

Descriptive Essay

"On the Road to Berlin" by Ernie Pyle

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Sometimes, descriptive essays do not have a clear thesis statement, but this one has an obvious purpose nonetheless. What is the purpose (dominant impression) of this essay? Locate a sentence that states the thesis and explain why you chose this sentence.
2. Why is the passage called, "On the Road to Berlin"? What does the title have to do with the content and purpose of the essay?
3. What is the tone (author's attitude) of the passage? Offer words, phrases or examples to support your answer.
4. What point of view does the author use in the narration of this essay? What effect does it have?
5. This descriptive passage is essentially a catalogue of the casualties of war: human and equipment. Select two of the most effective descriptions for each category of casualty and list them. Why are these four so effective in your opinion?
6. Pyle uses irony twice in this essay. Identify these two instances. Are they effective uses of irony? Why or why not? How do they contribute to Pyle's overall description?
7. Pyle uses contrast frequently to highlight the differences between the living and the dead and between the success and the costs of such an invasion. Identify two examples of contrasts and explain how they achieve his purpose.
8. In the essay, find an example of each of the Rhetorical Devices below. In your answer, quote the relevant phrase and provide a minimum 2-sentence explanation of how the device reinforces the main idea of the passage.
 - a) Simile
 - b) Metaphor
 - c) Personification
9. Find two examples of unusual sentence structures. Explain their function in the passage; determine why Pyle uses them.
10. Reread the last paragraph of the essay. Do you think the paragraph makes a good conclusion to the passage? Why or why not?