

Literature of WW1 Knowledge Organiser

Key events of WW1. Aug 1914—Germany invades Belgium, beginning WW1. April 1915—The Germans launch the first gas attack in history. May 1915—German submarine sinks the Lusitania. Sept 1916— The British use the first tanks ever used in battle. April 1917—The US enters the war on the side of Britain and France. March 1918—Launch of Spring Offensive, a series of German attacks. Nov 1918—Armistice Day

MAJOR BATTLES ON THE WESTERN FRONT IN WW1: VERDUN/THE SOMME/YPRES/SPRING OFFENSIVE

Key concepts/vocabulary

Allies - a state co-operating with another for military purposes

Western Front—the main armed frontier between Germany and the allies

Propaganda—misleading information used to promote a cause

Trench Warfare—type of land warfare used on Western front where soldiers fought from relatively permanent trenches dug into the ground

Dug-out—sheltered area in the trench for sleeping/eating

Blighty One— battle injury severe enough to be sent home to Britain 'Blighty'

Shell Shock— post traumatic stress disorder-suffered by soldiers

Desertion—illegally leaving the armed forces

White-feather - some women would pin a white feather on a man to denote him as 'cowardly' for not joining the army

Over-the-top—climbing over the top of the trench to attack the enemy lines

No-man's-land—the area between allied and enemy trenches

Court martial—a court for trying and sentencing members of the armed forces accused of offences against military law.

Jingoism—wanting to go to war to prove the superiority of one's country

Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori— Latin phrase meaning 'it is sweet and fitting to die for one's country'

Key Themes of the Literature of WW1

War/anti-war sentiment— during the war, and after, writers have explored the futility and horror of war and criticised the propaganda and jingoism that preceded it .

Heroism—ideas about courage and bravery

Comradeship— the close relationships and camaraderie amongst soldiers

Public School/Class—the social class system (upper/middle/working class) was very strict at the time of WW1. People didn't move between classes. Each class had particular values/attitudes. Wealthy and higher class boys were educated at expensive private schools (known as public schools) and this perpetuated what has become known as 'the establishment'.

Patriotism—love and pride in one's country. Some people believe this was exploited in order to encourage men to join the army. Nationalism is the belief that your country is superior to others.

Soldier Poets

Wilfred Owen killed in action 4 Nov 1918. Wrote about the horrors of trenches and gas warfare. Influenced by his mentor Siegfried Sassoon and in contrast to the public perception of war at the time and to the confidently patriotic verse of earlier war poet Rupert Brooke. Work published after his death.

Siegfried Sassoon his poetry described the horrors of the trenches. He was opposed to the jingoism that fuelled the war.

Rupert Brooke died in 1915. Wrote idealistic war sonnets.

Literary and Poetic Terms

Sonnet— a fourteen line poem with a fixed rhyme scheme

Stanza—verse within a poem

Enjambment—when a sentence continues onto the next line of poetry

Caesura—a pause within a line of poetry

Tone—the attitude of a writer or speaker towards the subject

Dialogue—conversation between two or more characters

Dramatic irony—when the audience understands more than the character on stage

Appositive Structures—to be used in analysis

Not only....but...

Despite....

Although...

Presenting additional interpretations

'could also'

'furthermore'

Zoom in on multiple key words/phrases from evidence