

Dulce et decorum est commentary

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Dulce Et Decorum Est written by Wilfred Owen is a narrative poem. This poem is first-person narrative, and is describing a situation of a scene at the trenches during the World War One. It is probably the poet himself talking from his own experience. Dulce Et Decorum Est, meaning "It is sweet and right", is formed with many figurative languages and structural devices. It's structured out with four stanzas. The layout of this poem takes a huge part building up the mood and the tone. The first stanza describes the condition of the soldiers: exhausted, sick, and in danger of having shells thrown at them. The second stanza, it sounds dreamy because of the poet's choice of the words used. It is also because the scene was brought out into a present time so it seems it's happening right now – but because it's not, it feels dreamy. The third stanza describes the poet being haunted by the horribleness of the war, advising his friend that going to war is not worth it. This poem contains an ABAB CDCD rhyme scheme which makes the poem more memorable and more effective. Parts such as "sacks...backs" and "lungs...tongues" will not be easily forgotten because of the words used in the sentences with the rhymes. The rhymes at certain places such as "blind" and "behind" slows down the poem. Iambic pentameter was used to add rhythm to the poem. From the first to third verse in the first stanza, you can see the iambic pentameter making a heavy rhythmic tone to describe the tired soldiers at the trenches. The poet described the terrible situation at the trenches mainly by using words that create images. He used four senses to achieve this: visual, aural, tactile and gustatory. The verse that reads, 'Till on the haunting flares we turned out backs" really brings out the aural imagery it gives. Words such as "Sludge" from the second verse, first stanza, make it

almost possible to feel the 'sludgy' touch and phrases such as "yelling out" and "coughing like hags" give the audience aural images of someone desperately shouting to save others' lives from gas, and people coughing severely. The imagery of gustatory can be found from "coughing like hags" in the first stanza and "GAS! Gas!" in the second stanza. Though gas can not be smelled, the fumes from the flames can be predicted to be smelled. We know this because the soldiers are coughing because of the burning of the shells and fumes coming out from it. Personification was used at the part when it's said "disappointed shells" in the first stanza, last verse. It is more of an effective way of describing how the soldiers were close to being blown up by the thrown shells. Simile plays a good part in the first and the second verse of the opening stanza where it is used as "like old beggars" and "coughing like hags". It is another effective way of using metonymy. By comparing the young soldiers to old hags and poor beggars, the horrible situation at the trenches was well described and exaggerated. Metaphor is something that should not be forgotten; it was used several times in the poem as well as simile. "Drunk with fatigue" is one of the good examples. Because one can not get drunk with fatigue, it is more memorable than it would have been if it were written as "So exhausted". Juxtaposition is yet another vital part of the structural devices of this poem, *Dulce Et Decorum Est*. To make the war situation dreamy, as in a nightmare way, Wilfred Owen inserted an ironic twist in the second stanza where it is said, "GAS! Gas! Quick, boys! —An ecstasy of fumbling". By doing this, the whole stanza sounded like a dream, though some verbs were in present tense, not future. What poet is trying to say to the readers from this poem is that being a

solfer at the trenches during the World War One was horrible, and he finds it unworthy for others' children to be sent to places as such like he was. It is clearly shown in the last stanza like fourth verse that says "like a devil's sick of sin" meaning the devil is never sick of sin, that the devil indeed enjoys the killing of the people, and it will continued to happen – the war will last long. As the first two verses read, Wilfred Owen mentions that it was impossible to dream of a peaceful place during that time. He describes the situation at the trenches very effectively. The diction gives a little twist in the meaning. It sure is horrible by the trenches by the context of the poem, however, the use of diction makes the feeling from this poem more like a dream, so it does not sound too terrible. The first verse of the first stanza is a good example; "GAS! Gas! Quick, boys! —An ecstasy of fumbling". Even though the gas must have been one of the most dreadful things by that time, he used juxtaposition to make the gas sound like a drug that's addictive, that makes one feel good. The mood of the poem is sad and depressing. Wilfred Owen talks about his dreams of his terrible time back at the trenches, "guttering, choking, drowning". This adds more to