposure*

- ❖ Owen uses the imagery of England, with its home fires, sun-lit young, fruits and fields in *Exposure* as he does in *Futility*. Compare the similarities of Owen's use of imagery in both poems.
- ❖ How does the image of England emphasize the rawness of the men's experience in *Exposure*?

Investigating themes in *Exposure*

- ❖ In Owen's introduction to what would have been his collection of poems, he claims: 'My theme is war and the pity of war.' How far does *Exposure* provide us with an example of a poem which deals with these themes?
- ❖ What other themes can you trace in *Exposure*?
 - Are they just different facets of war?