

Owen uses *poetic techniques* to convey his *ideas* about war.

(address question)

Owen's subject matter is war and the pity of war. He was not at all concerned with the poetry. Thus his main purpose in writing poetry is to convey the ideas of the horrors, brutality and waste of war and the hypocrisy of many back home. He uses poetry and poetic techniques in order to convey these ideas to others.

Owen's context is critical. Owen wrote his poetry while at war, while experiencing the war. Without this he may not have the same ideas about war nor would he know of the experience of war, such as the brutality and horrors, which is brought out by the use of sound and imagery. This can be compared to Brooks, another war poet of about the same time as Owen. Brooks wrote most of his poetry before he actually got to war. He wrote about what he thought war would be like. It turns out that Brooks and Owen's poetry is very different in terms of the message that is conveyed. Owens poetry represented a shift in poetry. Prior to Owen, poetry was romantic and Victorian poetry, however Owens poetry changed that view and has paved the way for modern poetry.

Owen's main idea about war presented in "Dulce Et Decorum Est" is the horrors of war and the hypocrisy of many back home. This theme is presented by the use of poetic techniques, in particular sound and imagery. The poem starts off at a slow pace and then in the later stanzas the pace becomes faster. This change in pace highlights a change in mood and tone of the poem. It allows for a shift in the topic. In the first stanzas the pace is slow which is made possible by the long multi-syllable words and also the use of the d and t sounds, for example "Bent double, like old beggars under sacks" and "knock-kneed". This emphasises the fact that the soldiers are exhausted and tired. This is also brought out by images such as "marched asleep", "dunk with fatigue".

In the next stanza's the pace becomes faster to emphasise the fast pace of war. This fast pace is made possible by single syllable words and the rhythm of the words. For example, "Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!" Rhyme is also used extensively throughout the whole poem, which follows an ABABAB rhyming scheme. Images such as "Dim, through the misty pages and thick green light," show what it is like for a soldier to drown in their own blood from poison gas.

The other main idea presented is the hypocrisy of many back home. This is shown in the last stanza by use of logical language of if, if and then. Owen says that if you could be here and experience war for yourself, then you would not think that it is such an honourable thing to die for your country. Owen says this last part by referring to a quote from Horace as "The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."

Another of Owen's poems, "The Next War" focuses on the brutality and waste of war. Owen makes use of poetic structure and imagery techniques to convey these ideas of war. The main use of imagery is the personification of death. Shown throughout the poem but particularly in the lines "Oh, Death was never enemy of ours!" and "He's spat at us with bullets and he's coughed shrapnel". This personification of death emphasises the fact, that at war death is always around and you cannot escape it. The last line, "He wars on Death – for lives; not men –for flags" is interesting as it presents the paradox of a soldier. It means that soldiers fight for their friends lives, not for their country. The structure of "The Next War" carefully used to help convey Owen's ideas about war. It is a sonnet, which must have a certain number of lines, rhyming scheme, iambic pentameter (rising falling) rhythm and a certain number of lines per stanza.

Owen was a revolutionary poet. It can be argued that his poetry from WWII started the new period of realistic poetry, a shift away from the romantic poetry from before him. So by the effective use of poetic techniques, along with his context, subject matter and purpose, he has successfully conveyed his ideas about war.

(735)

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## Context of Owen:

- He was at the war
- Can be contrasted to Brooks (traditional poet), who wrote before he got to war. Owen changed poetry
- Context → influences his subject matter

## Dulce Et Decorum Est:

**Subject:** horrors of war and hypocrisy of many back home

**Purpose:** persuade people to change their views on war

**Techniques:**

### Structure

First stanzas are slow, latter stanzas are faster.

### Sound

slow pace → soldiers are exhausted and tired

- t/d 's

faster pace → mimics the fast pace of war

- single syllable words
- short words
- "knock kneed", "Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!"

### Imagery

"trudge" / "march"

trenches, gassing, sleep deprivation  
"froth corrupted lungs"

If you could be there and see it then you would not want to tell of how glorious it is to die for your country.

### Subject

horrors of war and hypocrisy of many back home

"Dulce et decorum est Pro patria mori" -*Poros*

*It is sweet and honourable to give one's life for their country.*

**"The old Lie"**

## The Next War:

- > Owen's knowledge of poetry tradition (he knew of Donne's "Death Be Not Aloud")
- > Subject: brutality and waste of war

### *Structure*

- Sonnet → lines, structure, rising falling rhythm (iambic pentemina), certain rhyme pattern
- shows he is a good poet and worthy of recognition of his poems

### *Sound*

### *Imagery*

→ *Personification of death*, "Oh, Death was never enemy of ours!", "He's spat at us with bullets and he's coughed shrapnel"

→ *Paradox* of soldier at war: kill or be killed, "He wars on Death – for lives; not men – for flags" > he is fighting death at war for his mates lives, he is not fighting against men for his country.