

Imagery Practice

Read the following excerpt from Chapter 4, page 69 of *All Quiet On the Western Front*.

Cautiously, the mouth applied to the valve, I breathe. The gas still creeps over the ground and sinks into all hollows. Like a big, soft jellyfish it floats into our shell-hole and lolls there obscenely. I nudge Kat, it is better to crawl out and lie on top than to stay where the gas collects most. But we don't get as far as that; a second bombardment begins. It is no longer as though shells roared; it is the earth itself raging.

With a crash something black bears down on us. It lands close beside us; a coffin thrown up.

Paul is in a shell-hole with three other men, trying to “decide between life and death” and survive the bombardment of chemical gas. List the visual images that he describes, and label each image using one of the five senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste):

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____
- (4) _____

Look at the verbs that are used to describe the gas. What connotations do these verbs carry?

- (1) _____ Connotation: _____
- (2) _____ Connotation: _____
- (3) _____ Connotation: _____
- (4) _____ Connotation: _____

What simile does Remarque use to explain the movement of the gas? _____

How does this comparison affect the meaning of this passage? _____

What auditory images are described in this passage?

- (1) _____
- (2) _____

What effect do these auditory images have on the passage? _____

The last image of the passage is perhaps the most startling, and the most powerful. What image does “a coffin . . . throw[ing] up” create? _____

What do the men physically “feel”? _____

How does this affect the passage as a whole? _____

What do you suppose the author intended the reader to experience through these details? Write a sentence explaining how the images and their arrangement impact the meaning of the passage.

Now it is time for **you** to create the feeling of an experience through the use of images. Describe a battle scene using four of the five sensory images (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch) and include a simile or metaphor to describe this scene.

For homework, analyze the follow excerpt and write a sentence explaining how the images and their arrangement impact the meaning of the passage.

From Chapter 6, page 134

We see men living with their skulls blown open; we see soldiers run with their two feet cut off, they stagger on their splintered stumps into the next shell-hole; a lance-corporal crawls a mile and a half on his hands dragging his smashed knee after him; another goes to the dressing station and over his clasped hands bulge his intestines; we see men without mouths, without jaws, without faces; we find one man who has held the artery of his arm in his teeth for two hours in order not to bleed to death. The sun goes down, night comes, the shells whine, life is at an end.