

Activities and approaches

Write your own

Use the words below and extras if you need, to create a poem about war. The poem will be from the view point of the soldier and it should include attacking the enemy or an attack.

Think about techniques and the structure of the poem and how they might be used to convey the fear of the situation.

Key words:

bayonet bewilderment bullets crackling crawled dark dazzled dynamite fire flame heavy man mid-stride molten numb rifle smacking smashed standing stumbling suddenly sweat sweating tear terror threshing threw touchy wide yelling

Swap your poem with your partner. Each of you must choose a line from your partner's poem you think is most effective and explain why.

Now read 'Bayonet Charge' by Ted Hughes

Draw what happens in each stanza of the poem – label with key quotes from the poem.

Jigsaw task

Working in groups, you will be given a poetic feature to explore. When you have finished your exploration, get into groups with classmates who have looked at the other features and feed back to each other. Use this table to record the feedback.

'Bayonet Charge'	
Structure How the poem looks on the page.	
Language Words and phrases you think are effective. Metaphors and similes?	

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Attitude What message you think the poet has.	
Links Things which link to the other conflict poems	

Task

Write a mini essay titled:

How does the poet convey the reality of battle?

Use the following notes to help you:

Introduction

What is the poem about? How is battle shown in it?

Key words: experience, violent battle, thoughts, actions, avoidance, emotion, fear, patriotism

Structure

What is the structure of the poem? How does it add to our understanding of the reality of battle?

Key words: haphazard, urgency, desperation, stumbles, movements, thoughts etc.

Language

What important words, quotes or techniques show you the reality of battle? What effect does it have on the reader? Pick quotes that stand out and analyse them.

Key words: frantic, imagery, repetition, emotive, descriptive

Attitude

What are the feelings or attitudes towards war? What message is the poet putting forward?

Key words: terrified, struggle, conflict, torn, weapon

Personal response

How do you react to the poem? Can you link it to your knowledge of war? How might you feel if you were in the same position? How does the theme affect you?