



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

*to strengthen teaching in public schools®*

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2014 Volume II: Playing with Poems: Rules, Tools, and Games

---

## **Dulce et Decorum Est: Common Core and The Poetry of War**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 14.02.04, published September 2014

by Elizabeth A. Daniell

In this age of standardized testing, poetry is generally left as an after-thought, something to do if there is extra time because it is so rarely covered on our exams. Some districts are misreading the standards and are falsely believing that students should be reading less literature and more non-fiction. As such, we are short-changing students out of a rich genre of literature. Poetry should not be the after-thought, it should be the primary focus of a sustained, scaffolded, and structured unit in a standards-based classroom.

As this year is the beginning of the centenary, this cross-curricular unit will use the poetry of World War I to meet the goals of the Common Core. In addition to the traditional poet-soldiers like Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, this unit incorporates songs like "Your King and Country Want You" and poems like A.P. Herbert's "The General" (about one of the least-liked British officers of World War I), to provide students with a rich opportunity to look at the wit and humor created in the worst moments of the human experience.

(Developed for AP Literature [Sept], grade 12; English 2 and 2A [Dec]; recommended for High School English/English 2 and English 10, grade 10)

---

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit [https://teachers.yale.edu/terms\\_of\\_use](https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use)