

# The great influenza essay



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The Great Influenza is an account of the 1918 flu epidemic written by John M. Barry. Barry writes about scientists and their research of the great epidemic that killed thousands of people. John M. Barry uses many rhetorical strategies in his story to characterize scientific research. He also uses descriptive words to help the reader envision the story. Barry uses repetition to convey his point across to the reader about scientific research.

Barry talks about the certainty and uncertainty in the field of science throughout his accounts, " Certainty creates strength. Certainty gives one something upon which to lean". By using repetition, Barry is able to instill the ideas he has about the field of science to the reader over and over again. Not only does he talk about the certainties in life, but the uncertainties as well, " Uncertainty creates weakness.

Uncertainty makes one tentative if not fearful, and tentative steps, even when in the right direction, may not overcome significant obstacles". By using the strategy of repetition, the reader gets a real sense of how the author feels about certain subjects. Barry's use of descriptive words allows the audience to further understand his purpose of the challenges of experiments and the qualities that come from it. In describing the decisions that scientists must make, Barry describes work as " grunt" and " tedious. Through these words the reader realizes that a scientist does experience a complicated workload. He also uses words such as " strength" and " courage" in order to describe the characteristics that are needed to overcome the uncertainty that is so common in science. While describing a scientist's journey into the " unknown," Barry uses words such as " wilderness" and " frontier" which further illustrate the uncertainties

mentioned. Barry also describes a researcher as someone who paves ways for everyone else.

Research is so much more, it leaves roads for so many other things; that's why it has to be so precise and accurate. " A single step can also take one off a cliff. " Barry says this in the passage to show the preciseness of science. One mistake can lead to so many problems for everything else, but it can also lead to something new. John M. Barry uses many rhetorical strategies to portray his views of scientific research. He explains the certainty and uncertainty of a scientist to overcome the hardship of their work.