

# Building Background Knowledge Through Reading: Rethinking Text Sets

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## The Quad Text Set Framework

# Quick Tip for ELL Teachers:

Lexical Tutor

*VocabProfiler can help*

*quickly identify both*

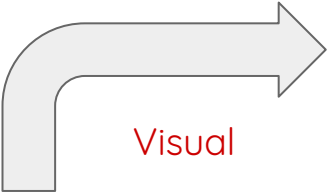
Key Vocabulary

and

Reading Difficulty

The screenshot displays the 'Web VP Classic' interface within a web browser. The browser's address bar shows the URL 'https://www.lexictutor.ca/vp/eng/'. The page has a dark theme with a red header bar. The header contains the text 'Home > VocabProfilers > English' and 'Web VP Classic v.4'. Below the header, there is a red banner with the text 'One-word VP-Classice' and 'NEW Jan 2018 - Corpus based school subject lists (MSVL - Middle School Vocab. Lists)'. The main content area is divided into two sections: 'Input method A' and 'Input method B'. 'Input method A' includes a 'Title' field, a 'MAIN TEXT' area with instructions, and a 'POST 2k' section with radio buttons for 'AWL', 'MSVL', 'School subjects', 'See lists', 'DEMOS', 'Sci Gr 4', and 'Hist Gr 5'. There is also a 'SUB-OPTIONS' section with radio buttons for 'post\_AWL' and 'overlap'. 'Input method B' includes a text area for 'Non-Lexical Proper Nouns' and a 'SUBMIT\_Window' button. The footer contains copyright information: 'Original VP by Heatley & Nation, VUW New Zealand & B. Laufer, U Haifa, Israel; AWL by A. Coxhead VUW; WebVP adapted by T. Cobb, UQAM Canada. How to cite'.

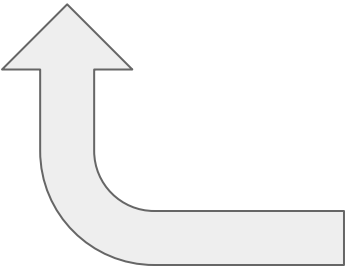
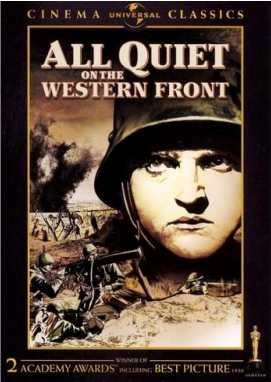
Sample  
Quad Text  
Set



Visual



Accessible



**"Dulce Et Decorum Est"**  
by Wilfred Owen

Knock-kneed, Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
Coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,  
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs  
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.  
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots  
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;  
Drunk with fatigue, deaf even to the hoofs  
Of disappointed shells that dropped behind.

GAS! Gas! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,  
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;  
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling  
And floundering like a man in fire or lime—  
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light  
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,  
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin,  
You could hear, at every jolt the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-companged lips,  
Owning no cancer, bitter as the cold  
Of their dead and twisted, and their ending—  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
Pro patria mori.

Aashra, Ashwarya, Kelly, Purima

EyeWitness to History.com!

### Gas Attack, 1916

The First World War accelerated the development of new technologies designed to improve the ability to kill an enemy: the machine gun, the tank, the airplane, the torpedo, and gas to name a few. Among these, gas was probably the cruelest, certainly the most capricious—a change in wind direction could spell disaster. Initially, gas cylinders were simply placed along the front line, facing the enemy trenches. Once the wind was deemed favorable, the cylinders were opened and the gas flowed with the breeze, carrying death to the enemy. Later, gas was packed into artillery shells and delivered behind enemy lines. No matter the method of delivery, its impact could prove fatal on earth. Chlorine and phosgene gases attacked the lungs, tearing the very breath out of its victims. Mustard gas was worse. At least a respirator provided some defense against the chlorine and phosgene gases. Mustard gas attacked the skin—most often such as the eyes, nostrils, and groin. It burned its way into its victim leaving wearing blisters and unrecognizable pain.

First introduced by the Germans, gas warfare was soon emulated by all combatants. By the end of the war, one in four of the soldiers killed on the Western Front contained gas.

#### Over The Top

Arthur Emery was an American living in New Jersey when war consumed Europe in 1914. Enraged by the sinking of the *Lusitania* and loss of the lives of American passengers, he expected to join an American army to combat the Germans. When America did not immediately declare war, Emery boarded a ship to England, enlisted in the British Army (a violation of his nationality law, but no one seemed to mind) and was soon receiving a trench on the front line.

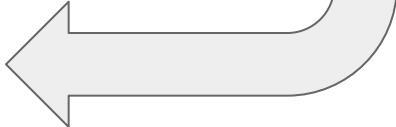
Emery survived his experience and published his recollections in 1917. We gain his story after he has been made a member of a machine gun crew and sits in a British trench waiting towards German lines. Conditions are perfect for an enemy gas attack—a slight breeze blowing from the enemy's direction—and the warning has been given along to be on the lookout:

"We had a new man at the periscope, on this afternoon in question. I was sitting on the fire step, cleaning my rifle, when he called out to me: 'There's a sort of generally yellow cloud sitting along the ground out to front. It's coming...'"

But I waited for no more, grabbing my helmet, which was detached from the rifle. I gave the alarm by hanging an empty shell case, which was hanging near the periscope. At the same instant, groups started rising down the trench, the signal for Tommy to don his respirator, or smother himself as he can.

Gas travels quickly, so you must not know how long; you generally have about eighteen or twenty seconds in which to adjust your gas helmet.

Informational



## THE LONG, LONG TRAIL

RESEARCHING SOLDIERS OF THE BRITISH ARMY IN THE GREAT WAR OF 1914-1919

HOME ABOUT SOLDIERS ARMY BATTLES BATTLEFIELDS REVIEWS VIDEOS NEWS RECOMMENDED READING NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO THE LONG, LONG TRAIL

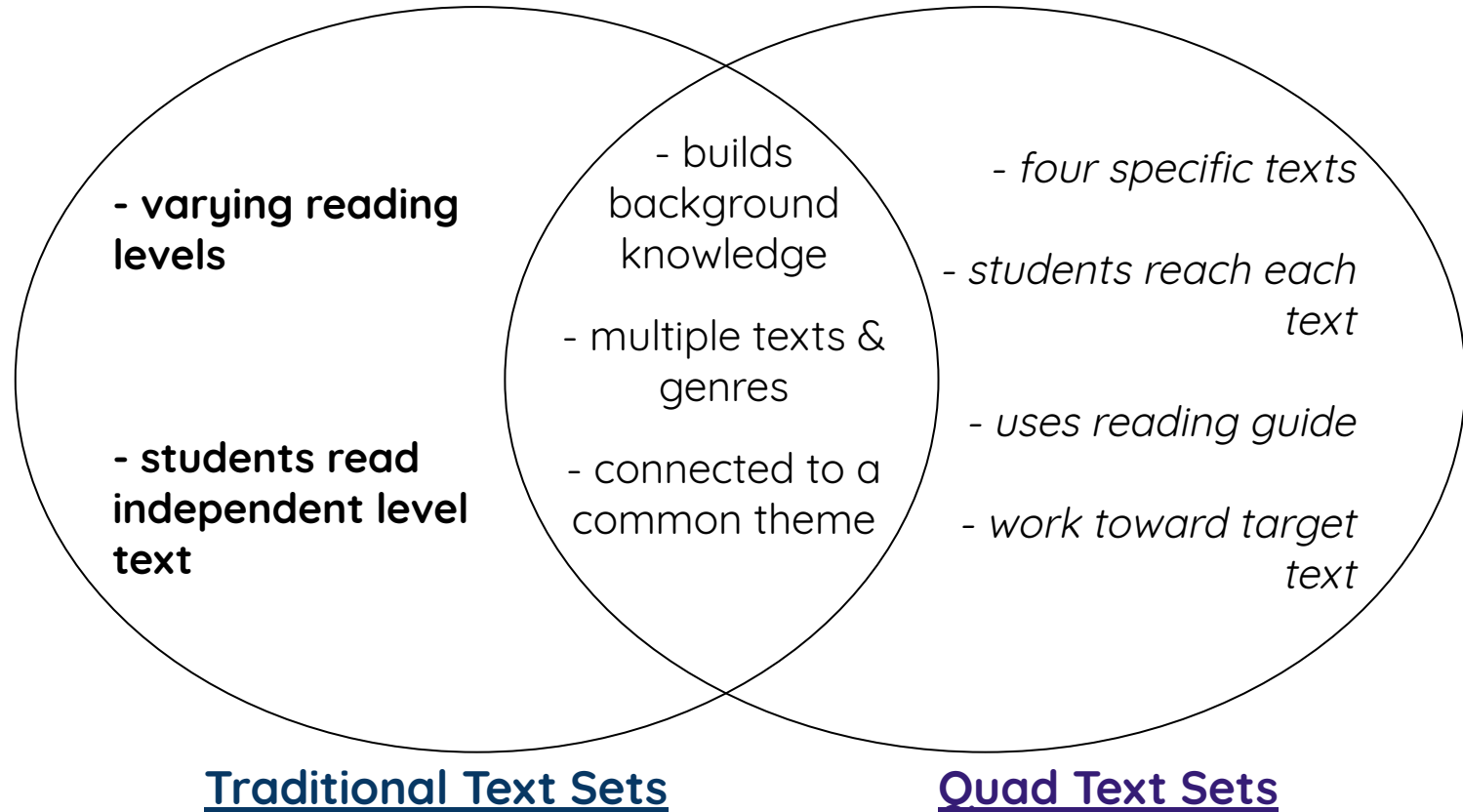
From website author, Chris Baker  
I am very pleased to welcome you to the Long, Long Trail, my site dedicated to helping you discover the British army and its soldiers of the First World War.

Need help in finding more about your soldier ancestor? Benefit from my professional services: [firstnames@longtrail.co.uk](#)

Need W.D.A.S?

The Long, Long Trail is pleased to recommend Battle Honours, the UK's leading company offering battlefield tours, with the ability and experience to arrange tours for groups of all sizes

# What do You Know about Text Sets?



# Activity: Creating Text Sets



- 6 Groups.
- Each group is given a target text or subject matter.

Groups will either:

- find all texts to complete the text sets.
- guess for which subject matter this text set is and find texts to compliment and support the target text

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# Post-Activity Discussions:

Share your chosen texts and your  
method of presentation



# Big Ideas

- Reading volume, text difficulty, motivation, and background knowledge all influence the reading experience for students.
- Using text sets helps to identify and focus on important knowledge for students.
- Looking at multiple texts helps students to find patterns and to come to a deeper meaning of shared themes.



# Strategies

- Easier texts help to scaffold harder ones.
- What students already know affects what details they find interesting and important.
- Pick topics that students find interesting.
- Use different types of texts that you know students will find engaging.
- Different types of texts help students who may have difficulties reading.

## TAKE ACTION!

1. Choose a target text for achieving instructional objectives.
2. Select a visual text to build background knowledge needed to comprehend the target text.
3. Select informational text(s) to build additional background knowledge.
4. Select an accessible text to help students make connections to and find relevance in the topic.
5. Consider the order of implementation of the texts to allow students to build understanding of the topic and texts strategically.
6. Select from a set of instructional routines and disciplinary literacy strategies to use before, during, and after reading for each text.