Essay Questions

1. “It is hard to say who or what is the greatest enemy in the poetry of Wilfred Owen, for his bitterness is directed at more than one target.” Discuss.

2. “My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity.” Discuss with reference to any three poems by Wilfred Owen.

3. “No doubt very honest, imaginatively evocative but immature poetry.” Fully discuss and illustrate with reference to at least three of Wilfred Owen’s war poems.

4. “Owen was deeply concerned with the techniques and aesthetics of poetry writing.” Discuss.

5. “Owen’s imagery is as strong as his anti-war feelings.” With reference to any three poems, discuss the poet’s use of imagery confirming Owen’s belief that war is disenchantment, obscenity, and torture.

6. “Owen’s imagery is often chosen to suggest the horrors of war, the inadequacy of religion, and the validity of love and grief.” Discuss.


8. “There is a visionary quality in some of Wilfred Owen’s most intriguing poetry.” Discuss, using detailed reference to at least two poems.

9. “This book is not about heroes. English Poetry is not yet fit to speak of them”, writes Wilfred Owen in the Preface to his Collected Poems. With reference to any three or more poems, discuss the way the poet’s feelings against war emerge.

10. “Who are these? Why sit they here in twilight? Wherefore rock they, purgatorial shadows, Drooping tongues from jaws that slob their relish, Baring teeth that leer like skulls’ teeth wicked?”

   Through careful and detailed reference to three poems of your choice, examine some of the ways in which Owen’s poetry conveys the nightmarish qualities of life in the trenches.

11. “Wilfred Owen’s poetry is riddled with inner conflict.” Discuss.

12. “Wilfred Owen’s verse shows that war poetry is necessarily a poetry of horror.” Discuss.

13. “With the exception of two or three poems, Wilfred Owen’s war poems remain second-rate deeply felt negative attempts at expressing the futility of war.” Fully discuss and illustrate.
The War Poems

Wilfred Owen

14 Fully discuss and illustrate Wilfred Owen’s poetic achievement in any three of the following poems: Spring Offensive, Greater Love, The Last Laugh, The Dead-Beat, and Strange Meeting.

15 Fully discuss and illustrate Wilfred Owen’s treatment of war in Anthem for Doomed Youth, Strange Meeting, and Dulce et Decorum Est.

16 Referring to Dulce et Decorum est pro Patria mori and any other two poems, discuss Owen’s use of irony.