**Exploring Themes in a Variety of Genres**

**Sunday Bloody Sunday**

**U2**

I can't believe the news today  
Oh, I can't close my eyes and make it go away  
How long, how long must we sing this song?  
How long? How long?  
'Cause tonight we can be as one, tonight

Broken bottles under children's feet  
Bodies strewn across the dead end streets  
But I won't heed the battle call  
It puts my back up, puts my back up against the wall

Sunday, Bloody Sunday  
Sunday, Bloody Sunday  
Sunday, Bloody Sunday

**“Bloody Sunday” Questions**

1. What does this song seem to be about?Why doyou think so?

2. What could the following lines indicate about the subject matter of the song?

* “How long, how long must we sing this song?  
  How long? How long?”
* “'Cause tonight we can be as one, tonight”
* “The trench is dug within our hearts  
  And mothers, children, brothers, sisters torn apart”

3. What are some of the theme topics being explored in the song? Why do you think so?

And the battle's just begun  
There's many lost but tell me who has won  
The trench is dug within our hearts  
And mothers, children, brothers, sisters torn apart

Sunday, Bloody Sunday  
Sunday, Bloody Sunday

How long, how long must we sing this song?  
How long? How long?  
'Cause tonight we can be as one  
Tonight, tonight

Sunday, Bloody Sunday  
Sunday, Bloody Sunday

Wipe the tears from your eyes  
Wipe your tears away  
Oh, wipe your tears away  
Oh, wipe your tears away  
Oh, wipe your blood shot eyes

Sunday, Bloody Sunday  
Sunday, Bloody Sunday

And it's true we are immune when fact is fiction and TV reality  
And today the millions cry  
We eat and drink while tomorrow they die  
The real battle just begun to claim the victory Jesus won on

Sunday Bloody Sunday  
Sunday Bloody Sunday

**“The Sniper” - Liam O’Flaherty**

**Group Discussion Questions**

***Instructions: These are to be answered on a separate sheet of paper in complete sentences. Each member of the group must have their OWN copy of the answers.***

1. What details does the author provide to identify the setting of the story in Paragraphs 1 & 2?
2. Where does the climax in this story occur? What does it tell you about the author’s purpose in writing this story?
3. Explain what kind of irony is found in the last sentence of the story: “Then the sniper turned over the dead boy and looked into his brother’s face.” Is this irony effective or melodramatic? Explain.
4. In addition to mystery, O’Flaherty also uses dilemma to create suspense. Describe the dilemma in “The Sniper”.
5. This story takes place in the 1920s, during the Irish Civil War. How does the author’s use of “in medias res” (in the middle of things) give this piece a timeless quality, however?
6. Read the poem “Conflict” below. What similar theme and subject-matter do both “Conflict and “The Sniper” illustrate? Write a theme statement – and remember your theme should be one-two sentences long and should not be a moral but a statement of a universal truth. What similarities do they share with “Bloody Sunday” as well?

**“Conflict” by F.R. Scott**

When I see the falling bombs

Then I see defended homes.

Men above and men below

Die to save the good they know.

Through the wrong the bullets prove

Shows the bravery of love.

Pro and con have single stem

Half a truth dividing them.

Between the dagger and the breast

The bond is stronger than the beast.

Prison, ghetto, flag and gun

Mark the craving for the One.

Persecution’s cruel mouth

Shows a twisted love truth.

Deeper than the rack and rope

Lies the double human hope.

My good, your good, good we seek

Though we turn no other cheek.

He who slays and he who’s slain

Like in purpose, like in pain.

Who shall bend to single plan

The narrow sacrifice of man?

Find the central human urge

To make a thousand roads converge?

**Historical Background of “The Sniper”**

Northern Ireland came into existence with the British Government of Ireland Act (1920) which divided Ireland into two areas: the Irish Free State, made up of the 26 southern counties in the South, and Northern Ireland - comprising 6 counties. **Roman Catholics**, who made up around one-third of the population of Northern Ireland, were largely **opposed to the partition**. Formed in 1969 as the clandestine armed wing of the political movement Sinn Fein, the **IRA (Irish Republican Army)** is devoted both to removing British forces from Northern Ireland and to unifying Ireland.

**In 1919, the newly formed Irish Republican Army (IRA) launched guerilla warfare during the Irish War of Independence to liberate Ireland from the British**. Unable to contain the rebels, London agreed in the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty to create an Irish Free State. However, the agreement would recognize the Free State only as a dominion in the British Commonwealth of Nations. Moreover, it would permit six counties in northern Ireland to withdraw from the Free State, allow the British to maintain ports in the south, and require the Free State to pay part of the debt Britain incurred in waging the war. Consequently, not all Irishmen accepted the agreement, the provisions of which became effective in 1922. (The six northern counties seceded (or withdrew formally from membership in the federal union with Britain), as expected.) **Once-united Irish fighters were now split into two factions—disgruntled IRA members and supporters of the Free State—and fought a civil war. O’Flaherty, himself a member of the IRA, centers his short story on a scene of fighting in Dublin in which an IRA sniper shoots at Free Staters from a rooftop**.

**Historical Background to “Sunday Bloody Sunday”**

 "Sunday Bloody Sunday" is noted for its militaristic drumbeat, harsh guitar, and melodic harmonies. One of U2's most overtly political songs, its lyrics describe the horror felt by an observer of [the Troubles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Troubles) in Northern Ireland, mainly focusing on the [Bloody Sunday](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloody_Sunday_(1972)) incident in [Derry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derry) in 1972 where British troops shot and killed unarmed civil rights protesters and bystanders who were there to rally against internment (imprisonment without trial).

**The Troubles** is the common name for the ethno-nationalist conflict in Northern Ireland that spilled over at various times into the Republic of Ireland, England and mainland Europe. The Troubles began in the late 1960s and is deemed by many to have ended with the Belfast 'Good Friday' Agreement of 1998, but sporadic violence has continued since then. Internationally, the Troubles is also commonly called the **Northern Ireland conflict** and has often been described as a war.

Traditional IRA activities have included bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, punishment beatings, extortion, smuggling, and robberies. Before the cease-fire in 1997, the group had conducted bombing campaigns on various targets in Northern Ireland and Great Britain, including senior British Government officials, civilians, police, and British military targets.

**Aftermath of IRA bombings in Britain**

**Graffiti / Wall Art in Northern Ireland**