The poem ‘Exposure’ describes life in the trenches. It doesn’t describe a dramatic battle but the terrible weather conditions and long, boring periods when “nothing happens”. Owen also describes the things that the men dream about when their minds wander and they dream of warmth, comfort and home.

The poem mainly describes the bitter winter of 1916 – 1917. Owen, like other soldiers, used to write home to his mother telling her about his experiences. In one letter he said:

“No Man’s Land under snow is like the face of the moon: chaotic, crater-ridden, uninhabitable, awful ....My platoon had no dug-outs but had to lie out in the snow under the deadly wind....

We were marooned on a frozen desert. There was not a sign of life on the horizon and a thousand signs of death. Not a blade of grass. Not an insect: once or twice a day the shadow of a big hawk scenting carrion.”

It was common for men to have to bury their dead comrades, either as a result of battle or dying from the cold, something else Owen mentions in ‘Exposure’. Men lost friends.

Task:

Imagine you are a soldier in the First World War. Write a letter home describing your experiences and what you have seen. Describe the weather conditions and what you feel. Mention how others are coping and what you miss about home.

Use what you have learnt from your own research, the information you have learnt in class and from ‘Exposure’.

- Word limit: 400 words minimum, 800 words maximum.
- Use paragraphs.
- Check spelling and punctuation.
- The address should be The Front Line, France and the date is November 1916.