

# Autumn | English | War Poetry

## Week One: The Crimean War (1853-1856)

- Stereotypically, military men were little more than “unknown soldiers.”
- The poetry that came out of the Crimean War is often disregarded because of the view that it is written by ill-informed patriots.

## Week Two and Three: World War One (1914-1918)

- The early poems extoll the old virtues of honour, duty, heroism, and glory.
- In the trenches, the poet became the soldier and the soldier became the poet.
- As the war brutally wore on, some poets (such as Wilfred Owen) saw it as their duty to write about the grim reality of war.

## Week Four and Five: World War Two (1939-1945)

- Earlier poems demonstrate a disbelief at the scope of the conflict, while later poems express a mournful acceptance of suffering.
- WW2 poetry shows how poets came to view violence, sacrifice, and our responses to historical atrocities and trauma. They reflect on the destructive nature of man, proven through Hitler’s extermination process and the dropping of the Atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

## Week Six: The Falklands War 2<sup>nd</sup> April – 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1982

- Poetry from the 20<sup>th</sup> century displays a register that is more reflective of the informal patterns of everyday speech. Soldiers and poets begin to use colloquialisms and slang to express their views in their own personal voices.

## Week Seven: The Afghanistan War (2001-2014)

- ‘In war,’ Aeschylus wrote, ‘truth is the first casualty.’ The poetry of WW1 kept this casualty breathing and the poetry of the 21<sup>st</sup> century continues to be more truthful and raw.
- The last decade has seen a noticeable increase in war poetry written by poets working from interviews or testimonials from those who have experienced war. The poet becomes a conduit for another’s voice.



Speaker	Sometimes a poem isn't about the poet; a speaker is used instead.
Stanza	A group of sentences in a poem.
Propaganda	Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or view.
Imagery	When a poet uses visually descriptive words to create a clear picture of something in our minds.
Simile	Where you make a comparison using the words, 'like' or 'as'. 'Her hair was as golden as the sun.'
Metaphor	Where you make a comparison without using the words, 'like' or 'as'. 'Her hair was a golden sun.'
Rhyme	Correspondence of sound between words or the endings of words.
Half-rhyme	Where the stressed syllables of ending consonants match, but the preceding vowel sounds don't match.
Rhyming Couplet	A rhyming pair of successive lines of verse.
Alliteration	Where several words start with the same letter.
Onomatopoeia	Where a word reflects the sound it makes, like, 'bang', 'hiss'.
Enjambment	Where an idea in a line continues onto the line below without pause.
Colloquialism	An informal word or expression. More suitable in speech than writing.
Slang	Informal words and phrases that are used among a small group of people or a specific subculture.
Protest poetry	Works that address socio-political issues and object against them.
Conduit	Something or someone that carries information.