

**Overview**

Your job for the final exam is to write a 6-7 page analysis of *one* of the following pieces:

1. “A Terre” by Wilfred Owen (poem)
2. “War Talk” from *Once There was a War* by John Steinbeck (WWII wartime correspondence)
3. “The Vietnam in Me” by Tim O’Brien (essay)

**Getting Started**

I recommend reading all three pieces to discover which one you like the most—and which one sparks your thinking. You might also do a little background reading on the piece you choose. Remember, no outside research is required for this essay, but finding out some basic information might be helpful (and if you do use outside sources, be sure to cite them according to MLA style).

Once you have selected your piece, reread it once or twice to determine what you would like to write about.

**Analysis**

Your analysis should be driven by a thesis and answer two key questions:

1. What is the theme of the piece?
2. How does the author represent the experience of war?

Some themes our class has discussed so far include the erosion of patriotism, the effect of war on combatants and non-combatants (psychological impact, family relations, and more), the question of heroism, and war-time gender roles. Trace one of these themes—or a theme of your own choosing—through your selected piece, commenting on how the text expresses or undermines the idea. Of course, making references to works we’ve already read is a very good strategy, though you should not discuss these previous works in depth.

We have also spent quite a bit of time discussing how war is represented, examining this question through a range of literary forms: memoir, poetry, graphic novel, novel, letters, and short stories. Your essay should speculate on the form and language chosen by your author. How does the form succeed in capturing the experience of war? How does it fail?

**Using textual excerpts**

Your essay should make judicious use of textual excerpts to support your argument. See the 384 resource page for some helpful resources on using direct quotes. In general, you should adhere to MLA style for in-text citations, though you do not need to include an entry on the works cited page for the piece you are writing about.

**Details**

Your response should be a minimum of six (double-spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins) and emailed to me before the beginning of class.