

"the call" by jessie pope essay sample

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This poem was written in 1915 by a female journalist Jessie Pope. This poem is aimed at young men trying to get them to enlist and volunteer for the war. Pope uses the colloquial word 'laddie' to suggest that it is directed at all young men. Pope clearly identifies in the poem who her audience is. The poem has a simple structure to best communicate its message to its intended audience; young men. It is a 3 stanza, 8 line poem. Pope uses a rhyming pattern of abab, for example 'begin, win and skin' in stanza 1. She uses this pattern in all 3 of the stanzas, this furthers the upbeat tone of the poem, giving it an almost song like rhythm which repeats the title of the poem 'The Call'. The use of the inclusive 'you' repeated in almost every second line of the poem makes it personal to the man who is reading it. It has a combination of end stopped lines, mainly in the form of questions 'who's going out to win?' and the use of repetition for example 'Are you my laddie?' She uses a variety of poetic devices to achieve her intentions and to keep the readers interested in the message of the poem. The language of the poem is very clear in its message to the young male readers.

She repeatedly uses rhetorical questions to evoke a sense of guilt and pressure to those who have not already enlisted for war. In stanza 2 Pope uses 'Who's keen on getting fit – Who means to show his grit' to appeal to men wanting to be fit and compares war with exercise. She has made the tone very bossy and seems like its rounding the readers up and putting them on the spot and pressuring them for an answer. In stanza 1, Pope says 'Who's going out to win, who wants to save his skin?' making it seem like war is a game. She adds negative lines such as 'Who wants to save his skin?' leaving the readers with little choice about choosing what they should do.

Pope continues this theme of guilt throughout the poem. The men are forced to choose between being a hero by saying yes or being seen as a coward by saying no. They are made to feel guilty when she says ' Who'll stand and bite his thumbs' comparing them to a scared baby. The other way she motivates the ' lads' to enlist is by appealing to the sense of support and defence of their country. Lines such as ' Who'll earn the Empires thanks' appeals to the men who want to impress. The final ' Will you, my laddie?' makes the message personal to each individual young man. There is no doubt that this poem is asking the reader to go to war.