

Wilfred Owen, Selected Poems:

(f) Sound effects

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🔗 refers to links on www.crossref-it.info

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To explore how Owen uses audio effects in his poetry to portray the horrors of war.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** In pairs, list all the sounds that might be heard at the Western front (eg. screams, gunfire, etc). Feedback on board to create a comprehensive list.
 - Depending on the ability level of the class...
 - Brainstorm sound devices used in poetry. Check understanding.
 - OR ask students to define the following:
 - Alliteration
 - Sibilance
 - Assonance
 - Onomatopoeia
 - Plosives
 - Rhyme
 - OR ask students to match the above key words with their definitions.
 - From memory, can students think of examples of how Owen uses these sound effect devices in his poems to recreate the experience of war?
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Re-read aloud *Anthem for Doomed Youth*.
 - Try to identify the sights and sounds represented, perhaps using two different highlighters.
 - This is a surprisingly difficult task as some of the images are created through sounds, and vice versa.
 - Use **Student worksheet f)i** to identify what techniques are used to create the sounds.
 - Consider the contrast between the ugly noise of the battle field and the quiet sibilance of England.
- 🔗 (*Anthem for Doomed Youth* > Language, tone, and structure)
- Next, in groups, students read aloud *The Last Laugh* and *Dulce et Decorum Est* and identify:
 - The sounds and techniques used
 - The effects created (perhaps highlighting and annotating)
 - Swap notes between groups.
- 🔗 (*The Last Laugh* > Language, tone, and structure)
- 🔗 (*Dulce et Decorum* > Language, tone, and structure)
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** In pairs or groups use the following prompt questions to discuss and compare the poems:
 - What patterns do you notice about the way Owen uses sound effects?
 - For what purposes does Owen use sound effects? For example:
 - Pity
 - Realism
 - Horror
 - Which of the techniques used is most effective/memorable?
 - Which of the three poems is...
 - The 'noisiest'?
 - The most realistic in creating the sound of the battlefield?
 - The most effective in its use of sound effects?
 - How does Owen's use of sound effects link to his anti-war messages?
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Imagine a noisy setting (the common room, a shopping centre, a concert) and write a short poem which includes some of the sound effect techniques identified in Owen's poems.
- ❖ **Critical task:** Prepare an answer to the essay question:
 - How does Owen use poetic techniques to represent the horror of the noisy battlefield?
- ❖ **Extension task:** Compare the 'fighting' poems with *Hospital Barge* which uses sound techniques for very different purposes.
 - 🔗 (*Hospital Barge* > Language, tone, and structure)