

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# WWI Poetry Unit

## *TPCASTT*

Make sure to label each annotation with the associated letter so your teacher can tell you've completed it.

**T** - Title - What do you think the poem is about before reading? (Annotation: Next to the title)

**P** - Paraphrase - Put the poem in your words. (Annotation: line-by-line)

**C** - Connotation - Examine the poem beyond the literal. Pull out literary devices, techniques, connections to literature/history. How do they help your understanding? (Annotation: circle/underline/highlight areas and make notes next to those places about what you notice AND ideas you have about them)

**A** - Attitude - What is the tone/attitude of the poem? (Annotation: Write in the margins or on the side. Can you add-on to the already annotated areas?).

**S** - Shift - Where does the tone/ideas/meaning shift (change)? Identify where and what the shift is. Shift from \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. (Annotation: at the place of change + Shift from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_)

**T** - Title Again - How has the meaning of the poem changed now that you've read and analyzed it? Can you be more precise in your original description? (Annotation: Next to the title. Can add-on to the original title annotation)

**T** - Theme - Analyze the poem for connection/development of themes. What is the main message of the poem? Bring in historical context and specific connections to the text. (Annotation: at the bottom of the poem, on the back of the page, wherever there is space!)

*Notes:*



## Pre-War

**1914**

*Archduke Ferdinand assassinated. Outbreak of war in July/August. Germany invades Belgium. First Battle of the Marne, First Battle of Ypres. United States remains neutral. Trench warfare begins. The Siege of Antwerp. The Christmas truce.*

### **Men Who March Away –**

BY THOMAS HARDY

What of the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away  
Ere the barn-cocks say  
Night is growing gray,  
Leaving all that here can win us;  
What of the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away?  
Is it a purblind prank, O think you,  
Friend with the musing eye,  
Who watch us stepping by  
With doubt and dolorous sigh?  
Can much pondering so hoodwink you!  
Is it a purblind prank, O think you,  
Friend with the musing eye?  
Nay. We well see what we are doing,  
Though some may not see—  
Dalliers as they be—  
England's need are we;  
Her distress would leave us rueing;  
Nay. We well see what we are doing,  
Though some may not see!  
In our heart of hearts believing

Victory crowns the just,  
And that braggarts must  
Surely bite the dust,  
Press we to the field ungrieving,  
In our heart of hearts believing  
Victory crowns the just.  
Hence the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away  
Ere the barn-cocks say  
Night is growing gray,  
Leaving all that here can win us;  
Hence the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away.

# Joining the Colours

BY KATHARINE TYNAN (1859 – 1931)

There they go marching all in step so gay!  
Smooth-cheeked and golden, food for shells and guns.  
Blithely they go as to a wedding day,  
The mothers' sons.

The drab street stares to see them row on row  
On the high tram-tops, singing like the lark.  
Too careless-gay for courage, singing they go  
Into the dark.

With tin whistles, mouth-organs, any noise,  
They pipe the way to glory and the grave;  
Foolish and young, the gay and golden boys  
Love cannot save.

High heart! High courage! The poor girls they kissed  
Run with them : they shall kiss no more, alas!  
Out of the mist they stepped-into the mist  
Singing they pass.

Source: *Westminster Gazette* (1914)

## Early War

**1915** - *Germans sink RMS Lusitania. The Dardenelles campaign. Battle of Gallipoli. Second Battle of Ypres. First use of poison gas.*

### **In Flanders Fields – (1915)**

BY JOHN MCCRAE (1872 - 1918)

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

### **Spring in War-Time – (1915)**

BY SARA TEASDALE (1184 – 1933)

I feel the spring far off, far off,  
The faint, far scent of bud and leaf—  
Oh, how can spring take heart to come  
To a world in grief,  
Deep grief?

The sun turns north, the days grow long,  
Later the evening star grows bright—  
How can the daylight linger on  
For men to fight,  
Still fight?

The grass is waking in the ground,  
Soon it will rise and blow in waves—  
How can it have the heart to sway  
Over the graves,  
New graves?

Under the boughs where lovers walked  
The apple-blossoms will shed their breath—  
But what of all the lovers now  
Parted by Death, Grey Death?

## Pack up your Troubles

### *-First Verse-*

Private Perks is a funny little codger  
With a smile a funny smile.  
Five feet none, he's and artful little dodger  
With a smile a funny smile.  
Flush or broke he'll have his little joke,  
He can't be suppress'd.  
All the other fellows have to grin  
When he gets this off his chest, Hi!

### *-Chorus (sung twice after each verse)-*

Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag,  
And smile, smile, smile,  
While you've a lucifer to light your fag,  
Smile, boys, that's the style.  
What's the use of worrying?  
It never was worth while, so  
Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag,  
And smile, smile, smile.

### *-Second Verse-*

Private Perks went a-marching into Flanders  
With his smile his funny smile.  
He was lov'd by the privates and commanders

For his smile his funny smile.  
When a throng of Bosches came along  
With a mighty swing,  
Perks yell'd out, "This little bunch is mine!  
Keep your heads down, boys and sing, Hi!

### *-Third Verse-*

Private Perks he came back from Bosche-  
shooting  
With his smile his funny smile.  
Round his home he then set about recruiting  
With his smile his funny smile.  
He told all his pals, the short, the tall,  
What a time he'd had;  
And as each enlisted like a man  
Private Perks said 'Now my lad,' Hi!

**codger** old man

**artful** tricky

**suppress** hold down and stop

**Fag** cigarette

**Flanders** Location in Belgium

**Bosches** WWI slang term for Germans

**throng** crowd

**yell'd** yelled

**pals**, friends,

**enlisted** (joined the military)

**lad**, young man,

## Middle War

**1916** - Battle of Verdun, Battle of the Somme.  
President Wilson re-elected with campaign slogan,  
"He kept us out of the war." Rasputin is murdered.

### ***The Troop Ship*** (1916)

BY ISAAC ROSENBERG (1890 – 1918)

Grotesque and queerly huddled  
Contortionists to twist  
The sleepy soul to a sleep,  
We lie all sorts of ways  
And cannot sleep.  
The wet wind is so cold,  
And the lurching men so careless,  
That, should you drop to a doze,  
Wind's fumble or men's feet  
Is on your face.

**1917** - Germans issue Zimmerman Telegram to Mexico, United States declares war on Germany, draft begins. U.S. troops land in France. Third Battle of Ypres. Bolshevik uprising in Russia, led by Lenin, headed by Trotsky.

### ***Anthem for Doomed Youth*** (1917)

BY WILFRED OWEN (1893 – 1918)

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?  
— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.  
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle  
Can patter out their hasty orisons.  
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;  
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—  
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;  
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.  
  
What candles may be held to speed them all?  
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes  
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.  
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;  
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,  
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

***The Death Bed* (1916)**

BY SIEGFRIED SASSOON (1886 – 1967)

He drowsed and was aware of silence heaped  
Round him, unshaken as the steadfast walls;  
Aqueous like floating rays of amber light,  
Soaring and quivering in the wings of sleep.  
Silence and safety; and his mortal shore  
Lipped by the inward, moonless waves of death.

Someone was holding water to his mouth.  
He swallowed, unresisting; moaned and dropped  
Through crimson gloom to darkness; and forgot  
The opiate throb and ache that was his wound.  
Water—calm, sliding green above the weir;  
Water—a sky-lit alley for his boat,  
Bird-voiced, and bordered with reflected flowers  
And shaken hues of summer: drifting down,  
He dipped contented oars, and sighed, and slept.

Night, with a gust of wind, was in the ward,  
Blowing the curtain to a gummering curve.  
Night. He was blind; he could not see the stars  
Glinting among the wraiths of wandering cloud;  
Queer blots of colour, purple, scarlet, green,  
Flickered and faded in his drowning eyes.

Rain—he could hear it rustling through the dark;  
Fragrance and passionless music woven as one;  
Warm rain on drooping roses; pattering showers  
That soak the woods; not the harsh rain that sweeps  
Behind the thunder, but a trickling peace,  
Gently and slowly washing life away.

He stirred, shifting his body; then the pain  
Leaped like a prowling beast, and gripped and tore  
His groping dreams with grinding claws and fangs.  
But someone was beside him; soon he lay  
Shuddering because that evil thing had passed.  
And death, who'd stepped toward him, paused and stared.

Light many lamps and gather round his bed.  
Lend him your eyes, warm blood, and will to live.  
Speak to him; rouse him; you may save him yet.  
He's young; he hated war; how should he die  
When cruel old campaigners win safe through?

But death replied: "I choose him." So he went,  
And there was silence in the summer night;  
Silence and safety; and the veils of sleep.  
Then, far away, the thudding of the guns.

Source: *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems* (1917)



## End War

**1918** - U.S. President Wilson issues Fourteen Points to peace. Germany launches Spring Offensive, bombs Paris. United States launches attacks at Belleau Wood and Argonne Forest. Bolsheviks murder Tsar Nicholas II and Romanov family. Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates, Germany signs armistice on November 11. Paris Peace Conference.

### ***Smile, Smile, Smile*** (1918)

BY WILFRED OWEN

(Note: not a new stanza, just a column break)

Head to limp head, the sunk-eyed wounded  
scanned  
Yesterday's *Mail*; the casualties (typed small)  
And (large) Vast Booty from our Latest Haul.  
Also, they read of Cheap Homes, not yet planned;  
"For," said the paper, "when this war is done  
The men's first instinct will be making homes.  
Meanwhile their foremost need is aerodromes,  
It being certain war has just begun.  
Peace would do wrong to our undying dead,—  
The sons we offered might regret they died  
If we got nothing lasting in their stead.  
We must be solidly indemnified.  
Though all be worthy Victory which all bought.  
We rulers sitting in this ancient spot  
Would wrong our very selves if we forgot  
The greatest glory will be theirs who fought,  
Who kept this nation in integrity."

Nation?—The half-limbed readers did not chafe  
But smiled at one another curiously  
Like secret men who know their secret safe.  
(This is the thing they know and never speak,  
That England one by one had fled to France  
Not many elsewhere now save under France).  
Pictures of these broad smiles appear each week,  
And people in whose voice real feeling rings  
Say: How they smile! They're happy now, poor  
things.

**1919 and After** - Armies demobilize, return home. Peace Treaty of Versailles ratified by Germany; U.S. Senate votes to reject treaty and refuses to join League of Nations. Proposal and constitution for League of Nations. The Cenotaph unveiled in London. Treaty of Sevres in 1920 ends war on Eastern Front.

***Everyone Sang* (1919)**

BY SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;  
And I was filled with such delight  
As prisoned birds must find in freedom,  
Winging wildly across the white  
Orchards and dark-green fields; on - on - and  
out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted;  
And beauty came like the setting sun:  
My heart was shaken with tears; and horror  
Drifted away ... O, but Everyone  
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the  
singing will never be done.

***War and Peace* (1921)**

BY EDGELL RICKWORD

In sodden trenches I have heard men speak,  
Though numb and wretched, wise and witty things;  
And loved them for the stubbornness that clings  
Longest to laughter when Death's pulleys creak;

And seeing cool nurses move on tireless feet  
To do abominable things with grace,  
Deemed them sweet sisters in that haunted place  
Where, with child's voices, strong men howl or  
bleat.

Yet now those men lay stubborn courage by,  
Riding dull-eyed and silent in the train  
To old men's stools; or sell gay-coloured socks  
And listen fearfully for Death; so I  
Love the low-laughing girls, who now again  
Go daintily, in thin and flowery frocks.

**WWI Poetry - *Why write poetry?***  
**Author exploration and poetry examination**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**The Last Laugh** BY WILFRED OWEN

'O Jesus Christ! I'm hit,' he said; and died.

Whether he vainly cursed or prayed indeed,

The Bullets chirped—In vain, vain, vain!

Machine-guns chuckled—Tut-tut! Tut-tut!

And the Big Gun guffawed.

Another sighed,—‘O Mother,—mother,—Dad!’

Then smiled at nothing, childlike, being dead.

And the lofty Shrapnel-cloud

Leisurely gestured,—Fool!

And the splinters spat, and tittered.

‘My Love!’ one moaned. Love-languid seemed his mood,

Till slowly lowered, his whole face kissed the mud.

And the Bayonets’ long teeth grinned;

Rabbles of Shells hooted and groaned;

And the Gas hissed.

**Answer:** *Notice the auditory and visual imagery present in this poem. What effect does it have on conveying Owen's message? What connections can you make to the information you heard in the documentary?*

**Banishment** by Siegfried Sassoon (1917)

I am banished from the patient men who fight.  
They smote my heart to pity, built my pride.  
Shoulder to aching shoulder, side by side,  
They trudged away from life's broad wealds of light.  
Their wrongs were mine; and ever in my sight  
They went arrayed in honour. But they died,--  
Not one by one: and mutinous I cried  
To those who sent them out into the night.

The darkness tells how vainly I have striven  
To free them from the pit where they must dwell  
In outcast gloom convulsed and jagged and riven  
By grappling guns. Love drove me to rebel.  
Love drives me back to grope with them through hell;  
And in their tortured eyes I stand forgiven.

**Answer:** *After learning more about Sassoon from the documentary – does it change your perception of the poem? What connections to the documentary information can you make?*

**Answer:** *Why poetry? Discuss both reasons for writing and the function of poems.*