

Modern War: A Very Short Introduction

By Richard English

Questions for Thought and Discussion

- What are the defining elements of 'modern' as opposed to pre-modern war?
- Can war ever be considered justified, given the scale of human cost which it involves?
- Have we exaggerated the justness of Britain's motivation in the Second World War, and underestimated the justification for Britain going to war in 1914?
- How important has religious belief been in causing wars in the modern period?
- Do states make war more likely, or limit the likelihood of war's occurrence?
- Did the existence of nuclear weapons make the world safer or more dangerous during the late-twentieth century?
- How significant has the role of key individuals been in bringing about modern wars?
- In what ways can novels and poetry help us to understand the nature of war as it has actually been lived?
- Knowing that so much of what occurs in warfare involves the deliberate use of terrifying violence for political purposes, should we continue to consider 'war' and 'terrorism' as separate categories of violence? Why?
- "The twenty-first-century wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have proved overwhelmingly counter-productive." Discuss.

Other books by Richard English

Terrorism: How to Respond (Oxford University Press, 2009)

Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA 2nd edition (Pan, 2012)

Irish Freedom: The History of Nationalism in Ireland 2nd edition (Pan, 2006)

Further Reading

Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Oxford University Press, 2008)

David D. Laitin, *Nations, States, and Violence* (Oxford University Press, 2007)

Michael Howard, *The First World War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2007)

Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford University Press, 2013)