

'The Charge of the Light Brigade' by Alfred Lord Tennyson

1. For each of the six stanzas of the poem, write one or two words which you feel sum up that stanza.
e.g. Stanza one - orders!

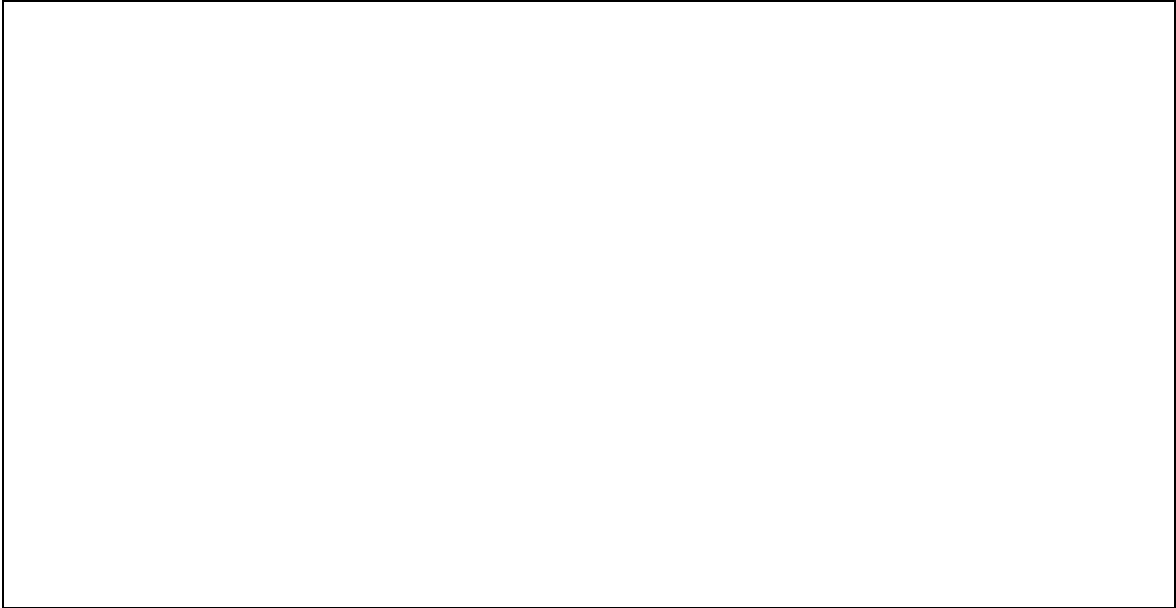
2. In stanza one, who do you think 'he' might be?

3. What kind of situation do you think the 'valley of Death' might be?

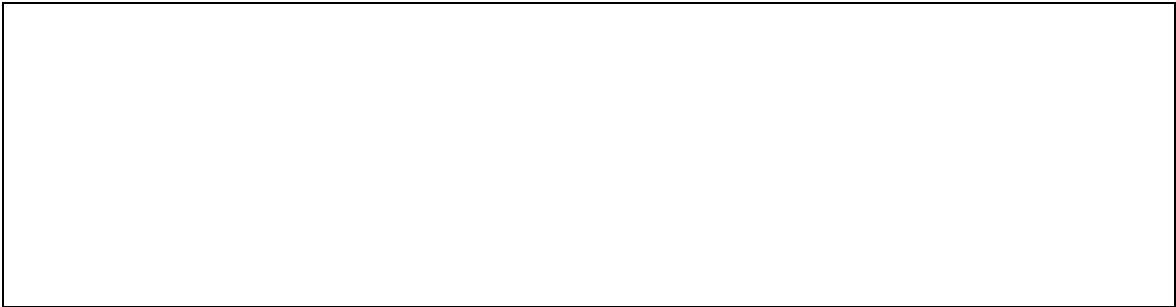
4. Is it a good idea to 'Charge for the guns'? Explain your answer.

5. In stanza two, what does Tennyson admire about the soldiers? Do you agree? Explain.

6. In stanza three, the dangerous situation the soldiers ride into is described using metaphors such as the 'jaws of death' and the 'mouth of hell'. What do you think it was like really? You could draw and label a sketch.



7. Re-read stanza four. In what way was the British force a poor match for the enemy?



8. How does Tennyson make the British seem rather glamorous?



9. From stanza five, write down a quotation to show the way in which most of the six hundred men perished.



10. List the positive words in stanza six.



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Complete the following by adding a quotation. The first one has been done for you.

12. Tennyson uses repetition to emphasise the danger surrounding the Light Brigade from all sides, for example:

“Cannon to right of them
Cannon to left of them
Cannon in front of them”

13. Tennyson uses metaphors to emphasise the danger of the ambush which the men ride into:

14. The poet uses alliteration to emphasise the dangerous nature of the ammunition being fired at the Light Brigade:

15. Many verbs are used in this poem to indicate the energy, drama and excitement of the charge. Some examples of these are:

16. Two examples of rhetorical questions are used in the poem in order to make the reader think about key points. One is made to emphasise the fact that the six hundred men should not be forgotten:

The other rhetorical question makes the point that the men were so brave and loyal to their commanding officers that they would follow even an obviously wrong order:

17. A very energetic rhythm is used in the poem to show the vigour and pace of the men charging on horseback. Some lines which show this are:

18. Tennyson uses many rhyming words in the poem which give it a lot of force and a very decisive feel. This is appropriate, given the energy of the six hundred men and their unquestioning dash into battle. Some examples of these rhyming words are:

Extended writing tasks

19. Explain why Tennyson does not name or single out any of the six hundred.
20. Tennyson based his poem on a newspaper report of the Charge. Write a modern newspaper account of the battle, as it might appear in a tabloid newspaper. Remember to use wordplay, short sentences and paragraphs, a heading, sub-headings, reported speech etc. You could also include a picture with a caption.
21. Write a formal letter to the editor of a newspaper, complaining about the military incompetence of the Charge and the waste of life which ensued. The address of the paper is:

The Editor
The Daily Herald
26 Fleet Street
London

Date (pick a date just after the event!)

Begin: Dear Sir