

## The Effects of War: Positive Morale

The effects of war can be felt from soldiers and civilians alike. Throughout history, war has affected the economies, viewpoints, and social structures of people both directly and indirectly involved. Art and literature have also been inspired by the effects of war, as can be seen in the poetry of soldiers or the movies produced back home by civilians affected by the war. Some products of war take on a critical and condescending approach, like the movie "We Were Soldiers," where war scenes are gruesome and home life is depicted by a group of housewives awaiting the dreaded letters announcing the deaths of their husbands overseas. However, other products of "war have shown the efforts by soldiers to maintain a more positive outlook on life, like the poetry from World War I soldiers living in the trenches of the battlefields. Poetry that paints a picture of the mind of the husband and father who keeps his thoughts not on the battlefield, but on the joys and love back home with his family; poetry portraying positive thoughts completely unrelated to the war, as if the writer was ignoring the horrors in front of him, seeking a paradise in his mind—all are examples of how it is human nature to fight for the preservation of their minds, even in the worst situations. War brings both soldiers and civilians down to reality, forcing them to find ways to keep up positive morale.

Looking back at the poetry of soldiers in the midst of World War I, one can find examples of thoughts completely unrelated to war—on the surface. Roland Leighton's "In the Rose Garden" is a short poem, with fascination of something so simple as a rose: "Dew on the pink-flushed petals; / Roseate wings unfurled; / What can, I thought, be fairer / In all the world?" (1-4). This appreciation of simple, organic life is something special, because Leighton took his mind away from the battles in front of him in order to remember the small, beautiful things in the world worth fighting for. Another example of this getaway mindset can be seen in Wilfred Owen's "From My Diary, July 1914." Owen lists simple things that remind him of a better place back home, including "leaves," "bees,"

1 "birds," and "her heart," then pairs each thing with a brief description or thought. Some examples  
2 are "Leaves/Murmuring by myriads in the shimmering trees" (1-2), "Bees/Shaking the heavy dews  
3 from bloom and frond" (9-10), and "Stars I Expanding with the starr'd nocturnal flowers" (29-30).  
4 Owen doesn't necessarily have a plot or conclusion in his poem, it is a list of things that he  
5 appreciates, and probably misses back home.

6 Other poetry of the time does mention the war, both indirectly and directly, but is still overall  
7 positive, showing the anticipation that the soldiers have to get back home. Examples include poems  
8 from Robert Graves and Roland Leighton. Graves' "1915" is a personal account of his frustrations of  
9 the war and the wishing for the pleasant things he misses. Assuming Graves is the narrator, he has  
10 "watched the Seasons passing slow, so slow" (1) in the "soul-deadening trenches" (9). But he knows  
11 that when he gets back home he will again enjoy "pictures, books, / Music, the quiet of an English  
12 wood/ [...] The narrow, bouldered mountain-track, / The broad, full-bosomed ocean, green and black,  
13 / And Peace, and all that's good" (9-14). This determination and positive thinking is what kept  
14 Graves from letting his spirits get too low. An even greater example of the power good morale can  
15 have is in Leighton's "Ploegsteert." In this brief poem, Leighton dedicates the first stanza to his  
16 criticism of the war: "... and all the joys that are / known once ... / leaped ...to the elemental dust of  
17 war" (2-4). The second stanza is Leighton's response to "joy" being taken from him and his battle  
18 brothers: "I have seen blood and death, but all has ending, I And even Horror is but made to cease  
19 ..." (5-6). Leighton points out that the war will be over soon, and so will his suffering, his family's  
20 suffering, and his country's suffering. This poem serves as a reminder that the war is horrible, but is  
21 worth fighting till the end, because the end is near.

22 So is the fight for good morale a concept of the era, or is it an effect of war that is seen  
23 through the ages? Taking a recent account of British soldiers in Afghanistan (a hundred years after

1 World War I) into consideration, one can conclude that morale is the center pin keeping things  
2 together for soldiers involved in all wars from any time in history. BBC's UK Troops Mark Last  
3 Christmas in Afghanistan, an article from December, 2013, celebrates the overall relief that British  
4 soldiers in Afghanistan had when the holidays were near. Even in foreign, warring land, Christmas  
5 cheer was spread with "carol concerts," "exchange of presents," "mince pies," and even a marathon  
6 run where soldiers dressed as Santa Claus. Brigadier James Woodham, the commander of Task  
7 Force Helmand, speaks of the troops and the holiday celebrations: "It's a good morale boost and the  
8 small details help to bring a little bit of home to Afghanistan."

9 War has its obvious effects – pain, confusion, suffering, struggle, sacrifice-but it also brings  
10 out the deepest parts of the hearts of the people involved, showing the power humans have to keep  
11 their morale boosted up in order to cope with the pain and survive difficult times. Whether it is poetry  
12 or gathered events during the holidays, people tend to find the good in any situation, escape from the  
13 war-mind, and remind each other what is really worth fighting for peace.

## Works Cited

- 1  
2 Graves, Robert. "1915." *The First World War Poetry Digital Archive*. Oxford University, n.d.  
3 Web.10Apr.2014.
- 4 Leighton, Roland. "In the Rose-Garden." *The First World War Poetry Digital Archive*. Oxford  
5 University, n.d. Web. 10 Apr. 2014.
- 6 Leighton, Roland. "Ploegsteert." *The First World War Poetry Digital Archive*. Oxford University,  
7 n.d. Web. 10 Apr. 2014
- 8 Owen, Wilfred. "From My Diary, July 1914." *The First World War Poetry Digital Archive*. Oxford  
9 University, n.d. Web. 10 Apr. 2014.
- 10 "UK Troops Mark Last Christmas in Afghanistan." *News UK*. BBC News, 25 Dec. 2013. Web.10  
11 Apr. 2014.

## Work Sample Evaluation

**Subject Area:** English Literature

**Task Title:** Effects of War

**Student Work Sample Title:** The Effects of War: Positive Morale

The document was scored using the CCR Task Bank Rubric. The final scores are indicated in the following chart.

Scoring Criteria	Insufficient Evidence	Developing	Progressing	Accomplished	Exceeds
Research and Investigation				X	
Ideas and Content				X	
Reading and Analysis			X		
Communication				X	
Organization				X	
Accuracy				X	

**Annotations:** The following evidence from the work sample and the reviewer’s comments support the scores above. Page and line numbers refer to the original work sample.

Scoring Criteria	Page #	Line #	Commentary about the work sample
<b>Research and Investigation:</b> <i>Locating resources independently and/or identifying information within provided texts</i>	1	17	The student refers to the evidence from Roland Leighton’s “In the Rose Garden” that connects ideas to the topic sentence and thesis.
	1	22	The student makes reference to the evidence from Wilfred Owen’s “From My Diary, July 1914” that continues the discussion in the first body paragraph about the thoughts unrelated to war “on the surface.”
	2	8	The student makes reference to the evidence from Robert Graves’ “1915” discussing how the poem contrasts images of war with the anticipation of home.
	2	15	The student refers to the evidence from Leighton’s “Ploegsteert,” again contrasting the details of war with hopes of home.
	3	2-3	The reference to BBC’s “UK Troops Mark Last Christmas in Afghanistan” reflects the student’s ability to incorporate evidence for how soldiers deal with maintaining morale while being away from home.
<b>Ideas and Content:</b> <i>Presenting a thesis and understanding concepts</i>	1	14-15	The thesis is clear and defensible, discussing the ways soldiers and civilians work to keep up a positive morale.
	1	16	The topic sentence focusing on the poetry of WWI, where thoughts are often unrelated to war.
	2	6-7	In this topic sentence, the student focuses on the poetry of WWI and soldiers’ thoughts of home.
	2	22-23	This topic sentence is in the form of a rhetorical question, which brings the discussion to a contemporary setting.
<b>Reading and Analysis:</b> <i>Examining and evaluating sources, data, and/or supporting evidence</i>	1	20-21	The student provides a commentary discussing how Leighton’s images give him reprieve from the war.
	2	4-5	There is a superficial connection between Owen’s words and what they show, but this is not discussed in depth or connected back to the thesis.
	2	5	This body paragraph lacks further development about how the ideas connect back to the bigger idea of positive morale.
	2	21	2 <sup>nd</sup> body paragraph is missing the larger connection to thesis.
	3	1-8	3 <sup>rd</sup> body paragraph superficially connects the ideas to a contemporary setting, but doesn’t really develop the ideas.

Scoring Criteria	Page #	Line #	Commentary about the work sample
<b>Communication:</b> <i>Using subject appropriate language and considering audience</i>	1	5-8	The work sample contains complex sentence structure with multisyllabic words.
	1	1-15	The student uses subject-specific vocabulary such as “war sciences are gruesome” (7) and “ignoring the horrors in front of him” (13).
	1	16-17	The work sample contains a variety of sentence structures.
	2	19-20	Student uses parallel structure to indicate the way the poet’s words convey his hopeful attitude toward war.
<b>Organization:</b> <i>Structuring main ideas and incorporated supporting information</i>	1	16-22	The first part of the paragraph follows a solid analytical structure with a clear topic sentence, introduction of evidence and commentary about the connection. This is followed by transition to another example as further evidence and commentary (lines 22-page 2, 1-5).
	2	6-21	This paragraph also follows the same analytical structure outlined in the previous paragraph.
	2-3	22-23, 1-8	This paragraph is not as effectively developed with only one example from a contemporary text and superficial discussion of its significance in relationship to the thesis.
	3	10-11	The concluding ideas wrap up the conversation, but may be underdeveloped in discussing “the power humans have to keep their morale boosted up.”
<b>Accuracy:</b> <i>Attending to detail, grammar, spelling, conventions, citations, and formatting</i>	1	8	In this sentence, there was a minor issue, which was a misplaced quotation mark.
	1	12	This also contained a minor issue: the misuse of a semi-colon.
	1	19	The student correctly cited lines of poetry in their work sample.
	1	18 & 22	The student used a variety of ways to introduce textual evidence.
	2	10	The work sample demonstrates sophistication in the citation of lines of poetry.
	3	5-6	The student proficiently integrates textual evidence into the supporting argument.