

# STUDENT WORKBOOK VOC 4

“Who’s for the game?” by Jessie Pope was a positive poem about war. It was written as Propaganda to excite men and make them want to fight in the war. “Dulce et Decorum Est” by Wilfred Owen was a negative poem written to inform men wanting to fight in the war about the realities of what happens on the battlefield. It is a direct contrast to Pope’s poem, which almost comes across as a piece of generic propaganda.

Both poets present their attitudes of soldiers who fight in the war. Firstly, in Pope’s poem, she glorifies war and highlights how England needs heroes to fight. The questions “Who’ll grip and tackle the job unafraid” and “Who’ll give his country a hand” present being a soldier as heroic. The metaphors used show the soldiers fearlessly protect the country. The noun ‘country’ is used to encourage patriotism and make the reader want to enlist. In Owen’s poem, he shows that the soldiers will not come out of the war as heroes, but either as dead, or badly injured old men, comparing the soldiers to “old beggars under sacks”. The word ‘beggars’ presents the soldiers on the battlefield as unimportant and as having their hardship and pain looked over by most of society. This makes the reader think about being in the soldier’s shoes, having to fight in the horrible conditions of the trenches, and being weakened by these conditions. From these quotes, it is clear that Pope has a positive outlook on war, implying the soldiers will return as heroes, whereas Owen bluntly shows that the soldiers are being weakened by the tough conditions of war, and will come back as beggars.

Both poems present their attitudes to death that occurs at war. Pope shows that men may be injured but celebrates the adventure of war, saying “Who would much rather come back with a crutch, Than lie low and be out of the fun?” The phrase ‘lie low’ suggests that those who do not take a risk to get hurt, but rather sit at home and not fight are missing out on the adventure of war. It also strongly suggests that if they do not sign up they would likely be seen as cowards as they are scared of getting hurt. This would make the reader feel peer pressured into signing up for war. In direct contrast, Owen is angry about men being lied to about war being adventurous, writing “In all my dreams before my helpless sight, He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.” The listing of violent verbs shows that those who are injured in war often die a painful death, haunting friends and family members. This would make the reader contemplate whether they should sign up to war, and risk hurting their friends and family and possibly die a painful death. From these quotes, it is clear that Pope knows that many that sign up will be injured, but thinks that it is all in the ‘fun’ of war. Owen has a different outlook, knowing from firsthand experience that dying on the battlefield is horrible and gives your friends and family hurtful memories.

Both poems present their attitudes to war through the description of events. Pope positively presents war as a game, viewing it as an exciting game played with guns. This is seen in the quotes “Who’s for the game, the biggest that’s played”, “Who knows it won’t be a picnic, yet eagerly shoulders a gun?” and “Who’ll toe the line for the signal to ‘go’?”. The noun ‘game’ suggests that war is a positive thing and will be good for those signing up. The quote

“Who’ll toe the line for the signal to ‘go’?” furthers this idea of war being a fun game. The description of war as a game will give readers a positive outlook on war, and making them feel as if it is something they don’t wanna miss out on. Owen has a contrasting attitude to war, stating that dying for your country is not heroic, seen at “My friend, you would not tell with such high zest, to children ardent for desperate glory, Dulce et Decorum est, Pro Patria Mori. The phrase “To children ardent for desperate glory” is pointing out that people should not fool those who are desperate for glory to sign up for war, because it isn’t as glorious as it seems. This would make the reader feel that they should not sign up, as there isn’t much glory in fighting in the war. From these quotes, it is clear that Pope thinks war is a game of guns, and that if you don’t sign up you are a coward and are missing out, whereas Owen feels that war isn’t as glorious as what some people make it out to be, and that those people only feel that way as they were told so when they were children desperate for glory.

In conclusion, Pope has an extremely positive outlook on war, telling readers that it is a fun game, who only those brave enough to sign up will experience, and although you have the chance to get hurt it is not something you want to miss out on. However, Pope’s whole poem is propaganda poetry, which was written having never experienced war. On the contrary, Owen, who had wrote this poem while a soldier at war, states that war conditions are terrible, leading to painful deaths, hurting family and friends emotionally, and he tells readers that war isn’t as glorious as some say it is.