An A level Student Workbook
by
Chris Cox, Julia Geddes, Kitty Graham and Anna Merrick

Student Tasks

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This workbook examines a variety of non-fiction extracts reflecting the type of material set for study by the AQA (Specification A). The passages explore a range of themes and ideas but they are all concerned with World War One in one form or another. The purpose of this workbook is to lead you through the passages, direct your thinking, develop the ways in which you can use your wider reading and enable you to respond in an informed and confident way to questions set by the examination board.

You should keep your own fuller notes in a notebook or ring binder. Where you see the notebook symbol on the left, a fuller response is required and your comments and answers in your own notebook or file will form an important revision aid.

At the end of the workbook you will see some specimen questions of the kind that you might find in a GCE Literature examination.

**A few tips on studying the unseen passage**

When you use the workbook to study the topic *World War One Literature*, it is important that you have read each passage carefully yourself and that you are familiar with what each aspect of it is saying. Before we embark on this process, we will consider how we study unseen passages.

As in the study of fictional literature, we should be guided by two key words: HOW and WHY. That is to say, how is a writer using language? And why has the writer chosen to use a particular image, symbol or technique? It is always helpful to remind yourself of the technical terms used to describe figurative language as well as the methods adopted to produce effective speeches, reports, essays and other academic writing, autobiography or journalism. If you are going to use these terms, however, you must understand how and why the writers have employed their chosen devices. You need to do more than make reference to a technical term and then move on with no discussion about the writer’s craft.
Your wider reading

To enable you to keep a record of ideas and attitudes to World War One whilst reading your poetry, prose and drama texts, we suggest that you also write down in your notebook short quotations under the headings provided below. This will help you to remember them more easily and to use them to discuss how similar to, or different from, your own reading about World War One you find the unseen extract set in the examination. In addition, it would be useful to research some of the historical context of the First World War.

Here are the headings you should use to link to quotations:

- Romanticised attitudes to war
- The horror of war
- Squalid living conditions
- Disturbed mental states
- Class
- The incompetence of those in command
- The gap in perception and lives between people on the home front and those in the trenches
- The perspectives and experiences of women
- The differing views and roles of old people and young people
- Attitudes to God and religion
- Time
- Nature

Good luck with your studying.
Read the following extract from a letter written by a British Sub-Lieutenant, aged 19, to another, aged 17. The writer describes embarking on the battle of Jutland, which was the largest naval battle of World War One and the only full-scale engagement of battleships during the war. It was fought in the North Sea, near Jutland in Denmark, from 31 May to 1 June 1916, between the British Grand Fleet and the (smaller) German High Seas Fleet, the two most significant navies in the world at that time. Fourteen British and eleven German ships were destroyed and an estimated 6,100 British and 2,555 German sailors killed. Neither side was able to claim overall victory – and both commanders, particularly Britain’s Admiral Jellicoe, came in for criticism at their handling of the conflict – but the German threat to British ships in the North Sea was reduced: the German High Seas Fleet was never in a position to take on such a major conflict again.

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I have been intending to write and tell you all about the 31st, but couldn’t find your address and could only remember the number.

I’m so awfully sorry you weren’t in it. It was rather terrible but a wonderful experience, and I wouldn’t have missed it for anything, but, by Jove! it is not a thing one wants to make a habit of.

I must say it’s very different from what I expected. I expected to be excited but was not a bit; it’s hard to express what we did feel like, but you know the sort of feeling one had when one goes in to bat at cricket and rather a lot depends upon you doing well and you’re waiting for the first ball; well, it’s very much the same as that - do you know what I mean? A sort of tense feeling waiting for the unknown to happen, and not quite knowing what to expect; one does not feel the slightest bit frightened, and the idea that there’s a chance of you and your ship being scuppered does not really enter one’s head - there are too many other things to think about.

This ship is just about the latest thing in destroyers and we are all transferred, officers and ship’s company, from the Bearer here.
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Continues over
We were attached to the battle-cruisers and were with them throughout the action, so we were probably in the thick of it, as no doubt you saw in the papers that the battle-cruisers stood the brunt of the action, and we were in action for about three hours before the battleships arrived upon the scene.

To start with, it was all at such long range that the destroyers were rather out of it, except there were plenty of 15-inch falling round us, and we just watched. It really seemed rather like a battle practice on a large scale and we could see the flashes of the German guns on the horizon.

Then they ordered us to attack, so we bustled off at full bore. Being navigator, also having control of all the guns, I was on the bridge all the time and remained there for twelve hours without leaving it at all.

When we got fairly close I sighted a good-looking Hun destroyer which I thought I’d like to strafe. You know, it’s awful fun to know that you can blaze off at a real ship and do as much damage as you like.

Well, I’d just got their range on the guns and we’d just fired one round when some more of our destroyers coming from the opposite direction got between us and the enemy and completely blanketed us, so we had to stop firing as the risk of hitting one of our own ships was too great – which was rather rot.

Shortly afterwards they recalled us, so we bustled back again. How any destroyers got out of it is perfectly wonderful.

What key points does the letter writer make in this extract and how does he convey these points?

Make notes on the writer’s choices of form, structure and language and how they contribute to the meanings in the passage

What can you say about the writer’s tone and how this expresses his attitudes? Comment on the references he makes.

How has the time of writing influenced the views articulated here?
What connections can you make between the attitudes and values expressed in this extract and those in your wider reading? You should consider some of the writers’ use of form, structure and language as you explore these.

Now try to find some quotations that convey ideas different from the views expressed in the extract of the letter.
Read the following extract written by Frederick Broome, a Gunner in
the Royal Field Artillery, recalling his time in the army at the
outbreak of war in 1914 and his subsequent experience of being
invalided back to England.

When the war broke out I was fifteen years of age but I was
already in the Army. I went to France in August 1914 and was
there through the retirement from Mons, the battle of the Marne
and then the advance to Ypres. It was there that I caught enteric
fever and was invalided back to England. I went and visited my
father and he sent in my birth certificate so I was discharged for
having misstated my age on enlistment.

I got a job in Civvy Street and a few months afterwards I was
walking across Putney Bridge when I was accosted by four girls
who gave me three white feathers. I explained to them I had been
in the Army, and had been discharged, and that I was still only
sixteen years of age, but they didn’t believe me. By now several
people had collected around the girls who were giggling. I felt
most uncomfortable and awfully embarrassed and said something
about how I had a good mind to chuck them into the Thames and
eventually broke off the conversation feeling very humiliated. I
finished the walk across the bridge and there on the other side was
the 37th London Territorial Association of the Royal Field
Artillery. I walked straight in and rejoined the Army.

Make notes on the key points Broome makes about his experiences
of war and, later, of the home front.

Consider the tone of the extract and comment on what kind of
vocabulary the writer uses and the references he makes.

Make notes on what influence you think the time of writing might
have had on the viewpoints expressed in the passage.

Now make some connections between Broome’s attitudes
expressed in the passage and those in your wider reading. You
should attempt to comment on the way the ideas are expressed
by looking closely at the language used.

Now try to find some quotations that are different from the
views expressed by Broome.
Read the following extract from an account written by a seriously wounded soldier in the Royal Field Artillery in 1917.

I was in a carriage on a stretcher fixed on the wall and when I looked round Sergeant Emsley was next to me. He’d been wounded in the leg as well. They took us to a hospital at Étaples and then put me in a bed and fitted me with a Thomas splint, a round wooden ring with iron bands and a footrest. The pain from my knee was getting terrible so when I saw an officer coming up with his arm around two sisters and laughing, I said, ‘Excuse me, Sir, could you have a look at my knee? The pain is driving me crazy.’

He came over and he stank of whisky. When the nurses took the bandages off he said, ‘Oh there’s fluid above the knee. We’ll tap that tonight.’ So they came for me to go to the theatre and I thought, ‘Thank God for that.’ But when I woke up in the early hours of the morning I thought, ‘Oh my God. My leg’s gone.’ They’d guillotined it off without saying a word. There had been no hint at all that I was going to lose my leg. They hadn’t even looked at it until I asked the doctor.

That day, I prayed to die. All I could think of were the men who stood begging on street corners with a crutch and a tin can. And I was a footballer and that was finished. It was terrible. Late in the afternoon, a nurse came up, took the blanket off and started tearing the gauze off that had dried on. As she was pulling it I think I called her every name I knew. I said, ‘You’re inhuman, woman!’ but she didn’t take any notice, she must have been deaf. She could have wet it, which would have made it come off easily, but she wouldn’t. I was in agony.

After that, they put me on a boat and I was taken to Stockport General Hospital. A civilian doctor, Mr Fenwick, came to look at me and when he took the bandages off the smell was terrible. The flesh had receded, two inches of bone stuck out and it had gone black. He said, ‘Send a telegram for his mother and father to come right away.’ He thought I was going to die. He told a sister to get a bowl of sterilised water with peroxide in it and that my leg had to be syringed with this solution every four hours. And then it started to get better. The wound became beautiful clean red flesh. Mr Fenwick said, ‘We’re going to win, Willie.’ My parents came, and my future wife, whom I’d met when I was home on leave. I think it was her that pulled me through. And Mr Fenwick was an angel. He arranged for a friend of his, a surgeon who specialised in amputations, to re-amputate the leg and make a proper stump. He did it and it was perfect. Everybody seeing it said, ‘What a beautiful job.’
What key point is the young soldier making about the way injured men were treated after battle? Try to consider the vocabulary he uses.

Now develop your ideas on the style of language used and the tone of the extract.

What influences do you think the time of writing may have had on the young man’s view point?

What connections can you make between the young soldier’s view of his treatment after battle and your wider reading? You should consider some of the writers’ use of form, structure and language as you explore these.

Now try to find some quotations that demonstrate different ideas from the views expressed in the passage.
Educated at Pontypridd Intermediate School, Glyn Morgan joined the army from school. He was killed in action in Flanders on 1 August 1917 at the age of 21 and was recommended for a posthumous Victoria Cross. It was the custom for soldiers to write a letter to their immediate family (next of kin) which would only be sent in the event of their death. Some letters were also written, as this one is, prior to a major engagement with the enemy. Letters were left with soldiers’ private possessions in the trench.

Extract 4  In the event – Glyn Morgan

My dear Dad,

This letter is being written on the eve of our ‘going over the top’ in a big attack.

It is only because I know by this time what are the odds against returning unhurt that I write it. It will only be sent in the event of my being killed in action. You, I know, my dear Dad, will bear the shock as bravely as you have always borne the strain of my being out here, yet I should like, if possible, to help you to carry on with as stout a heart as I hope to ‘jump the bags’.

I believe I have told you before that I do not fear Death itself; the Beyond has no terrors for me. I am quite content to die for the cause for which I have given up nearly three years of my life, and I only hope that I may meet Death with as brave a front as I have seen other men do before.

My one regret is that the opportunity has been denied me to repay you to the best of my ability for the lavish kindness and devotedness which you have always shewn me. I had hoped to do so in the struggle of Life. Now, however, it may be that I have done so in the struggle between Life and Death, between England and Germany, Liberty and Slavery. In any case, I shall have done my duty in my little way.

Well, Dad, please carry on with a good heart, then I shall be quite content. Goodbye, dearest of fathers, goodbye E_____ and G____. May you all reap the benefits of this great war and keep cheery and happy through life.

Your affectionate son and brother,

Glyn
Read the first two paragraphs of the letter. How does the soldier convey his emotions about going into battle? Comment on the language used and tone of the writing.

Now read the next section and make notes on the soldier’s attitude towards death and the justification for the war.

Having considered the ways in which Glynn Morgan refers to going into battle and his attitude towards death and the cause for which he was fighting, now link your ideas to your wider reading. How similar to or different from other texts you have read is the letter you have read? In your answer you should discuss the writers’ choice of form, structure and language.

In contrast, post-1917 literature is often less sanguine about the war and death. Try to find some examples.
Sidney Rogerson was a company commander in a battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment. The following extract is part of his account of being relieved in the line, at the Somme, in November 1916. He tells of a journey along the trenches where he encounters a young lance corporal who meets with his displeasure.

From A Company’s sap to that of B Company was only a few yards along Fall Trench and my visit took the post there, consisting of a young lance-corporal and two men, by surprise. The Corporal had not only allowed his men to take off their equipment, but was minus his own while there was a general atmosphere of slackness. It was strictly against orders to remove any essential equipment while in the trenches and the offence naturally became still more heinous in men on what was virtually outpost duty. Still, in view of the youth of the NCO and his good record, I was prepared to let him off this time with a good dressing-down, had he not shown a kind of familiar resentment that I should have taken exception to his indiscipline. This hint of familiarity touched me on a delicate spot. It had always seemed absurd to me to try to adhere rigidly to the conventional formalities of discipline in the trenches where officers lived cheek-by-jowl with their men, shared the same dangers, the same dug-outs and sometimes the same mess-tins. Quite apart from the absurdity, I believed, and nothing I ever saw subsequently shook me in the belief, that the way to get the best out of the British soldier was for an officer to show that he was the friend of his men and to treat them as friends. This naturally involved a relaxation of pre-war codes of behaviour but it did not mean that an officer should rub shoulders with his men at every opportunity or allow them to become familiar with him. It meant rather that he should step down from the pedestal on which his rank put him and walk easily among his men, relying on his own personality to give him the superior position he must occupy if he wished to lead. He consequently had to steer a delicate course between treating those under him as equals in humanity if inferiors in status and losing their respect by becoming too much one of them. He must deal with them sympathetically and at all times interpret the law in the spirit and not in the letter but he had equally to be jealous of his position and never allow leniency to be looked upon as a weakness or friendship to degenerate into familiarity. He had, in short, to discriminate between the men who would appreciate his interest and those who would be foolish enough to try to impose upon his good nature.

Continues over
This was a case in point. Nothing was left to me but to take disciplinary action and, sending for his platoon commander, Hall, I ordered him to be relieved of his post and brought up for punishment when we got out of the line. For that show of bad manners, he was to lose his lance-stripe.

It was but a few moments before our minds were turned to less serious thoughts. Hall and I had walked a little further along to the right of the sector – we were standing talking in the front line when we noticed a scuffling of earth in the parados [rear crest] of the trench and out fell a furry, fat little mole. It appeared as one of nature’s miracles that this blind, slow creature could have survived in ground so pounded and upturned. After holding him for a few minutes, and marvelling at the strength of his tiny limbs, we put him into his hole again to find his way back whence he had come. A few desperate clawings and he had easily disappeared. How we wished we could dig ourselves in so easily!

**Make notes on the key points Rogerson is making here and the ways in which he expresses these key points.**

**Consider the tone of the extract and comment on the kind of vocabulary the writer uses and the references he makes.**

**Try to make some connections between Rogerson’s view of the war as he expresses it here and the views expressed elsewhere in this book and in your wider reading, exploring the writers’ choice of form, structure and language as you do so.**

**Now try to find some perspectives that are different from the views expressed in the extract.**
This is an extract from a declaration Sassoon made in July 1917 when he had completely lost faith with the plans and designs of the military command. Sassoon was a captain in the army and had been praised and decorated for his bravery and commitment to the cause. The declaration was sent directly to several leading literary and political figures of the day as well as being read aloud in the House of Commons and published in The Times newspaper on 30 July 1917.

I am making this statement as an act of wilful defiance of military authority because I believe that the war is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it.

I am a soldier, convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that this war, upon which I entered as a war of defence and liberation, has now become a war of aggression and conquest. I believe that the purposes for which I and my fellow soldiers entered upon this war should have been so clearly stated as to have made it impossible to change them and that, had this been done, the objects which actuated us would now be attainable by negotiation.

I have seen and endured the sufferings of the troops and I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings for ends which I believe to be evil and unjust. I am not protesting against the conduct of the war, but against the political errors and insincerities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed.

On behalf of those who are suffering now I make this protest against a deception which is being practised on them; also I believe that I may help to destroy the callous complacency with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share, and which they have not sufficient imagination to realise.

What key point is Sassoon making about his attitude to the war? How does he make this key point? Try to examine the language he uses.

Now examine the ways in which Sassoon’s attitude towards the war is conveyed through his choice of language, structure and form. You may also wish to consider the tone he adopts.
What influence do you think the time of writing and Sassoon’s gender might have had on his viewpoint?

Having looked closely at the key points Sassoon makes here, go back now and attempt to link the passage to your wider reading. First, you should consider similarities to your wider reading material. If possible, also consider the writers’ choices of form, structure and language.

Now try to find some quotations that demonstrate different ideas from the views expressed in the passage.
Read carefully through the following extract which is taken from an essay by DH Lawrence published in *The Manchester Guardian* newspaper on 18 August 1914. Lawrence’s wife was German and he had spent some time, in the summer before the war, in Bavaria where he watched some German soldiers going through their manoeuvres. In the article, Lawrence explores the realities of war, revealing remarkable insight into the nature of modern warfare.

On the crown of the little hill were three quick-firing guns, with the gunners behind. At the side, perched up on a tiny platform at the top of a high pair of steps, was an officer looking through a fixed spyglass. A little further behind, lower down the hill, was a group of horses and soldiers.

Every moment came the hard, tearing, hideous voice of the German command from the officer perched aloft, giving the range to the guns; and then the sharp cry, “Fire!” There was a burst, something in the guns started back, the faintest breath of vapour disappeared. The shots had gone.

I watched, but I could not see where they had gone, nor what had been aimed at. Evidently they were directed against an enemy a mile and a half away, men unseen by any of the soldiers at the guns. Whether the shot they fired hit or missed, killed or did not touch, I and the gun-party did not know. Only the officer was shouting the range again, the guns were again starting back, we were again staring over the face of the green and dappled, inscrutable country into which the missiles sped unseen.

What work was there to do? – only mechanically to adjust the guns and fire the shot. What was there to feel? – only the unnatural suspense and suppression of serving a machine which, for aught we knew, was killing our fellow-men, whilst we stood there, blind, without knowledge or participation, subordinate to the cold machine. This was the glamour and the glory of the war: blue sky overhead and living green country all around, but we, amid it all, a part in some iron insensate will, our flesh and blood, our soul and intelligence shed away, and all that remained of us a cold, metallic adherence to an iron machine. There was neither ferocity nor joy nor exultation nor exhilaration nor even quick fear: only a mechanical, expressionless movement.

What key point is Lawrence making about the nature of war? Try to consider the vocabulary he uses.
Now make notes on the style of language used and the tone of the extract.

What influence do you think the time of writing may have had on the views expressed?

What connections can you make between the views expressed by Lawrence and those in your wider reading? You should consider some of the writers’ use of form, structure and language as you explore these.

Now try to find some quotations that convey different ideas to the views expressed here.
Vera Brittain was at Oxford University when the First World War broke out. She, her brother Edward and their immediate circle of friends rushed to volunteer to help the war effort. The men – all of whom were to die in the war - joined the armed forces and, along with numerous other women of upper middle class and wealthy families, Vera became a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurse.

HMHS Britannic was the third and largest of the White Star Olympic-class liners. Its sister ships were RMS Titanic and RMS Olympic. It was used as a hospital ship in the First World War and sank in 1916 with the loss of 30 lives after hitting a mine.

**Vera to Edward**  
Malta, 28 November 1916

Isn't it dreadful the way hospital ships are being torpedoed; I should think that even the Germans will find it hard to explain away four in a fortnight. I suppose since they cannot shake our supremacy at sea they are wreaking vengeance on the only kind of ship which is known not even to attempt to defend itself. We are all very sad at the fate of the poor, gorgeous Britannic; it seems impossible to imagine those beautiful saloons and state cabins at the bottom of the sea. We are wondering what is the fate of some of the nice people we met on board but we hear that some of the sisters are coming here to recover from the shock and partly to wait until the Powers that Be decide what to do with them; so I suppose we shall hear all about it. The Germans, as you probably know, had threatened her, and now that she is sunk I suppose there is no harm in telling you that we had a very narrow escape ourselves; we were chased through the Archipelago by a submarine and for some time we were in considerable danger though fortunately for our peace of mind we did not know it at the time... We only thought we were going rather fast for a region supposedly difficult to navigate but as we always went very fast it did not impress us much. Isn't it extraordinary that both the ships which brought us here should have suffered the same fate!

Make notes on the key points Brittain makes here and the ways in which she expresses these key points.
Explore the form and structure of the extract and examine how it contributes to the meaning.

Consider the tone of the extract and comment on what kind of vocabulary the writer uses and the references she makes.

Try to make some connections between Brittain’s view of the war as she expresses it here and the views expressed elsewhere in this book and in your wider reading, considering the form, structure and language of the texts you find.

Now try to find some texts which explore views which are different from those expressed in Vera Brittain’s letter.
This letter was sent to the editor of *The Morning Post* in 1916. It struck a chord with people at home and, by popular demand, was reprinted as a pamphlet, selling 75,000 copies in one week. Although it appears to be written by a woman, some people, then and now, believed it was not a genuine letter but a piece of propaganda. In any case, it can be seen as a reflection of some of the attitudes of the period and as an example of the extreme jingoism often attributed to women who saw themselves as part of the home front.

[**Tommy Atkins was the name given to any British frontline soldier and dates back to 1815 when the specimen forms used by the Army were often filled in with the name Thomas Atkins and example details. Later, the name was shortened to Tommy Atkins and then Tommy as a name for any soldier.**]

**To the Editor of The Morning Post**

Sir,

As a mother of an only child - a son now in training and waiting for the age limit to do his bit - may I be permitted to reply to Tommy Atkins, whose letter appeared in your issue of the 9th inst.? Perhaps he will kindly convey to his friends in the trenches not what the Government thinks, not what the Pacifists think, but what the mothers of the British race think of our fighting men. It is a voice which demands to be heard, seeing that we play the most important part in the history of the world, for it is we who 'mother the men' who have to uphold the honour and traditions not only of our Empire, but of the whole civilised world.

To the man who pathetically calls himself a 'common soldier', may I say that we women who demand to be heard will tolerate no such cry as 'Peace! Peace!' where there is no peace. The corn that will wave over land watered by the blood of our brave lads shall testify to the future that their blood was not spilt in vain. We need no marble monuments to remind us. We only need that force of character behind all motives to see this monstrous world tragedy brought to a victorious ending. The blood of the dead and the dying, the blood of the 'common soldier' from his 'slight wounds' will not cry out to us in vain. They have all done their share and we, as women, will do ours without murmuring and without complaint.

Send the Pacifists to us and we shall very soon show them, and show the world, that in our homes at least there shall be no 'sitting at home warm and cosy in the winter, cool and “comfy” in the summer.'
There is only one temperature for the women of the British race, and that is white heat. With those who disgrace their sacred trust of motherhood we have nothing in common. Our ears are not deaf to the cry that is ever ascending from the battlefield from men of flesh and blood whose indomitable courage is borne to us, so to speak, on every blast of the wind. We women pass on the human ammunition of 'only sons' to fill up the gaps, so that when the 'common soldier' looks back before going 'over the top' he may see women of the British race on his heels, reliable, dependent, uncomplaining.

The reinforcements of women are, therefore, behind the 'common soldier.' We gentle-nurtured, timid sex did not want the war. It is no pleasure to us to have our homes made desolate and the apple of our eye taken away. We would sooner our lovable, promising, rollicking boy stayed at school. We would have much preferred to have gone on in a light-hearted way with our amusement and our hobbies. But the bugle call came and we have hung up the tennis racquet, we've put his cap away and we have glanced lovingly over his last report, which said 'Excellent' - we've wrapped them all in a Union Jack and locked them up, to be taken out only after the war to be looked at. A 'common soldier', perhaps, did not count on the women but they have their part to play and we have risen to our responsibility. We are proud of our men and they in turn have to be proud of us. If the men fall, Tommy Atkins, the women won't.

Tommy Atkins to the front
He has gone to bear the brunt.
Shall 'stay-at-homes' do naught but snivel and but sigh?
No, while your eyes are filling
We are up, and doing, willing
To face the music with you - or to die!

Women are created for the purpose of giving life and men to take it. Now we are giving it in a double sense. It's not likely that we are going to fail Tommy. We shall not flinch one iota but when the war is over he must not grudge us, when we hear the bugle call of 'lights out', a brief, very brief, space of time to withdraw into our own secret chambers and share with Rachel the Silent the lonely anguish of a bereft heart and to look once more on the college cap before we emerge stronger women to carry on the glorious work our men's memories have handed down to us for now and all eternity.

Yours, &c.,
A LITTLE MOTHER
How does the writer present women’s contribution to the war? What is her view of those who criticise the war or draw attention to the loss of life?

Consider the tone of the letter and comment on the language used and the references the writer makes.

What influences might the time of writing have had on the viewpoints expressed in the letter?

How similar is the text to other texts you have read? You should discuss the writers’ choice of form, structure and language.

Now look for some alternative views on the attitudes of people - and especially the women - at home.
Read carefully through the following extract, written by A B Baker and taken from an account of her wartime experiences entitled *The Story of a WAAC*. The WAAC (Women's Auxiliary Army Corps) came into being in early 1917 after the severe losses on the Western Front; it was decided that recruiting women to do ‘soft jobs’, mostly clerical and catering posts, would release men to join the fighting forces. About 57,000 women served in the WAAC despite some publicly voiced misgivings - some felt that these responsibilities were not suitable for women and that there was a danger that they would form inappropriately close relationships with soldiers. However, the vast majority of WAACs discharged their duties efficiently and modestly and a few died or were injured, for example, under German shellfire, while carrying them out.

This is a girl’s contribution. It has few thrills.

First, as to why I went: At home, my father was too old to go. Also, he had the farm. My sister and I have no brother. Many relatives lived near us. All had men folk who could go to fight - and did. Uncles, cousins and cousins’ sweethearts were all in the trenches or in training for the trenches.

Three or four times a week an aunt or a cousin would bring in her letter from the Front, and read it proudly. They were anxious of course. One cousin was killed. One uncle was wounded. But they were proud, above all. They said that Father and Mother were lucky, to have no one about whom they need be anxious. Yet even my younger sister could see that they pitied us, too.

I do not know what Mother felt. I quickly discovered that Father did not count himself lucky. Their pity hurt his pride. With him, it was not only pride. The farm had been the family’s for two hundred years. The country meant more to Father than flags waved and glib patriotic cant uttered. The old sorrow that he had no sons had become, I guessed, a new bitterness.

To be brief, there you have the reason why I joined the WAACs. I joined first and told my home folks afterwards. (I had to call myself twenty-one to go to France. I meant to go to France. But I was not nineteen.) Mother was upset. Father said little. Yet I knew that he was glad.

I was sent to camp near Oswestry. My humdrum training days are of no interest to Everyman. Here are two impressions which remain.

Continues over
How good it was to wear (unofficial) riding breeches! How queer in the small villages of the Glyn Ceiriog Valley to feel myself the foreigner that I was! I had not left Britain: yet I was a stranger in a strange land, with strange speech in my ears.

We went to France, via Folkestone. Our billet was a big hotel by the sea. I liked its luxury. It had not occurred to me before that riches have their good side. I seemed to grow taller in those lofty rooms. The many bright lights and the soft, thick carpets made me feel quietly content. I think that I must have had the feeling which our cat has when it purrs on the rug before the fire at home.

Our draft was posted. The end of Folkestone was excitement and inoculation and leave. That last English leave of mine was rather wonderful. Mother cried. Daddy took me down to the pig-sties and talked. He told me that he was proud of me. He knew, he said, that I should be good. He wanted me to be kind as well as good. The Tommies were heroes, but they were men, too. I had only to respect myself, and they would respect me, also.
Whilst women are often represented as being supremely patriotic, idealistic and unaware of the true horror of the war, especially by angry and embittered male writers, many did participate in the war by serving as trained nurses or in the VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) or WAAC (Women's Auxiliary Army Corps) and saw at close quarters the injuries and the effects on the mental conditions of the soldiers. Similarly, many mothers wrote not about the glory of their sons serving their country but about loss and remembrance. The next extract is by Evadne Price, a journalist and novelist, who wrote under the pseudonym, Helen Zenna Smith.

Forgive me, Mother and Mrs Evans-Mawnington. That was not the kind of language a nicely-brought-up young lady from Wimbledon Common uses. I forget myself. We will begin again.

See the man they are fitting into the bottom slot. He is coughing badly. No, not pneumonia. Not tuberculosis. Nothing so picturesque. Gently, gently, stretcher bearers – he is about done. He is coughing up clots of pinky-green filth. Only his lungs, Mother and Mrs. Evans-Mawnington. He is coughing well tonight. That is gas. You've heard of gas, haven't you? It burns and shrivels the lungs to… to the mess you see on the ambulance floor there. He’s about the age of Bertie, Mother. Not unlike Bertie, either, with his gentle brown eyes and fair curly hair. Bertie would look up pleadingly like that in between coughing up his lungs… The son you have so generously given to the war. The son you are so eager to send out to the trenches before Roy Evans-Mawnington, in case Mrs. Evans-Mawnington scores over you at the next recruiting meeting… ‘I have given my only son.’

These are sitters. The man they are hoisting up beside me and the two who sit in the ambulance. Blighty cases… broken arms and trench feet… mere trifles. The smell? Disgusting, isn’t it? Sweaty socks and feet swollen to twice their size… purple, blue, red… big black blisters filled with yellow matter. Quite a colour-scheme, isn’t it? Have I made you vomit? I must ask again pardon. My conversation is daily growing less refined. Spew and vomit and sweat… I had forgotten these words are not used in the best drawing rooms on Wimbledon Common.

Gaze on the heroes who have so nobly upheld your traditions, Mother and Mrs. Evans-Mawnington. Take a good look at them… The heroes you will sentimentalise over until peace is declared, and allow to starve for ever and ever, amen, afterwards.
How does the writer convey her criticism of the stereotypical stay-at-home female patriot?

What influences might the time of writing have had on the viewpoints expressed in the letter?

How similar is the text to other texts you have read? You should discuss the writers’ choice of form, structure and language.

Now look for some alternative portrayals of women and their part in the war.
The daughter of the suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst, E. Sylvia Pankhurst took a leading part in the early stages of the militant campaign mounted by the Women’s Social and Political Union, which had been founded by her mother. The war brought about a break with her mother and sister, Sylvia’s pacifism contrasting with their support for the conflict. The following extract was written over Christmas 1914, whilst visiting Paris.

We found Paris less brilliantly lighted than of old but not in the grim pitch darkness then shrouding London. None of the recruiting posters we had grown accustomed to glared from her walls; having Conscription, the French Government needed no such appeals for obtaining men. The replacing of men by women’s labour, though more extensive, was less ostentatious than it was already becoming in Britain. The war was too near a reality for Paris to make a show of it as they did over here. Some of the large shops had been turned into relief workrooms for unemployed women; one saw them in their dark clothes sewing behind the plate glass windows, for a wage, we were told, of only 5d per day. Some of the finest hotels were converted to military hospitals.

Dr Flora Murray and a staff of women were running a hospital under the French Government at Claridge’s Hotel; for the British War Office was as yet unwilling to accept their aid.

We found Claridge’s still as a sanctuary; in the entrance hall, no one; in the spacious inner hall, silence and lights shrouded in veils. A man in uniform sat at a high desk.

‘Dr Murray,’ we murmured.

He pointed beyond us and we saw her seated, far away and small, writing under a shaded lamp. She did not see us until we were close to her; and then she was so much the pitiful, small-voiced woman who had come to my bedside in the days of the Cat and Mouse Act that at first I did not notice she was in khaki, a dull subdued tone of it, with a narrow, dark red piping: the uniform she had chosen for ‘the women’s hospital corps’. Flat-chested, hipless, emaciated, one might have judged her devoid of stamina; she was tireless in efficient activity; a characteristic example of the intelligent middle class woman, whom an earlier generation would have dismissed as an ‘old maid’. With her almost excessive quietude and gentleness, she had overborne many a seemingly cast-iron Army tradition.

Continues over
In defiance of all precedent, she gave equal treatment to officers and privates, placing them side by side in the same wards.

She led us into the great, brilliantly lighted wards. The soldiers had put up Christmas decorations: ‘A Merry Christmas to our Doctors, Sisters and Nurses!’ in letters of cotton wool. The unfinished hotel had lacked its heating apparatus when war broke out; no such work, even for hospital use, was undertaken now. Huge open braziers of glowing coke had been brought in. ‘Highly unsatisfactory,’ Dr Murray rightly called them, but to the casual observer cosy and picturesque. Convalescent soldiers gathered about them exchanging yarns. All turned in to welcome Dr Murray and her women orderlies. There was an atmosphere of friendliness and peace, wherein life seemed ordered well.

When we had taken tea, and the typical thin bread and butter toasted bun of a modest English household, with Dr Murray and her orderlies, we returned to the wards, and were left alone to talk to the patients. They spoke of the hospital as the desert-worn traveller of the oasis; yet some murmured sadly: of what use to be speedily healed of one’s wounds, to be sent back only the sooner to death or worse? Dr Murray had often complained in the days of the Cat and Mouse Act that her work of restoring Suffragette prisoners, discharged in a state of collapse from the hunger and thirst strike, was futile. More hopeless indeed was her task today! Some of the lads now due for return to the Front looked enviously at those who had lost a limb; the cripples congratulated themselves on their mutilations; and yet thought ruefully of the years to come.

[Note on the Cat and Mouse Act: In 1913, the Women’s Social and Political Union (founded by Emmeline Pankhurst, Sylvia’s mother) stepped up its campaign to destroy public and private property in order to draw attention to the issue of women’s suffrage. The women responsible, when caught, were imprisoned and often went on hunger strike. In order to avoid their dying in prison and thus becoming martyrs for their cause, the government passed an act called the Prisoner’s Temporary Discharge of Ill Health Act. This meant that prisoners could be released from prison until they regained strength, whereupon they would be recaptured and the whole cycle could begin again. The Act became known as the Cat and Mouse Act.]

Make notes on the key points Pankhurst is making here and the ways in which she expresses these key points.
Explore the form and structure of the extract and examine how it contributes to the meaning.

Consider the tone of the extract and comment on what kind of vocabulary the writer uses and the references she makes.

Try to make some connections between Pankhurst’s view of the war as she expresses it here and the views expressed elsewhere in this workbook and in your wider reading, not forgetting to consider the effects of form, structure and language in your new texts.

Now try to find some texts which express ideas that are different from the views expressed here.
The following extract is taken from an account by the Reverend H. Stirling Gahan on the visit he was permitted by the German authorities to make to Edith Cavell the night before her death. Norfolk-born Cavell was director of a hospital in Brussels before the war and stayed in Belgium when it was occupied by the Germans. She was famed for aiding hundreds of Allied soldiers to escape to the neutral Netherlands and eventually arrested on 3 August 1915. A devout Christian, she did not deny the charges brought against her and was executed by firing squad on 12 October. After her death, described by an American diplomat in Brussels (the United States had yet to join the war) as ‘a murder which would stir all civilised countries to horror and disgust’, her brave story, accompanied by illustrations which represented her as innocent, vulnerable and a lot younger than she was, was used in numerous propaganda campaigns to demonise the Germans and inspire men to join up lest more defenceless British women be slaughtered.

On Monday evening, October 11th, I was admitted by special passport form the German authorities to the prison of St. Gilles, where Miss Edith Cavell had been confined for ten weeks.

The final sentence had been given early that afternoon.

To my astonishment and relief I found my friend perfectly calm and resigned. But this could not lessen the tenderness and intensity of feeling on either part during that last interview of almost an hour.

Her first words to me were upon a matter concerning herself personally, but the solemn asseveration which accompanied them was made expressly in the light of God and eternity.

She then added that she wished all her friends to know that she willingly gave her life for her country, and said: ‘I have no fear nor shrinking; I have seen death so often that it is not strange or fearful to me.’

She further said, ‘I thank God for this ten weeks’ quiet before the end. Life has always been hurried and full of difficulty. This time of rest has been a great mercy. They have all been very kind to me here. But this I would say, standing as I do in view of God and eternity, I realise that patriotism is not enough, I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone.’
What key points does Reverend Gahan make in this extract and how does he convey those points?

Make notes on the writer’s choices of form, structure and language and how they contribute to the meanings in the passage.

What can you say about the tone of the writer and his subject and how this expresses their attitudes? Comment on the references they make.

Where can you see influences of the time of writing on views articulated here?

Now try to find some texts which explore similar ideas to the ones featured here.

Look for some texts which express different perspectives from Cavell’s and Gahan’s.
The questions in the examination will ask you to:

- reflect on how the writers present their thoughts and feelings about war
- explore the extent to which the extract you are given is similar to and different from your wider reading in the literature of World War One
- consider the writers’ choices of form, language and structure.

The assignments that follow will now guide you through what you will be expected to do under examination conditions. You will see that our responses are more detailed although, in the examination, you will not have time to use all the ideas you have.

In this next section, as you study these passages, start to practise a more integrated approach to your discussion.

At this stage, the separate questions and bullet points are only here to help you.

Practice Question No. 1

Tributes to ‘The Unknown Warrior’ at the Cenotaph, London

The Cenotaph stands in Whitehall, London. It is undecorated, apart from a carved wreath on each end and the words ‘The Glorious Dead’, chosen by Rudyard Kipling. The first wreath was laid at a wooden Cenotaph by King George V on 11 November 1919. However, the ceremony captured the public imagination and the sculptor Edwin Lutyens was commissioned to design a stone Cenotaph which was unveiled by the King on Armistice Day 1920. In the meantime, it was decided that the body of an unknown soldier be returned to England for burial at the same time as the unveiling of the Cenotaph. The original idea came from the vicar of Margate, the Reverend David Railton MC, who had served as a padre in France in 1916. Years later he wrote:

‘I came back from the line at dusk. We had just laid to rest the mortal remains of a comrade. I went to a billet in front of Erkingham, near Armentières. At the back of the billet was a small garden and in the garden, only six paces from the house, there was a grave. At the head of the grave there stood a rough cross of white wood. On the cross was written in deep black-pencilled letters ‘An
Unknown British Soldier’ and, in brackets beneath, ‘of the Black Watch’. It was dusk and no one was near, except some officers in the billet playing cards. I remember how still it was. Even the guns seemed to be resting.

How that grave caused me to think.’

On the morning of 11 November 1919, the body of the Unknown Warrior was drawn to the Cenotaph on a gun carriage pulled by six black horses, followed by twelve distinguished pallbearers, including Generals Haig, Beatty and French. At eleven o'clock - ‘the eleventh hour’ - as Big Ben began to chime, the King faced the Cenotaph and released the flags covering the monument. This was followed by two minutes’ silence and the sounding of the Last Post.

The Unknown Soldier was then taken down Whitehall to Westminster Abbey where the nave was lined by 100 soldiers who had been awarded the Victoria Cross. The Royal Family was present but the congregation was mainly composed of widows and mothers who had lost sons. There was no foreign representation. The service was brief and according to The Times newspaper, 'the most beautiful, the most touching and the most impressive this island has ever seen.'

Up to the time the grave was closed on 18 November, an estimated 1,250,000 people visited the Abbey but the pilgrimage continued long afterwards, with the space enclosing the grave remaining filled with flowers and other tributes for almost a year.

Read the following extracts carefully.

**Extract A**

**Phillip Gibbs - Daily Chronicle, 12 November 1920**

It did not seem an Unknown Warrior whose body came on a gun-carriage down Whitehall where we were waiting for him. He was known to us all. It was one of ‘our boys’ – not warriors – as we called them in the days of darkness lit by faith . . . To some women, weeping a little in the crowd after an all-night vigil, he was their own boy who went missing one day and was never found till now . . . To many men wearing ribbons and badges on civil clothes, he was a familiar figure, one of their comrades . . . It was the steel helmet – the old ‘tin hat’ - lying there on the crimson of the flag, which revealed him instantly, not as a mythical warrior, aloof from common humanity, a shadowy type of national pride and martial glory, but as one of those fellows dressed in the drab of khaki, stained by mud and grease, who went into the dirty ditches with this steel hat on his head . . .
Extract B

**Pathetic Tributes - Daily Herald, 13 November 1920**

Close by the King’s massive offering there lay a small wreath of laurel and flowers, to which was attached this touching dedication:

‘In loving remembrance of our darling, Jim Cook, who answered his country’s call at the early age of thirteen years and ten months and laid his life down at seventeen years of age. Ever remembered by Dad and Mam, Brothers and Sisters at home and abroad.’

Another bore this touching inscription:

‘From ‘Little Mother’ (unable to be present) to her only child ‘Somewhere in France’.’

Yet another sorrowing ‘Little Mother’ had inscribed her offering:

‘Somewhere in France.’ We will remember thee in the mornings, and in the night season we will not forget.’

Now, as you study these extracts, remember to practise a more integrated approach to your discussion.

In the light of this, re-read the extracts and answer the questions that follow. (Remember that, at this stage, the separate questions and bullet points are only here to help you.)

Having re-read extract A, comment on the ways in which the writer describes the reactions to the Unknown Soldier.

Having looked closely at the ways in which the writer of extract A presents the reactions of the onlookers, go back and attempt to link the passage to your wider reading, considering how the passage is similar to or different from what you have read. In your answer, you must attempt to look at the writers’ choices of form, structure and language in contrast to the passage set.

Look at the ways in which the writer of extract A presents the change in attitudes towards the war and loss of life.

Re-read extract B, analysing the meaning and language used and then relating your analysis to your wider reading.
Practice question No. 2
From *A Testament of Youth* - Vera Brittain

The question on your examination paper will always be of the same format for this part of the unit. It will be:

*Read the following extract carefully. It is taken from . . .*

*How does the writer present his or her thoughts and feelings about . . .?*

*How far is the extract similar to and different from your wider reading in the literature of World War I?*

*You should consider writers’ choices of form, language and structure.*

With this in mind, read the following extract carefully.

It is taken from *A Testament of Youth* by Vera Brittain, who worked as a voluntary nurse during the First World War. In this passage, she describes firstly how excited she is at seeing her fiancé Roland, who is due home on leave over the Christmas holidays, and then how she hears the terrible news of his death. This is a retrospective account of that time but, throughout the passage, Brittain is referring to the Christmas of 1915. Roland died on 23 December 1915, at the Casualty Clearing station at Louvencourt.

As Christmas Eve slipped into Christmas Day, I finished tying up the paper bags, and with sister filled the men’s stockings by the exiguous light of an electric torch. Already I could count, perhaps even on my fingers, the hours that must pass before I should see him. In spite of its tremulous eagerness of anticipation, the night again seemed short; some of the convalescent men wanted to go to early services and that meant beginning temperatures and pulses at 3am. As I took them I listened to the rain pounding on the tin roof, and wondered whether, since his leave ran from Christmas Eve, he was already on the sea in that wild, stormy darkness. When the men awoke and reached for their stockings, my whole being glowed with exultant benevolence; I delighted in their pleasure over their childish home-made presents because my own mounting joy made me feel in harmony with all creation.

At eight o’clock, as the passages were lengthy and many of the men were lame, I went along to help them to communion service in the chapel of the college. It was two or three years since I had been to such a service but it seemed appropriate that I should be

Continues over
there, for I felt, wrought up as I was to a high pitch of nervous emotion, that I ought to thank whatever God might exist for the supreme gift of Roland and the love that had arisen so swiftly between us. The music of the organ was so sweet, the sight of the wounded men who knelt and stood with such difficulty so moving, the conflict of joy and gratitude, pity and sorrow in my mind so poignant, that tears sprang to my eyes, dimming the chapel walls and the words that encircled them: ‘I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.’

Directly after breakfast, sent on my way by exuberant good wishes from Betty and Marjorie and many of the others, I went down to Brighton. All day I waited there for a telephone message or a telegram, sitting drowsily in the lounge of the Grand Hotel or walking up and down the promenade, watching the grey sea tossing rough with white surf-crested waves and wondering still what kind of crossing he had had or was having.

When, by ten o’clock at night, no news had come, I concluded that the complications of telegraph and telephone on a combined Sunday and Christmas Day had made communication impossible. So, unable to fight sleep any longer after a night and a day of wakefulness, I went to bed a little disappointed but still unperturbed. Roland’s family, at their Keymer cottage, kept an even longer vigil; they sat up till nearly midnight over their Christmas dinner in the hope that he would join them and, in their dramatic, impulsive fashion, they drank a toast to the Dead.

The next morning I had just finished dressing, and was putting the final touches to the pastel-blue crepe-de-Chine blouse, when the expected message came to say that I was wanted on the telephone. Believing that I was at last to hear the voice for which I had waited for twenty-four hours, I dashed joyously into the corridor. But the message was not from Roland but from Clare; it was not to say that he had arrived home that morning but to tell me that he had died of wounds at a Casualty Clearing station on December 23rd.

Having read the first paragraph, comment on the ways in which Vera Brittain describes her excitement at the return of Roland as she prepares for Christmas in the military hospital.
Having looked closely at the ways in which Brittain presents her emotions and feelings in this first paragraph, go back now and attempt to link it to your wider reading considering how the passage is similar to or different from what you have read. In your answer you must attempt to look at writers’ choices of form, structure and language in contrast to the passage set.

There will be lots of different references that you can make from your wider reading and, although they may not be the same as ours, that does not matter. What is important is that you explore how typical or different they are from the passage set.

Now read the next paragraph looking again at the ways in which Brittain presents issues related to war.

Now, as you have done with paragraph one, link this passage to your own wider reading.

Look at the third paragraph, this time referring to your wider reading in a more integrated way.

Read through the penultimate paragraph. Again, attempt to link the ideas expressed in it to your wider reading whilst at the same time discussing language, form and structure.

Read the last paragraph and again comment on the ways ideas are presented and link them to your wider reading.

As alternatives to these suggestions, you might wish now to attempt to list as many writers you can think of who are either similar to or different from Vera Brittain in this passage, in the styles of writing they choose and the ideas they express. Make a note of the particular theme(s) they address.
Here is our list but yours may be different. This does not matter. In fact, it is encouraging, as it means you are developing your own wider reading which is essential to this unit.

*Birdsong* - Sebastian Faulks  
*Who’s for the Game?* - Jessie Pope  
*I Shouted for Blood* - Janet Begbie  
*Spring Offensive* - Wilfred Owen  
*Anthem for Doomed Youth* - Wilfred Owen  
*Peace* - Rupert Brooke  
*Does it Matter?* - Siegfried Sassoon  
*The Hero* - Siegfried Sassoon  
*My Boy Jack* - David Haig  
*The Accrington Pals* - Peter Whelan

Now practise writing an introduction and a conclusion to the question set.
Practice question No. 3
Letter to my mother – Wilfred Owen

Here is another assignment which will help you to write about the passage you are given in the examination in a more integrated way. Obviously, in the examination, you will not be given the supplementary questions which the workbook offers you – and you will not be able to answer using bullet points. Again, you will see that the responses here are more detailed than you will have time to give in the examination and you may not be able to recall all the longer quotations – but any reference which is embedded in the sentences of your answer or which echoes the text will be useful.

Read the following extract carefully.
It is taken from one of the many letters Wilfred Owen wrote to his mother, Susan Owen, to whom he was extremely close. It was written on 16 January 1917. Although he had joined up in October 1915, following his training, Owen had only been in France for two and a half weeks and the bleak horrors of the battlefield made a profound impression on a young man who had already begun to think of himself as possessing a poetic vocation.

Consider the writer’s thoughts and feelings about the war and the ways in which he expresses them.

Compare this extract to your wider reading, saying how typical you think it is of the literature of World War One. You should consider both subject matter and style.

I can see no excuse for deceiving you about these last four days. I have suffered seventh hell. – I have not been at the front. – I have been in front of it. – I held an advanced post, that is, a ‘dug-out’ in the middle of No Man’s Land.

We had a march of three miles over shelled road, then nearly three along a flooded trench. After that we came to where the trenches had been blown flat out and had to go over the top. It was of course dark, too dark, and the ground was not mud, not sloppy mud, but an octopus of sucking clay, three, four, and five feet deep, relieved only by craters full of water…

Three quarters dead… we reached the dug-out, and relieved the wretches therein…

My dug-out held twenty-five men tight packed. Water filled it to a depth of one or two feet, leaving say four feet of air. One entrance had been blown in and blocked. – So far, the other remained.

Continues over
The Germans knew we were staying there and decided we shouldn’t. Those fifty hours were the agony of my happy life. – Every ten minutes on Sunday afternoon seemed an hour. - I nearly broke down and let myself drown in the water that was now slowly rising over my knees.

Towards 6 o’clock, when, I suppose, you would be going to church, the shelling grew less intense and less accurate: so that I was mercifully helped to do my duty and crawl, wade, climb and flounder over No Man’s Land to visit my other post. It took me half an hour to move about hundred and fifty yards…

In the platoon on my left the sentries over the dug-out were blown to nothing… I kept my own sentries half way down the stairs during the most terrific bombardment. In spite of this, one lad was blown down and I am afraid, blinded.

Read the first paragraph of this extract. How does Owen convey his emotions about what he is going through here?

Now start to compare Owen’s account with some of your wider reading. Look again at this paragraph. How typical of relationships with those ‘back home’, in the writings you have read, is Owen’s frankness with his mother?

Read the second paragraph of the extract. How does Owen present the march through No Man’s Land?

Read the third and fourth paragraphs of the extract. How does Owen portray the physical characteristics of the trenches?

Look again at the second, third and fourth paragraphs. Is Owen’s description of the Somme mirrored in other writings?

Re-read the fifth paragraph of the extract. How does Owen introduce the enemy?
Look again at the fifth paragraph. What other views of the enemy have you read?

Read the sixth paragraph of the extract. What new aspects of Owen’s situation are presented here? Where have you encountered these features in other writing of and about the First World War?

Read the seventh paragraph of the extract. How does Owen present the wounding of his sentry?

Look again at the final paragraph of this extract. Where else, in your wider reading about the First World War, have you found interesting references to the bonds between fellow soldiers?

Here is the list of the texts we have used but, of course, there are many more works of fiction and non-fiction which you may have read which do not appear here. Keep adding to the list!

- Recruiting - E A Mackintosh
- The Hero; Attack - Siegfried Sassoon
- The Volunteer - Herbert Asquith
- All Quiet on the Western Front - Erich Maria Remarque (trans. Brian Murdoch)
- Fall In; War Exalts - Harold Begbie
- To Germany - Charles Sorley
- Greenmantle; The Three Hostages - John Buchan
- Strange Meeting; Exposure; Dulce et Decorum Est; The Sentry - Wilfred Owen
- A Dead Boche - Robert Graves
- Peace - Rupert Brooke
- Bombardment - Richard Aldington
- Here Dead We Lie - A E Housman
- Strange Meeting - Susan Hill

You might also want to look at:
Newspapers from the war years, especially The Times
Paintings by war artists such as Paul Nash.

Now practise writing an introduction and a conclusion to the question set.