World Literature

European & Russian Literature: War and Grief

In groups, discuss and answer the following questions using your books as a guide.

**“No News from Auschwitz” & “The Butterfly” (pg. 410)**

1. If you had a chance to visit Auschwitz, would you go? Why or why not?
2. Explain why the title of the essay is ironic. What “news” does Rosenthal want his readers to know?
3. What purpose, or aim, do you think Rosenthal had in writing this essay?
4. Which lines in “The Butterfly” strike you most strongly? What images or feelings do they create for you?
5. What time of year is implied by the references to dandelions and to the “white candle” blossoms of chestnut trees? Would you normally expect to see many butterflies during that time of year?
6. What relationship do you see between Rosenthal’s essay and the poem “The Butterfly”?

**Russia’s Antigone (pg. 740)**

1. Look up “Antigone”. In three words, how would you describe her? Summarize her life and story in three sentences.
2. Read the two poems by Akhmatova. Which lines most strongly remind you of *Antigone*?
3. Akhmatova lived into her seventies, how can she be compared with Antigone, who died in her youth?

**Connections**

1. In what ways do Akhmatova’s poems reflect the feelings and ideas of “The Butterfly” and “No News from Auschwitz”?
2. Do you think these poems and article are still important for us to study and remember today? Why or why not?