CAMBRIDGE POETRY ESSAY WRITING PROMPT- ANCHOR PAPERS
AS LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE

DIRECTIONS:
Evaluate your own paper in comparison to the following papers and their corresponding Cambridge bands.

EXAMPLES FROM OWEN POETRY SET TEXT

PROMPT A:
In what ways, and with what effects, does Owen use soldiers’ voices in two poems?

Band 5 Example

In “The Letter” and “Inspection”, Wilfred Owen uses punctuation and dialogue for effect behind the voices of the soldiers. “The Letter” is a poem that tells how a soldier is writing a letter to his wife in the middle of war and combat. In line two, the soldier says “(Oh blast this pencil. ‘Ere, Bill, lend’s a knife.)”. Owen use the parenthesis to separate what the soldier is saying in the letter, and what he is saying out loud as he is writing the letter (which is what is in the parenthesis). In this quote, the soldier broke his pencil and has to stop writing the letter, and then has to sharpen his pencil with a knife in order to continue writing. This shows a soldier’s point of view and voice of the poem. In line 18 it says “When me and you--”. That was the soldier’s voice in the letter, and the dash shows that the soldier was interrupted and left his poem unfinished. That shows how the effect of the poem is displayed by the soldier’s voice in the poem with use of punctuation.

In Owen’s poem “Inspection”, he uses dialogue for three different soldiers throughout the poem. The point of view is coming from one officer telling of something that happened during an inspection of soldiers’ uniforms during a war. Line three says “Please, sir, it’s--’ “Old yer mouth, the sergeant snapped.” Here we have the soldier that is being chewed out, the sergeant (second in command, after the officer), and the officer, present quoting what went on. Line eight says “was blood, his own. Well, blood is dirt, I said”. Here the officer/narrator is quoting what he had said in the past event of the inspection. The reader is ultimately given four different voices in this poem, and they are all soldiers. The voice of the sergeant, the officer (both past and present), and the other soldier. The effect of this language providing readers with imagery is given by the soldiers’ dialogue. That is how Owen uses dialogue for effect behind the soldiers’ voices in this poem.

Comments:
This essay discusses two poems that suit the prompt, but fails to analyze them in a meaningful way other than to identify that they do indeed present soldiers’ voices. The student identifies Owen’s techniques in each poem (parenthesis and dialogue), but doesn’t explain what the effects these techniques have on the reader, or Owen’s greater purpose behind presenting the reader with these voices in the first place. Without this analysis, the bulk of this essay is largely summary.

Band 4 Example

Owen uses soldiers’ voices in his poems through dialogue, and their thoughts to create various effects about the war. Two particular poems by Owen do this in different ways.

In “Disabled” by Wilfred Owen, Owens gives us the thoughts of a disabled veteran who lost his legs in the war. Owens uses the thoughts of the veteran to create pity, and sympathy for all the soldiers who fought in the Great War. In the poem Owens points out that now that this veteran is crippled, no one will ever see him the same again: “Now he will never feel again how slim girl’s waists are, or how warm their subtle hands, All of them touch him like some queer disease” (Owen 11-13). The veteran is granted sympathy here since he is looked upon as a freak, something unusual. The word choice of “queer disease” lets the reader know that he is seen as not only strange, but as something horrifying like a freak. Also, since he will never again feel another woman, his purpose of being a man (To mate) has been taken away from me which also grants him pity, and sympathy. In addition, Owens also uses the veteran’s thoughts to create sympathy when he mentions that the soldier wasn’t really cheered upon arriving home: “Some cheered him home, but not as crowds cheer goal. Only a solemn man who brought him fruits.” (Owen 37-38). This adds to the pity created for the soldier since he sacrificed a lot during the war, and lost his legs to not really be thanked or appreciated by anyone. He did it all for nothing.
In Addition, the poem “The letter” by Wilfred Owen use the dialogue of a soldier, and the writing of a soldier to show how the war is “masked”, not seen how it really is creating an horrifying effect of the war. The poem is divided into two different parts. One being the soldier’s dialogue with his comrades while under attack, but at the same time the soldier is writing a letter to his wife talking about how great he’s doing. Owens shows the soldier lying to his wife when he tells her that he is fine, and not to worry about him: “My feet’s improv’in’, as I told you of. We’re out in rest now. Never fear. (Vrack! By crumbs, that was near!” (Owen 13-15). This creates the effect that the realities of war are masked since the soldiers don’t really speak of what is really going on to anyone outside of the war. The soldier in the poem is being shot at, yet he lets his wife know that he is safe.

The soldier’s voices is a major contributor to the effects created in Wilfred Owen’s poems. Owen uses them to convey negative views on war. The voices of soldiers especially do a great job at conveying these view since they are the only ones who experienced the reality of war leaving them disabled or put through struggling times making them a powerful resource to use.

**Comments:**

The writer of this essay demonstrates relevant knowledge of the content of these poems, and a clear ability to analyze how Owen’s choices create certain effects on the reader (pity, sympathy, horror). Although a couple of the quoted references are long, the student narrows his analysis down to specific words in one of the long quotations (“queer disease”) and a specific strategy (dividing between dialogue and letter) in another, although he doesn’t explain the technique (parenthesis) that Owen uses to do this. This writer likely would benefit from more time to write: the second second point in the first body paragraph needs more explanation and the second body paragraph needs more evidence altogether.

**Band 3 Example**

Many of Wilfred Owen’s poems integrate soldiers’ voices to achieve a multitude of effects. To be specific, this includes “The Letter” in which Owen’s use of punctuation varies the voice of the soldier, demonstrating contrasts in war. Another poem by Wilfred Owen that effectively uses soldiers’ voices is “The Last Laugh” which has a certain tone that evokes physical suffering. Both “The Letter” and “The Last Laugh” also bring about the pity of war.

To begin with, Owen’s extensive use of punctuation in “The Letter” highlights the difference in a soldier’s voice, a part of which is sweet and calming while another is notably aggressive. In the middle of the poem, Owen writes in a soldier’s voice who is writing to his wife: “I’ll soon be home ‘ome. You mustn’t fret” (12). Here, it is clear that the soldier reassures his wife of the situation. The apostrophe replacing the “h” in “home” indicates a comfortable, familiar voice, a calm tone. However, the short length of the soldier’s sentences seems to be hiding something. It appears as if he is in a hurry; the choppiness of line 12 depicts that, perhaps, there is more to what he is telling his wife. On the contrary, Owen writes as the soldier yelling at the current scenario, toward a co-soldier at war: “(Eh? What the ‘ell! Stand to? Stand to!” (18). There are evidently plenty of uses of punctuation. In this case, the parenthesis marks the separation between the two varying voices of the soldier. Also, the use of question marks and exclamation points elevates the true feelings of the soldier: confusion, sheer chaos, and horror. “The Letter” then demonstrates the contrasting sides of war, one that is a lie and one that is painfully true. Wilfred Owen does so by separating the soldier’s voice into two, which also illustrates the pity of war where it shows what war has brought upon human kind.

Furthermore, in Owen’s “The Last Laugh,” voices of several soldiers have a wry and somewhat romantic tone, depicting physical suffering as well as the pity of war. One soldier in the poem explains, “Oh Mother,-M-Mother,-D-Dad!” (6). At the verge of his soldier’s death, he cries out to his loved ones in such a tone that evokes pity and darkness. It is as if the soldier was well aware that he had been defeated by the weapons, by war itself, that he felt the need to shout into the void, hopelessly suffering. This is also shown by another soldier, who, before he died, shouted, “My Love!” (11). Again, a soldier has turned back to his family or his significant other as he knew that he neared death. An overall emotion of love is poured out from the soldiers’ voices in “The Last Laugh,” making the poem all the more heart-felt, influencing readers to deeply sympathize with those who lost their lives in battle and with those who lost loved ones to battle. “The Last Laugh” simply reiterates both the theme of wars’ significant toll on humans and the imminent pity of war.

Overall, Owen’s wide array of techniques in using soldier’s voices in “The Letter” and “The Last Laugh” illustrates the negative aspects of war. The purposeful punctuation becomes a part of the soldier’s voice in “The Letter” as it adds on meaning. It aids in making the two voices of the soldier very distinct, showing not only the lie and the truth in war but also the pity of war and how it truly affects people. As for “The Last Laugh,” the soldiers’ voices carry an ironic tone due to how they referred to their loved ones in times of despair and suffering. This signifies the theme of physical suffering and the effects of war on people.
Comments:
The writer of this essay demonstrates a competent knowledge of the two poems she uses and a sound understanding of how Owen uses various techniques to create particular effects. The response suffers from a lack of focus--the student points out various effects and purposes and provides an example to support each one, but doesn’t reach one clear overarching argument directly addressing Owen’s ultimate purpose in depicting soldiers’ voices in both poems together, which would help to organize the entire response. The analysis of “The Letter” is stronger than “The Last Laugh,” highlighting Owen’s central method of parenthesis to divide the two views and how it contributes to his ultimate theme in the poem. Some of the student’s points merit further explanation and grounding in evidence, particularly in the second body paragraph, which at one point veers into tangential speculation. The concluding paragraph also introduces the new idea of “an ironic tone” without having addressed it at all previously.
Comment closely on ways in which the language and imagery create the mood of the following poem. ["The Last Laugh"]

Band 5 Example

"The Last Laugh" shows how language and imagery create the mood of the poem in many different ways. These ways consist of repetition and a lot of different punctuations.

In line 4 of "The Last Laugh," Wilfred Owen says "Machine-guns chuckled--Tut-tut! Tut-tut!" Wilfred is talking about how in the moment, the soldiers are getting shot at. This poem is in the POV of the soldiers. Here, Wilfred Owen is using repetition in order to create the mood of the poem. When he repeats things like the noise of the gun shots, he creates a violent imagery because the doesn't just say it once but, twice so he can really put it in your head the site of it and how it sounds too. In line 3 of "The Last Laugh," Wilfred Owen says "The Bullets chirped--the vain, vain, vain!" In this moment, Wilfred Owen is still talking in perspective of the soldier. He is talking about how the soldiers including himself are scared and they are trying to run away and or hide. Here, Wilfred Owen is using repetition in order to create the mood of the poem as violence. First off, he is talking about how the Bullets are coming out and people are starting to go crazy and violent. When repeating vain three times, it makes it sound more hectic and insane!

In conclusion, Wilfred Owen uses imagery and language in many different ways to create the mood for the poem. In "The Last Laugh," show how imagery and language create the mood in the poem through punctuation and repetition.

In line 6 of "The Last Laugh," Wilfred Owen says, "Another sighed--0 Mother,--Mother,--Dad!" Wilfred in this moment is talking about a person who isn't a soldier who is trying to talk to their dead parents but, they are not waking up. Here, the long pauses of the poem make it more dramatic and questionable. Since the tone of the poem is that the gun is always the one that wins, it fits in.

In conclusion, the poem "The Last Laugh" by Wilfred Owen is being created mood of violence by imagery and language through punctuation and repetition.

Comments:
The writer of this essay attempted to analyze two of Owen's techniques (really, one: repetition) and connect them to an overall mood of "violence," but struggles with pinpointing specific words in her quotations and explaining precisely how these support the mood. The student doesn't have a complete understanding of Owen's overall message, missing in particular the irony of the narrative voice and the personification of the weapons. Although punctuation is mentioned in the thesis statement and the first "In conclusion" paragraph, there is no analysis of the punctuation marks used in the first body paragraph, and only vaguely in the fourth. This essay needed a more thorough annotation of the poem and better planning of the essay before starting the draft.

Band 3 Example [Please note: The spelling and some punctuation of this essay were edited to make it easier to read.]

Wilfred Owen uses imagery and language in a variety of ways to create the mood of his poems. In his poem "The Last Laugh" Wilfred Owen uses his skills of imagery and language to set a mood of despair and dying. He does this through using startling imagery that is then complemented and expanded by his wide variety of vocabulary to tell the reader just that he is saying and is specific about it. Furthermore, Wilfred Owen uses his extensive language and imagery details to complement his overall theme and mood, and conveys it to the reader in a easy to understand manner. In particular his extensive knowledge of imagery is quite fascinating.

Wilfred Owen uses his wide array of imagery to set the stage in the reader's mind to fully see his story. As shown in personification "And the Big Gun guffawed." (The Last Laugh Wilfred Owen line 5). This line personifies the huge artillery cannon as laughing as it delivers death to soldiers in battle. This paints a picture in the reader's mind of a huge gun laughing in a almost cynical tone and brings it to life as shown by "Big Gun" being capitalized. Another line that shows Wilfred Owen's wonderful use in employing imagery to portray the mood is "I'll slowly lowered, his whole face kissed the mud." (The Last Laugh, Wilfred Owen line 12). This line is showing the reader the final moments of a soldier in love as he dies face down in the mud. This is showing how not only did people die in agony but some found peace and acceptance, Wilfred Owen masterfully shows this soldier's acceptance by using soft imagery like "his whole face kissed the mud." to show a more gentle scenario than what the reader might have put in place otherwise. In short Wilfred Owen uses imagery to set a play in his readers mind and plays it just how he wants it to, he complements his imagery in this effect by also using his wide variety of word choice to imply a very precise meaning.
Wilfred Owen’s poems would be set in an entirely different mood if it were not for his word choice. Take for example his beautiful word choice on line 3 of The Last Laugh “The Bullets chirped--In vain, vain, vain!” This line shows the storyteller’s frustration for not being able to save his comrade’s life. The quotation also employs an extended vocabulary in his word choice, because rather than saying “The bullets cracked” Owen used “The bullets chirped” changing the meaning from a very chaotic, loud, and scary fight to a more calm and almost child-like sound as if to say that the storyteller views war as a game and soldiers pieces to be thrown away which dramatically sets the mood. Also on line 14 “Rabbles of shells hooted and groaned;” Wilfred Owen once again shows how his word choice affects the mood. This quote is made to give the reader a very specific sound and the feeling of dread and despair. Instead of saying “clusters of shells cracked and whined” Owen uses “rabbles of shells hooted and groaned” to not only personify them, but give the reader that they love to kill and instills a very unique sound that promptly complements this in the readers mind. With these quotes Wilfred Owen shows how his mastery of word choice can truly change the whole mood of his poems.

In a very wide variety of ways Wilfred Owen used both language and imagery to set the mood of his poems. Without these, Owen’s poems could, and would, have a dramatically different mood. It was his very unique style and mastery of these two skills that truly made Wilfred Owen a poet to be remembered through time. For without these Owen would have been a standard poet of no value, but by using these Wilfred Owen has made a name for himself. This is how Wilfred Owen’s fantastic use of imagery and language to complement each other perfectly sets the mood of his poem “The Last Laugh”.

Comments:
This essay is a clear, well-ordered response to the question, and a great example of how excellent evidence and analysis can compensate for weaknesses in spelling, punctuation, and grammar conventions. The writer uses several well-chosen examples from the text to support the argument that Owen “[sets] a mood of despair and dying”. The student demonstrates a clear knowledge of some of the techniques Owen uses (personification, imagery, word choice), and a sound understanding of how these choices support the author’s various purposes. Stronger connections back to the student’s original argument of a “mood of despair and dying” (particularly in the second paragraph), a more logical and less repetitive structure, and better clarity of expression would push this paper closer to Band 2.

Band 2 Example
In “The Last Laugh,” Owen uses both language and connotation to create a hopeless, defeated mood. He then uses imagery to further emphasize and expand the reader’s defeat.

Owen begins suggesting the soldiers’ fight was over before it began, by repeating the word “vain.” “Whether he vainly cursed, or prayed indeed,/The Bullets chirped--In vain! vain! vain!” (2-3). “Vain” implies that the soldier’s efforts to live and to fight are nothing compared to the machines’ power, and there was no way the soldier could have won. Owen furthers this idea in line 9, with the “shrapnel-cloud” calling another soldier a “Fool!” Again, it is insinuated that the men were “fool[s]” to try to fight these machines. Consequently, the reader is made to feel that the men could never win again the machines, and that there was little honor in trying. Thus, the reader adopts the defeat and hopelessness the soldiers accepted in death.

Furthermore, Owen joins the feeling of defeat with one of mockery by using personification to create imagery. As the first soldier dies, “the Big Gun guffaw[s],” (5) as if the gun were laughing at the soldier’s efforts and death. The image of a Big Gun laughing (similar to a large man laughing) strengthens the idea that the men were fools (jesters) to try to fight machines, that there was no chance they’d win. Owen describes the weapons laughing again in line 10 (“the splinters spat, and tittered”) and again in line 15 (“the Gas hissed”). Eventually, the reader sees all the weapons laughing in chorus and making a display of these “fools.” They are then left feeling hopeless and mocked, with the idea that men do not win in man vs. nature.

Comments:
Although short, this essay demonstrates the proficient knowledge and intelligent understanding necessary to place in Band 2. The analysis of Owen’s techniques is precise and focused on single words or short phrases, and the argument clearly builds from one paragraph to the next. A more sustained analysis and in-depth explanations could have pushed this essay into Band 1; its short length places it at the lower end of Band 2.
PAPER 3 EXAMPLES FROM OTHER TEXTS


Comment closely on ways in which the writer uses imagery in the following poem.

Amends

Nights like this: on the cold apple-bough
a white star, then another
exploding out of the bark:
on the ground, moonlight picking at small stones
as it picks at greater stones, as it rises with the surf
laying its cheek for moments on the sand
as it licks the broken ledge, as it flows up the cliffs,
as it flicks across the tracks
as it unavailing pours into the gash
of the sand-and-gravel quarry
as it soaks through cracks into the trailers
as it dwells upon the eyelids of the sleepers
as if to make amends.

Adrienne Rich

Band 5 Example A

In the poem Amends by Adrienne Rich the author uses imagery to show how moonlight is much like the process of Amending. Throughout the poem the author uses many verbs such as “rises, laying, leans, and dwells”. The verbs are used to describe what the moonlight is doing almost as if it were a human, this helps better the imagery for the reader to understand that the moonlight represents a person going through the process of amendment.

In the first paragraph Adrienne uses imagery by describing the type of night it is “on the cold apple bough” creating a sad mood. Later in the stanza the moonlight is “picking at small stones”. This is something we can relate to therefore it is easy to picture. The imagery in the first stanza represents the first step of Amending and it is thinking about what you've done. The moonlight seems to be wondering much like one does while thinking of something they've done.

In the second stanza the poet uses many verbs to describe the movement of the moonlight almost as if it were restless, much like a human. The author uses the verbs “rises, laying, broken, flows, licks”. These verbs were used to create imagery to show the reader what the moonlight is feeling. When a person is feeling guilty they become
restless and aren't sure what to do with themselves much like the moonlight is shown in the second stanza through the imagery of the verbs used. The moonlight seems restless much like a person contemplates on what they have done wrong. The moonlight is going through the guilt stage of Amending.

In the third stanza the author Adrienne describes the moonlight and all the places it is going, from the “gash of the sand-and-gravel” to the “hangared fuselage of the crop-dusting plane”. The moonlight is heading some place to make amends. The imagery of the places the moonlight is headed to is much like how a person makes their way towards the person they want to amend with.

In the fourth stanza the author uses imagery to show that the moonlight has made it to where the people are and it wants to make amends. The author shows how the moonlight is making it’s way over there “as it soaks through the cracks”. The author uses this imagery to show how desperate it is to reach it’s destination. Finally the moonlight “dwells upson the eyelids of the sleepers as if to make amends”. Although it’s unclear what the amend is for the author used the imagery of how the moon was acting to describe the steps of amending.

In the poem Amends by Adrienne Rich the author uses imagery to describe the way the moonlight is acting and moves to describe the different steps of amending a problem with someone. The author uses moonlight to symbolize a human through its actions and imagery.

Knowledge: some limited ability to select details
Understanding: some limited response to language
Personal Response not fully developed
Communication basically clear

Marks 8/25 (mid-high Band 5)

### Band 5 Example B

In the poem, Amends by Adrienne Rich, the literary term imagery could be read. As the poem progresses, the writer presents new settings each time. However, it seems to be at the night time because of the beginning stanza and the last stanza.

The first imagery could be seen at the beginning of the poem. This is where the writer introduces the setting by saying “Nights like this” (Rich, 1). Here, the use of imagery helps give out the setting of this poem. Although it just says “like this”, the writer continues with a colon “on the cold apple-bough” (Rich, 1). They provide us with more detail how this night was like.

Additionally, the writer continues with imagery but adding some exaggeration so that his words chosen could become more interesting. Rich writes “white star, then
another exploding out" (Rich, 2 & 3). Here, the world “exploding” gives the reader a strong picture in mind that this star exploded. The writer’s diction helps with the imagery because it sets a stronger and more intense picture in your mind when thinking about this white star.

Furthermore, we could, as readers, follow up where the poem is trying to take us. Rich uses in every last line in the first three stanzas, different places. At the beginning, the place is with “moonlight picking at small stones” (Rich, 4). This hints to us here that it could be at the beach, and the moonlight could be reflected on the ocean, this setting seems to be on the beach. Through this writer’s imagery this poem takes us to different places.

Another setting is on line 8 “as it flicks across the tracks”. (Rich, 8). “Tracks” could symbolize train tracks. Being at the train now, the writer has now switched us from the beach to seeing tracks. Lastly, the new place is now a “crop-dusting plane” (Rich, 12). Looking at the plane, this imagery on every last line of the stanzas 1-3, lets us see something new.

Shortly, after we think our travelling has stopped, the writer takes us back to their home, which is sleeping. The different settings has ended, and “the eyelids of this sleepers” (Rich, 15) have started.

This is perfectly placed at the end of the poem, because the travelling is done. Rich’s use of imagery takes us on a journey, and see different settings.

Some simple Knowledge through summary
Communication, though limited Understanding
Some Personal Response

Marks 6/25 (low Band 5)