



**READING 1E** Use books of quotations (printed or electronic) as needed. **3** Evaluate the changes in sound, form, figurative language, graphics, and dramatic structure in poetry across literary time periods. **RC-12(B)** Make complex inferences about text and use textual evidence to support understanding.

### An Irish Airman Foresees His Death

Poem by William Butler Yeats (See biography on page 1190.)

### The Soldier

Poem by Rupert Brooke

### Dreamers

Poem by Siegfried Sassoon

#### Meet the Authors

##### Rupert Brooke

1887–1915



A handsome, intelligent, and athletic young man, Rupert Brooke earned a reputation as one of Britain's most promising young poets after publishing a series of war sonnets that he wrote early in World War I. Tragically, Brooke's life was cut short: he died at the age of 27 while en route to battle.

**The Poet-Soldier** Brooke graduated in 1909 from Cambridge University, where he had begun to make a name for himself as a poet. Following graduation, he traveled to Germany, North America, and the South Pacific. Returning to England in 1914, Brooke joined the Royal Navy when

World War I broke out and began combat training. During this time, he completed his most important literary work, a sequence of five war sonnets that includes "The Soldier."

**Tragedy and Irony** In February 1915, after participating in only one minor battle, Brooke sailed for Turkey, where he was to take part in a military campaign. During the voyage, he died from blood poisoning. He was buried on the Aegean island of Skíros. According to critic Doris L. Eder, "All England mourned the poet-soldier's death."

##### Siegfried Sassoon

1886–1967



Siegfried Sassoon wrote about the gruesome realities of trench warfare during World War I. Today, his verse is admired for the power with which it portrays the range of emotions experienced on the battlefield.

**The Sporting Life** Sassoon began writing poetry as a child, but he was more interested in sports than school. After dropping out of Cambridge University in 1907, he spent his time playing cricket, hunting foxes, and writing poetry. In 1914, he joined the army just days before England declared war on Germany.

**From Idealism to Cynicism** As an infantry officer in France, Sassoon was wounded several times and received the Military Cross for bravery. However, his wartime experiences affected him profoundly. In 1917, having become a pacifist, he wrote his commanding officer a letter protesting the war. The letter might have led to a court-martial, but Sassoon was instead briefly hospitalized for shell shock and then sent back to the battlefield. He continued to write about his wartime experiences long after the conflict ended.

Authors Online



Go to [thinkcentral.com](http://thinkcentral.com). KEYWORD: HML12-1242

## LITERARY ANALYSIS: TONE

The **tone** of a literary work is an expression of the writer's attitude toward a subject. A poem's tone can usually be described in a single word, such as *solemn*, *joyous*, or *sarcastic*. Though sometimes subtle, tone plays a central role in conveying the poet's meaning. The three poems you are about to read all address warfare, but each has a distinctive tone. As you read, examine the following elements to help identify the tone of each poem:

- the **imagery** used to depict the subject or action
- the poet's **word choices**
- the **speaker's** feelings or thoughts

## READING SKILL: MAKE INFERENCES IN POETRY

To better understand a poem's speaker, you can **make inferences**—or logical guesses—about the text based on evidence or clues you find in the poem and on your own experience. Making inferences is sometimes called “reading between the lines” because you come to an understanding of something that an author has not explicitly stated. For each poem, create a chart like the one shown. As you read, record your inferences and the details on which you based them.

<i>“An Irish Airman Foresees His Death”</i>	
<i>Details from Text</i>	<i>Inferences</i>
<i>“meet my fate”</i>	<i>He’s resigned to the possibility of dying.</i>



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

# Is PATRIOTISM *enough?*

Many soldiers enlist in the military out of a sense of patriotism—love for and dedication to one's country. It is difficult, however, for someone who has never experienced war to imagine the day-to-day realities of military life during war. In this selection, three poets with very different perspectives explore the effect of war on a soldier's psyche.

**DISCUSS** One way to learn more about others' ideas on a topic, such as patriotism or war, is to consult a book of quotations. These books contain well-known sayings on many different subjects. Use the Internet or your library to find a book of quotations and read what others have said about war. With a classmate, discuss which quotes help you understand more about patriotism and the effects of war.



# *An Irish Airman Foresees His Death*

*William Butler Yeats*

**BACKGROUND** Yeats wrote this poem to commemorate the death of Major Robert Gregory, who was killed during World War I. The young soldier was the son of Yeats's patron, Lady Gregory, a leading figure in the Irish Literary Renaissance.

I know that I shall meet my fate  
Somewhere among the clouds above;  
Those that I fight I do not hate,  
Those that I guard I do not love;  
5 My country is Kiltartan Cross,  
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,  
No likely end could bring them loss  
Or leave them happier than before.  
Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,  
10 Nor public men, nor cheering crowds.  
A lonely impulse of delight  
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;  
I balanced all, brought all to mind,  
The years to come seemed waste of breath,  
15 A waste of breath the years behind  
In balance with this life, this death. **A**

**3–4 Those ... love:** Many of the Irish—even those who fought beside the English against the Germans in World War I—resented their English rulers.

**5 Kiltartan Cross:** crossroads in Kiltartan Parish in the west of Ireland. The Gregory estate, Coole Park, was located nearby.

## **A MAKE INFERENCES**

Reread lines 13–16. What can you infer about the speaker's view of civilian life when he decided to become an airman?

## **Literary Analysis**

- 1. Summarize** Reread lines 9–12. What reasons did *not* inspire the speaker to fight in World War I? What did inspire him?
- 2. Analyze Historical Context** In the title, Yeats specifies that the speaker is Irish. Review the notes alongside the poem. How does the historical context help you understand the speaker's attitude toward World War I?

*Lieutenant A. P. F. Rhys Davids, DSO, MC,  
Sir William Orpen. © Imperial War Museum,  
London, United Kingdom.*







# *The Soldier*

*Rupert Brooke*

If I should die, think only this of me,  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is forever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed,  
5 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. **B**

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
10 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.

## **B TONE**

Reread lines 1–8. What words and phrases help create a patriotic tone?

## **Literary Analysis**

- 1. Paraphrase** What does the speaker say about the possibility of his death in lines 1–3?
- 2. Analyze Speaker** Why might a young man going off to war think these thoughts?

# Dreamers

*Siegfried Sassoon*

Soldiers are citizens of death's gray land,  
Drawing no dividend from time's tomorrows. **C**  
In the great hour of destiny they stand,  
Each with his feuds, and jealousies, and sorrows.  
5 Soldiers are sworn to action; they must win  
Some flaming, fatal climax with their lives.  
Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin  
They think of firelit homes, clean beds and wives.

I see them in foul dugouts, gnawed by rats,  
10 And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain,  
Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,  
And mocked by hopeless longing to regain  
Bank holidays, and picture shows, and spats,  
And going to the office in the train.

## **C TONE**

Reread lines 1–2. What tone is established in these opening lines?

**13 bank holidays:** in Britain, a generic term for holidays on which banks are closed; **picture shows:** movies.

*Over the Top*, John Nash. © Imperial War Museum, London/Bridgeman Art Library.



## Comprehension

1. **Recall** In “Dreamers,” what do the soldiers dream of “when the guns begin”?
2. **Recall** What physical hardships does the speaker describe in “Dreamers”?
3. **Clarify** In “Dreamers,” what fate does the speaker describe in lines 5–6?

## Literary Analysis

4. **Examine Structure** “Dreamers” is a sonnet consisting of an eight-line octave followed by a six-line sestet. What **turn**, or shift in thought, occurs between these two stanzas?
5. **Make Inferences in Poetry** There is a strong contrast between the feelings expressed in “The Soldier” and those expressed in “Dreamers.” Review the chart you completed as you read. What inferences would help explain the difference in the speakers’ feelings?
6. **Identify Tone** Describe the tone of each of the following passages. What imagery and phrases help create the tone of each passage?
  - lines 13–16 of “An Irish Airman Foresees his Death”
  - lines 12–14 of “The Soldier”
  - lines 9–14 of “Dreamers”

## Literary Criticism

7. **Different Perspectives** British philosopher John Stuart Mill said, “War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. . . . The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself.” Consider the three poems you’ve just read. Which speaker or speakers do you think would agree with Mill, and why?



**READING 3** Evaluate the changes in sound, form, figurative language, graphics, and dramatic structure in poetry across literary time periods.  
**RC-12(B)** Make complex inferences about text and use textual evidence to support understanding.

### *Is* **PATRIOTISM** *enough?*

What message about war or patriotism is expressed in each of the three poems? Cite evidence from the poems to support your response.

# Conventions in Writing

◆ **GRAMMAR AND STYLE: Add Emphasis and Rhythm**

Throughout “An Irish Airman Foresees His Death,” Yeats employs **repetition** and **parallelism**, the use of similar grammatical structures, to add emphasis and rhythm to his writing. Here is an example from the poem:

*Those that I fight I do not hate,  
Those that I guard I do not love;  
My country is Kiltartan Cross,  
My countrymen Kiltartan’s poor,* (lines 3–6)

In the first two lines, repetition and parallel structure lend balance and rhythm to the poem and emphasize the speaker’s conflicted feelings about fighting. In the next two lines, repeated references to Kiltartan as well as *country* and *countrymen* emphasize the speaker’s allegiance to his homeland of Ireland.

**PRACTICE** Rewrite the following paragraph, adding parallel elements or repetition.

Anybody who had the good fortune to meet Jake Anderson knows what an optimist is. His great big smile had a way of brightening even the cloudiest of days. Jake was one of those rare people who always find a way to see the upside of everything. Even after his plane was shot down during battle last year, Jake wrote home to his parents and praised the training he’d received for just such an occurrence. Jake even praised the makers of the parachute that brought him safely to the ground. The glass was always half full for Jake.

**READING-WRITING CONNECTION**



Expand your understanding of these poems by responding to this prompt. Then, use the **revising tips** to improve your eulogy.

WRITING PROMPT	REVISING TIPS
<p><b>COMPOSE A EULOGY</b> Suppose that a military pilot has been recently shot down and killed during battle. In the spirit of Yeats’s “An Irish Airman Foresees His Death,” write a <b>two-paragraph eulogy</b> for him. Invent a history for the pilot and include details that convey his personality and outlook on life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain a consistent and appropriate tone.</li><li>• Use repetition and parallel structure to enhance the emotional effect of your words.</li></ul>



**WRITING 14** Write literary texts to express feelings about real or imagined people, events, or ideas. **ORAL AND WRITTEN CONVENTIONS 17** Understand the function of and use the conventions of academic language when speaking and writing.

Interactive Revision

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KEYWORD: HML12-1249