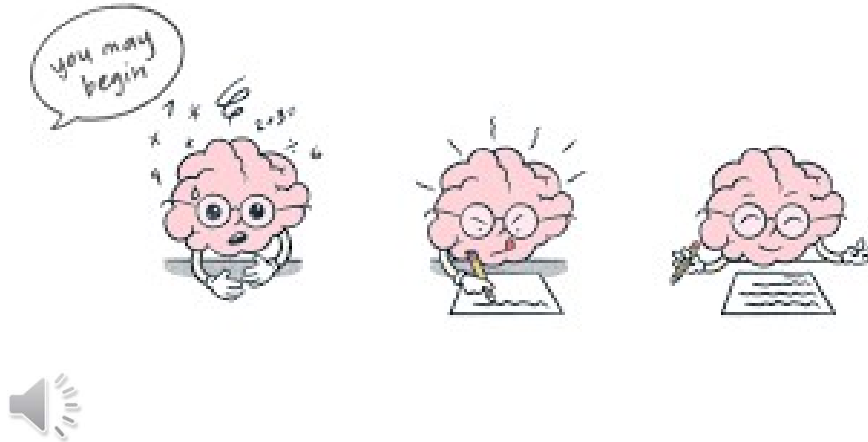


English Revision Session: Bayonet Charge.

Starter for Five:

Brain dump anything you can remember about 'Bayonet Charge.'

3 minutes- brain dump independently.
2 minutes- share ideas with the person next to you.



April 2023.



Bayonet Charge:

What is the poem about?

The poem focuses on the thoughts and behaviour of a soldier in World War I. This soldier is depicted mid-charge, his bayonet primed to attack the enemy.

However, he has an epiphany during his charge and suddenly questions why he's there in the first place.

Old notions like patriotism and honor seem to fade away as the soldier confronts the absurd reality of war—and of the likelihood of his own death.



Bayonet Charge:

Let's read the poem!



Suddenly he awoke and was running – raw
In raw-seamed hot khaki, his sweat heavy,
Stumbling across a field of clods towards a green hedge
That dazzled with rifle fire, hearing
Bullets smacking the belly out of the air –
He lugged a rifle numb as a smashed arm;
The patriotic tear that had brimmed in his eye
Sweating like molten iron from the centre of his chest, –

In bewilderment then he almost stopped –
In what cold clockwork of the stars and the nations
Was he the hand pointing that second? He was running
Like a man who has jumped up in the dark and runs
Listening between his footfalls for the reason
Of his still running, and his foot hung like
Statuary in mid-stride. Then the shot-slashed furrows

Threw up a yellow hare that rolled like a flame
And crawled in a threshing circle, its mouth wide
Open silent, its eyes standing out.
He plunged past with his bayonet toward the green hedge,
King, honour, human dignity, etcetera
Dropped like luxuries in a yelling alarm
To get out of that blue crackling air
His terror's touchy dynamite.

Bayonet Charge:

Meaning/main messages of the poem:

- It is thought that in Bayonet Charge Hughes wanted to highlight the brutality of trench warfare as a tribute to his father's suffering as well to memorialize war as a warning for future generations. This poem was greatly inspired by Wilfred Owen (the author of Exposure) who similarly tries to depict the reality of war in his poetry.
- The poem also highlights the mental impact of war and the soldiers' realisation that the reality of war is not the same as the propaganda that persuaded them to join up- in fact, many soldiers felt a complete loss of faith and patriotism as a result of their suffering.

Bayonet Charge:

Complete the cloze activity in your booklet:



Bayonet Charge:

Action	Bewilderment
Sweat	Goals
Bayonet	Hare
Reasons	Weapon
Fear	Death
Game	Patriotism

The poem opens in media res—in the middle of the _____. The poem focuses on a single soldier who, as the title suggests, is in the middle of charging at the enemy with his _____. The soldier is "heavy" with _____ and is described as "raw" which relates to his physical exertion, but also to the intense _____ that he feels as he enters the heat of battle. Next, the soldier suddenly comes to his senses. He stands in _____ as he begins to wonder why he is there fighting that battle. This soldier knows that this battle may be the end of him, now he begins to wonder why he is running to his _____. The soldier then reveals his belief that he is nothing more than "a cog in the machine" or something that is used by forces greater than he to accomplish their own _____. He feels like a pawn in the government's _____.

After observing a terrified looking _____, the soldier snaps out his frozen, statue-like stance. Once again, he begins to run. The speaker does not give a real reason for his continuing to run, but for some reason his identifying with the hare allowed him to keep going. He thinks about all of the _____ why he signed up for war such as for honour, dignity and _____, but no longer feels passionately about any of these things. Instead, the soldier ponders on what a dangerous _____ he has become during the war, almost as if he is fearful of his own capabilities.

Bayonet Charge:



Action	Bewilderment
Sweat	Goals
Bayonet	Hare
Reasons	Weapon
Fear	Death
Game	Patriotism

The poem opens in media res—in the middle of the **action**. The poem focuses on a single soldier who, as the title suggests, is in the middle of charging at the enemy with his **bayonet**. The soldier is "heavy" with **sweat** and is described as "raw" which relates to his physical exertion, but also to the intense **fear** that he feels as he enters the heat of battle. Next, the soldier suddenly comes to his senses. He stands in **bewilderment** as he begins to wonder why he is there fighting that battle. This soldier knows that this battle may be the end of him, now he begins to wonder why he is running to his **death**. The soldier then reveals his belief that he is nothing more than "a cog in the machine" or something that is used by forces greater than he to accomplish their own **goals**. He feels like a pawn in the government's **game**. After observing a terrified looking **hare**, the soldier snaps out his frozen, statue-like stance. Once again, he begins to run. The speaker does not give a real reason for his continuing to run, but for some reason his identifying with the hare allowed him to keep going. He thinks about all of the **reasons** why he signed up for war such as for honour, dignity and **patriotism**, but no longer feels passionately about any of these things. Instead, the soldier ponders on what a dangerous **weapon** he has become during the war, almost as if he is fearful of his own capabilities.

Golden quotations:

Bayonet Charge: Golden Quotations



In media res: the speaker literally wakes up running. Nameless 'he'

‘Suddenly he awoke and was
running – raw’

The **alliteration** of 'r' gives sense of effort and breathing.

The **adjective** 'raw' has negative connotations of unready, unprotected.



Bayonet Charge: Golden Quotations



Metaphor: his fear makes his dangerous

'His terror's touchy dynamite.'

The **alliteration** of 't' emphasises his anxiety, hard, quick, metallic sound.

Contrast to first line – speaker has almost become a weapon.



The Emigree: Structure

Enjambment – pace

Note how the lines run on from the first stanza until the volta (turning point) where the speaker has an epiphany. This highlights the panic and chaos of the soldier's situation. It emphasises the contrast when the speaker 'stopped -'



Bayonet Charge: plenary/exit ticket.

Imagine this is your exam question:

'Compare how the harsh realities of war are presented in 'Bayonet Charge' and one other poem.'



- 1) Decide which poem you would compare with.**
- 2) Write down one point of comparison between the poems.**