

1. Collect some effective words:

Here are some examples, but add some of your own ideas below. You may also want to use a thesaurus to find some other examples:

floundering scars death trudge rotten boots

2. Try to use visual and aural poetic features:

Alliteration - repetition of a consonant sound (for the sound of the bombs / guns)

Onomatopoeia - words that sound like the sound they make such as 'buzz' or 'sizzle' (to reflect the sound of the battle or the soldiers)

Personification - giving objects or things human qualities (to make the weapons / war seem more frightening)

Rhyme - sound patterning and rhythm (to reflect the sound of the war)

Simile - describing something as *like* or *as* something else (to describe how the soldiers looked / felt / were injured etc.)

3. Write emotively about the horrors of war:

Start off with a dramatic opening line, like:

The **soldiers** marched, trudging like burdened **men**,
Bombs **crashed** and ...

Have a go at changing the words in **bold** to see make it different - you may want to try a number of versions to see which is most effective.

4. Try zooming in:

Try to remember an image from a war film, photograph or programme you may have seen which particularly affected you. Think about all the details you can remember and zoom in on them - remembering the smallest real detail can help to add authenticity to your poem.



[Detail of Paths Of Glory \(1917\) by CRW Nevinson \(1878-1958\), Imperial War Museum \(IWM ART 518\) ©](#)

Here are two 'crunched' versions of two famous war poems.

Poem (1) These are the first 115 words from a war poem.	Poem (2) These are the 115 words from another war poem.
<p>air an and and and and and and and at blast Boche breath buffeting burst but but by candles choked clay climb corpses curse den door down down dug-out eyes flump! for found found frantic from fumes gave guttering hammered he hell herded high hour hour if in in kept knew last left lived men murk never not of of of of of old old on on one our quite rain remained rising shell shell slime slush smell snuffing sour stank steps that the the the the the their their there there thick through thud! thud! to too top up us waist waterfalls we we'd what whizz-bangs whizz-bangs who'd with with years</p>	<p>a a a a a air all an and and and and and as at aware away back be blest body bore breathing by by by concealed corner day die dreams dust dust earth England England England England's English English eternal ever evil field flowers for foreign friends gave gentleness given gives happy heart hearts heaven her her her her her home I if in in in is laughter learnt less love made me mind no of of of of of once only peace pulse rich richer rivers roam shall shaped shed should sights some somewhere sounds suns that that that the the the there there's think think this this thoughts to to under washed ways whom</p>

- Look at the words in each poem carefully. Do you prefer one? Why?
- Which words are repeated most? (Don't include words which join words and parts of sentences together, such as 'and', 'of' or 'by' etc.)
- What do you think is the effect of this repetition on the reader?
- Choose the word that you think is most powerful or effective in each poem. Explain why.

Choose one poem, and complete each part of the rectangles below. Discuss your ideas with a partner if you prefer.

What other aspects of the poem would I like/do I need to find out more about?

What words or ideas am I **confused** or **unsure** about?

What **mood** is created by these words and ideas?

Poem (1)	Poem (2)
<p>air an and and and and and and and at blast Boche breath buffeting burst but but by candles choked clay climb corpses curse den door down down dug-out eyes flump! for found found frantic from fumes gave guttering hammered he hell herded high hour hour if in in kept knew last left lived men murk never not of of of of of old old on on one our quite rain remained rising shell shell slime slush smell snuffing sour stank steps that the the the the the their their there there thick through thud! thud! to too top up us waist waterfalls we we'd what whizz-bangs whizz-bangs who'd with with years</p>	<p>a a a a a air all an and and and and as at aware away back be blest body bore breathing by by by concealed corner day die dreams dust dust earth England England England England's English English eternal ever evil field flowers for foreign friends gave gentleness given gives happy heart hearts heaven her her her her home I if in in in in is laughter learnt less love made me mind no of of of of of once only peace pulse rich richer rivers roam shall shaped shed should sights some somewhere sounds suns that that that the the the there there's think think this this thoughts to to under washed ways whom</p>

Now choose the language you find most interesting or inspiring (from poem 1 or 2), and write your own short poem or stanza.

- Each time you use a word, cross it off the list.
- Remember to use some of the suggested poetic techniques.
- Try to think of a suitable title for the poem too!

Read through the full versions of the poems below - and compare your poem or stanza with the original.

'The Sentry'

We'd found an old Boche dug-out, and he knew,
And gave us hell, for shell on frantic shell
Hammered on top, but never quite burst through.
Rain, guttering down in waterfalls of slime
Kept slush waist high, that rising hour by hour,
Choked up the steps too thick with clay to climb.
What murk of air remained stank old, and sour
With fumes of whizz-bangs, and the smell of men
Who'd lived there years, and left their curse in the den,
If not their corpses. . . .

There we herded from the blast
Of whizz-bangs, but one found our door at last.
Buffeting eyes and breath, snuffing the candles.
And thud! flump! thud! down the steep steps came thumping
And splashing in the flood, deluging muck –
The sentry's body; then his rifle, handles
Of old Boche bombs, and mud in ruck on ruck.
We dredged him up, for killed, until he whined
"O sir, my eyes – I'm blind – I'm blind, I'm blind!"
Coaxing, I held a flame against his lids
And said if he could see the least blurred light
He was not blind; in time he'd get all right.
"I can't," he sobbed. Eyeballs, huge-bulged like squids
Watch my dreams still; but I forgot him there
In posting next for duty, and sending a scout
To beg a stretcher somewhere, and floundering about
To other posts under the shrieking air.

Those other wretches, how they bled and spewed,
And one who would have drowned himself for good, –
I try not to remember these things now.
Let dread hark back for one word only: how
Half-listening to that sentry's moans and jumps,
And the wild chattering of his broken teeth,
Renewed most horribly whenever crumps
Pummelled the roof and slogged the air beneath –
Through the dense din, I say, we heard him shout
"I see your lights!" But ours had long died out.

Wilfred Owen

'The Soldier'

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Rupert Brooke