

Related or Contrasting Texts

Key Stage 3 > Year 9

> Framework Objective R7 Compare the presentation of ideas, values or emotions in related or contrasting texts	> Framework Objective R10 Comment on different interpretations of the same text or idea in different media, using terms appropriate for critical analysis
> Framework Objective W17 Cite specific and relevant textual evidence to justify critical judgements about texts	> Framework Objective R15 Extend their understanding of literary heritage by relating major writers to their historical context, and explaining their appeal over time

Icon

> [Historic recordings](#) > [View all results](#) > [Alfred Tennyson](#)

Overview

Dulce et Decorum Est Exploring an image and key Victorian idea about war	Read All About It Ideas, values and emotions in Crimean War ballad and 1 st hand news report	The Charge of the Light Brigade Tennyson's poem and comparison with other 3 texts/images	Enduring Appeal Exploring the legacy of Tennyson's poem and the validity of its enduring appeal
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Introduction

This sequence of activities is designed to form a self-contained unit of work lasting several lessons. Its primary focus is on comparing the presentation of ideas, values or emotions in related or contrasting texts, although it also gives some coverage of the framework objectives related to historical context and media comparison. Its pedagogical method is to develop a textured, historically contextualised understanding of Tennyson's *The Charge of the Light Brigade*.

This understanding is developed by working with several related texts and images from the time, in facsimile, multimedia and traditional forms. This requires the use of ICT in the classroom to support multimodal activity by students and teacher. It uses an astonishing recording from the Poetry Archive website and additional supporting notes available there.

Different kinds of reading are required, with exploration and comparison of media and literary texts. Different forms of comparative note-making are involved, including key word responses, highlighting, and Venn diagrams. Formal written explanation in the Point Example Explanation mode is practised.

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Key concepts

Broadside or broadsheet ballad

The Bodleian archive defines these as “popular songs, sold for a penny or half-penny in the streets of towns and villages around Britain between the sixteenth and early twentieth centuries. These songs were performed in taverns, homes, or fairs -- wherever a group of people gathered to discuss the day's events or to tell tales of heroes and villains.” They were one of the cheapest forms of print available.

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Activities

1. Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori

- Display this image or similar (from the collection of Crimean War material, including digitised photographs taken by official Crimean War photographer Roger Fenton, available at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pp/pphome.html>)



- Invite short descriptive responses, starting with one word and adding layers of detail. What can you see, smell, hear, taste, touch? When looking at this image, what do you think? What do you feel? What do you want to do? Annotate or list responses. Move outwards from creative response to a more speculative analytical one: what do you think is happening here? Who is involved? When and where do you think this event took place? Why?
- Give relevant contextual details: the Crimean War 1853-1856. This image is called *The fall of Sebastopol/Capture of the Malakoff tower*. It shows French and Russian soldiers engaged in hand-to-hand combat at the Malakoff tower. In the Victorian era in which this war took place, it was commonly held that it is sweet and fitting to die for your country. What attitude to this idea does this picture suggest? How is this attitude suggested?

2. Read All About It

- Introduce the table of ideas about war, values and emotions. Dictionary work as needed to identify meanings of unfamiliar words, then invite paired discussion of the headings: what ideas about war do they hold? What do they value most in life? What emotion do they feel about war? Explore range of views held in the class, and link to the idea that different texts will have different ideas, values and emotions.
- Read (more than once) the broadside or broadsheet ballad *The Sufferings of the British Army in the Camp before Sebastopol* available in facsimile form from the Bodleian Library collection at

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<http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ballads/ballads.htm>. This is described thus: “*Although the soldiers themselves are praised as “England's gallant soldiers” this is a song attacking the political and military leadership of the war*”. Have students highlight the ideas, values and emotions in this text.

- Review responses to the ballad, comparing ideas, values and emotions with their own.
- Read the article from the London Times of November 14, 1854 dispatch, written by William Howard Russell from the front of the Crimean War. This is the article that immediately inspired Alfred Tennyson to write the poem of the same name, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. This is available in word-processed form on Wikisource at <http://en.wikisource.org/wiki>. Have students highlight, in a different colour, the ideas, values and emotions. Then class discussion to explore and identify similarities and differences. Agree a set of 3-5 key statements.
- Next have small groups working on a formal, structured written explanation of how the 3-5 key ideas are presented by the two writers, using a Point Examples Explanation type structure. These could be developed in further essay writing development work.
- Finish off with a review of some of the comparisons, pushing some students to extend the comparison to include the painting too.

3. The Charge of the Light Brigade

- Introduce the idea that Tennyson wrote this poem minutes after reading the Times article already discussed. You could look at the manuscript copy of the poem here: <http://etext.virginia.edu/britpo/tennyson/TenChar.html>. Click on the small images and the manuscript page will open. Right click on the image, select “save picture as” and you can save the 3 pages of the manuscript on your computer.
- Remind students of the historical context of the poem, already explored through the ballad and newspaper article. You could also provide the summary of the battle given in the notes to the poem on the Poetry Archive webpage for the poem. Then read the poem and invite immediate responses. Then 3 further readings with time for students to make notes, in turn, on ideas about war, the values and the emotion. 3 readings should include the astonishing recording available on the Poetry Archive website of Tennyson himself reading the poem.
- Discuss comparisons with the other two texts and painting and produce, as a class, a Venn diagram with 4 overlapping circles exploring the similarities and differences between them.
- Extend this to include discussion of what difference is made by the presentation of this war in the 4 different media we have considered: painting, broadsheet ballad, broadsheet news article, poem. Key questions might include: how do we respond to each form? What longevity does each form have? Who is the intended audience of each? What is the purpose of each? What sort of influence does each have on the ideas about war, values and emotions of their audience?
- Introduce the idea that Tennyson’s poem is frequently anthologised, and appears frequently in surveys of people’s favourite poems. Explore why students think this might be and develop a set of initial ideas. Have students reading a BBC article commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Crimean War, available here <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/3944699.stm> and highlighting/noting the points made here about the enduring appeal of Tennyson’s poem. Add these to the class list, with any fresh ideas that have emerged. This could be developed into written explanations.

4. Wrapping it up

Finish off with an evaluation of these ideas about the enduring appeal of Tennyson’s poem: to what extent do students find them convincing? You could do this as a “Room 101” style discussion with one person advocating expunging the poem from all records, and another defending it.

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Ideas about war	Values	Emotions
A custom past its shelf life that will eventually wither away	Achievement...Adventure...Ambition	Acceptance...Agitation...Alarm
A tool of the state to serve its political interests with	Beauty...Boldness...Change	Amusement...Anger...Angst
All's fair in love and war	Charity...Close relationships	Annoyance...Anticipation
An absurdity	Community...Compassion...	Apathy...Apprehension...Awe
An adventure	Competence...Competition	Bitterness...Boredom...
An affair of honour	Compromise...Conformity	Calmness...Comfort
Ceremonial ritual	Cooperation...Country...Courage	Confidence...Contentment
Crime	Creativity...Decisiveness	Courage...Delight...Depression
Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori	Democracy...Diligence...Duty	Desire...Disappointment
Fundamentally immoral	Education...Efficiency...Endurance	Discontentment...Disgust
Holy war	Equality...Excellence...Excitement	Ecstasy...Elation
Just war	Fame...Fast living...Freedom	Embarrassment...Envy...Fear
Manifestation of a "death wish"	Friendship...Generosity...Happiness	Friendship...Frustration
Nature's way of ensuring survival of the fittest	Having a family...Helping people	Gladness...Glee... Gratitude
Necessary evil to protect peace and freedom	Helping society...Honesty...Humility	Grief...Guilt...Happiness
Outlet for natural aggression	Independence...Influencing others	Hate...Homesickness...Honour
Punishment from God	Integrity...Intellectual status	Hope...Horror...Humility
The bane of humanity	Involvement...Kindness...Knowledge	Impatience...Inadequacy
The liberating force for the creation of a brave new world	Leadership...Location...Love	Irritability...Jealousy...Joy
The proper occupation of a nobleman	Loyalty...Meaningful work...Mercy	Kindness...Loneliness...Love
	Merit...Modesty...Money...Nature	Lust...Melancholy...Modesty
	Order...Patience...Peace...	Negativity...Nervousness
	Perseverance...Physical challenge	Nostalgia...Pain...Passion
	Pleasure...Power...Privacy	Patience...Peace...Phobia
	Prudence...Public service...Reason	Pity...Pride...Rage...Regret
	Religion...Reputation...Respect	Remorse...Resentment
	Responsibility...Security	Sadness...Self-pity...Shame
	Self-control...Selflessness	Shock...Shyness...Sorrow
	Self-respect...Sophistication	Suffering...Surprise...Suspense
	Stability...Status...Tolerance	Terror...Unhappiness
	Truth...Wisdom....Work	Vulnerability...Worry...Yearning
		Zest

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Variations

- You could add in some activities to make the readings of the two poems more active, such as having students “sculpt” a frozen image to represent each stanza, or rehearsing a gesture to go with each line. These would add in some kinaesthetic, drama-based work that may be enjoyable and help some students get “inside” the poem in a different way.
- Able/enthusiastic students could extend this work by exploring Tennyson’s related poem, *The Charge of the Heavy Brigade*, also available as text and recording on the Poetry Archive website
- You could add an extra level of media comparison by including for comparison the trailer for the 1936 film *The Charge of the Light Brigade* starring Errol Flynn, available via the Internet Movie Database website at www.imdb.com.

Other resources

- More images and material available at the Imperial War Museum and its website at www.iwm.org.uk
- Information about obtaining facsimile copies of old newspapers from Historic Newspapers at www.historic-newspapers.co.uk or from the British Library’s newspapers collection at <http://www.bl.uk/collections/newspapers.html>
- Additional facsimile texts about the Crimean War available online on the National Archive’s website at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/battles/crimea