

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## The War Works Hard

By Dunya Mikhail  
From *The War Works Hard* • 2005

*Born and raised in Iraq, Dunya Mikhail (1965—) has written much about the wars she lived through in her home country. As a journalist and poet in Baghdad, her writing was considered “subversive” by former dictator Saddam Hussein. In 1996 she was forced to flee the country after facing threats and harassment from the government. As you read, take note of the imagery and tone of the poem.*

- [1] How magnificent the war is!  
How eager and efficient!  
Early in the morning  
it wakes up the sirens  
[5] and dispatches ambulances  
to various places  
swings corpses through the air  
rolls stretchers to the wounded  
summons rain from the eyes of mothers.  
[10] It produces the most questions  
in the minds of children  
and urges families to emigrate.



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- The war continues working, day and night.  
It inspires tyrants  
[15] to deliver long speeches  
awards medals to generals  
and themes to poets.  
It contributes to the industry  
of artificial limbs  
[20] provides food for flies  
adds pages to the history books  
achieves equality  
between killer and killed  
teaches lovers to write letters  
[25] accustoms young women to waiting  
fills the newspapers  
with articles and pictures  
builds new houses  
for the orphans  
[30] invigorates the coffin makers  
gives grave diggers  
a pat on the back  
and paints a smile on the leader's face.  
It works with unparalleled diligence!

[35] Yet no one gives it  
a word of praise.

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## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which of the following best states how the speaker's tone reveals his or her point of view about war? [RL.6]
- A. The speaker's amused tone reveals that he/she believes war should not be taken seriously.
  - B. The speaker's insistent tone reveals that he/she believes war is necessary to society.
  - C. The speaker's detached tone reveals that he/she is unaffected by war.
  - D. The speaker's sarcastic tone reveals that he/she believes war is cruel and destructive.

2. PART B: How does the poet's use of personification and imagery contribute to the tone mentioned in the answer to Part A? Use at least two pieces of evidence in your response. [RL.4] [RL.1]

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3. Which of the following best states the theme of this poem? [RL.2]
- A. War is necessary for society to function.
  - B. War is a beautiful thing.
  - C. War is a terrible thing.
  - D. Always praise those who are deserving.

4. PART A: What is the poet's most likely purpose for writing this poem? [RL.6]
- A. To send a message about forgiveness.
  - B. To criticize dictators and protest war.
  - C. To describe the positive aspects of war.
  - D. To show support for ending a war peacefully.

5. PART B: Which structural element of the poem best supports the answer to Part A? [RL.5] [RL.1]
- A. The division between stanza 1 and stanza 2 suggests that war creates a rift in perspectives between two enemies, despite the common destruction experienced on both sides.
  - B. The lack of rhyme scheme highlights the idea that war is necessary for the liberation of a people or nation.
  - C. The use of consistent line length conveys a sense of duty, reflecting the characterizations of war throughout the poem.
  - D. The separation of the relatively short final stanza from the rest of the poem emphasizes its significance in revealing the speaker's true attitude toward war.

