



Dissenting voices (part two) – Worksheet 12a

Activity: Read the poem 'War Exalts' by Harold Begbie below. Three words are missing. With your partner, discuss which word should go in each space. For spaces 2 and 3, you must choose one of the three words offered.

Glossary

brute	<i>a violent, cruel person</i>
cleanse	<i>clean, make pure, get rid of sin or guilt</i>
exalt	<i>make noble, make excellent</i>
perish	<i>die</i>
shrapnel'd	<i>blown to pieces by a bomb</i>
tyrant	<i>someone who uses fear and oppression to rule</i>

War Exalts

War exalts and cleanses: it lifts man from the ⁽¹⁾ _____!

Ask God what He thinks of a bayonet dripping blood.

By War the brave are tested, and cowards are disgraced!

Show God His own image shrapnel'd into paste.

Fight till tyrants perish, ⁽²⁾ **slay / kill / fight** till brutes are mild!

Then go wash the blood off and try to ⁽³⁾ **impress / face / control** your child.

Harold Begbie
1871–1929

About the poet

Harold Begbie was a Christian who was enthusiastic about WWI when it began in 1914. One of his poems, 'Fall In', was used to help recruit young men to the army by making them feel ashamed and like 'shirkers' if they didn't join up.

By the time Begbie wrote 'War Exalts', however, he had changed his mind: he attacked the idea that war was 'good' for you and that God was on the side of war.