

Name _____

Date _____

Several young men known as the Trench Poets wrote about their experiences in World War I. Wilfred Owen, whose poem appears below, was one of them. Owen died in the war in 1918, a week before its end. The "old Lie" Owen mentions in the end of the poem comes from Latin and means "It is sweet and right to die for your country."



Document 6

Dulce Et Decorum Est

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 towards 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 . . .

GAS! Gas! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And floundering 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. . . .

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, . . .
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs, . . .
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.

Wilfred Owen, 1917

Directions

Use the poem to answer the questions. Write complete sentences. Use another sheet of paper.

1. Does Owen's description of war sound glorious or awful? Explain.
2. What images does Owen use to portray the gas attack?
3. Is Owen's poem for or against war? Explain your answer.
4. Owen's poem says the idea that it is glorious to die in war for your country is a lie. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.