Year 9 Term 1: Conflict S

Conflict is an undeniable part of the human experience. Whether it be personal conflict, conflict between individuals or conflict on a global scale.

Many of the poems you will study this term deal with the perspectives of those involved in war and the effect this intense conflict has on them as individuals. Conflict may be inevitable in society, however many of these poets question whether war or violence should be.

War and poetry have always gone hand in hand. The first great work of poetry that has come down to us, *the Iliad,* is about nations in conflict. No war however, has produced a greater wealth of English poetry than the First World War.

Context

WWI began on **28 July 1914 and ended on 11 November 1918**. It was one of the deadliest conflicts in history; an estimated 9 million people were killed in combat, while over 5 million civilians died from military occupation, bombardment, hunger, and disease.

As a group, **war poets wrote poems which were often violent and realistic, challenging earlier poetry which largely glorified war**. The first-hand experience of war is maybe one reason why there is such a shift in the attitude of poets towards war.

The poets of WWI tend to question the reason for war, document the horrors of trench warfare and lament the mass death of their fellow soldiers.

Themes

Absurdity of war
Horror of war
Patriotism
Heroism
Death
Sacrifice
Remembrance
Nationhood
Nature
Loss
Duty and honour
Criticism of leadership
Violence and brutality
Evil
Love
Identity

WWI Letters

During the First World War, **letter writing was the main form of communication between soldiers and their loved ones**, helping to ease the pain of separation.
Soldiers wrote letters in spare moments, sometimes from front line trenches or in the calmer surroundings behind the lines.
Censorship dictated what servicemen were permitted to disclose in their letters.
However, in practice, men often found ways to impart information, and their letters offer a **powerful and highly personal insight into the experience of war**.
Receiving letters from family and friends was also **vital to morale.**

Poems

The Man He Killed - Thomas Hardy
A dramatic monologue, the poem's speaker recounts having to kill a man in war. In conflict about shooting the man, the speaker says it was "just so"—it was just what happens during war.
For the Fallen - Laurence Binyon
Deeply patriotic poem mourns, honors, and celebrates the soldiers who died fighting for England in the war.
Who's for the Game - Jessie Pope
A call-to-arms, a targeted address to young men with the aim of getting them to enlist in the British Army.
The Soldier - Rupert Brooke
Deeply patriotic and idealistic poem that expresses a soldier's love for his homeland—in this case England, which is portrayed as a kind of nurturing paradise.
In Flanders Fields - John McCrae
The poem describes the tragedy of the soldiers' deaths, as well as the ongoing natural beauty that surrounds their graves. It also addresses the question of the next generation's responsibility to carry on the soldiers' battle in war.
Common Form – Rudyard Kipling
Kipling speaks here in the voices of the slain, the "angry and defrauded young".
Perhaps - Vera Mary Brittain
Poem that mourns the tragic loss of life due to the war.
I Have a Rendezvous with Death - Alan Seeger
The poem features a soldier who is certain that death is near. Though the speaker implies that it would be preferable to try to avoid this fate, the poem makes it clear that this is simply not an option because of the speaker's soldierly sense of duty.
The General - Siegfried Sassoon
Sassoon critiques those in charge within this anti-war poem.
Dulce et Decorum Est - Wilfred Owen
He illustrates the brutal everyday struggle of a company of soldiers, focuses on the story of one soldier's agonizing death, and discusses the trauma that this event left behind.
The Falling Leaves – Margaret Postgate Cole
Cole, in her poem, highlights the mass loss of life due to war whilst still trying to honour those who fought.
Vultures - Chinua
The poem is an extended metaphor on the nature of evil. It portrays a picture of a concentration camp commander, but begins with an analogy; a description of a pair of vultures.
Belfast Confetti - Ciaran Carson
In the poem, an unnamed speaker appears to be caught up in a bomb blast and tries to escape. The poem then explores the relationship between violence and language itself.
Out of the Blue – Simon Armitage
Told from the point of view of an English trader working in the North Tower of the World Trade Centre on 9/11, it charts the conflict the speaker feels about jumping from the burning building.
The Last Post - Carol Ann Duffy
It imagines what would happen if time ran backwards and those killed in the war came back to life; their lives would still be full of possibilities and filled with "love, work, children, talent, English beer, good food."

Grammar

Noun types:
Concrete – A noun we can see, hear, touch, smell or taste
Abstract – A noun which we cannot experience with any of the 5 senses e.g. happiness, tension
Proper – A noun which is the name or title of something and is capitalised
Collective – A singular word used to group together a plural e.g. a group, a herd, a class

Pronouns: replaces a noun e.g. she, her, mine, that

Subject: Does the action in a sentence or clause

Verb types:
Dynamic – A verb that we can see/hear being completed – a deliberate action
Stative – A verb that we cannot see being completed e.g. I think, I believe
Imperative – A commanding verb e.g. Do this work, sit down, let's go
Modal – A verb expressing possibility or probability e.g. will, should, could, can, must

Past tense: used to describe things that have already happened **Present tense**: used to describe things that are happening now
Future tense: describes things that have yet to happen

Main clause – A clause which makes sense on its own as a sentence
Subordinate clause – A clause which does not make sense on its own as a sentence – it needs another to make it make sense – it starts with a subordinating conjunction

Coordinating conjunction – A conjunction which joins 2 main clauses FANBOYS – for, and, nor, but, or, yet and so
Subordinating conjunction – A conjunction which joins a subordinate clause to a main one – e.g. while, as, because, since, if

Simple sentence – A sentence with only one verb and one main clause
Compound sentence – A sentence with more than one main clause, joined by a coordinating conjunction
Complex sentence – A sentence with at least one main clause and at least one subordinate clause which can't stand alone as a sentence, joined by a subordinating conjunction

Grammar

Adjective types:
Descriptive – An adjective which describes factual characteristics e.g. big, green
Evaluative – An adjective expressing an opinion, can be disagreed with e.g. great, boring, amazing
Emotive – An adjective which makes the reader feel a strong emotion e.g. shocking, starving, dangerous
Comparative – An adjective ending in –er or with 'more' in front of it. e.g. bigger, faster, more exciting
Superlative – An adjective ending in –est or with 'most' in front of it. e.g. biggest, fastest, most exciting

Adverb types:
Manner: tell us how something happens e.g. angrily, quickly
Time: tell us when something happens e.g. tomorrow, yesterday
Place: where something happens e.g. everywhere, nowhere
Degree: describe the intensity of an action or quality e.g. extremely, very, too
Frequency: used to describe how often something happens e.g. constantly, frequently

Poetry Terms

Speaker/Persona: the character who tells the story in the poem
Stanza: a paragraph in a poem
Elegy: a form of poetry in which the speaker expresses grief, sadness, or loss
Sonnet: a 14 line poem written in iambic pentameter, rhyming couplet at the end
Assonance: repetition of vowel sounds within a tight group of words
Plosives: repetition of the p/b/g/d/m sound in words next to each other
Fricatives: repetition of the f/th sound in words next to each other
Sibilance: repetition of the S sound in words next to each other
Enjambment: a run on line in poetry
Caesura: punctuation in the middle of a line of poetry
Rhyme scheme: pattern of rhyme in a poem
Free verse: poem with no regular rhyme scheme
Extended metaphor: extends over the course of multiple lines, paragraphs, or stanzas
Imagery: visually descriptive or figurative language
Iambic pentameter: a line of verse with five metrical feet, each consisting of one short (or unstressed) syllable followed by one long (or stressed) syllable
Meter: the rhythm produced by the arrangement of syllables according to the number and type of beats in each line
Rhythm: the beat and pace of a poem

Scholars – Extra Texts

George Orwell – Homage to Catalonia

Homage to Catalonia is George Orwell's personal account of his experiences and observations fighting in the Spanish Civil War. Published in 1938 (about a year before the war ended). Orwell is one of the most popular and famous British writers who often wrote about conflict, social criticism and inequality.

Percy Shelley – Masque of Anarchy

The Masque of Anarchy (or *The Mask of Anarchy*) is a British political poem written in 1819 following the Peterloo Massacre of that year. In his call for freedom, it is perhaps the first modern statement of the principle of nonviolent resistance.

Lord Byron - The Destruction of Sennacherib

First published in 1815. One of the leading figures of the Romantic movement, Byron is regarded as one of the greatest English poets This poem is based on the biblical account of the historical Assyrian siege of Jerusalem in 701 BC by Assyrian king Sennacherib, as described in the Bible. Some major themes in this poem is death, war and God's power.

William Blake - Jerusalem ["And did those feet in ancient time"]

This poem was likely printed in 1808. Blake is one of the key English poets of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His key themes are religion, poverty and the poor, and the plight of the most downtrodden or oppressed within society.

The poem was supposedly inspired by the apocryphal story that a young Jesus, accompanied by Joseph of Arimathea, a tin merchant, travelled to what is now England.