



# ESSAY ANSWER DECONSTRUCTED

In this document we take a look at a real English essay that Clare wrote in one of her high school exams that got a really good grade. You will see that perfection is not required for a really good essay!

## The essay question:

“Describe the main idea or purpose in two short texts you have studied. Explain why the idea or purpose helped you remember the texts.”

## The short texts I wrote about:

*Dulce et Decorum Est* and *Anthem for Doomed Youth* by Wilfred Owen (Recognised as one of Britain’s greatest poets, he died in combat in WWI in France. You can read more about him [here on Wiki](#)).

## My essay:

~~An important~~ A main idea in the poems *Dulce et Decorum Est* and *Anthem for Doomed Youth* by Wilfred Owen is war. It is important because it illustrates the poets opinion that war is not glorious or honourable, but brutal, disturbing, and pointless. This is important because these significant ideas help me remember the texts.

The idea of war is illustrated in the poem *Dulce et Decorum Est*. Traditionally, war is thought to be glorious and noble, because it is an honour to fight for one’s country. Wilfred Owen abolishes this myth by using graphic language techniques which convey the sick truths of war. ~~For example,~~ The phrase “guttering, choking, drowning, obscene as cancer, bitter as the end”, is showing the brutal, devastating reality of war, and that war is not glorious in any sense, it is only cold and desensitising. “Guttering, choking, drowning”, is describing a soldier who is gasping for air, ~~and~~ as he is wounded, and choking and ~~d~~-drowning possibly because he has inhaled chlorine gas. He is drowning in his own fluid, as his lungs fill with fluid from the gas. “Obscene as cancer, bitter as the end”, is portraying the idea that war is demoralising, and horrible, because it is obscene to kill other humans in such disturbing ways. In war, the soldiers die suffering in agonising ways.

**Comment [C1]:** Great start...! I’m glad I crossed this out though because the question asked us to describe THE MAIN IDEA in two short texts, not an *important* idea.

**Comment [C2]:** In the first sentence of my introduction I spell out the main idea of the two texts to directly respond to the essay question immediately.

**Comment [C3]:** The next sentence of the intro tells the reader what the essay is going to discuss at a high level.

**Comment [C4]:** Last sentence of intro addresses the second part of the essay question.

**Comment [C5]:** The ‘S’ of S.E.X.I. – Statement. The rest of the paragraph is the rest of S.E.X.I. (‘E’ – Explanation, ‘X’ – Example, and ‘I’ – Importance), which addresses the first part of the essay question – describing the main idea.

**Comment [C6]:** Using real quotes from the poem backs up my explanation.

The text is remembered because of the way Wilfred Owen reveals describes the bitter reality of war. In the simile, "bent double, like old beggars", and "but limped on, blood shot", the idea the war is completely exhausting for soldiers both physically and mentally. "Bent double, like old beggars" is comparing soldiers to old beggars who are completely drained. They are so exhausted that their spirit is broken. The second quote also emphasises how draining war is. The soldiers stagger through mud in terrible, unimaginable conditions, whilst their surroundings are smothered with blood because so many have died and suffered gruesome deaths. These ideas imprint lasting images in my thoughts because they're so vivid and disturbing.

In the poem Anthem for Doomed Youth, the idea that war soldiers are falsely motivated to go to war, by honour and grace which they will not receive. This idea is shown in metaphors, throughout the poem by an extended metaphor of a peacetime funeral. The quote, "What passing bells for those who die as cattle", reveals the idea that war is pointless, and a soldiers' sacrifice is not given credit that they deserve. During war, no The quote, "the shrill demented choirs", and "the pallor of girls' brow shall be their pall", further emphasise the above idea, like the first quote. During war, a soldier does not hear bells in recognition of his sacrifice, and only the shrill demented choirs of wailing shells will represent the sound of choir boys at a peacetime funeral. Only the pale brow of the women who loved those who died will represent the pall they do not receive. The soldiers are remembered by those who loved them, but not everyone else the soldiers are a faceless crowd.

The idea that in war, soldiers die in more sufferable ways than people imagine is revealed in Anthem For Doomed Youth. In the quote, "what passing bells for those who dies as cattle", portrays Wilfred Owen's opinion that war is brutal. The soldiers are being compared to cattle in a metaphor, which illustrates that in war soldiers are slaughtered as are cattle. Like cattle in the meat works, soldiers die in masses under horrible, bloody conditions. Soldiers die in similar ways to that of cattle. This helps make the poem more memorable because the idea that soldiers suffer so terribly is truly truly horrendous. According to Wilfred Owen, no man deserves to suffer such atrocities, especially when they are sent to war thinking they are noble men, when war fighting in war is arguably the most inhumane, disturbing and removed experience a soldier man could face.

Conclusion??

For some reason I did not written a conclusion! Perhaps I ran out of time in the exam! If was running out of time I still should have written at least one sentence summarising my essay. Something like: "Both of these poems by Wilfred Owen are based on the idea of war, and strongly illustrate Wilfred Owen's belief that the realities of war are inhumane and far from the noble experience traditionally portrayed. The language techniques Owen utilises create graphic images in the readers mind, which makes these poems highly memorable."

**Comment [C7]:** The 'S' of S.E.X.I. – Statement.

**Comment [C8]:** This paragraph is addressing the second part of the essay question – why the idea helped me remember the text. A better word than 'remembered' would have been 'memorable'.

**Comment [C9]:** Once again addressing the first part of the essay question – the idea of war.

**Comment [C10]:** Using a precise language technique term gives credibility and a strong level of knowledge and understanding to the essay.

**Comment [C11]:** Should be 'that' not 'the'.

**Comment [C12]:** Addressing the second part of the essay question.

**Comment [C13]:** Best not to use contractions in essays – 'they are' is better.

**Comment [C14]:** The Statement – addressing the first part of the essay question – the idea of war.

**Comment [C15]:** Sentence does not read well. I expect I should have written "the idea IS that soldier...."

**Comment [C16]:** Don't know why I used a comma here...

**Comment [C17]:** Again using a precise language technique term.

**Comment [C18]:** Improper use of apostrophe. Should be soldier's not soldiers'. If I wanted to use "soldiers'" the sentence should read "and soldiers' sacrifices are not given the credit that they deserve".

**Comment [C19]:** Don't like this language. Should have said "The quote ... further emphasises this main idea".

**Comment [C20]:** Yup a word double up! The things your brain does in an exam!

**Comment [C21]:** Does not read well. An em-dash (—) between 'else' and 'the' would have been better.

**Comment [C22]:** Again addressing the first part of the essay question.

**Comment [C23]:** Using a precise language technique term.

**Comment [C24]:** Unnecessary word.

**Comment [C25]:** Addressing the second part of the essay question.