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Investigating *Miners*

- ❖ Owen includes himself in the final verse of *Miners*. Within the year he too had been killed. Look for the points in the poem where Owen includes himself.
 - To what extent does Owen identify with both the dead miners and the dead soldiers?
 - How does Owen's subsequent death add to the pity of this poem?
- ❖ Owen saw parallels between the dead miners, men and boys, and the dead of the trenches. What are the most important points of comparison between the miners and the troops?
- ❖ Look at the reference in *Miners* to 'the boys that slept wry sleep'. How many of Owen's other poems can you identify which are about the very young men who died on the Western Front?

Investigating language and tone in *Miners*

- ❖ In *Miners* much of the poem's effectiveness rests on the language used to describe the pit disaster but which also serves to describe the war. Make a list of the words and phrases Owen uses which are common to both.
 - For each, write a sentence to show how Owen has used the language of the pit to illustrate the pain and suffering of the war.

Investigating structure and versification in *Miners*

- ❖ Owen's cousin Leslie Gunston told him that the pararhymes offended his musical ear. How does the unexpected half-rhyming Owen uses in this poem make the reader more aware of the 'pity of war'?

Investigating imagery and symbolism in *Miners*

- ❖ Owen had repeated dreams about being underground. He was familiar with the idea of hell being a place of torture and this can be seen in many poems. Compare *Miners* to *The Sentry* and *Strange Meeting*.
 - Look at the similarities between each poem regarding the way Owen creates the sense of horror.

Investigating themes in *Miners*

- ❖ Owen began *Miners* as a poem about a mining disaster, yet the resulting theme is of war. What ideas are common to both tragedies?
- ❖ Does Owen concentrate on the war dead at the expense of the dead miners, as some critics have suggested?
- ❖ Do you agree that this poem is out of place in a selection of anti-war poems, which is the view of some critics?