



English Home Learning Task Year 9



War Poetry



Name _____

Tutor Group _____

Teacher _____

Given out: Monday 23 March

Handed in: Monday 30 March

Parent/Carer Comment

Staff Comment

Target

WARM-UP READING:

Harry Patch, Britain's last surviving soldier of the Great War, dies at 111 (in 2009)



It was just 11 years ago, when he turned 100, that Harry Patch first began to talk about his experiences fighting in the first world war.

It was a week ago that he became the last surviving soldier in the country who had seen at first hand the horror of the trenches.

Yesterday, Harry Patch died peacefully in his bed at his residential home in Wells, Somerset, a man who spent his last years urging his friends and many admirers never to forget the 9.7 million young men who perished during the 1914-18 war.

"War isn't worth one life," Patch, nicknamed "the last fighting Tommy", would say. So traumatised was he by his experiences at the 1917 battle of Passchendaele - which claimed the lives of 70,000 men - that each year Patch locked himself away in a private vigil for his fallen friends.

It was seven days ago that Henry Allingham, 113, Britain's oldest man and a fellow veteran of the trenches, died; with both men has gone Britain's last living link to one of the most traumatic events in modern history. The prime minister said it was the passing of the "noblest of all the generations".

Harry Patch was born on 17 June 1898 in Combe Down, near Bath in Somerset. He left school at 15 to learn his trade as a plumber. He turned 18 just as conscription was brought in and, after six months' training, he was on the frontline with the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. He was in the trenches at Ypres between June and September 1917, where he and his gang of five machine gunners made a pact not to kill an enemy soldier if they could help it: they would aim for the legs.

In September 1917, a shell exploded above Patch's head, killing three of his comrades; he was hit by shrapnel in the lower abdomen, but survived. Every year since then Harry would remember that day.

"He would just lock himself away and remember his friends," said author Max Arthur, whose 2005 book *Last Post* documented the words from the last 21 survivors of the war. "Last week, there was just one; now there is no one alive who has seen what Harry saw in the trenches. Harry said it was just the most depressing place on earth, hell with a lid on," he said.

Arthur said the horrors of Passchendaele stayed with Patch throughout his life.

LISTEN: to Radiohead's incredible 'Harry Patch' tribute song -
<https://youtu.be/p4gDOrLtGs0>

Task 1: Words associated with poetry
Look up the definitions and learn the spellings. You will be given a spelling test next week.

Poetry spelling	Look up the definitions and write here.
Alliteration	
Metaphor	
Simile	
Onomatopoeia	
Repetition	
Stanza	
Volta	
Juxtaposition	
Enjambment	
Iambic pentameter	

TASK 2 - All sets to read the poem below and complete questions on the next page.

Dulce et Decorum est

By Wilfred Owen

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And toward our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! – An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime...
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues –
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

Task 2 the Questions: The following four questions to be completed by all sets.

1. Reread the first stanza (lines 1 - 8). Write down four things we find out about the soldiers in this section.	1.
	2.
	3.
	4.
2. Reread the second stanza (lines 9 – 14). The poet uses three particular types of punctuation. What are they? Choose one example and explain what effect you think this might have on the reader.	
3. In the last stanza the poet uses some similes. Give an example of a simile in this stanza and explain why you think the reader has used it.	
4. The last two lines of this poem are written in Latin (an old language which is sometimes taught in schools): 'Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.' This means: it is an honour to die for one's country. Why do you think the poet would put this at the end of this poem?	

TASK 3A – All sets read this poem by Carol Ann Duffy written in 2013. She wrote the 'Last Post' to mark the Deaths of Henry Allingham and Harry Patch, the two longest surviving soldiers from the 1914-18 First World War.

Last Post

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.
If poetry could tell it backwards, true, begin
that moment shrapnel scythed you to the stinking mud ...
but you get up, amazed, watch bleed bad blood
run upwards from the slime into its wounds;
see lines and lines of British boys rewind
back to their trenches, kiss the photographs from home -
mothers, sweethearts, sisters, younger brothers
not entering the story now
to die and die and die.
Dulce - No - Decorum - No - Pro patria mori.
You walk away.
You walk away; drop your gun (fixed bayonet)
like all your mates do too -
Harry, Tommy, Wilfred, Edward, Bert -
and light a cigarette.
There's coffee in the square,
warm French bread
and all those thousands dead
are shaking dried mud from their hair
and queuing up for home. Freshly alive,
a lad plays Tipperary to the crowd, released
from History; the glistening, healthy horses fit for heroes, kings.
You lean against a wall,
your several million lives still possible
and crammed with love, work, children, talent, English beer, good food.
You see the poet tuck away his pocket-book and smile.
If poetry could truly tell it backwards,
then it would.

