**Herbert Read (1893-1968)   
"The Happy Warrior"**

His wild heart beats with painful sobs,  
His strin'd hands clench an ice-cold rifle,  
His aching jaws grip a hot parch'd tongue,  
His wide eyes search unconsciously.  
  
He cannot shriek.  
  
Bloody saliva  
Dribbles down his shapeless jacket.  
  
I saw him stab  
And stab again  
A well-killed Boche[[1]](#footnote-1).  
  
This is the happy warrior,  
This is he...

**Lens: Sound Devices**

1. First, paraphrase. On the surface alone, what is happening in this poem?
2. “Cacophony” or “dissonance” is a series of harsh, hard sounds (the word “cacophony” is in fact cacophonous because of its hard c’s). Label cacophonous sounds in this poem, along with their purpose.
3. “Phonetic symbolism” is sound suggestiveness: when the sounds of a word or series of words reminds you of something else related to the poem (i.e., “The swishing, rushing sounds of the winds through the willows”. The “sh” and “s” sounds symbolize the wind.). Find and label some phonetic symbolism with what it represents.
4. Is there any clear beat and/or rhythm in this poem? Why or why not?

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**Lens: Structure and Punctuation**

1. First, paraphrase. On the surface alone, what is happening in this poem?
2. What is the ending punctuation mark in this poem? What tone does this imply?
3. There is one telegraphic sentence. Label it, look at the content, and write down what purpose it serves.
4. There is an ellipsis (…) in the poem. Label it, look at the content and placement, and write down what you think it means or symbolizes.

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A well-killed Boche[[3]](#footnote-3).  
  
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**Lens: Imagery**

1. First, paraphrase. On the surface alone, what is happening in this poem?
2. Circle examples of imagery in the poem. Then, in the margins, write at least 4 words that describe the tone or emotions associated with those images.
3. There is a juxtaposition of temperature words in this poem. Find it, and write down what purpose it serves.
4. What does “search unconsciously” mean?

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**Lens: Symbolism**

1. First, paraphrase. On the surface alone, what is happening in this poem?
2. What does a “heart” typically symbolize? Look at the words associated with the soldier’s heart. What does this mean?
3. What could the “shapeless jacket” imply? (Hint: What shape is a jacket *supposed* to take?)
4. What does a “warrior” stereotypically look like, act like, etc? Does this match up with the warrior you see in the poem? Why do you think that is?

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**Lens: Diction**

1. First, paraphrase. On the surface alone, what is happening in this poem?
2. Circle the first words of each line. Mark the shift, write down what the shift is, and then write down the “so what”? (i.e., shifts from \_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in order to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)
3. Circle the verbs. Use at least three tone words/adjectives to describe the verbs.
4. Discuss the word “shriek” in the margins.
5. What is the “so what” for the repetition of the word “stab”?

**“Happy Warrior” Table Notes**

**First**, share out your notes so that everyone can have on their poem what you have on yours.

1. What is the irony of the title? Please also consider the content of the poem and discuss specifics; do not just say one thing, and move on.
2. The poem seems to narrow toward the end. What could this represent?
3. There are three characters in this poem. Identify them, and analyze them using as many descriptive words as you can. (Hint: the most ambiguous/uncertain character could be more than one person. Explore as many possibilities as you can think of.)
4. The phrase “well-killed” has a double-meaning, one of them ironic. Identify both meanings, and the irony.

**“Happy Warrior” Pangaea Notes**

1. What is this author’s stance on the following things, if we are just using this poem as evidence? Please write down EVERYTHING your group says—there are multiple answers and multiple shades of understanding.
   1. War/Battle
   2. Courage
   3. Identity
2. Is there a “bad guy” in this poem? Is there a “good guy”? Why or why not? What could this mean about conflicts in general? PLEASE deep dive on this one and take time to really talk about it.
3. Under what circumstances do we/could we have happy warriors? Do we want them? Why or why not? Why has the author called this poem “Happy Warrior”? Could you tie this into your answer? PLEASE deep dive on this one and take time to really talk about it.

1. Boche: an offensive term for a German soldier [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Boche: an offensive term for a German soldier [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Boche: an offensive term for a German soldier [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Boche: an offensive term for a German soldier [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Boche: an offensive term for a German soldier [↑](#footnote-ref-5)