

# Wilfred Owen: Investigating *S.I.W.*

 refers to links on [www.crossref-it.info](http://www.crossref-it.info)

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### Investigating *S.I.W.*

- ❖ Explore the following link: <http://www.wilfredowen.org.uk/virtual-tour/cerisy-gailly>. This web site suggests that Owen would have had first-hand experience of men with *S.I.W.s*.
  - Make a note of the details which suggest that *S.I.W.* is based on Owen's experiences.
- ❖ In *S.I.W.* Owen uses the first name of the soldier, which is the only time he does so in any of his poems. Re-read *The Letter*, where Owen uses names although not that of the protagonist. What is added to the poems by Owen's use of the men's first names?
  - In which of these two poems do you think most of Owen's pity lies and why do you think this is?

### Investigating language and tone in *S.I.W.*

- ❖ Owen is frequently quoted as saying that his writing was about the pity of war. From your reading of *S.I.W.* how do you think Owen feels about this event?
- ❖ Compare *S.I.W.* with *Futility*, another poem about the death of a young soldier.
  - Which poem is most effective in showing the pity of war in your view and why?
- ❖ Compare Owen's feeling for the man in *S.I.W.* to his feelings about *The Dead Beat*.

### Investigating structure and versification in *S.I.W.*

- ❖ Owen creates a poem in four parts: Prologue, Action, Poem and Epilogue. What does The Epigraph add to the poem?
  - Why does Owen make The Prologue the longest section?
  - What is the central Action of the poem?
  - How does Owen voice his own opinions in The Poem section?
  - Why is there such a brief Epilogue do you suppose?

### Investigating imagery and symbolism in *S.I.W.*

- ❖ Owen has been described as being preoccupied with unpleasant detail and excessive emotion. Some of the images in *S.I.W.* are gruesome but do you feel that the emotion is ever excessive?
- ❖ Do you agree that Owen is preoccupied with the details of war and suffering in *S.I.W.*?
  - Explain your response.

### Investigating themes in *S.I.W.*

- ❖ Owen said that a war poet must tell the truth. *S.I.W.* is about both truth and lies. Remind yourself of the old lie in *Dulce et Decorum Est*. In what ways are these two poems similar?
- ❖ Remind yourself of *The Dead Beat*. What does it have in common with *S.I.W.*?
- ❖ Out of *S.I.W.*, *Dulce et Decorum Est* and *The Dead Beat*, which poem do you think is the most sympathetic and why?