

Text selected by student for assessment: Diary entries

### Learning outcomes in focus

#### Students should be able to:

**OL1.** Know and use the conventions of oral language interaction, in a variety of contexts, including class groups, for a range of purposes, such as asking for information, stating an opinion, listening to others, informing, explaining, arguing, persuading, criticising, commentating, narrating, imagining, speculating.

**R2.** Read for a variety of purposes: learning, pleasure, research, comparison.

**R8.** Read their texts to understand and appreciate language enrichment by examining an author's choice of words, the use and effect of simple figurative language, vocabulary and language patterns, and images, as appropriate to the text.

**R13.** Appreciate a variety of registers and understand their use in the written context.

**W1.** Demonstrate their understanding that there is a clear purpose for all writing activities and be able to plan, draft, and edit their own writing as appropriate.

**W4.** Write competently in a range of text forms, for example letter, report, multi-modal text, review, blog, using appropriate vocabulary, tone and a variety of styles to achieve a chosen purpose for different audiences.

**W7.** Respond imaginatively in writing to their texts showing a critical appreciation of language, style and content, choice of words, language patterns, tone, images.

### Teaching and learning context

Students studied five World War 1 poems, analysing themes, language and imagery and offering their personal response to the poems studied, both orally and in writing. Students were then given the task of creating a piece of writing in letter, diary entry or short story form, inspired by the war poetry studied and containing the appropriate features of their chosen genre. Students had been explicitly taught the layout and features of letters, diary entries and short stories and had written in these genres previously.

A crucial aspect of the process involved students' drafting, editing and re-drafting their written texts over four class periods. Students engaged in peer and self-assessment to aid the editing process. Following classroom-based work on their initial drafts, they typed up their final drafts.

### Task

Create a piece of writing in letter, diary entry or short story form, inspired by the war poetry discussed in class and containing the appropriate features of your chosen genre.

### Features of Quality

Genre awareness and control/creativity

Writing competence and word choices

Awareness of and shaping for receiver/audience

\* Students choose two texts from their collection to submit for assessment.

Today, January 4th 1919

I woke up in my own bed this morning for the first time in years, I have lost count at this point. Staying in different hostels and things for the past few months, I felt like I could finally face this new reality I have been thrown into. Attempting to live a normal life after the horrors I have witnessed, is difficult, inconceivable to say the least. The nights have been particularly unbearable. Every night is a new terror, delving deeper and deeper into my most frightening memories of the battlefields. In my dreams, I know I am falling. There are no sides to grasp, no sense to reason with. I am falling and falling, all the while the war rages on around me and I am left defenseless and exposed. When I open my mouth to sound my terrified scream, all that comes out is piercing white noise, and endless gunshots, explosions. I feel as if I will fall forever and never reach any sort of end. I will always be caught in the limbo of my subjective fear. All that I see, all that I know is covered in blood. Gashes, rivers, puddles, rain. Its like my very own heart has exploded from fear. It covers me in a greasy, inescapable lather. I would scream and thrash in my cage of agony, begging and screaming for mercy. Then in the morning I would wake, and weep for my lost soul. Its gone somewhere, simply lost in the void of my failed ambitions, and the reality of lies that were implanted into our eager minds.

Last night though, it was different. I relived one of my most haunting memories from those dreadful days. It was Collin. Collin's death. I was living in slow motion, every second lasting a lifetime. It came down so slowly, spinning in the air like a baseball coming off the bat. STRIKE. HOME RUN. The opposition dance in glee, they won the point. Collin falls to the ground in defeat, our 11 long years of friendship flash before me remorse and fierce anger tainting even the best of our memories. The summers we spent down at the creek, the endless warmth and the assurance of long and happy futures, best friends forever. All gone in an instant. A large part of me died last night (one of the only sacred parts the war hadn't taken away.) It's because I'm finally home again, I know that's the reason. I can't ignore the real world now. I have been for so long, trying to convince myself of a false sense of safety and security in the normal world, free from war and, supposedly, hate and cruelty. My body found a way of snapping me out of my stupor, and I'm not thankful for it. I wished only to elude myself for as long as possible, I guess I'm just not strong enough anymore.

Jack

Today, January 16th 1919

I feel like I am really losing myself, it's like I can't even tell left from right anymore. I really should be happy in my days, that I am home and finally safe, away from any immediate external hatred and violence. But I honestly just can't shake this lethargic air from my head. I am caught in a mist of lackadaisicalness, I feel so hopeless and confused yet I am so careless as to find out exactly why or how I could stop it. The mist gets thicker and thicker, sometimes I feel as if its suffocating me. But I don't really mind it, it's maybe helping me to understand what I ultimately want, and it only brings me close to my desire, my longing to be rid of the mist forever. God, it's so different for the other soldiers. They had so much to live for, fight for, so much to come home to; friends, family, good jobs, love, joy. My whole reason to live came to die with me. They were all I had; Collin was like my brother from when I was only seven, my parents dying then. The war came and we signed up, the boys, and me the only thing on our minds was fulfilling the farce promise of honor and dignity. But one by one, they dropped like flies. We made a pact and all, to come home as we left; all in one piece and close as ever. I kept my side of the bargain up; I just wish they could have kept theirs.

Everyday, I sit in the same old rocking chair, my wooden leg propped up on stool, I still gotta get used to that thing. I spend hours upon hours reading the list of casualties from the war, hoping to god I don't find any familiar names. They do come however, and it's like someone set fire to the rain. All I can do it sit in shelter, fire blazing outside, as the roof burns on top of me threatening to cave at any moment. One that really got me, was seeing little Billie Parson's name written there in stark black and white. He must have been the most cheerful and compassionate little guy I have ever met. He would never hurt a thing, wouldn't even think about it. We were in the same form, right up until year nine, and then he moved away to Holmes Chapel in Cheshire. We were never all that close, but I could always turn to him if I ever needed some cheering up.

I remember how he walked down the hall on his last day of school for good. His crooked smile and freckled cheeks flash in my mind, his friendly, open walk strode towards the swinging doors. Book bag in hand, he turned and offered a final greeting to me over his shoulder, "Well I'll see ya Jack, it was really nice knowing you. I hope I'll see you again!" soon I always hoped that too, now all I have left of him is the long lasting image of his body outlined in the sunlight, his small innocent body. He's an angel in my mind now, in what I would call a heaven. With all of the good people who died with a loving and hopeful soul, maybe he's with Collin and the boys. I'd like if they were together. I really would. I wept then, seeing his name written there. It really got me. I don't know how I will recover from this one.

Jack

Today, January 21st 1919

They call it the 'Roll of Honor' that list. It baffles me, the hypocrisy of that title. There is nothing honorable or dignified about it. It's a godless, filthy world we live in. Fact, name, date. Fact, name, date. Fact, name, date. Over and over and over again. Black and right. White and wrong. The only thing that ever changes is its order, and the words that the apathetic journalist chooses to put them in. It's repetitive, monotonous and incessant. It's driving me insane. I don't know how I was ever able to cry over Billie, having just seen his name written there, stone cold. No explanation or understanding of his actual death offered. Barren, devoid of meaning and genuine human compassion towards the men who died upon there hundreds of thousands, millions even. I wish only now that my name could have been one of them. Then no one would have any excuse to cry over me at all. They would have just glanced over my name, a fleeting second of remorse, and nothing more. I guess I will just have to cry for myself tonight.

Jack

Today, January 30th 1919

I have lost count of the days that idly pass me by. I no longer give any thought or attention to them, but disregard them as no more than mere opportunities to manifest my senselessness more into the idea that I have completely lost my mind. Since the war, the world has been an entirely different place. Each morning I wake from my torment, to even more suffering, yet only now, the days are limp and lifeless. The only time I ever feel any true emotion anymore is within the few seconds after waking, where I am duly flooded by the terror of my nightmare, and the ache of just being alive.

It's like the sun never rises above the horizon anymore; a constant, never-ending night. Filled with despair and melancholy, but so rich in beauty. I look to the sky; stars flickering like lights turning on in children's rooms from far away. The promise of better life, up there in the darkness, not down here in the stark, blinding light. I used to think the years go by in order, that you get older one year at a time. But it's not like that. It happens overnight. I'm young in appearance and age, but my heart has witnessed enough horrors for a thousand lifetimes. All of my years of naivety and innocence sucked from my consciousness. I feel an irrevocable desperation that I can't come to terms with. I have grown to hate my pulse because it thinks I'm still alive.

Jack

### Features of quality - teacher annotations and level of achievement

#### Teacher annotations:

##### **FQ1.** Genre awareness and control/creativity

The writing displays a clear understanding and command of the chosen genre. The diary entries were dated, personal, informal and detailed.

##### **FQ2.** Writing competence and word choices

The student displays a highly competent command of detailed and descriptive writing. The student effectively referenced and took inspiration from the war poems studied in class.

##### **FQ3.** Awareness of and shaping for receiver/audience

The beauty of the writing and the horror of the subject matter, combined with a strong and convincing narrative voice, make this series of diary entries engaging, memorable and realistic for the reader.

#### Level of achievement:

##### **Best fit on balance judgement =**



Exceptional

This example represents one text from the student's Collection of Texts. The student selected this and one other text to submit for assessment. Looking at a number of examples, teachers will see a variety of different text types, in a variety of genres.

More examples will be added over time at [curriculumonline.ie](http://curriculumonline.ie)

#### Features of Quality:

##### **Exceptional**

The student's text shows creativity and command of the chosen genre.

The writing is highly competent, marked by original ideas, and imaginative word choices are perfectly suited to the purpose of the text.

The work is fully shaped for its intended receiver/audience.

##### **Above expectations**

The student's text shows very good control of the chosen genre.

The writing is consistently competent, and effective word choices are very well matched to the purpose of the text.

The work is clearly shaped with the receiver/audience in mind.

##### **In line with expectations**

The student's text shows good awareness of the chosen genre.

The writing is generally competent, and word choices match the purpose of the text well.

Content and development of ideas reveal consistent awareness of the receiver/audience.

##### **Yet to meet expectations**

The student's text shows little awareness of the chosen genre.

The writing lacks competence, and word choices may be inappropriate to the intended purpose of the text.

Content and development of ideas reveal little awareness of a receiver/audience.

The annotations capture observations by the student's teacher, using the features of quality, with a view to establishing the level of achievement this text reflects.

The annotations and judgement were confirmed by the Quality Assurance group, consisting of practicing English teachers and representatives of the Inspectorate, the SEC and JCT.