



PAPER 1: POETRY AND MODERN PROSE TEXTS

Assessment Objective 1

Demonstrate a close knowledge and understanding of texts, maintaining a critical style and presenting an informed personal engagement

Assessment Objective 2

Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects

Assessment Objective 3

Explore links and connections between texts

Assessment Objective 4

Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written

A01 is worth 13% of marks

A02 is worth 23% of marks

A03 is worth 10% of marks

A04 is worth 13% of marks for the whole course

This chapter focuses on Paper 1: Poetry and Modern Prose Texts of the English Literature course. Working through these lessons and activities will help you develop the reading and writing skills you will need for the Paper 1 exam.

The chapter is split into the following sections:

- Reading poetry
- Poetry Anthology
- Modern prose.

Paper 1 is worth 60% of the total marks for the course and is split into three sections:

- Section A: Unseen poetry
- Section B: Anthology poetry
- Section C: Modern prose.

In sections A and B of your exam you will need to be able to meet Assessment Objectives A02 and A03.

In section C of your exam you will need to be able to meet the Assessment Objectives A01 and A04.

POETRY

WHAT IS POETRY?

Poetry can be a surprisingly difficult thing to define. What is it that makes a piece of literary writing into a poem, rather than simply a section of prose or drama? Often, the suggested answer to this question is given in terms of language. Where dramatic texts are based on performance and prose texts such as novels tend to be organised by story and character, poetry is usually thought of as depending on much more highly organised patterns of language. This generally means patterns of rhythm and patterns of rhyme that provide poetry with its structure in the same way as narrative often does for prose. For example, a poem like William Blake's 'The Tyger' has no plot or characters and is instead organised by a clear pattern of repeated rhythms and rhymes within the language. Similarly, what makes Shakespeare's 'Sonnet 116' a poem, rather than simply a set of thoughts and observations about love, is the highly ordered structure that is applied to the language. The difference between reading poetry and reading other forms of writing often means paying much more detailed attention to the language itself, rather than just what the language represents.

While defining poetry through its language can be useful, it is important, however, to recognise that in practice it is not always a simple task to clearly distinguish poetry from other forms of writing. Shakespeare's plays, for example, are dramatic works, but also repeatedly use detailed patterns of both rhythm and rhyme, meaning that they can be read as poetry as well as drama. Some forms of poetry are primarily meant to be performed aloud before an audience in the same way as drama, rather than read in isolation. This includes medieval ballads, as well as modern forms of performance poetry and rap music. Some poems contain complex plots and rich characters, and therefore come much closer to the form of the novel. John Milton's long 17th century poem 'Paradise Lost' is an example of this. Likewise, many novelists use beautiful and highly detailed language patterns that can be hard to separate from the form of poem. Finally, many writers write in different forms at different times; for example, Shakespeare wrote poems as well as plays while the Victorian author, Thomas Hardy, wrote both poems and novels. You should bear in mind that defining the difference between poetry and other forms of language is therefore a matter of emphasis, rather than a matter of hard, cut and dried distinctions.

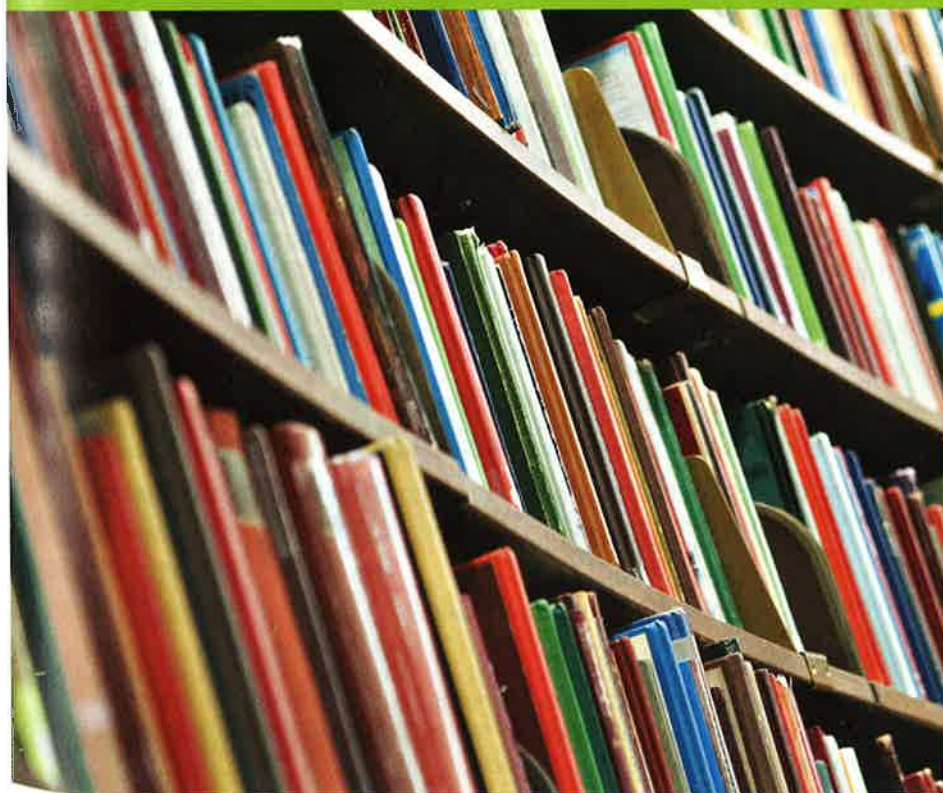
POETS' IDEAS

It is a sign of how difficult it is to form a clear definition of poetry that many famous poets have produced many different descriptions of definitions, often disagreeing with each other in the process. Some poets have defined poetry in terms of the importance of language: Samuel Taylor Coleridge claimed that prose is 'words in their best order', while poetry is 'the best words in their best order'. Others have defined poetry in terms of emotion and feeling: William Wordsworth stated that 'Poetry

is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings... emotion recollected in tranquillity.' A later poet called Matthew Arnold famously defined poetry as containing wisdom about life: 'poetry is at bottom a criticism of life... the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life – to the question: How to live.' Still others have suggested that it is impossible to truly define poetry other than by simply writing and reading it: A.E. Housman said 'I could no more define poetry than a terrier can define a rat.'

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The way that poetry resists simple or straightforward definitions is also linked to the fact that understanding of what counts as poetry, and what doesn't, changes dramatically over time. In the 16th and 17th centuries, poetry had to be written in a highly organised rhythm and use complex, difficult language, as it was by poets like Shakespeare in the 16th century and John Donne in the 17th century. If it didn't, it would not be considered poetry and certainly not good poetry. However, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, a group called the Romantic poets overturned this understanding of poetry. In the preface to a revolutionary collection of poems called *Lyrical Ballads*, the Romantic poet William Wordsworth outlined a kind of poetry that used very simple rhythms and language and was written in 'the real language of men'. In the 20th century, understandings of poetry changed again, with much poetry experimenting with radical new rhythms and forms of language. This was the period when 'free verse', or poetry with no consistent rhythmical pattern, became popular, something which poets from earlier periods would not have considered as poetry at all.



Assessment Objective 2
Analyse the language, form
and structure used by a writer
to create meanings and effects

Assessment Objective 3
Explore links and connections
between texts

▲ What's between the covers – poetry, drama or prose?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help you to:

- analyse individual poems
- provide a general introduction to the process of reading and understanding poetry.

KEY POINT

There are two essential questions that you should ask when approaching any poem. Firstly, what does the poem mean and/or what feelings does it generate? Secondly, what techniques are used to communicate those meanings and feelings?

MAKING SENSE OF POETRY

The first thing to think about is what meaning you can take from the poem. What is the poem *saying*, if you had to summarise it? Sometimes the answer is fairly clear. Rudyard Kipling's 'If –', for example, is clearly talking about what it takes to be a good and successful man. Many poems, however, might express more than one meaning or contain hidden meanings. Other poems are based on the communication of feelings and sensations rather than an identifiable meaning. William Blake's 'The Tyger' is a good example of this. Your own personal response is important. How does the poem make *you* feel? What does it mean to *you*? Questioning your own thoughts and reactions is at the heart of analysing poetry and can make it an exciting and meaningful process.

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, INTERPRETATION, COLLABORATION

▼ DIFFERENT MEANINGS

Read 'Half-Caste' by John Agard. Discuss the poem in a small group. Make a list of all the meanings that you take from it, and another list of all the feelings and sensations that are part of your individual reactions to it.

FINDING EVIDENCE

When analysing poetry, your personal response will never be enough on its own. To succeed in the exam, you need to take the next step and ask *how* the poet communicates meaning and feelings. In other words, your personal response needs to be supported by evidence that you have noticed within the poem. There are several different dimensions that you should look at when finding this evidence. Many of these points are addressed in greater detail in the other sections in this unit. They include things like poetic imagery, rhythm and rhyme, poetic structure and form, and the poet's choice of language.

ACTIVITY 2

A02

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION

▼ EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

Look at the first stanza of John Keats's 'La Belle Dame sans Merci'.

O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

Make a list of the feelings and meanings that you take from the stanza and then make a parallel list of the techniques that communicate them. Compare your list to the one provided below (don't read this list until you have completed your own).

▼ MEANING/FEELING	▼ TECHNIQUE
Feeling of melancholy and sadness	Lots of long vowel sounds: lots of 'a's and 'o's and 'e's. 'O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms, / Alone and palely loitering?'
Feeling that things have gone wrong; the natural order has been disturbed	This creates an effect of slowness and helps to produce the sense of a melancholy wasting and fading away. The use of words that suggest sickness and the decay of nature, such as 'withered', 'ail' and 'palely'. The final line is much shorter than the others and therefore disturbs the rhythm that has been established in the first three lines. This creates a feeling of strangeness and disturbance in the usual order of things.
Setting feels medieval/very old	The choice of archaic words that are not widely used today, such as 'thee', 'knight-at-arms' and 'sedge'.

HIDDEN MEANINGS AND FEELINGS



▲ Photos can have implicit and explicit meanings

Another thing which will improve your answer in the exam is to look for meanings and feelings that are **implicit** and below the surface, as well as those which are more obvious.

'War Photographer' by Carol Ann Duffy is literally about a photographer developing photographs. However, you need to work harder to think about what Duffy might be trying to say through her descriptions of the photographer. Is the poem talking about the horrors of war, the psychological damage done to the photographer or the coldness of Western societies which only access war through newspapers? You need to argue in support of one of these interpretations by using evidence from the poem. If you can access implicit as well as explicit meaning in this way, it will help to improve the quality of your response.

ACTIVITY 3

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, INTERPRETATION, CO-OPERATION

▼ EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT MEANING

Working with a partner, pick one of the poems in the Anthology. One person writes down what they consider the explicit or literal meaning of the poem to be. The other person writes down any implicit meanings or ideas they can find. Compare what you have written. Do both pieces together produce a comprehensive description of the poem's meaning?

GENERAL VOCABULARY

implicit suggested or understood without being told directly

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

A03

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS, ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY

HINT

Try to apply the methods you have used in the activities above to answer the question.

Discuss the representation of nature in John Keats's 'La Belle Dame sans Merci'.

In your answer, you should consider the poet's:

- descriptive skills
- choice of language
- use of structure and form.

Support your answer with examples from the poem.

(30 marks)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help you to:

- know what figurative language is
- identify different kinds of figurative language
- understand why poets might choose to employ figurative language.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Figurative language is language that is used in a non-literal way. Poets adapt words and phrases using figurative language, such as metaphors, similes and personification. This presents things that are not literally true, things that do not exist in the real world, but that are nevertheless able to communicate powerful truths.

METAPHOR

Metaphor is a kind of figurative language where one thing is described by relating it to another. The thing which the poet is trying to describe is technically known as the 'tenor' and the image which they use to describe it is known as the 'vehicle'. With metaphor, the connection between tenor and vehicle is presented as being direct: the tenor is the vehicle. Imtiaz Dharker employs a metaphor in 'Blessing' that uses the image of a god to describe water:

Imagine the drip of it,
the small splash, echo
in a tin mug,
the voice of a kindly god.

SIMILE

A simile resembles a metaphor, but with a simile the relationship between tenor and vehicle is less direct. Instead of saying that the tenor is the vehicle, similes claim that the tenor is *like* the vehicle or shares some resemblance with it.



▲ The water was as calm as a sleeping baby

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, COOPERATION,
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

▼ USE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

HINT

Forms of figurative language often play a crucial role in making the language of poetry vivid and powerful. It is important that you can show that you understand this and can identify the different kinds of figurative language, as well as the effects they have in individual poems.

'Sonnet 116' by William Shakespeare is a poem that uses a variety of figurative language to describe love. Work with a partner and find all of the individual metaphors that Shakespeare uses in the sonnet. Then discuss with your partner why Shakespeare chooses to describe love using metaphors in this way. What are the advantages of describing love through metaphors rather than describing it literally?

STRETCH YOUR THINKING

Read William Blake's 'The Tyger'. This is a poem that uses a lot of figurative language. More interestingly, it also poses some problems for the way figurative language usually works. This is because it repeatedly states that the tiger cannot actually be described and is beyond the poet's powers of representation: 'What immortal hand or eye, / Could frame thy fearful symmetry?' Bearing this in mind, how might you write about the use of figurative language in 'The Tyger' in an exam?

PERSONIFICATION

GENERAL VOCABULARY

inanimate not living

Personification is a kind of figurative language that can be achieved by means of a simile or a metaphor, but that can also be achieved in other ways. Something that is **inanimate** is treated as if it has a personality and character. Describing the sea as angry or a forest as threatening are examples of personification because they attribute emotions and character traits (qualities) to things that do not possess personalities. The way that Dharker describes the water in 'Blessing' is an example of personification because it treats the water as if it has character traits such as generosity and power.

KEY POINT

Metaphor is based on a direct identification between tenor and vehicle, while simile is based on a less direct form of comparison between tenor and vehicle. The effect of personification can be produced through a metaphor or a simile, but can also be produced in other ways.



▲ The angry sea

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

HINT

Use what you have learned about metaphors, similes and personification to help you answer this question.

Re-read 'Sonnet 116'.

Compare the way that love is presented in 'Sonnet 116' and one other poem in the Anthology.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help you to:

- understand some of the other techniques which poets use to produce meaning
- understand poetic effects, including the use of connotation, the manipulation of sounds, syntax and structure.

CREATING MOOD, ATMOSPHERE AND EMOTION

There are several methods besides figurative language that a poet can draw on to produce powerful and vivid effects. It is always important to look very closely at the choice of words that a poet makes. What is the poet suggesting or implying by selecting certain words, rather than others? How does their choice contribute to the poem's ability to communicate its meaning or express feelings and emotions?

CONNOTATIONS

HINT

The literal meaning of a word is the one that it 'denotes', while the suggested or implied meanings are those which it 'connotes'. With poetry, connotative meaning is usually far more important than it is with other kinds of language.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

imply to suggest that something is true, without saying this directly
implication a possible future effect or result of an action, event or decision
lurking hiding or existing without someone seeing it or knowing about it

It can be helpful here to think about what words suggest or **imply**, as well as what they literally mean. Look at the following lines from Robert Browning's 'My Last Duchess' as an example of this:

Her husband's presence only, called that spot
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek

'Spot' here literally means the red blush which appeared on the lover's cheek when she was happy.

However, 'spot' also suggests a blemish or imperfection; a small sign of damage on something that otherwise seems good and wholesome.

It is this second **implication** that is really the more significant, as it expresses the poem's central theme of violence and darkness **lurking** beneath an apparently luxurious and beautiful surface.



▲ Blushing

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, COLLABORATION, TEAMWORK

▼ WORD CHOICE

Work in a small group and read 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night' by Dylan Thomas. Divide the stanzas evenly between the members of the group. Each person should look at their stanza and look closely at the words that Thomas uses. Consider the following questions.

- What meanings do these words express through connotation and suggestion, in addition to their literal meaning?
- What patterns of connoted meaning does Thomas build up in this way?

SOUNDS AND MEANING

The sounds of words are often directly linked to their sense and meanings: this is a defining feature of poetry. Take the following lines from Louis MacNeice's 'Prayer Before Birth':

those
who would dissipate my entirety, would
blow me like thistledown hither and
thither or hither and thither

KEY POINT

Understanding how a poem creates moods, atmosphere and emotions means looking well beyond the literal meaning of the language. It means looking at the meanings and feelings which the words imply, at the sounds that words make, and the order in which they have been arranged.

MacNeice heavily repeats the 'th' sound of '*thistledown*', '*hither*' and '*thither*'. This makes the lines difficult to say as you are reading. This recreates the feeling of giving up control and instead being blown around from one 'th' sound to the next.

When looking at sound, there are some particular effects that it can be helpful to think about. One of the most important is rhyme. Does the poet emphasise certain words by rhyming them together? Is there a consistent rhyme scheme that supports the poem's meaning and effects? Another effect is alliteration: the repetition of consonant sounds. MacNeice's repetition of the 'th' sound is an example of alliteration.

ORDER AND STRUCTURE OF WORDS

In addition to implication and sound, the order or structure of the words can serve a vital role in generating mood, atmosphere and emotion. A poem like 'Poem at Thirty-Nine' by Alice Walker uses very short lines and very short sentences.

This has the effect of fragmenting the poem and breaking it up. It also helps to create the impression of someone remembering **fleeting** memories from their childhood that they can only partially recall.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

fleeting lasting for only a short time

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

HINT

Try to use what you have learned about how poets generate mood, atmosphere and emotion when you answer this question.

Re-read 'Blessing' and 'Prayer Before Birth'.

Compare the way that childhood is presented in 'Blessing' and 'Prayer Before Birth'.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help you to:

- understand what poetic metre is
- understand how poetic language makes use of rhythmical patterns and related effects.

FORM, RHYTHM AND METRE

Form, rhythm and metre are all features used by poets to create a wide range of effects within their work. By understanding the difference between these and the impact each can have upon the way a poem is read and interpreted, it is possible to gain a fuller understanding of poetry as a whole.

METRE

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

iambic using a light, unstressed beat followed by a heavy, stressed one: *tee-tum* (this pair of beats is called an iamb)
pentameter a line of poetry containing five pairs of beats or ten syllables

Metre is the pattern of emphasis that the poet uses in order to create the rhythm of a poem. As you are reading any poem, think about which sounds the poet is making you emphasise or 'stress'. Do the stresses form a recognisable pattern? The most widely used metre in English poetry is called **iambic pentameter**. Shakespeare wrote most of his plays and poems in iambic pentameter and his 'Sonnet 116' is a good example:

(Admit) (imped)(iments). (Love is) (not love)
 (Which al)(ters **when**) (it al)(tera)(tion finds),

Other poems use an unstructured metre that does not follow a regular pattern, but which changes from line to line. This is called 'free verse'. Alice Walker's 'Poem at Thirty Nine' is a good example of free verse.

STRETCH YOUR THINKING

HINT

It is important to be able to identify what kind of metre a poet is using, as well as being able to identify other effects such as repetition, **enjambment**, rhyme scheme and **alliteration**. To really earn marks in the exam, you need to be able to talk about why the poet uses techniques like these and what effect they have on the reader.

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

enjambment the interruption of a sentence by the ending of a line, often producing a shocking and striking effect; for example, in 'Poem at Thirty-Nine': 'I wish he had not been / so tired / when I was / born'
alliteration the use of several words together that begin with the same sound or letter

Try to identify the metres of 'The Tyger' and 'La Belle Dame sans Merci'. This will be a little harder than it is with 'Sonnet 116', because both of these poems slightly alter or adapt traditional metres.

THE EFFECT OF METRE

It is important to ask what the effects of a particular metre are. What mood does the rhythm create? For example, William Blake's 'The Tyger' uses a very strong rhythmical pattern that places a very heavy stress on the final syllable of each line:

Tyger Tyger, burning **bright**,
 In the forests of the **night**

The force of this emphasis helps to communicate the force and wild power which the tiger represents.

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, COOPERATION

▼ SPOKEN POETRY

Work with a partner and choose one poem from the Anthology. Read it aloud and work out where you think the emphasis is placed and whether the poet is using a consistent metre or writing in free verse. Next, try reading it aloud in different ways, deliberately emphasising different syllables.

► How do different ways of reading change the feel of the poem?

FORM AND STRUCTURE

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

sonnet a 14-line poem with a formal structure, consisting of a set pattern of lines; the Shakespearian sonnet contains three quatrains and a couplet (four and two lines respectively); the Petrarchan sonnet contains an octave and a sestet (eight and six lines respectively)

narrator a character that tells the story in a novel, play, poem or film

Once you are confident with rhythmical and other kinds of effect at the level of individual words and lines, you can begin to look at the way they work together at the level of the whole poem. Doing this means you are looking at the poem's 'form' and 'structure'. Talking about form means talking about the shape and number of stanzas, the pattern that lines make in combination with each others and the overall organisation of the poem. The **sonnet** form, for example, is 14 lines of rhymed iambic pentameter. Shakespeare's 'Sonnet 116' is obviously a sonnet, but so is Christina Rossetti's 'Remember'.

Talking about structure is similar, but means talking in particular about the order in which the poem is arranged. 'My Last Duchess', for example, is structured so that certain important information only becomes clear at the end of the poem and is revealed by the **narrator** through implication rather than through direct statement.

ACTIVITY 2

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, TEAMWORK

▼ ANALYSING FEATURES

Work with a partner and choose a poem from the Anthology. One person makes a list of the techniques that the poem uses at the level of lines and words: things like metre, repetition, enjambment and rhyme. For each technique, note how it contributes to the poem's effect. The other person makes a list of the features that define the poem at the level of its form and its structure. You should be able to combine your lists to produce a complete reading of the poem.

KEY POINT

Pay attention to two things when analysing the features of a poem: the techniques that a poem uses at the level of individual words and lines, and the way that these techniques help to shape the poem as a whole at the level of its overall form and structure.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

A03

HINT

Use the things you have learned about metre, form and structure to help you answer this question.

Re-read 'My Last Duchess' and 'War Photographer'.

How is violence presented in 'My Last Duchess' and 'War Photographer'?

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help you to:

- gain the skills and techniques you will need to approach an unseen poem in the exam.

UNSEEN POEMS

In the exam you will be asked to analyse a poem that you have not seen before. This might be quite straightforward: it might be quite obvious what the poem is about, what it means and what feelings it generates. However, you might have a poem which makes it more difficult to establish these basics and what is happening in the poem. It is this kind of poem that you need to prepare for. You need to know these basic points before doing the kind of detailed analysis outlined so far in this section.

PREPARING FOR UNSEEN POEMS

Read the First World War poem 'Channel Firing' by Thomas Hardy.

▼ 'CHANNEL FIRING' BY THOMAS HARDY

That night your great guns, unawares,
Shook all our coffins as we lay,
And broke the chancel window-squares,
We thought it was the Judgment-day

And sat upright. While drearishome
Arose the howl of wakened hounds:
The mouse let fall the altar-crumbs,
The worms drew back into the mounds,

The glebe cow drooled. Till God called, "No;
It's gunnery practice out at sea
Just as before you went below;
The world is as it used to be:

"All nations striving strong to make
Red war yet redder. Mad as hatters
They do no more for Christ's sake
Than you who are helpless in such matters.

"That this is not the judgment-hour
For some of them's a blessed thing,
For if it were they'd have to scour
Hell's floor for so much threatening...

"Ha, ha. It will be warmer when
I blow the trumpet (if indeed
I ever do; for you are men,
And rest eternal sorely need)."

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▲ Bombers at night

HINT

Often the title of a poem will give a clue to the most important aspects. In this case, the title 'Channel Firing' tells you that the poem is set near the English Channel (the area of sea between England and France) and that it is related to guns firing.

So down we lay again. "I wonder,
Will the world ever saner be,"
Said one, "than when He sent us under
In our indifferent century!"

25

And many a skeleton shook his head.
"Instead of preaching forty year,"
My neighbour Parson Thirdly said,
"I wish I had stuck to pipes and beer."

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Again the guns disturbed the hour,
Roaring their readiness to avenge,
As far inland as Stourton Tower,
And Camelot, and starlit Stonehenge.

35

This poem does not give the reader a lot of help when it comes to basic things like what is happening, what the setting is and who is speaking to whom. Instead, it asks the reader to do a lot of work to find out these things themselves. This is the work that you would need to do if you were faced with a poem like this in the exam.

UNDERSTANDING UNSEEN POEMS

Who is speaking and who is being addressed? This is often a crucial question when it comes to analysing a difficult poem.

- What voices are speaking in 'Channel Firing'? There are a few different voices at different points.
- What situation is the narrator of the poem in? What events and experiences are they describing?
- Does the speaker have a particular motivation? Are they trying to persuade anyone of anything?

What is the setting of the poem?

- In what kind of place is 'Channel Firing' set?
- What physical events happen in the setting as the poem progresses?

What is the meaning of the poem? Now you can start to think about what ideas the poem communicates.

- What does the narrator think and feel about the things that happen in 'Channel Firing'?
- What wider point or idea do you think Hardy might be trying to communicate through the poem?

If you can successfully answer all of these questions, it should give you a good understanding of the basic elements of the poem which you could then use as the foundation to talk about more advanced things like figurative language, sound, rhythm and structure.

KEY POINT

It is important to have the basic elements of a poem clear in your mind before moving on to the analysis of poetic techniques. Answering questions like 'who is speaking to whom?', 'what situation is the poem set in?' and 'what events happen in the course of the poem?' are key to helping you do this.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

SKILLS CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY

HINT

Practise the techniques that you have learned so far using the unseen poems and exam questions provided below. When preparing your answers, think about both the basic elements, such as what the poems are about and who is speaking, as well as more advanced questions of poetic technique and how meanings and feelings are communicated.

He gives his harness bells a shake (9)
Look closely at the references to sounds and to silence in this stanza. How do these references help to generate the poem's mood and tone?

woods (13) Notice the way that the word 'woods' is repeated in this poem. What is the effect of this choice?

How does the poet create a feeling of solitude in Robert Frost's 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening'?

In your answer, you should consider the poet's:

- descriptive skills
- choice of language
- use of structure and form.

Support your answer with examples from the poem.

(20 marks)

▼ 'STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING' BY ROBERT FROST

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

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15

- What details does the poet give the reader which help to build up a feeling of isolation?
- What effect is produced by the change of rhyme scheme in the final stanza?



► Settings can inspire emotions and ideas

STRONG SAMPLE ANSWER



- ¹ Focused introductory sentence, clearly answering the question.
- ² This answer uses examples from the poem to support its points very well.
- ³ Taking time to develop and further explore their observations of the poem to a more sophisticated level.
- ⁴ Good attention to the ways in which the poet creates mood.
- ⁵ Sophisticated observation of poetic technique.
- ⁶ Good use of appropriate literary terminology.
- ⁷ The student covers a good range of poetic techniques, adding structure to mood and sound.

In this poem the poet uses several effects to help create the feeling of solitude ¹. There are many references to the fact that he is isolated, far away from houses or the village and from the owner of the woods saying 'He will not see me stopping here' ². This therefore sets up a contrast between the community represented by the houses and the village and the isolation of the speaker ³. This is supported by the fact that the speaker is repeatedly linked to darkness and cold, it being said that it is 'The darkest evening of the year' and 'snowy' and 'frozen', again highlighting how far he is from human society ⁴.

The horse is also used to help communicate the feeling of solitude because it finds the situation eerie and confusing, shaking his harness bells 'To ask if there is some mistake'. Sound is very important here ⁵, with the poet creating the impression of absolute silence being interrupted by the sounds of the bells and the snow, which is 'the only other sound'. This helps to intensify the feeling of spookiness that comes with someone being entirely alone in a deserted landscape. The poet further emphasises these feelings of isolation by the use of repetition ⁶ in the last two lines. By saying 'And miles to go before I sleep' twice, he forces the reader to consider how far he is from a house or settlement where he could rest ⁷.

WEAKER SAMPLE ANSWER



- ¹ Opening sentence doesn't really make sense, and is a clumsy use of language.
- ² This is accurate, but is stating the obvious unless it is followed up by further exploration and analysis.
- ³ There is no attempt to link the rhyme scheme to the question, which asks about solitude. The writer also over-explains the rhyme scheme, possibly just as a device to fill up space.
- ⁴ There is no evidence for this assumption, and indeed the poem is deliberately ambiguous (unclear) about the figure that is speaking and their journey.
- ⁵ The student is just filling up space by quoting sections of the poem without analysis. They would get some credit, however, for at least identifying relevant quotations.
- ⁶ Little attempt has been made in this answer to analyse how this impression is created.

There is a lot of solitude in 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' ¹. The poet is far away from houses and has only his horse for company ². It is dark and snowy so he feels very alone, saying that 'the woods are lovely, dark and deep'. The horse becomes alarmed because it thinks it is 'queer to stop without a farmhouse near'. The poet uses a rhyme scheme of aaba, meaning that he rhymes the last words of the first two lines and the last word of the last line of each stanza, but doesn't rhyme the third line. This can be seen in the first stanza which has 'know' and 'though' as the last words of the first two lines, and 'snow' as the last word of the last line, but 'here' as the last word of the third line ³. The poet says that he has a long way to travel before he reaches the destination he is aiming for, which I assume is his own house that must be located on the far side of the woods from the village ⁴. The poet says that 'he will not see me stopping here' and he has stopped 'without a farmhouse near' and that he has miles to go before he sleeps, reinforcing the impression of solitude ⁵. This poem creates a strong impression of what it is like to be alone in the countryside at night ⁶.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY

Discuss the way that the poet, Boey Kim Cheng, presents the city in 'The Planners'.

In your answer, you should consider the poet's:

- descriptive skills
- choice of language
- use of structure and form.

Support your answer with examples from the poem.

(20 marks)

They plan. They build. (1) Who might the poet be referring to when he says 'they'?

They erase the flaws, / the blemishes of the past, knock off / useless blocks with dental dexterity. (10) Notice how the poet repeatedly relates the city to the forgetting of the past.

Anaesthesia, amnesia, hypnosis. (17) The contrast between what the city represents and what poetry represents in this last stanza is crucial to the poem as a whole.

▼ 'THE PLANNERS' BY BOEY KIM CHENG

They plan. They build. All spaces are gridded,
filled with permutations of possibilities.

The buildings are in alignment with the roads
which meet at desired points
linked by bridges all hang
in the grace of mathematics.
They build and will not stop.
Even the sea draws back
and the skies surrender.

5

They erase the flaws,
the blemishes of the past, knock off
useless blocks with dental dexterity.

10

All gaps are plugged
with gleaming gold.
The country wears perfect rows
of shining teeth.

15

Anaesthesia, amnesia, hypnosis.

They have the means.
They have it all so it will not hurt,
so history is new again.
The piling will not stop.
The drilling goes right through
the fossils of last century

20

But my heart would not bleed
poetry. Not a single drop
to stain the blueprint
of our past's tomorrow.

25

STRONG SAMPLE ANSWER



¹ This answer is very clearly structured, as it moves through the different stanzas in order.

² Very sophisticated understanding of the associations of the language in the poem.

³ This answer is good at seeing how the poem works as a whole as well as in individual lines and stanzas.

⁴ Feeling of coherence – the paragraphs in this answer flow neatly on from each other.

⁵ Appropriate literary terminology.

⁶ This answer is very thorough in providing examples.

⁷ Good grasp of rhythm and the effects of grammar here.

⁸ The last stanza of 'The Planners' can be interpreted in a number of ways, and this answer does a good job of selecting an interpretation and defending it.

In 'The Planners', the poet uses a range of techniques to produce a vivid image of the city. The first ¹ stanza uses technical words like 'alignment' and 'mathematics', which create a feeling of order and precision. However this is also combined with a feeling of beauty, as the space is described as 'filled with permutations of possibilities' and hanging 'in the grace of mathematics' ². There is therefore a powerful tension between order and beauty which continues to develop throughout the ³ poem. This stanza also sets up the opposition between the grid of the city and nature, as 'the sea draws back / and the skies surrender'.

The second stanza continues this sense of opposition ⁴ between nature and the city by using the extended metaphor ⁵ of dentistry – comparing the building of the city with a dentist putting fillings into a mouth. The poet again manages to communicate a sense of beauty through the image of 'gleaming ⁶ gold' fillings. This stanza also combines the theme of the city replacing nature with the theme of the city replacing the past, as 'history is new again' and 'The drilling goes right through / the fossils of last century'.

The final stanza contradicts what has been said in the rest of the poem. This is shown through the use of the word 'But' ⁷ in its opening. The poet then contrasts poetry with the order of the city. Where the city doesn't cause any pain because it is an 'anaesthesia', poetry is connected with bleeding, and therefore the return of pain ⁸. Although the city is neat and organised, it is not perfect and needs the pain of poetry. Where the city erases the past, poetry creates 'the blueprint / of our past's tomorrow'.

WEAKER SAMPLE ANSWER



¹ Obvious statement, no analysis going on.

² Does not really reflect the spirit of the poem.

³ This answer consistently overlooks the complexity of the poem's view of the city – it is not simply 'good' in a straightforward sense.

⁴ The student provides no evidence for this statement.

⁵ The student does well to identify this image, but fails to talk about the specific effects which it has upon the reader.

⁶ Potentially a good point, but it is not sufficiently developed.

⁷ No reference to the significance of this quotation within the answer as a whole.

⁸ The student misinterprets the final stanza of the poem.

⁹ Mathematics are not treated as a metaphor in this poem.

¹⁰ This is not the spirit of the poem.

'The Planners' is a poem about the building of ¹ a new country that destroys ² nature. The city is made up of roads and buildings that replace the sea and sky. The city is also seen as good because it is 'desired' and contains 'possibilities' ³. The poet creates the feeling that the city will be a wonderful place for people to live ⁴. One important image that the poet uses is teeth, comparing the city to a mouth full of teeth that need to be fixed so that they are 'perfect' ⁵. The people building the city are referred to as 'they', but the poet never explains who 'they' ⁶ are, making them seem very mysterious. The poem also states that 'history is new ⁷ again'.

At the end of the poem the poet says 'my heart would not bleed / poetry'. This shows that once the city is complete poetry will no longer be needed, because poetry is like bleeding and once all the teeth have been filled in the patient won't bleed anymore ⁸. This idea is reinforced in the metaphor ⁹ of mathematics, with the feeling that maths needs to replace poetry ¹⁰. The goodness of the city can again be seen in the statement 'The buildings are in alignment with the roads / which meet at desired points / linked by bridges all hang / in the grace of mathematics. They build and will not stop' ¹¹.

Overall this is a poem about the importance of cities and why humanity needs to build cities in order to survive into the future ¹².

¹¹ This is an unnecessarily long quotation, possibly added just to fill space as the student is running out of ideas.

¹² Reconfirms the fact that the poem has not been fully understood.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY

How does the poet present nature in Walt Whitman's 'Patrolling Barnegat'?
In your answer, you should consider the poet's:

- descriptive skills
- choice of language
- use of structure and form.

Support your answer with examples from the poem.

(20 marks)

lashing (4) Notice the repetition of 'ing' which comes with the use of verbs in the present continuous tense: what effect does this have?

Through cutting swirl and spray watchful and firm advancing (8)
Where is the emphasis placed in this line and how does that emphasis help to communicate the poem's meaning?

(That in the distance!... is the red signal flaring?) (9) Why does the poet choose to ask the reader a question here?

Slush and sand (10)

Steadily, slowly (11) Sibilance with repetition of the 's' sound.

▼ 'PATROLLING BARNEGAT' BY WALT WHITMAN

Wild, wild the storm, and the sea high running,
Steady the roar of the gale, with incessant undertone muttering,
Shouts of demoniac laughter fitfully piercing and pealing,
Waves, air, midnight, their savagest trinity lashing,
Out in the shadows there milk-white combs careering,
On beachy slush and sand spirts of snow fierce slanting,
Where through the murk the easterly death-wind breasting,
Through cutting swirl and spray watchful and firm advancing,
(That in the distance! is that a wreck? is the red signal flaring?)

5

Slush and sand of the beach tireless till daylight wending,
Steadily, slowly, through hoarse roar never remitting,
Along the midnight edge by those milk-white combs careering,
A group of dim, weird forms, struggling, the night confronting,
That savage trinity warily watching.

10



► A fishing boat at sea

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

SKILLS CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY

How is the experience of the lovers presented in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 'Silent Noon'?

In your answer, you should consider the poet's:

- descriptive skills
- choice of language
- use of structure and form.

Support your answer with examples from the poem.

(20 marks)

▼ 'SILENT NOON' BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass, --
The finger-points look through like rosy blooms:
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms
'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.
All round our **nest**, far as the eye can pass,
Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge
Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn-hedge.
'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

5

Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the **sky**: --
So this wing'd hour is dropt to us from above.
Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
This close-companioned inarticulate hour
When twofold silence was the song of love.

10

Your eyes smile peace (3) Why does the poet disobey the normal rules of grammar and sentence construction here?

nest (5) What effect is created by the description of the lovers in a 'nest'?

sky (10) Why is the sky mentioned repeatedly in 'Silent Noon'?



► A dragonfly in summertime

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help you to:

- analyse both seen and unseen poems
- compare poems.

COMPARING AND LINKING POEMS

In the exam you will be asked to use the skills that you have learned so far in this section to compare two poems with one another. The question will often provide you with a theme that is important to both poems for you to base your comparison around.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

In the exam you will be asked to compare **two** poems. You will have a choice of **two** questions: **either** comparing two specific poems from the Anthology with each other **or** comparing a specific Anthology poem with any other poem from the Anthology. Each question is worth 30 marks.

In this section, you will read an unseen poem, 'Blackberry-Picking', and an Anthology poem, 'Piano', and compare the way that memory is presented in them. This is for illustrative purposes only and in the exam you will not be asked to compare an unseen poem with one from the Anthology.

KEY POINT

The key to the exam is being able to use the methods of analysis that you have learned. This includes looking at figurative language, the creation of mood and tone, and poetic rhythm, in order to compare poems with one another.



▲ Wild blackberries

▼ 'BLACKBERRY-PICKING' BY SEAMUS HEANEY

Late August, given heavy rain and sun
 For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.
 At first, just one, a glossy purple clot
 Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.
 You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet
 Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it
 Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for
 Picking. Then red ones inked up and that hunger
 Sent us out with milk cans, pea tins, jam-pots
 Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our boots.
 Round hayfields, cornfields and potato-drills
 We trekked and picked until the cans were full,
 Until the tinkling bottom had been covered
 With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned
 Like a plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered
 With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.

5

10

15

We hoarded the fresh berries in the byre.
 But when the bath was filled we found a fur,
 A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.
 The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush
 The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.
 I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair
 That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.
 Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not.

20

MAKING COMPARISONS

The first thing to do is to establish the very basics of each poem: what is the poem about, who is speaking, what events take place within it? At this point you should also ask how each poem relates to the theme that is raised in the question.

With a poem from the Anthology, like 'Piano', you should already be fairly familiar with this. With an unseen poem, however, you should take a few moments to establish these basics, as this will form the foundation of the rest of your answer.

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, INTERPRETATION

▼ POETRY ANALYSIS

Write a few short sentences, noting down what you think 'Blackberry-Picking' is about, what kind of voice is speaking, and what events and experiences are communicated. Note down too how 'Blackberry-Picking' relates to the idea of memory.

Once you have the basics of each poem, you can start to think about how to compare the ways that they present the central theme: in this case, the theme of memory. This is also where your personal response comes in.

- What are the key features of each poem's presentation of memory?
- What feelings and ideas do these poems raise for you?

STRETCH YOUR THINKING

In order to prepare for the exam, try going through the process outlined on these pages with other pairs of poems — both poems from the Anthology and other poems which you could find in poetry collections or by asking your teacher for advice.

ACTIVITY 2

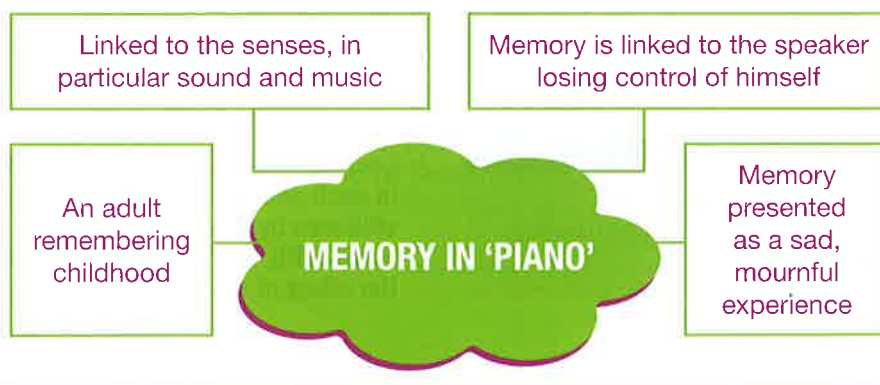
A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, TEAMWORK

▼ POETRY THOUGHT CLOUD

Work with a partner and draw a thought cloud for each poem detailing all of the things that are important in its presentation of memory. An example is provided below for 'Piano'. Add any other points you think should be included, and produce another one for 'Blackberry-Picking'.



By this point, you should have a good understanding of each poem. This means understanding both what it is about and what feelings and meanings it contains. You should also start to see how you could compare the poems in terms of their presentation of memory.

For example, 'Piano' and 'Blackberry-Picking' are similar since they are both about an adult recalling a childhood experience. However, in 'Piano', the speaker talks about the adult world they live in now as well as their childhood past, whereas 'Blackberry-Picking' focuses only on the world of childhood.

The rest of your time in the exam will be spent building on these ideas by analysing and comparing **how** the poems communicate, in addition to **what** they communicate. Comparing things like figurative language, mood, sound, rhythm and structure as they are used in 'Piano' and 'Blackberry-Picking' should provide you with a strong foundation to answer a question about the way they present memory.

► Do the poems use any figurative language? If so what is the effect of that language?

ACTIVITY 3

A02

A03

SKILLS ANALYSIS, INNOVATION

▼ PICKING OUT TECHNIQUES

Copy and complete the table with a list of all the points in 'Blackberry-Picking' and 'Piano' where metaphors, similes or personification are used, and note next to each one why the poet uses it and what effect it has. Does one poem use more figurative language than the other? If so, this might be a good point of comparison.

▼ FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Simile: 'Among others, red,
green, *hard as a knot*'

▼ EFFECT

Transforms the blackberries, which would normally be imagined as soft, into something hard and tight.

MOOD, ATMOSPHERE
AND EMOTION

It is important to consider a poet's choice of words. How do the words chosen help the poems to communicate their meaning? Look at both the connotations and implied meanings of words and the sounds that they make. Does the poet repeat similar sounds to produce effects of alliteration or rhyme? Do they repeat words that have similar meanings and associations to build up a particular feeling or idea?

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

sibilance a form of alliteration characterised by or producing a hissing sound like that of *s* or *sh*

► Looking again at 'Piano' and 'Blackberry-Picking', what sounds are repeated in each poem and what effect does this have? For example, 'Piano' uses **sibilance** by repeating a lot of 's' sounds, while 'Blackberry-Picking' rhymes 'knot' with 'clot' and 'pots' with 'boots'. How do these choices contribute to the effect of the poem?

ACTIVITY 4

A02

A03

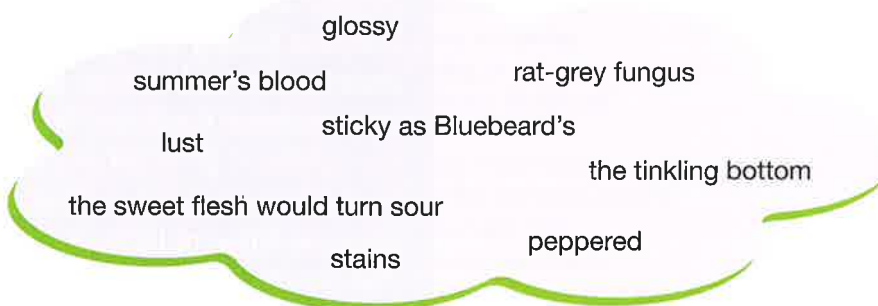
SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING,
INTERPRETATION, TEAMWORK,
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

▼ CHOICE OF LANGUAGE

In a small group, look at the words and phrases used in 'Blackberry-Picking'.

Note down what you think each word or phrase suggests as well as what they literally mean. Next, identify the key words and phrases in 'Piano' and do the same thing.



FORM, RHYTHM AND METRE

GENERAL VOCABULARY

jarring different in style

As well as looking at the choice of words in a poem, you must think about the rhythm and structure. How do the lines feel to read? Are they smooth and flowing or **jarring** and disjointed? What syllables does the poet emphasise? In terms of structure, how are the poems organised? What is the order of events and does the mood change or develop as the poem progresses?

ACTIVITY 5

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION,
COLLABORATION, NEGOTIATION

▼ READING ALOUD

Work with a partner and each note down the words and sounds that you feel are stressed in one of the two poems, and what you think the effect of the stress is. Discuss your readings of the poems with each other. Do you agree with or have anything to add to your partner's reading?

GENERAL VOCABULARY

rotting badly decaying

ACTIVITY 6

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION,
ADAPTIVE LEARNING

▼ BREAKING DOWN POEMS

Break each poem down into three or four smaller units (the division between stanzas might be helpful to you here). For example, you might divide 'Blackberry-Picking' into:

- description of summer and the blackberries
- description of the boys picking the blackberries
- description of the blackberries **rotting** in their containers.

Then think about the effect that this structure has on the meaning of the poem. What mood is created by ordering its content in this way?

KEY POINT

First get the basics of what each poem is about clear in your mind. Then establish the meanings, ideas and feelings that you think the poem produces, considering where the two poems contrast with one another and where they are similar. Spend the remaining time looking at how the language communicates this content through techniques like figurative language, mood, sound, rhythm and structure. Again, be careful to highlight points of similarity and points of contrast between the two poems on all of these points.

'IF—' RUDYARD KIPLING

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Rudyard Kipling was born in 1865 in India, in the city of Bombay (now known as Mumbai) and died in 1936. Before his death, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He was also offered a knighthood (a British honour or award for achievement given by the Queen), but he refused it. Much of his work is based on his knowledge of India and the East, especially the stories in *The Jungle Book*, now best known from the Disney cartoon film. He was known as a very patriotic person, but his attitudes were changed deeply by the loss of his son (John, to whom the poem 'If—' is addressed) in the First World War.



▲ Bombay (Mumbai) in the late 1800s

If you(1) Repetition plays an important role throughout the poem; by repeating the word 'if', the author could suggest uncertainty and difficulty.

Or being lied about, don't deal in lies, / Or being hated, don't give way to hating (6-7) Kipling gives two examples of the general principle of not repaying evil with evil.

Triumph and Disaster(11) Abstract nouns are used here, giving a sense of personification that make the ideas easier to relate to and more engaging.

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream — and not make dreams your master;
If you can think — and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

GENERAL VOCABULARY

pitch-and-toss an old gambling game in which players had to throw coins as close to a wall as possible

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of **pitch-and-toss**,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

20

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings — nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And — which is more — you'll be a Man, my son!

25

30

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

iambic using a light, unstressed beat followed by a heavy, stressed one: *tee-tum* (this pair of beats is called an iamb)

pentameter a line of poetry containing five pairs of beats or ten syllables

dramatic monologue where a single person (first-person narrator) tells the events, especially in a poem, either to a single listener or to the reader

narrator a character that tells the story in a novel, play, poem or film

GENERAL VOCABULARY

virtues a particular good quality in someone's character

FORM

'If—' is structured in four stanzas, each containing eight lines and focused on related virtues. It is written in **iambic pentameter** and follows a regular rhyme scheme of ABABCD CD, though the opening three lines finish with the same word ('you'). The poem is a single long sentence in the conditional tense, featuring multiple clauses linked by frequent use of conjunctions ('and', 'or' and 'but') and punctuation marks. It finishes with an exclamation mark.

CONTENT

'If—' is addressed to the writer's son, John, but is more widely directed at any young boy growing into adulthood. In the final line, the words 'my son' come as a shock, as the reader realises that this is a **dramatic monologue** by a father speaking directly to his son. For most of the poem, the reader is likely to assume that it is addressed to people in general because of the first-person perspective and use of the second person pronoun 'you', which can either be singular or plural. It works, therefore, as both a specific and a general address.

The poem features a long list of **virtues** the writer believes his son must possess and for each aim there is a potential obstacle, e.g. 'If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you'. Rather than writing the specific attributes, such as patience ('If you can wait and not grow tired of waiting') and honesty ('don't deal in lies'), he lists hypothetical examples of situations where he may have the opportunity to show these virtues. The list is long, complex, abstract and probably impossible, which reflects that growing-up and adulthood are also difficult and complex. Repetition of the word 'if' show that the subject's success is dependent on his ability to meet each condition. The use of the contraction 'you'll' at the end of the final stanza, rather than more uncertain words like 'might' or 'probably', makes it seem that the poem is like an informal agreement between the father and son. If he is able to do show that he possesses all these virtues, he will be successful.

It is not until the final two lines that the reader learns what the **narrator** believes his son's overall aim should be ('Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it, / And — which is more — you'll be a Man, my son!'). 'Everything' suggests material riches, but the more abstract notion of being able to consider yourself

'a Man' is said to be more valuable. The steady rhythm and flowing structure build to a final exclamation. Along with its **direct address** to the reader and the message that if you remain principled and strong in the face of adversity then you can achieve anything, this makes the poem extremely emotive. You might also think it is humorous: if you can do all of these things, many of which are impossible, then you can consider yourself an adult!

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

direct address using second person pronoun 'you' or 'your'
metaphor describing something by comparing it to an image which it resembles, in a way that suggests the object is the image

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select some key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- show the qualities that Kipling admires
- focus on features of Kipling's language and its effect, such as repetition, personification and **metaphor**
- be words that seem striking or unusual to you and that convey Kipling's powerful ideas.

▼ LANGUAGE

▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT

'keep your head...'

He should not panic under pressure.

'talk with crowds and keep your virtue'

He should be able to relate to all people, 'high or low'.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

'If-' is often referred to as an inspirational or motivational poem, with the writer giving encouragement to a young person and advice about how to live. If you think of qualities that Kipling admires, such as courage, self-belief, perseverance, or staying calm under pressure, then you may find links to other poems.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

GENERAL VOCABULARY

stoical not complaining when bad things happen to you

- ▶ How do you think a teenager would react to being given the advice in this poem?
- ▶ How do the form and structure of the poem help to present the ideas?
- ▶ Why might the attitudes in this poem be described as **stoical**? Do you think this is a good word to use?
- ▶ Why are some of the ideas in the poem linked to sport?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

1 Re-read 'If-' and 'Sonnet 116'.

Compare the ways that the poets give advice in 'If-' and 'Sonnet 116'.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

2 Re-read 'If-'.

Show how being good and successful is presented in 'If-' and one other poem in the Anthology.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)



▲ Wartime London

'PRAYER BEFORE BIRTH' LOUIS MACNEICE

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Louis MacNeice was born in 1910 and died in 1963. The poem 'Prayer Before Birth' was written in 1944, during the Second World War. At that time, people in Britain were experiencing regular attacks from the 'doodlebug' (also known as the V1), a frightening flying bomb that fell silently from the sky. This is a poem that expresses deep concern about the life that was in store for children being born into such a world.

I am not yet born(1) Repetition is used throughout to draw attention to the narrator and highlight one of the poem's main concerns.

bloodsucking bat(2) MacNeice uses alliteration throughout the poem to draw attention to the unpleasant imagery setting a dark tone.

black racks rack(7) The use of **assonance** creates a sense of rhythm while also strengthening the imagery.

forgive(12) **sins**(13) **God**(26) Religious language acts to contrast ideas of hope and fear.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

dandle cradle gently
engendered caused
hector bully or intimidate

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

assonance resemblance of sound, especially of the vowel sounds in words

I am not yet born; O hear me.

Let not the **bloodsucking bat** or the rat or the stoat or the club-footed ghouel come near me.

I am not yet born, console me.

I fear that the human race may with tall walls wall me,
with strong drugs dope me, with wise lies lure me,
on **black racks rack** me, in blood-baths roll me.

I am not yet born; provide me

With water to **dandle** me, grass to grow for me, trees to talk
to me, sky to sing to me, birds and a white light
in the back of my mind to guide me.

I am not yet born; **forgive** me

For the **sins** that in me the world shall commit, my words
when they speak me, my thoughts when they think me,
my treason **engendered** by traitors beyond me,
my life when they murder by means of my hands,
my death when they live me.

I am not yet born; rehearse me

In the parts I must play and the cues I must take when
old men lecture me, bureaucrats **hector** me, mountains
frown at me, lovers laugh at me, the white
waves call me to folly and the desert calls
me to doom and the beggar refuses
my gift and my children curse me.

I am not yet born; O hear me,

Let not the man who is beast or who thinks he is **God**
come near me.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

dragoon force someone
lethal automaton a 'killing machine', with
 no feelings; it links to the word 'dragoon',
 as dragoons were heavily armed soldiers

I am not yet born; O fill me
 With strength against those who would freeze my
 humanity, would **dragoon** me into a **lethal automaton**,
 would make me a cog in a machine, a thing with
 one face, a thing, and against all those
 who would dissipate my entirety, would
 blow me like thistledown hither and
 thither or hither and thither
 like water held in the
 hands would spill me.

30

35

Let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me.
 Otherwise kill me.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

imperative a verb that gives an instruction
 or command
narrator a character that tells the story in
 a novel, play, poem or film

FORM

'Prayer Before Birth' is a dramatic monologue written in the form of a prayer from a first-person perspective, directly addressing God. Even though it is free verse, MacNeice's use of repetition, punctuation and structure gives the poem rhythm. The first, second and eighth stanzas are each structured as two sentences, while all other stanzas are made up of one long sentence each. The eight stanzas vary in length, increasing from three lines in the first, to ten lines in the seventh. Stanzas six (three lines) and eight (two lines) do not follow this trend, but break up the fast, flowing pace to give emphasis to their contents.

With the exception of the last, each stanza begins with 'I am not yet born' followed by an **imperative** to God while the first and last lines end with the word 'me'. In the first and second stanzas, the imperative is followed by a full stop, but in stanzas three to seven, MacNeice uses enjambment to increase pace.

CONTENT

The **narrator** of the poem is an unborn child, directly addressing God. The use of 'I am not yet born' at the beginning of each stanza reminds the reader that, while the vocabulary and ideas expressed are complex, the narrator is an unborn child. Each of the narrator's pleas are an appeal for protection, creating a sense that the child will be powerless and corrupted by the world. MacNeice elaborates on this idea by removing responsibility for the child's actions ('For the sins that in me the world shall commit, my words / when they speak me, my thoughts when they think me'). He will be subject to the whims of other men and the circumstances he lives in ('blow me like thistledown'). The third stanza's tone differs significantly from the others, as the narrator asks to be provided with something, rather than to be protected. It refers to natural wonders ('grass to grow for me, trees to talk / to me, sky to sing to me, birds and a white light...') and is contrasted, in particular, with the seventh stanza. The seventh stanza seems to refer to war and the idea that the unborn child will be 'a cog in a machine' and part of a 'lethal automaton'. It also contains a reference to water in a metaphor for death ('like water held in the hands would spill me'), inviting comparison with the earlier more innocent reference to water from the third stanza ('provide me / With water to dandle me'), showing loss of innocence throughout the future life of the narrator.

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select some key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- show a world full of fears and nightmarish thoughts
- focus on features of MacNeice's language and its effect, looking at such aspects as his use of alliteration and assonance/rhyme
- be words that seem striking or unusual to you and that convey MacNeice's powerful ideas.

▼ LANGUAGE	▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT
'blood sucking bat... club-footed ghoul'	These harsh-sounding words give an immediate impression of a world of vampire and ghost films, with creatures that would terrify a young child.
'Otherwise kill me'	The strong request at the end is sudden and unexpected. The child does not want to be born into a world of such horrors unless it can be protected.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

The poem is about birth and death, but also the world of the child. This world contains hopes of warmth and love, but also fears of nightmares and terrors, and a background of war and betrayal.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

onomatopoeia where a word sounds like the noise it makes

- Although the poem shows the fears of an unborn child, how far does it also show adult fears?
- Look at the examples of MacNeice's use of alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia. Where do these mainly occur in the poem and why are they used?
- How would you describe the overall mood and tone of the poem?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

SKILLS ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

- 1 Re-read 'Prayer Before Birth' and 'Blessing'.

Explore the use of religious language in 'Prayer Before Birth' and 'Blessing'.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

- 2 Re-read 'Prayer Before Birth'.

Show how the poets use literary effects (such as rhyme, rhythm, repetition, alliteration and assonance) in 'Prayer Before Birth' and one other poem in the Anthology.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

'BLESSING' IMTIAZ DHARKER

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Imtiaz Dharker was born in Pakistan in 1954 and grew up in the UK. In addition to being a poet, she is also an artist and a documentary film maker. It is possible to see the influence of her filmmaking and her painting in the poem 'Blessing', through its focus on striking visual images and pictures. 'Blessing' is set in the city of Bombay (known today as Mumbai) in India during the dry season. It describes the effect of water being given to the people through a burst pipe. It is a political poem about poverty and drought, as well as a beautiful description of the physical experience of water.



▲ Drought-stricken earth

like a pod(1) the voice of a kindly
god(6) crashes to the ground(9) Use of
figurative language such as simile and
metaphor.

drip(3) splash, echo(4) roar(11)
screaming(19) highlights(20) light(21)
sings(22) Use of sense experience, for
example, sound, touch, taste.

The skin cracks like a pod.
There never is enough water.

Imagine the drip of it,
the small splash, echo
in a tin mug,
the voice of a kindly god.

the voice of a kindly god(6) the flow
has found / a roar of tongues(10/11)
Personification of the water.

tin(5) silver(9) brass, copper,
aluminium(15) polished;(21)
flashing(21) Use of imagery related
to metal.

kindly god(6) congregation(12)
blessing(22) Religious imagery.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

municipal owned and operated by the
government

congregation a religious gathering of
people, often an audience attending a
church service

Sometimes, the sudden rush
of fortune. The **municipal** pipe bursts,
silver crashes to the ground
and the flow has found
a roar of tongues. From the huts,
a **congregation**: every man woman
child for streets around
butts in, with pots,
brass, copper, aluminium,
plastic buckets,
frantic hands,

10

and naked children
screaming in the liquid sun,
their **highlights polished** to perfection,
flashing light,
as the blessing sings
over their small bones.

15

20

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

FORM

Notice the unusual structure that Dharker uses, dividing the poem into four stanzas all of different lengths. This seems to be done in quite a random way, with no obvious reason for the position of the breaks between stanzas. Perhaps this apparently random structure reflects the idea of the water bursting out and spreading itself across the earth in a free and disordered way. Another possible reason for the irregular stanza length (very short – long – slightly shorter) is to reflect the idea of the water dripping out slowly before bursting into a huge torrent and then falling away again.

Look at the way that sentences are organised to reflect the experience that the poem describes. The opening lines use a lot of very short, simple sentences such as 'There never is enough water'. The third stanza, however, uses much longer sentences that very quickly add more and more things, frantically describing 'pots, brass, copper, aluminium, plastic buckets, frantic hands'. This reflects the idea of moving from a state where very little is happening and the water only comes in small drips to a state where the water rushes out very fast.

CONTENT

Dharker uses lots of different images to describe the water, but they are all designed to make it feel exciting and powerful. Figurative language is used to describe water as being like a god, like money, like precious metal and like the sun. Techniques that make something that is not alive seem like it is and gives it a personality are called personification. This idea of the water as a living force is crucial to the effect of 'Blessing'. Try listing the techniques which are used in this poem to bring to life the world it describes.

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- show how Dharker portrays the scene
- focus on features of the descriptive language used and its effect in creating vivid imagery
- pick out the effect of words that seem striking or unusual, and of words that convey Dharker's ideas.

▼ LANGUAGE

'There never is enough water.'

'silver crashes to the ground'

▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT

This bold statement acts to label water as precious. The use of punctuation enforces this.

This image of liquid metal is vivid, portraying the water as something valuable and beautiful.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

This poem is about poverty. In the last stanza it also focuses on the importance and experience of children and in particular on children who are suffering. 'Blessing' is also a very sensual poem, focusing extensively on the significance of vivid experiences of sight, sound and touch. In addition, 'Blessing' is a poem that makes something that might not seem very important at first (for example, a water pipe bursting) seem very significant and beautiful. All of these features provide strong potential links with other poems.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Look specifically at words in the poem which refer to sounds, for example, 'drips' or 'roar'. What is the significance of sound in 'Blessing'?
- What might Dharker be trying to communicate to the reader about the children in her description of them in the final stanza? Why does she focus on the children rather than the men and women mentioned earlier in the poem?
- Highlight all the places where alliteration is used in 'Blessing' and think in each case about why the poet has chosen to use it.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

1 Re-read 'Blessing' and 'The Tyger'.

Explore how religion is presented in 'Blessing' and 'The Tyger'. You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

2 Re-read 'Blessing'.

How do the poets present sense experience, such as sound, sight, touch and smell, in 'Blessing' and one other poem from the Anthology?

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

'SEARCH FOR MY TONGUE' SUJATA BHATT

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Sujata Bhatt was born in India in 1956 and emigrated to America in 1968. During her childhood she mainly spoke an Indian dialect called Gujarati, but moved to a culture dominated by the English language after her family travelled to the USA. This experience of moving between different languages can clearly be seen in the poem 'Search for My Tongue'. Bhatt has taught at many universities across Europe and America and has won numerous awards for her poetry.

You ask me what I mean⁽¹⁾ I ask you,
what would you do⁽³⁾ You... if you
thought that way... if you lived⁽⁸⁻¹⁰⁾
you had to 'spit it out.' I thought I
spit it out⁽¹⁴⁻¹⁵⁾ Conversational tone,
addressing the reader directly through
questions and answers.

tongue⁽²⁾ Notice the repetition of
'tongue'.

would rot, / rot and die⁽¹²⁻¹³⁾ it
grows back, a stump of a shoot /
grows longer, grows moist, grows
strong veins⁽³¹⁻³²⁾ the bud opens,
the bud opens in my mouth⁽³⁴⁾
it blossoms out of my mouth⁽³⁸⁾
Metaphor of the tongue as a plant,
either growing or rotting.

You ask me what I mean
by saying I have lost my tongue.
I ask you, what would you do
if you had two tongues in your mouth,
and lost the first one, the mother tongue,
and could not really know the other,
the foreign tongue.
You could not use them both together
even if you thought that way.
And if you lived in a place you had to
speak a foreign tongue,
your mother tongue would rot,
rot and die in your mouth
until you had to 'spit it out'.
I thought I spit it out
but over night while I dream,

મને હુતુ કે આબૂબી જીભ આબૂબી ભાષા,
(munay hutoo kay aakhee jeebh aakhee bhasha)

મેં થૂંકી નાખી છે.
(may thoonly nakhi chay)

પરંતુ રાત્રે સ્વપ્નામાં મારી ભાષા પાછી આવે છે.
(parantoo rattray svupnama mari bhasha pachi aavay chay)

5

10

15

20

ફૂલની જામ મારી ભાષા મારી જીભ

(foolnee jaim mari bhasha mari jeebh)

મોઢામાં બીલે છે.

(modhama kheelay chay)

25

ફૂલની જામ મારી ભાષા મારી

(fullnee jaim mari bhasha mari jeebh)

મોઢામાં પાકે છે.

(modham pakay chay)

30

it grows back, a stump of a shoot
grows longer, grows moist, grows strong veins,
it ties the other tongue in knots,
the bud opens, the bud opens in my mouth,
it pushes the other tongue aside.
Everytime I think I've forgotten,
I think I've lost the mother tongue,
it blossoms out of my mouth.

35



► A blossoming flower

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

FORM

The poem is made up of three sections. The first is written in English, the second in Gujarati and the final one translates that Gujarati back into English. The use of Gujarati is very important because it represents the dream-state where the poet's native tongue re-emerges and overtakes the foreign tongue. It is also important because it is a way for Bhatt to put the assumed English reader in her situation of dealing with a foreign tongue. The reader is presented with a language that is strange to them and which they do not understand, just as the poet has had to learn English as a foreign tongue. By writing in Gujarati, Bhatt forces the reader themselves to deal with a 'foreign tongue'.

The fact that the poem is structured around questions and answers is also important. Bhatt uses a very informal, direct tone that makes it feel as if she is having a personal conversation with the reader. By using statements like 'You ask me what I mean', she also creates the sense of a conversation in which the reader is asking questions and she is responding. This creates the feeling of a close connection between reader and poet. However, it also produces the sense that the two have difficulty understanding each other and that there is a distance between them; a difficulty which needs to be overcome by asking and answering questions.

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

pun an amusing use of a word or phrase that has two meanings, or of words that have the same sound but different meanings

GENERAL VOCABULARY

rotting decaying by a natural process
blossoming flowering

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

narrator a character that tells the story in a novel, play, poem or film

CONTENT

The use of 'tongue' to refer to both a language (for example, English or Gujarati) and an actual physical tongue or piece of flesh is key to 'Search for My Tongue'. Bhatt uses this double-meaning (also called a **pun**) to represent the competition between two languages as a literal fight between two tongues competing for space in her mouth.

She then explores this situation through an extended metaphor that presents the tongue as a plant, first **rotting** away and then growing back and **blossoming**. While she thinks that her native (or mother) tongue has died and been replaced by the foreign tongue, the fact that she still dreams in her mother tongue is significant. This reminds her that it will always be the native language with which she is most at home.

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- show the **narrator's** relationship with language
- focus on features of Bhatt's language and its effect, particularly where this has been highlighted in the text
- pick out the effect of words that seem striking or unusual to you and that convey Bhatt's ideas.

▼ LANGUAGE	▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT
'You ask me what I mean'	Through direct address, the reader is immediately drawn into the poem and is encouraged to form their own view.
'the foreign tongue'	The other tongue is alien and isolated – represented literally by placing it on a line of its own.
'rot and die in your mouth'	The use of emotive and strong language creates a vivid, striking image.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

This poem is about the importance of language. It is also focused on ideas of a person's origins, their birth and parentage. It works by making familiar things, like someone's native tongue, seem strange and unfamiliar. It also presents a culture, namely Indian culture, that readers may not be familiar with if they are only used to reading and writing in English. All of the features provide strong potential links with other poems.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ▶ Why does Bhatt choose to associate her native language with the figure of the mother, through the image of the 'mother tongue'?
- ▶ How does it feel to you to read the section in Gujarati? How does this reading experience differ from reading English?
- ▶ What is the significance of the dream? Why is it in a dream in particular that the mother tongue is recovered?
- ▶ The poet talks about having 'two tongues' in her mouth. What does this say about her identity and the way it is divided between her new and her old homes?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

- 1 Re-read 'Search for My Tongue' and 'Poem at Thirty-Nine'.

Compare how the relationship with parent figures is presented in 'Search for My Tongue' and 'Poem at Thirty-Nine'.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

- 2 Re-read 'Search for My Tongue'.

How do the poets present memory in 'Search for My Tongue' and one other poem in the Anthology?

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

'HALF-PAST TWO'

U.A. FANTHORPE

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

U.A. Fanthorpe, whose full name was Ursula Askham Fanthorpe, was born in 1929 and died in 2009. She had a number of different jobs, including working for a while as a teacher, and she often wrote about her experience of the world of work. 'Half-past Two' is based on a real or imagined incident in the life of a teacher and child.

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

colloquial slang or informal language

Once upon a schooltime(1) This is a slight variation on the classic fairytale opening; what does this make you think will come later in the poem?

Something Very Wrong(2, 5) The use of capital letters makes the reader aware that the child thinks it was a terrible thing he had done, but the writer cannot remember what it was; forgetting is something of a theme.

half-past two(6, 15) time(8, 10, 14, 29, 31) forgotten(7) forgot(31) Words and phrases associated with time and memory are repeated throughout to show their importance, but also suggest a sense of confusion and forgetfulness.

Gettinguptime, timeyouwereofftime, / Timetogohomenowtime, TVtime, / Timeformykisstime(11-13) These compound words are a fun play on colloquial, day-to-day time periods, used here to show confusion.



▲ A clock in a classroom

Once upon a schooltime
He did Something Very Wrong
(I forget what it was).

And She said he'd done
Something Very Wrong, and must
Stay in the school-room till half-past two.

(Being cross, she'd forgotten
She hadn't taught him Time.
He was too scared at being wicked to remind her.)

He knew a lot of time: he knew
Gettinguptime, timeyouwereofftime,
Timetogohomenowtime, TVtime,

5

10

important times(14) Shows that the boy does not give importance to the standard way of telling the time; think about which times he does think are important.

click(18) **clock**(16, 32) **Scuttling**(26) **tick**(33) Examples of onomatopoeia, used here to show the importance of time and its impact on the child.

silent noise(23) An **oxymoron**: the adjective seems to contradict the noun.

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

oxymoron a figure of speech in which the writer combines two ideas that are opposites; this frequently has a startling or unusual effect

omniscient knowing everything within the world of the novel or play, including the secrets of all the characters and what the future holds

third person using the third person – that is, 'he', 'she' and 'it'; this differs from the first person ('I') and the second person, which directly addresses the reader ('you')

narrator a character that tells the story in a novel, play, poem or film

Timeformykisstime (that was Grantime).
All the **important times** he knew,
But not **half-past two**.

15

He knew the **clockface**, the little eyes
And two long legs for walking,
But he couldn't **click** its language,

So he waited, beyond once upon a,
Out of reach of all the **timefors**,
And knew he'd escaped for ever

20

Into the smell of old chrysanthemums on Her desk,
Into the **silent noise** his hangnail made,
Into the air outside the window, into ever.

And then, *My goodness*, she said,
Scuttling in, I forgot all about you.
Run along or you'll be late.

25

So she slotted him back into schooltime,
And he got home in **time** for teatime,
Nexttime, notime forthatnowtime,

30

But he never **forgot** how once by not knowing **time**,
He escaped into the **clockless** land for ever,
Where time hides **tick-less** waiting to be born.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

FORM

'Half-past Two' features an **omniscient third-person narrator**. The poem is written in free verse, containing 11 stanzas of three lines. The majority of these feature one or two sentences, though Fanthorpe's use of enjambment means that some stanzas contain no complete sentences. This combination of long sentences and short stanzas reflects the way that the young boy, about whom the poem is written, experiences time.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

neologisms a new word or expression

CONTENT

The poem is a simple story of a boy who is given a detention by his teacher and daydreams while waiting for her to return to the classroom. Fanthorpe explores two main **themes** in the poem: time and innocence. Use of frequent childish-sounding **neologisms** ('schooltime', 'gettinguptime', 'TVtime') show how the boy relates time to specific events throughout the day, rather than worrying about a schedule. The events themselves are important, but the time at which they occur is not. This reflects his limited concept of time, his immaturity and the absence of pressure on him. This is contrasted with his teacher, who is forgetful and appears to be very busy and concerned with schedule. While the boy is able to daydream and forget about time ('He escaped into the clockless land'), the teacher worries that he'll be late.

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select some key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- show how Fanthorpe presents the child or the teacher
- focus on features of Fanthorpe's language and its effect, including personification, onomatopoeia and repetition
- be words that seem striking or unusual to you (such as her use of compound words) and that convey Fanthorpe's ideas.

▼ LANGUAGE

'He knew the clockface, the little eyes'

'time hides tick-less waiting to be born'

▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT

This shows how the child in his imagination compared the clock to a 'person' with a face and legs, although he did not realise how it told the time.

'Time' is personified as someone not yet born, which shows time as set in an eternal world; time was not yet born for the child in the sense that he had not been able to measure it.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

The poem focuses on the world of the child and how this is affected by the actions of adults. It also looks at how the young child's mind works, with its confusion about things beyond his understanding and the strong use of the imagination.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

sympathetic applied to a character in fiction, this means a character who is liked by the reader or other characters

- ▶ How does Fanthorpe's use of 'compound words' (invented for the poem) add to the effect of the poem?
- ▶ When the child 'escaped' into a timeless world, to what extent do you feel that this was a happy experience for him?
- ▶ Does Fanthorpe present the teacher and her actions in a **sympathetic** way?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

- 1 Re-read 'Half-past Two' and 'Hide and Seek'.

Compare how being left alone is presented in 'Half-past Two' and 'Hide and Seek'.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

- 2 Re-read 'Half-past Two'.

Explore how the passage of time is presented in 'Half-past Two' and one other poem in the Anthology.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

'PIANO' D.H. LAWRENCE

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

David Herbert (D.H.) Lawrence was born in 1885 in a coal-mining town in Nottinghamshire, UK, where his father worked as a miner. He died in 1930, after being ill with **tuberculosis**. He was devoted to his mother, who died of cancer when he was just 25, which had a deep effect on him. Although he is famous mainly for his novels, he also wrote over 800 poems.

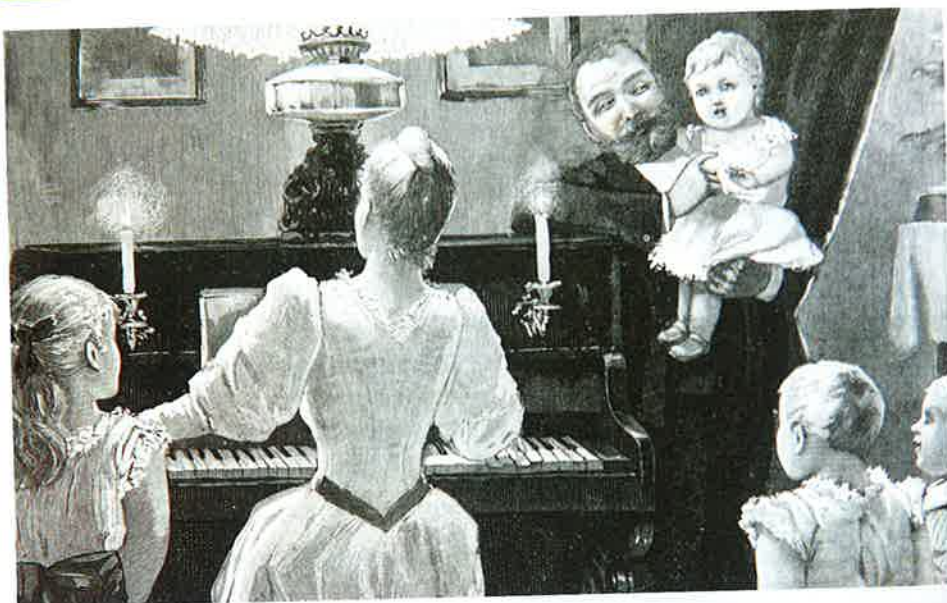
GENERAL VOCABULARY

tuberculosis a serious infectious disease

vista a view, in this case of the memories he has over the years

insidious creeping up in a gradual and threatening way

appassionato an Italian musical term meaning 'played with passion'



▲ Christmas in the early 1900s

singing(1) child(3) piano(3,8,10)

weeps(6,12) Words that are repeated in varied forms as the poem progresses; this shows the significance of these things throughout the narrator's life and his attachment to the past.

boom(3) tingling(3) tinkling(8)

Examples of onomatopoeia emphasising the qualities of the piano.

pressing the small, poised(4)

Alliteration helps to create a musical, sing-song rhythm.

years(2) back(6) old(7) past(12) Words connected with the past, showing the importance of the past to the narrator.

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;
Taking me back down the **vista** of years, till I see
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings .
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself, the **insidious** mastery of song
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside
And hymns in the cosy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour
With the great black piano **appassionato**. The glamour
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past.

5

10

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

dactyl a group of three beats, one stressed followed by two unstressed: *tum-te-te* (this rhythm is called dactylic)

spondee a pair of beats, both equally stressed: *tum-tum* (this rhythm is called spondaic)

narrator a character that tells the story in a novel, play, poem or film

GENERAL VOCABULARY

nostalgic remembering a happy time in the past

emasculated made to feel weaker and less male

FORM

'Piano' is a lyric poem. It has 12 lines in three equal-length stanzas and is written from a first-person perspective. Lawrence uses enjambment to create a flowing structure: each stanza contains a single, long sentence and ends with a full stop.

The rhythm consists mostly of **dactyls** ('Softly in...') 'but sometimes **spondees** ('myself') and there is a straightforward rhyme scheme (AABB and so on). The last word in each stanza is a monosyllable containing long stresses ('sings', 'guide', 'past') which, in combination with internal rhyme ('tingling', 'strings', 'sings') and alliteration give the poem a gentle pace, steady rhythm and sense of melody. Both the past and present action are described in the present tense, giving a sense that reality and memory feel equally real to the poet. He is reliving the memories, rather than recalling them.

CONTENT

The poem describes how a singer's performance leads the **narrator** to feel **nostalgic** when reliving memories from his youth. As the title suggests, each memory is linked to music. Stanzas one and two each focus on a different memory relating music, while in the final stanza the poet laments the passing of his childhood. Lawrence shows that the narrator is powerless to stop himself from reliving the memories by using phrasing which makes him appear passive ('Taking me back down', 'Betrays me back'). It is important to note that he does not play or sing himself. Music happens around him, but he is not in control of it, as he is unable to control his reaction to it. By the end of the poem, the narrator is **emasculated** by his longing for the past ('my manhood is cast down') and behaving as if he were a child ('I weep like a child'). This simile describing the narrator's strong reaction – in which he behaves like a younger version of himself – asserts, once more, that he relives these memories rather than just thinking about them.

Sensory language helps the reader to empathise with the narrator. While this includes the visual ('till I see a child sitting under the piano') and touch ('pressing the small, poised feet'), it is more frequently audial. The theme of music is clearly reflected in his choice of vocabulary, with repetition of different forms of 'sing' ('sings', 'singing', 'song'), the technical term 'appassionato', references to the piano and use of onomatopoeia ('boom', 'tingling strings', 'tinkling piano').

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select some key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table on page 102. These may:

- show how strong Lawrence's feelings are about his childhood with his mother
- focus on features of his language and its effect, including alliteration, onomatopoeia, metaphor and simile
- be words that seem striking or unusual to you and that convey Lawrence's ideas.

▼ LANGUAGE	▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT
'the boom of the tingling strings'	The use of onomatopoeia helps the reader to be able to use the senses to imagine the scene.
'And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings'	This tender line helps the reader to visualise the closeness between the child and mother: the young boy presses the mother's feet as she presses on the pedal of the piano.
'insidious mastery of song'	This presents music as a powerful controller trapping the listener like a slave, so powerful is the song.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

The themes of this poem are mainly the memory of childhood and the love between a child and their mother. There is also the subject of the power of the senses (in this case, the sound of music) to create memories. There are other poems in the Anthology that focus on events in people's childhood and others that look back into the past or that show a parent-child relationship. In 'War Photographer', it is a visual stimulus (a photograph) that evokes memories of a different place, so there are some interesting links that could be explored here.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How would you describe the tone of Lawrence's writing in this poem?
- Why does this memory cause him to 'weep like a child'?
- In what ways does Lawrence's presentation of sound reinforce the ideas of the poem? How do the other senses contribute to the overall effect (think especially of sight and touch)?
- What impression does the poem give of Lawrence's early life? How does the fact that in adult life Lawrence experienced much unhappiness, especially over the death of his mother, make a difference to your understanding of the poem?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

- 1 Re-read 'Piano' and 'Poem at Thirty-Nine'.

Compare the presentation of an adult looking back on their childhood in 'Piano' and 'Poem at Thirty-Nine'.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

- 2 Re-read 'Piano'.

Show how sound is important in 'Piano' and one other poem in the Anthology.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

'HIDE AND SEEK'

VERNON SCANNELL

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Vernon Scannell was born in 1922 in Lincolnshire and died in 2007. He was a soldier in the Second World War and afterwards did a variety of jobs, including working as a professional boxer, as well as being a well-known writer and poet. He wrote many poems about his wartime experiences.



▲ Children playing hide and seek

Call out. Call loud⁽¹⁾ Repetition initially suggests childish excitement.

smell⁽²⁾ The senses, including touch and smell, create the atmosphere of the child's hiding-place.

Call⁽¹⁾ be careful⁽⁴⁾ Stay⁽¹¹⁾ don't come⁽¹⁴⁾ Examples of command terms used throughout – like the instructions given for a child's game.

hushed⁽¹⁰⁾ mutters⁽¹²⁾ scuffle⁽¹³⁾ Examples of onomatopoeia that act to paint a vivid image of the location.

Call out. Call loud: 'I'm ready! Come and find me!'
 The sacks in the toolshed smell like the seaside.
 They'll never find you in this salty dark,
 But be careful that your feet aren't sticking out.
 Wiser not to risk another shout.
 The floor is cold. They'll probably be searching
 The bushes near the swing. Whatever happens
 You mustn't sneeze when they come prowling in.
 And here they are, whispering at the door;
 You've never heard them sound so hushed before.
 Don't breathe. Don't move. Stay dumb. Hide in your blindness.
 They're moving closer, someone stumbles, mutters;
 Their words and laughter scuffle, and they're gone.

5

10

bites(19) The use of personification of the weather perhaps suggests that even natural forces are against the child.

dark damp smell(20) Alliteration adds a sense of rhythm, mimicking heightened emotions and excitement.

bites(19) garden watches(25) hold their breath(26) Examples of personification, heightening the sense of tension and anticipation.

But don't come out just yet; they'll try the lane
And then the greenhouse and back here again.
They must be thinking that you're very clever,
Getting more puzzled as they search all over.

15

It seems a long time since they went away.
Your legs are stiff, the cold bites through your coat;
The dark damp smell of sand moves in your throat.

20

It's time to let them know that you're the winner.
Push off the sacks. Uncurl and stretch. That's better!
Out of the shed and call to them: 'I've won!
Here I am! Come and own up I've caught you!'

25

The darkening garden watches. Nothing stirs.
The bushes hold their breath; the sun is gone.
Yes, here you are. But where are they who sought you?

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

narrator a character that tells the story in a novel, play, poem or film

FORM

'Hide and Seek' is structured in two stanzas: one of 17 lines and the other of ten lines. It is a free verse poem and, as such, there is no clear rhythm or rhyme scheme, and the structure of lines varies significantly, following no set pattern. There is some use of enjambment, but the majority of lines feature at least one complete sentence, with some featuring numerous short sentences. It has a second-person **narrator** which is the inner voice of a boy – in the form of a monologue – as he hides from his friends during a game of hide and seek. There is also some speech as the boy calls aloud to his absent friends.

CONTENT

While the subject of the poem seems relatively innocent, Scannell's vocabulary and careful use of punctuation, rhyme and alliteration create tension. The confident exclamations in the opening line are followed by an innocent reference to the smell 'of the seaside'. But the tone changes in the third line, which has several possible meanings: that they may never find the boy because he has found such a good hiding place; that they might not find him because they do not really care to look for him – highlighting the boy's isolation and loneliness; or, a darker possibility is they might not find him because he cannot be found and he is in danger. If Scannell was trying to show that this was simply another show of confidence from the boy, he could have punctuated with an exclamation mark, but instead the sentence runs onto a warning on the next line ('but be careful...'). At the end of the poem, the boy reveals himself, but his friends are nowhere to be seen and he is left alone in the dark. While the reader cannot know the age of the boy, you can assume that he is quite young and innocent as he is playing hide and seek. This assumed innocence, in conjunction with the creepy tone, makes the audience empathise with the boy, but also fear for him. This is reinforced by the use of the word 'prowling' to describe his friends as they try to find him, with its connotations of a predator seeking prey.

Even though the vocabulary is quite simple, the narrator's voice seems more mature than the boy's actions (compare it with 'Half-past Two', for example). It seems unlikely a young boy would say 'Their words and laughter scuffle', for example. Combined with the second-person perspective, this adds further tension, as it seems as if the boy is at the mercy of another character.

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select some key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- add to the increasing tension in the poem
- focus on features of Scannell's language and its effect, especially his use of the senses
- be words that seem striking or unusual to you and that convey Scannell's ideas in an effective way.

▼ LANGUAGE

'The bushes hold their breath'

'They'll never find you in this salty dark'

▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT

This personification is effective: the natural surroundings are like watchers, waiting to see what happens when the emerging child discovers that they have been left.

This gives a good impression of the child's hiding-place, with the senses of sight and taste brought into the description.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

This poem about a childhood memory has obvious links with others in the collection, but especially perhaps 'Half-past Two', where the child is again isolated and inhabits a timeless world of the imagination. Think about the similarities and differences in how the two writers treat their subject.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ▶ How does Vernon Scannell's language help the reader to see and feel the events that take place?
- ▶ Is the ending surprising? Explain your answer.
- ▶ Why might such an experience have a great effect on the child who is the subject of the poem?
- ▶ How would you describe the overall tone and mood of the poem?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

- 1 Re-read 'Hide and Seek' and 'War Photographer'.

Compare the ways that the loss of innocence is presented in 'Hide and Seek' and 'War Photographer'.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

- 2 Re-read 'Hide and Seek'.

How does the mood change over the course of the poem in 'Hide and Seek' and one other poem in the Anthology?

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)



▲ A portrait of William Shakespeare

GENERAL VOCABULARY

bark an old word for boat

doom the end of time

Let me not to the marriage of true minds⁽¹⁾ The narrator is both thinking of marriage itself and also of two minds joined together in love.

love is not love⁽²⁾ Repetition is used throughout to emphasise and develop ideas and themes.

ever-fixèd mark⁽⁵⁾ A light or visible object to guide ships.

It is the star to every wandering bark⁽⁷⁾ Words linked to sea travel develop a nautical metaphor for love.

sickle's compass come⁽¹⁰⁾ Alliteration emphasises the language choice.

I never writ, nor no man ever loved⁽¹⁴⁾ Negative words are used throughout to demonstrate the strength of his beliefs.

► According to 'Sonnet 116', people may change but love does not.

'SONNET 116' WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564 and died in 1616. He is Britain's most famous playwright and his plays are still performed all over the world, having been translated into many languages. Not so many people know his poems, which included 154 sonnets. *The Sonnets* are poems on the theme of love and some are written to particular people, such as the mysterious 'dark lady'. 'Sonnet 116' is one of the most popular of all the sonnets, because the ideas are thought by many people to show the strength of true love.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments; love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no, it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

5

10



UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

sonnet a 14-line poem with a formal structure, consisting of a set pattern of lines; the Shakespearean sonnet contains three quatrains and a couplet (four and two lines respectively); the Petrarchan sonnet contains an octave and a sestet (eight and six lines respectively)

quatrain a four-line stanza

narrator a character that tells the story in a novel, play, poem or film

FORM

The Shakespearean **sonnet** form consists of 14 lines written in iambic pentameter. Though it is structured as one stanza, the first twelve lines are split into three equal **quatrains**, following a regular rhyme scheme (ABAB CDCD EFEF). The final two lines are a rhyming couplet (GG). It is written from a first-person perspective.

CONTENT

Each quatrain describes a different characteristic of love: in the first **quatrain**, the **narrator** shows that true love does not change ('love is not love / Which alters when it alteration finds'); the second quatrain presents a nautical metaphor for true love, which is seen to steer a path through a stormy sea guided by a fixed beacon or star; and the third quatrain states that love is unaffected by time or death. The poem does not attempt to define love, but rather shows its enduring and powerful nature through indirect examples, showing that, unlike all other earthly things, love does not age or die. In the second quatrain he uses a metaphor which is open to interpretation ('It is the star to every wandering bark'), while in quatrains one and three the narrator shows what love is by using examples of what it is not ('Love's not Time's fool'). This idea of pairs and opposites can be found elsewhere in the vocabulary: 'love is not love', 'alters when it alteration finds' and 'the remover to remove'. It is a reflection of the need for balance in a relationship, referring to a pair of lovers. In the rhyming couplet at the end of the sonnet, the narrator shows his confidence by issuing an amusing challenge to the reader: if he is incorrect about the nature of love, then he has never written anything and no man has ever truly loved. Of course, he has this poem to prove that he has written!

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select some key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- show Shakespeare's thoughts about change and **constancy**
- focus on features of his language and its effect, including his use of metaphors and personification
- be words that seem striking or unusual to you, perhaps because they seem old-fashioned, or they may convey Shakespeare's ideas in interesting ways.

▼ LANGUAGE

'Love's not Time's fool'

'rosy lips and cheeks...'

'O no'

▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT

Love and Time are both personified, and Shakespeare is saying that Time cannot make a fool of Love.

These are the outward signs of beauty that are much admired, but they fade with time, unlike true love.

This is a strong exclamation, which shows that he rejects strongly the idea that has just been stated.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

constancy the quality of staying the same even though other things change

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

The central idea of this poem, that of love, is one that can be found in other poems in the Anthology, but love comes in many different forms and sometimes it does not last (for example, in 'My Last Duchess'). Other ideas you can find in poems in this section deal with the subject of the passing of time and the subject of change.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

GENERAL VOCABULARY

contemporaries those who lived or were in a particular place at the same time as someone else

- ▶ Think about how Shakespeare writes about changing and unchanging things. Why does he suggest that love is able to resist change?
- ▶ Why do you think Shakespeare chooses to write about a (metaphorical) journey at sea? Think about the following:
 - Shakespeare lived at a time of great sea adventures: Sir Francis Drake, an English sea captain, and Sir Walter Raleigh, an English explorer and writer, were his **contemporaries**
 - sea travel was extremely dangerous and following the right route was very difficult without modern navigational aids.
- ▶ How does Shakespeare use 'negative' language to develop the theme of the poem?
- ▶ Why do you think Shakespeare believes that love can last for ever?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

- 1 Re-read 'Sonnet 116' and 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'.

Compare the presentation of love in 'Sonnet 116' and 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

- 2 Re-read 'Sonnet 116'.

Explore how time is presented in 'Sonnet 116' and one other poem in the Anthology.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

ballad a short story in the form of a poem or song

'LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI: A BALLAD'

JOHN KEATS

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

John Keats was born in 1795 and died at the young age of 26 from tuberculosis. He trained as a surgeon, but later gave up his training to concentrate on his poetry. He was one of the group of romantic poets writing at the same time as Wordsworth and Coleridge. He fell in love with Fanny Brawne, but they never married. The **ballad** form displayed in 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' was taken from the Middle Ages. Such ballads traditionally contained themes such as love and death. The title of the poem is taken from a French lyrical poem by the writer Alain Chartier, which Keats had read in translation; it means 'the beautiful lady without pity'.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

sedge grasses in the wetland
granary a store

Oh what can ail thee, knight-at-arms (1, 5) Alone and palely loitering? (2, 46) Repeated questions, repetition and old-fashioned language are typical of ballads.

Alone and palely loitering (2, 46)
 Alliteration throughout the poem acts to emphasise the sinister tone, and the sing-song quality when read.



▲ A medieval knight

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
 Alone and palely loitering?
 The **sedge** has withered from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

Oh what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
 So haggard and so woe-begone?
 The squirrel's **granary** is full,
 And the harvest's done.

5

harvest's done⁽⁸⁾ full beautiful⁽¹⁴⁾

The harvest is over and life is fading; in contrast, the fairy is 'full beautiful' and blooming.

fading rose⁽¹¹⁾ The rose, a **symbol** of beauty, contrasts with the lily, which is associated with death.

withered⁽³⁾ fading rose⁽¹¹⁾ death-pale⁽³⁸⁾ Examples of words relating to death or dying used throughout to create a chilling tone.

wild wild eyes⁽³¹⁾ a faery's song⁽²⁴⁾ Links between the 'strangeness' and 'wildness' of the fairy.

death-pale⁽³⁸⁾ The lack of colour and vibrancy is linked to the absence of bird song and the dying away of the seasons.

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

symbol in literature, people, objects or events that have a meaning other than their literal meaning

GENERAL VOCABULARY

zone belt
steed horse
manna food from heaven
gloom twilight
sojourn remain

I see a lily on thy brow,
 With anguish moist and fever-dew,
 And on thy cheek a fading rose
 Fast withereth too.

10

I met a lady in the meads,
 Full beautiful — a faery's child,
 Her hair was long, her foot was light,
 And her eyes were wild.

15

I made a garland for her head,
 And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
 She looked at me as she did love,
 And made sweet moan.

20

I set her on my pacing steed,
 And nothing else saw all day long,
 For sidelong would she bend, and sing
 A faery's song.

25

She found me roots of relish sweet,
 And honey wild, and manna-dew,
 And sure in language strange she said —
 'I love thee true'.

She took me to her elfin grot,
 And there she wept and sighed full sore,
 And there I shut her wild wild eyes
 With kisses four.

30

And there she lulled me asleep
 And there I dreamed — Ah! woe betide! —
 The latest dream I ever dreamt
 On the cold hill side.

35

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
 Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
 They cried — 'La Belle Dame sans Merci
 Hath thee in thrall!'

40

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
 With horrid warning gapèd wide,
 And I awoke and found me here,
 On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here
 Alone and palely loitering,
 Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

45

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

tetrameter a line of poetry containing four pairs of beats or eight syllables

narrator a character that tells the story in a novel, play, poem or film

symbolism using symbols to represent particular concepts or ideas

FORM

'La Belle Dame sans Merci' is structured in 12 quatrains, using a simple rhyme scheme of ABCB. The poem is a folk ballad, which is a form of poetry written to be performed aloud; the simple vocabulary and rhyme scheme to help a performer remember the words. The first three lines of each quatrain are in iambic **tetrameter**, with a shorter final line. This reflects the unsettling tone of the poem, and makes each quatrain end abruptly. It takes the form of dialogue between Keats's two different **narrators**, who address each other directly. In the first two quatrains, the narrator is an unknown person who directly address the night. From the third quatrain until the end of the poem, the knight recounts his story to the first narrator.

CONTENT

'La Belle Dame sans Merci' (literally 'the beautiful woman without mercy') tells the story of a knight that falls in love with a beautiful and mysterious woman who seduces him into a magical realm. She lulls him to sleep and he wakes up alone. The ending is ambiguous and leaves the story unresolved: the reader does not know whether the knight survives, or whether he is doomed to become one of the 'Pale warriors' he sees in his dream.

The poem explores themes such as death, love, memory and sex. Keats quickly establishes an ominous tone, using sensory language to set the scene. There is an eerie silence ('no birds sing'), images alluding to death ('the sedge has withered from the lake') and a vulnerable figure on his own ('Alone and palely loitering', 'haggard'). This creates a sense of foreboding, making the reader fear for the knight's safety. The poem is rich with **symbolism** and Keats uses references to nature for several different purposes: 'a lily on thy brow' has connotations of death, as the lily is commonly regarded as a symbol of death. The third quatrain features a second reference to a flower: 'And on thy cheek a fading rose'. Like the lily, the rose is used to show the paleness of the knight's skin – the colour is quickly draining from the knight's cheeks. The rose is another common symbol in literature and has previously been used to represent love, beauty and sometimes passion. That the rose is withering may represent the knight's fading feelings for the woman or that life is draining from him. The knight and woman may also be seen as symbols. At the time of writing, Keats was suffering from tuberculosis – which would ultimately kill him – and he would have been aware of the severity of his condition. The sickly knight may represent him, and the beautiful woman may be a symbol of death; she is without mercy because everyone must die eventually.

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY,
COLLABORATION

GENERAL VOCABULARY

enslaved to make someone a slave
archaic old-fashioned

ACTIVITY 1

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select some key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- show the character of the knight or the fairy visitor and how he is **enslaved** by her ('in thrall')
- focus on features of the **archaic** use of language of Keats and its effect in creating a strange age in the past
- be words that seem striking or unusual to you, and that convey the poet's ideas about love and death.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

desolation a state of complete emptiness or destruction

▼ LANGUAGE

'I saw their starved lips in the gloam / With horrid warning gapèd wide'

'And no birds sing.'

'She found me roots of relish sweet / And honey wild'

▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT

This haunting image presumably refers to the open mouth of a corpse or skeleton.

This ending to the poem creates a sense of complete **desolation** and death. The sound of birds is such a universal, natural occurrence that their absence creates a chilling atmosphere. It was commented on, for example, by soldiers in the battlegrounds of the First World War.

The unusual food suggests that he is being put under her spell; she seems to have magic power over him.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

The main theme is that of love, which connects the poem with others in the collection, although the treatment of love is very different from the others. There is also a strong connection with death, which again connects it with some poems in the collection.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ▶ There is a mystery about this strange lady who appears. What does the reader find out about her and why does her appearance to the knight have such a powerful effect on him?
- ▶ The knight admits that he had received warnings about the lady, but he does not seem to have paid attention. Why is this?
- ▶ How do the structure and form of the poem contribute to its effect?
- ▶ Many aspects of the poem seem mysterious and readers have disagreed over how to interpret it. Comment on what the poem means to you.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

- 1 Re-read 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' and 'My Last Duchess'.
Show how romantic love is presented as destructive in 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' and 'My Last Duchess'.
You should make reference to language, form and structure.
Support your answer with examples from the poems. (30 marks)
- 2 Re-read 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'.
How does the presentation of the lady in 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' compare to the presentation of a significant person in one other poem in the Anthology?
You should make reference to language, form and structure.
Support your answer with examples from the poems. (30 marks)



▲ Martin Luther King

'POEM AT THIRTY-NINE' ALICE WALKER

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Alice Walker is an African-American writer, born in 1944. Her poems and novels about her family background in particular have been greatly admired. The best known of her works is the novel *The Color Purple*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1983 (the year when she was 39 years old, seven years after her father's death). This book was made into a very successful film. In the 1960s, she was linked to the civil rights movement in the United States, with its charismatic **leader** Martin Luther King.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

leader the person who directs or controls a group, organisation or country.

How I miss my father(1, 27) He taught me(8, 20) Repetition highlights the main focus of the poem.

Writing deposit slips and checks(6) form(9) bits of paper(13) savings account(18–19) writing(44) Words relating to writing and accounts are used throughout.

high school(17) Because her father had had little education, he was determined that education would be the way out of poverty for Alice.

How I miss my father.

I wish he had not been
so tired
when I was
born.

5

Writing deposit slips and checks

I think of him.
He taught me how.
This is the form,
he must have said:
the way it is done.

10

I learned to see
bits of paper
as a way
to escape
the life he knew
and even in high school
had a savings
account.

15

He taught me
that telling the truth
did not always mean
a beating;
though many of my truths
must have grieved him
before the end.

20

25

How I miss my father!

cooked(28) good food(33) pot(37)
seasoning(38) Words that refer to
cooking.

like a person / dancing / in a yoga
meditation(28–30) This simile suggests
that her father was both excited and at
the same time completely absorbed in
what he was doing when he cooked.

He cooked like a person
dancing
in a yoga meditation
and craved the voluptuous
sharing
of good food.

30

Now I look and cook just like him:
my brain light;
tossing this and that
into the pot;
seasoning none of my life
the same way twice; happy to feed
whoever strays my way.

35

40

He would have grown
to admire
the woman I've become:
cooking, writing, chopping wood,
staring into the fire.

45

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

FORM

'Poem at Thirty-Nine' is written in free verse and structured in seven irregular stanzas. Through repetition of a phrase, the poem is split into two distinct sections: the first section includes stanzas one to four; the second section from stanza five to seven. The style is conversational, with simple vocabulary and no rhyme scheme or formal metre.

Walker frequently uses enjambment to isolate and emphasise words and phrases. By using long sentences that run across several short lines, she communicates the fragmented and yet flowing nature of memory.

CONTENT

The poem describes a series of memories of the poet's dead father, working from her birth through to the present day. It begins in a plaintive tone, expressing regret at how hard her father had to work ('I wish he had not been / so tired / when I was / born'). The focus on saving money ('even in high school / I had a savings / account') suggests that they had little. As well as the practical skill of saving money, the poem shows that he taught her principles, such as being honest: 'He taught me / that telling the truth / did not always mean / a beating'. This implies both that her father taught her to be truthful even in the face of adversity – a reference to Walker's civil rights campaigning – while also suggesting that he was physically abusive. That it did not 'always' result in a beating implies that it sometimes did, and 'many of my truths / must have grieved him' suggests that her father was regularly abusive. Walker's writing communicates a lot on a sub-textual level, with passages having greater meaning than they may initially appear to.

Repetition of the opening line ('How I miss my father') marks a tonal shift and the beginning of the second section, which explores more positive memories

and similarities between the poet and her father. In the second instance, the phrase is punctuated with an exclamation mark rather than a full stop, giving a stronger sense that she truly misses him. The sixth stanza explains that she not only looks like him, but she has inherited his sense of adventure ('seasoning none of my life / the same way twice'). The final stanza asserts the poet's belief that her father would be proud of the woman she has become.

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select some key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- show aspects of her personality and relationship with her father
- focus on features of Walker's language and its effect
- pick out the effect of words that seem striking and convey Walker's ideas.

▼ LANGUAGE	▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT
'How I miss my father'	This line, which is repeated for emphasis, expresses clearly and simply the idea running through the poem. It is stated without extra words and this makes the feelings all the more powerful.
'cooked like a person / dancing / in a yoga meditation'	This is an unusual simile, with the one-word line 'dancing' a surprising word in the context; however, this is no ordinary dancing: people in yoga meditations are often completely still.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

The main theme explored in this poem is the parent and child relationship, in this case the daughter's very personal memory of her growing up and learning from her father. Other relationships are focused on in several poems, but perhaps the poem that links most naturally with this one is Dylan Thomas's poem, 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night', addressed to his own father.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Why do you think Alice Walker chose this particular title? Does the age 39 have some significance, perhaps?
- Discuss the ideas of writing, accounts and cooking; think about what the method of cooking tells you about her and her father's attitudes to life.
- What do you learn about the relationship between the writer and her father? What signs can you find of problems in their lives and what did she learn from him?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

- 1 Re-read 'Poem at Thirty-Nine' and 'Half-past Two'.
Show how everyday events are made to appear significant in 'Poem at Thirty-Nine' and 'Half-past Two'.
You should make reference to language, form and structure.
Support your answer with examples from the poems. **(30 marks)**
- 2 Re-read 'Poem at Thirty-Nine'.
How is childhood presented in 'Poem at Thirty-Nine' and one other poem in the Anthology?
You should make reference to language, form and structure.
Support your answer with examples from the poems. **(30 marks)**

'WAR PHOTOGRAPHER' CAROL ANN DUFFY

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Carol Ann Duffy was born in 1955 and is one of Britain's most celebrated poets. She became the first female Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom in 2009: this is an honorary position that has been held by many famous poets over the years. A close friend of Duffy's was Don McCullin, one of the best known of all war photographers. His pictures have created some powerful images of the suffering that war can cause.



▲ The war photographer, Don McCullin

GENERAL VOCABULARY

Mass a religious service

darkroom(1) red(3) black-and-white(19) Words linked to colour; red is particularly striking in relation to black and white photography.

he(1) 'He' is often repeated, creating a sense of identity and ownership.

as though this were a church(4) A simile creating religious comparisons.

Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh.(6) These are all capital cities that have suffered greatly from the effects of war.

In his darkroom he is finally alone
with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.
The only light is red and softly glows,
as though this were a church and he
a priest preparing to intone a **Mass**.
Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.

He has a job to do. Solutions slop in trays
beneath his hands, which did not tremble then
though seem to now. Rural England. Home again
to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel,
to fields which don't explode beneath the feet
of running children in a nightmare heat.

5

10

All flesh is grass⁽⁶⁾ Words from the Bible making a link to the previous line.

running children in a nightmare

heat⁽¹²⁾ There are famous photos from the Vietnam War showing such scenes.

foreign dust⁽¹⁸⁾ This phrase echoes the famous war poem by Rupert Brooke, 'The Soldier': 'a corner of some foreign field that is for ever England'.

black-and-white⁽¹⁹⁾ Black-and-white photographs are often thought to be the most powerful for images of war; the phrase is also used to mean 'with no room for doubt; clear-cut'.

Something is happening. A stranger's features faintly start to twist before his eyes, a half-formed ghost. He remembers the cries of this man's wife, how he sought approval without words to do what someone must and how the blood stained into foreign dust.

15

A hundred agonies in black-and-white from which his editor will pick out five or six for Sunday's supplement. The reader's eyeballs prick with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers. From the aeroplane he stares impassively at where he earns his living and they do not care.

20

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

GENERAL VOCABULARY

Sunday's supplement a regular additional magazine section placed in a Sunday newspaper

impassively without feeling

darkroom a special room with only red light or no light, where film from a camera is made into photographs

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

symbolic where a person, object or event is used by a writer to convey a meaning beyond its literal meaning

FORM

'War Photographer' is written in four six-line stanzas, each ending with a rhyming couplet. The neat structure is in contrast to the disorder seen in the images described. The poem is narrated from the third-person perspective with a blunt and to-the-point style. Combined with the use of enjambment, the poem bears a resemblance to a newspaper article. As in an article, lines do not begin with a capital letter, except where they are also the beginning of a new sentence.

CONTENT

Much of Duffy's poem explores contrast and balance. The peaceful **darkroom** described in the opening stanza is contrasted with the disturbing images that the photographer develops, while there is a literal example of contrast in the fourth stanza ('black-and-white'). The photographer's role, it is suggested, is to restore balance to disorder, as he places the spools 'in ordered rows'. Duffy juxtaposes the reactions of the war photographer and the newspaper readers, referring to their eyes to show the differences ('the reader's eyeballs prick / with tears', 'he stares impassively'). The photographer's passive response is mirrored in the matter-of-fact writing style, as well as showing that his job is to document. It may also suggest that he has become desensitized to the horrors of war. However, the use of 'stares' implies that he is giving the subject time and attention, whereas the readers only manage to look fleetingly 'between the bath and pre-lunch beers'. There is also a contrast drawn between the photographer's 'impassive' reaction when he was taking pictures in the war zone, where his hands 'did not tremble,' but they 'seem to' in the darkroom. In fact, his development of the photographs is **symbolic**: as he processes the pictures, he also processes his feelings. His physical reaction after the event shows the extent to which he has been affected and suggests that he may be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It brings to mind the poetry of the World War I which frequently explored the physical and emotional impact that war had on soldiers. There is significant focus on sensory language and sight in particular ('the only light is red and softly glows', 'agonies in black-and-white') reflecting the photographer's focus on the visual. There are also references to sound, specifically the onomatopoeic 'slop' of the development fluid and the cries of an injured woman that the photographer remembers while developing a photograph of her husband. These devices help the reader empathise with the war photographer.

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Mass a religious service

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UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

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ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select some key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- show how Duffy portrays the scene in the darkroom
- focus on features of her language and its effect in creating powerful and disturbing images
- pick out the effect of words that seem striking or unusual to you and that convey Duffy's ideas about the work of the photographer or about your reactions to human suffering.

▼ LANGUAGE

'between the bath and pre-lunch beers'

'Solutions slop in trays'

▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT

This phrase gives the idea that people in England have a set routine on Sunday morning (despite the first stanza, going to church does not seem to come into it).

Through the use of alliteration and the onomatopoeic 'slop', you can hear the sound of the liquid used to develop the photos.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

The theme of war is central, of course, but there is also the subject of human suffering and how different people respond to it. The poem also makes a strong comment on people's attitudes and uses contrasts and religious imagery.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ▶ How does a photograph compare with a 'picture' in words?
- ▶ How do you think the editor chooses five or six pictures from all those he has taken? What do you think they are looking for?
- ▶ How well do you feel that you understand the thoughts and feelings (or lack of them) shown by the photographer?
- ▶ What do you think that the overall message of the poem is? What does Duffy want you to feel about her subject?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

- 1 Re-read 'War Photographer' and 'My Last Duchess'.

Compare the guilt of the photographer in 'War Photographer' to the guilt of the narrator in 'My Last Duchess'.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

- 2 Re-read 'War Photographer'.

How do the poets present suffering in 'War Photographer' and one other poem in the Anthology?

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)



'THE TYGER' WILLIAM BLAKE

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

William Blake was born in London in 1757 and died in 1827, spending most of his life in London, which was the subject of some of his writing. He was an unusual individual and a talented artist. He produced two sets of poems that presented strong contrasts: *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. *Songs of Innocence* include one of his best-loved poems, 'The Lamb', and they show the wonder of childhood. In *Songs of Experience*, childhood has turned into a more suspicious and fearful adulthood. 'The Tyger' is very different from 'The Lamb', which Blake actually makes reference to in the final line of the fifth stanza of 'The Tyger'.

▲ William Blake's original print of 'The Tyger'

Tyger, Tyger(1) Repetition features throughout the poem to create strong visual images.

burning bright(1) Alliteration features throughout to create a strong, memorable rhythm when read aloud.

Could frame thy fearful symmetry?(4) The poem has a lot of questions; they are addressed, strictly speaking, to the tiger, but may be seen as rhetorical, as no answer is expected.

What the hammer? what the chain,
/ In what furnace was thy brain?
/ What the anvil?(13-15) Industrial language is used to create a sense of fear and uncertainty.

he(20) This refers to God.

Tyger, Tyger(21) The final stanza is a repetition of the first, but with one change; consider why Blake may have done this.

Tyger, Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? And what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger, Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

5

10

15

20

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

GENERAL VOCABULARY

tyger an old-fashioned spelling of 'tiger'

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

trochaic using a heavy, stressed beat followed by a light, unstressed one: *tum-te* (this pair of beats is called a trochee)

narrator a character that tells the story in a novel, play, poem or film

symbol in literature, people, objects or events that have a meaning other than their literal meaning

FORM

'The **Tyger**' features six quatrains and a simple AABCCDD rhyme scheme (meaning it is written in rhyming couplets). It follows a largely **trochaic** metre and has a third person **narrator** who appears to address the tiger directly.

CONTENT

Unlike many of the poems you have looked at in this section, 'The Tyger' does not tell a story. Rather, it appears to pose some grand questions about religion. Bear in mind that there are many possible interpretations of the poem. For this reason, it can be quite intimidating! The addressee, the tiger, can be seen as a **symbol** of the devil, or the personification of evil – at once both fascinating and terrifying. This is supported by references to fire ('burning bright', 'burnt the fire of thine eyes') which may refer to hellfire, and 'wings' which may refer to Lucifer, the fallen angel. With this reading, the questions in the first and last stanzas take on a different meaning: how could an all-powerful and benevolent God create evil or impose evil on the world? Alternatively, you could argue that the tiger is a symbol of God – in which case, the question 'What immortal hand or eye / Could frame thy fearful symmetry?' becomes an age-old question about who created God. The uncertainty felt by the reader in trying to grasp the meaning of the poem is a reflection of the narrator's inability to grasp the many questions he or she asks. As with another poem in this section, 'Half-Caste' by John Agard, the numerous questions posed by the narrator invite the reader to ask the same questions. It seems that Blake is asking his readers to consider either the origin of God, or at least the nature of God.

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select some key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- show the process of creating the tiger
- focus on features of Blake's language and its effect, such as the use of repetition, questions and alliteration
- pick out the effect of striking or unusual words to describe the tiger.

▼ LANGUAGE

'began to beat'

'What dread hand? And what dread feet?'

'burning bright / In the forests of the night'

▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT

The alliteration seems effective here because the 'b' represents the sound of the beating of the heart.

The repetition in these two short questions shows that the different parts of the creator's body are thought of as producing a feeling of fear and dread.

The tiger is shown to be a fiery figure shining through the forests, which are seen as dark.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

The subject matter of 'The Tyger' is very different from most poems in this section of the Anthology. However, there are other poems that deal with the themes of creation, power and strength, and that describe violent actions. Use these ideas as a basis for making links between poems.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How does Blake bring out the idea that creating the tiger must have been a very difficult process?
- What is the effect of the use of language from industry? (This was the time of the Industrial Revolution in Britain.)
- Read the poem 'The Lamb' from *Songs of Innocence*, which was paired by Blake with 'The Tyger', and compare the two poems.
- Think about the strong trochaic rhythm and the regular rhyme scheme in the poem. How do these help to create the effect of the poem?
- You have seen how Blake asks a large number of questions in the poem. What do you feel this questioning tone adds to the sense of the poem?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

- 1 Re-read 'The Tyger' and 'La Belle Dame sans Merci'.

Compare the presentation of nature in 'The Tyger' and 'La Belle Dame sans Merci'.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

- 2 Re-read 'The Tyger'.

Explore how the poets produce powerful language in 'The Tyger' and one other poem in the Anthology.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)



► A wild tiger



A painting of Lucrezia de' Medici, the inspiration for Robert Browning's 'My Last Duchess'

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

dramatic monologue where a single person (first-person narrator) tells the events, especially in a poem, either to a single listener or to the reader

Duchess (1, 15) Repetition used to establish a sense of social standing.

I call / That piece a wonder, now (2-3) This enjambment and the caesura or pause, at the colon disrupts the metre and makes this line feel jarring; also conversational and irregular like everyday speech.

Frà Pandolf's (3) Probably not a real painter; 'Fra' suggests a Friar in the Catholic Church.

that spot / of joy (14-15) Note how the Duke describes the colour on her face in the painting and as she was in real life; what does he think about this colour?

looked on (24) What might the Duke be trying to say here about what the Duchess 'looked on'?

favour (25) A gift, such as a jewel, perhaps.

'MY LAST DUCHESS' ROBERT BROWNING

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Robert Browning was born in London in 1812 and died in 1889. Many of his poems were on the theme of love, but if readers expect 'My Last Duchess' to be a conventional love story, they are in for a surprise. Browning started writing poetry when very young, but his early efforts did not find a publisher. His many poems include the famous narrative poem 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' and many of his poems, including 'My Last Duchess', are **dramatic monologues** in which one person talks to another. He was married to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who was herself a famous writer. They lived for a long time in Italy, where 'My Last Duchess' is set, and Browning died in his son's home in Venice.

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
'Frà Pandolf' by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say 'Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much,' or 'Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat': such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart — how shall I say? — too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool

nine-hundred-years-old name(33)

Notice the Duke's pride in his long family history.

stoop(34, 42, 43) **smile**(43, 45, 46)

Repetition draws attention to these acts.

stooping(42) He will never 'stoop'; he expects her always to bend to his will and defer to him: it has to be that way round. This is perhaps her worst 'offence'.

Neptune(54) The Roman god of the sea; does the Duke see himself as a god, taming his wives?

Claus of Innsbruck(56) Probably not a real sculptor; the name is meant to sound impressive.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

forsooth in truth

Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
 She rode with round the terrace — all and each
 Would draw from her alike the approving speech, 30
 Or blush, at least. She thanked men, — good! but thanked
 Somehow — I know not how — as if she ranked
 My gift of a **nine-hundred-years-old name**
 With anybody's gift. Who'd **stoop** to blame 35
 This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
 In speech — (which I have not) — to make your will
 Quite clear to such an one, and say, 'Just this
 Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
 Or there exceed the mark' — and if she let 40
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
 Her wits to yours, **forsooth**, and made excuse,
 E'en then would be some **stooping**; and I choose
 Never to **stoop**. Oh sir, she **smiled**, no doubt, 45
 Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
 Much the same **smile**? This grew; I gave commands;
 Then all **smiles** stopped together. There she stands
 As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
 The company below, then. I repeat,
 The Count your master's known munificence 50
 Is ample warrant that no just pretence
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
 Together down, sir. Notice **Neptune**, though, 55
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
 Which **Claus of Innsbruck** cast in bronze for me!

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

FORM

'My Last Duchess' is a dramatic monologue written in iambic pentameter and structured as a long speech. Browning uses a conversational tone and varied punctuation to reflect this. It is written in rhyming couplets, but the rhyme scheme is masked by Browning's extensive use of enjambment. While a rhyme would ordinarily give a poem a sense of rhythm, the rhyming words are often in the middle of a sentence, meaning the stress of the rhyme would be in conflict with the rhythm of the sentence.

CONTENT

The characters in the poem are based on real people. The speaker is Alfonso II d'Este, the fifth Duke of the Italian city of Ferrara, and he is speaking to a representative from the Count of Tyrol. The 'last Duchess' is the daughter of Cosimo I de' Medici, Lucrezia de' Medici. The Medicis were a powerful rich family, but lacked a 'nine-hundred-years-old name'. The poem is set in the period between 1561 (when Lucrezia died) and 1565 (the Duke's second marriage).

Browning's poem explores themes including status, wealth and morality and is an interesting study of perspective. In spite of his privilege, the Duke's behaviour is far from gentlemanly. He is boastful and proud of his material possessions, pointing them out to the emissary and highlighting their rarity by name-dropping the artists that created them ('Notice Neptune, though, / Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity, / Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!'). He states that his late wife should have been more grateful to him for marrying her ('as if she ranked / My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name / With anybody's gift') and depicts her as undiscerning ('Too easily impressed'). Repetition of the verbs 'look' and 'smile', as well as the use of 'blush', show the Duke's view that the Duchess as immature and naïve – someone that gets by on her smile and charm because she does not truly understand what is happening around her and too foolish to appreciate what the Duke has given her. But you must remember that everything in the poem is the Duke's point of view and a poem covering their marriage from the Duchess' perspective would likely be very different.

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

narrator a character that tells the story in a novel, play, poem or film

While you only see the Duchess from the Duke's perspective, Browning includes enough information that the reader can see that perhaps the Duchess was actually less materialistic than the Duke and actually being well-mannered in accepting all gifts with the same gratitude. The Duke's snobbery, arrogance and shallow nature make the reader unsympathetic towards him, and even dislike and distrust him – as well as pitying the Duchess for having to put up with him! It is important to remember that any **narrator** can be considered unreliable, because everyone has their own bias. A close analysis of the seemingly simple title communicates many of the ideas explored in the poem. 'My' indicates ownership, while referring to his former wife as 'Duchess', her title, rather than 'my last wife' reflects that the Duke is more concerned with titles and status than love.

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select some key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- show aspects of the Duke's character or give his views about the 'last Duchess'
- focus on features of Browning's language and its effect, including his use of **archaic** words or phrases
- pick out the effect of words that seem striking or unusual to you and that show Browning's ideas about his characters effectively.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

archaic old-fashioned

▼ LANGUAGE

'a nine-hundred-years-old name'

'I gave commands'

▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT

This shows how much importance the Duke puts on coming from a long-established family, which he thinks the Duchess needed to respect much more, compared with everyone else.

This phrase seems deliberately vague: the reader does not know who he gave the commands to, but it does sound threatening, especially with the pause after it.

'The Count your master's
known munificence...'

The language here seems very pretentious and formal, emphasising that he is thinking of this marriage entirely as a business contract.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

This is a poem that focuses on the marriage of a Duke and a Duchess and on the theme of marriage more generally: the Duke now wants to arrange another marriage to the Count's daughter. There is reference to the idea of men seeing women as objects or possessions. It also explores a number of aspects of character, in this case the ideas of jealousy, selfishness and pride. You may be able to compare the way Browning uses the dramatic monologue form with other poems from Section C of the Anthology.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

enjambment the interruption of a sentence by the ending of a line, often producing a shocking and striking effect; for example, in 'Poem at Thirty-Nine': 'I wish he had not been / so tired / when I was / born'
end-stopped a line ending in a definite punctuation mark

- ▶ **What is the effect on the reader of the opening line? Does it suggest that the Duke had warm feelings towards the Duchess?**
- ▶ **It is said that part of Browning's skill is to make the Duke reveal much more about himself than he intends. Can you find places in the poem where this happens?**
- ▶ **What do you notice about the tone of the last ten lines of the poem (47–56)? What is the effect of the ending?**
- ▶ **Look at the ways Browning uses the rhyme (rhyming couplets) and rhythm (iambic pentameter). Consider also how he uses **enjambment** in this poem, with very few **end-stopped** lines. (You can see this immediately in the lack of punctuation at the end of most lines, which flow into each other.)**
- ▶ **Do you think that Browning wanted you to believe that the Duke had his wife murdered? Find evidence for your view.**

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

- 1 Re-read 'My Last Duchess' and 'Sonnet 116'.

Compare the presentation of romantic relationships 'My Last Duchess' and 'Sonnet 116'.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

- 2 Re-read 'My Last Duchess'.

Compare the presentation of evil in 'My Last Duchess' and one other poem in the Anthology.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

DID YOU KNOW?

A term from colonial history, 'half-caste' is now considered to be an offensive term used to describe someone whose parents are of different races.

'HALF-CASTE'

JOHN AGARD

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

John Agard is a poet, playwright and writer of short stories. He was born in 1949 in the South American country of Guyana, which was then part of the British Empire. He moved to England in 1977, and has since published numerous collections of poetry and won many literary awards. The poem 'Half-Caste' is from a collection with the same title that was first published in 2005. As well as being well-known in its written form, the poem is notable for Agard's powerful public readings and performances of it. It deals with one of the central themes of his writing: the condition of being mixed race (his father was Caribbean and his mother Portuguese), as well as living as a non-native in Britain.

Excuse me(1) Explain yuself(4, 10, 23, 31) I will tell yu(51) Some examples of the use of direct address to the reader.

yu mean when Picasso / mix red an green / is a half-caste canvas?(7-9) Use of analogy (comparison) to highlight the stupidity of the term 'half-caste'; other examples on lines 13-15 and 26-30.

dem overcast / so spiteful dem don't want de sun pass(20-21) One example of the author's use of humour.

Excuse me
standing on one leg
I'm half-caste.

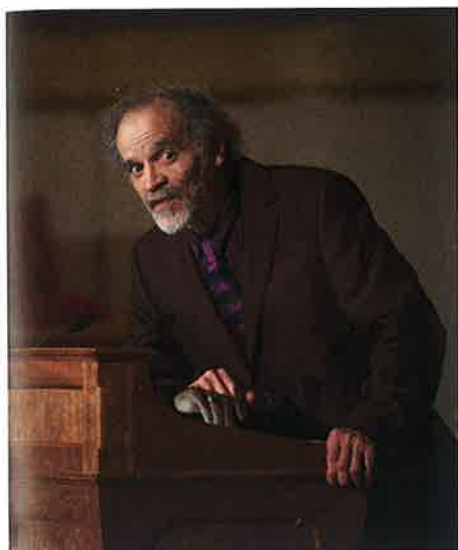
Explain yuself
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean when Picasso
mix red an green
is a half-caste canvas?
explain yuself
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean when light an shadow
mix in de sky
is a half-caste weather?
well in dat case
england weather
nearly always half-caste
in fact some o dem cloud
half-caste till dem overcast
so spiteful dem don't want de sun pass
ah rass?

5

10

15

20



John Agard

explain yuself
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste 25
yu mean tchaikovsky
sit down at dah piano
an mix a black key
wid a white key
is a half-caste symphony? 30

Explain yuself
wha yu mean
Ah listening to yu wid de keen
half of mih ear
Ah looking at yu wid de keen 35
half of mih eye
an when I'm introduced to yu
I'm sure you'll understand
why I offer yu half-a-hand
an when I sleep at night 40
I close half-a-eye
consequently when I dream
I dream half-a-dream
an when moon begin to glow
I half-caste human being 45
cast half-a-shadow
but yu must come back tomorrow
wid de whole of yu eye
an de whole of yu ear
an de whole of yu mind. 50

an I will tell yu
de other half
of my story.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

FORM

The structure of the poem essentially sees it broken into two sections. The first sarcastically asks for an explanation of what the reader means when they say 'half-caste'. A split then occurs at 'Ah listening to you', and from here the rest of the poem turns to focus on the poet himself and the idea that he is half-caste and what that means to him.

By splitting the structure in this way, Agard is again able to reinforce the idea of being half-caste, as the poem is literally split in two. It also helps to create the feeling that the poet is conducting an argument with the reader through the poem. In the first half he demolishes what the reader means by using the term 'half-caste', and in the second half he attacks the reader for lacking the vision to see or know him properly.

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

colloquial slang or informal language

Like many of Agard's poems, 'Half-Caste' is not written in Standard English. Instead, it uses a colloquial speech pattern which reproduces the sounds and rhythms of a Caribbean dialect. This has a number of effects within the poem. Firstly, it creates the sense of the poem as something that is primarily spoken rather than written. The reader can feel Agard's voice strongly, which reinforces the sense that a direct address is being made to the reader. Indeed, Agard is a performance poet and often reads his works, including 'Half-Caste', aloud in front of audiences. Secondly, it supports the idea of being 'half caste' by producing a sort of half-caste effect within the language, which is split between England and the Caribbean.

CONTENT

Much of the poem is based on analogies which compare the image of being 'half-caste' to other images and ideas. In the first section Agard compares being half-caste to a Picasso painting which mixes different colours, the English weather which often mixes sun and cloud together, and a symphony by Tchaikovsky which uses both black and white piano keys.



▲ Piano keys are one of the images Agard uses.

These comparisons have been carefully chosen for specific reasons. By comparing the idea of being half-caste to the English weather, Agard relates it to something very familiar and central to English identity. This has the effect of moving away from the view of half-caste being something unfamiliar and alien, while also suggesting that if it is alien it is an alienness which is equally at the heart of English culture.

The first and last analogies introduce into the poem the idea of great art produced by figures who are traditionally thought of as great artists – Picasso and Tchaikovsky. This creates the sense of Agard challenging the idea of what counts as great and important art, and trying to force his own 'half-caste' identity into this category.

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select some key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- show how Agard ridicules the idea phrase 'half-caste'
- focus on features of his language and its effect, such as the use of colloquial speech, repetition and questions
- pick out the effect of words that seem striking or unusual to you and that convey Agard's ideas.

▼ LANGUAGE

'when I dream / I dream half-a-dream'

▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT

By suggesting the phrase 'half-caste' means half a person, Agard lists examples of normal human behaviour that are only half complete. This use of humour makes the idea of someone being 'half-caste' seem ridiculous and something to laugh at.

'explain yuself / wha yu mean
/ when yu say half-caste'

Repetition of this imperative tells the reader to give a logical explanation for the phrase 'half-caste' – and of course there isn't one! It is a simple but clever way of making the reader question something, by literally asking them a question.

'mix a black key / wid a white
key / is a half-caste symphony'

The use of black and white mirrors the idea of mixing colours. The result of the mix is a beautiful piece of art.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

'Half-Caste' is a poem which focuses on the experience of being an outsider. It is also about the relationship between British culture and other cultures, in particular the cultures of countries which have been colonised by Britain in the past. It involves an inventive and informal use of language which does not conform to the rules which govern Standard English. In addition, it is heavily based on the use of powerful analogies and comparisons, and the sense of a direct address being made to the reader. All of these features provide strong potential links with other poems.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ▶ Think about the opening words of the poem, 'Excuse me'. On the surface this sounds like a polite and humble request, but this doesn't really seem to fit with the confrontational feel of the rest of the poem. Are there any other ways of interpreting this statement which fit better with the poem as a whole? Why does Agard choose to open the poem in this way?
- ▶ In the second stanza Agard makes a joke about the English weather, stating that it is 'nearly always half-caste'. What are the effects of his choice to use humour here? How does it affect the overall feeling of the poem?
- ▶ What is the significance of the poem's form, which uses irregular verses of seemingly random lengths and very short lines without rhyme or a consistent rhythmical pattern?
- ▶ What do you think the poet means when he ends the poem by stating 'I will tell yu / de other half / of my story'? What is the 'other half' of his story, and what does he mean when he says that the reader must return with the whole of their eye, ear and mind?
- ▶ What does it suggest about the identity of the speaker when they say that they only 'dream half-a-dream' and only 'cast half-a-shadow'?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02
A03
SKILLS

 ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

SKILLS

 ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

- 1 Re-read 'Half-Caste' and 'Prayer Before Birth'.

Compare the way the reader is directly addressed in 'Half-Caste' and 'Prayer Before Birth'.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

- 2 Re-read 'Half-Caste'.

How do the poets make use of unconventional language in 'Half-Caste' and one other poem from the Anthology?

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(30 marks)

'DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT'

DYLAN THOMAS

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Dylan Thomas was born in Swansea, South Wales in 1914, just after the start of the First World War, and died in New York, in November 1953, aged just 39. He was buried in Wales. Although he is considered a great Welsh poet, he wrote almost all of his works in English; he had a love of words and sounds, and wrote in a very musical way, enjoying such devices as rhythm, alliteration and assonance.



▲ A young Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night^(1, 6, 12, 18) Repetition conveys a sense of anger and reinforces this message.

burn and rave⁽²⁾ Old age is personified.

Rage, rage against the dying⁽³⁾
Alliteration throughout results in a song-like quality when read aloud.

words had forked no lightning⁽⁵⁾
The wise men may feel that they have not said or written things that have a dramatic impact, but they should not abandon hope of doing so.

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

flight(10) **way**(11) **night**(12) Following an ABA rhyme scheme gives the poem a very musical feel.

Grave men(13) Notice the **pun** here: men who are serious and are going to the grave.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in **flight**,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its **way**,
Do not go gentle into that good **night**. 10

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light. 15

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

pun an amusing use of a word or phrase that has two meanings, or of words that have the same sound but different meanings

narrator a character that tells the story in a novel, play, poem or film

FORM

This poem is a villanelle, a form that always has nineteen lines, with a fixed rhythm using iambic pentameter. There are five groups of three lines (tercets) with a final quatrain (four lines – an extra line after the sixth tercet, which rhymes with the previous line). The first and third lines of the first stanza are used as refrains throughout the poem, used alternately as the last line of the tercets.

The rhyme scheme of the first five stanzas is ABA, while the quatrain has a rhyme scheme of ABAA with the two refrains becoming a rhyming couplet as the last lines of the poem. Note that the rhyme pattern is based on the idea of alternating night and day. The fixed rhythm, rhyme scheme and use of refrains give the poem a song-like quality (the word 'villanelle' derives from the Italian word 'villanella', which is a kind of song).

CONTENT

When Dylan Thomas's father was in his eighties, he became blind and weak. The reader can assume that the **narrator** of the poem – on this occasion – is the poet himself, who is trying to persuade him to remain strong and fight against death, keeping an energetic hold on life. However, it is not clear until the final stanza that the poet is directly addressing his father and the reader may naturally assume that the poem is a more general address, with stanzas two to five beginning with references to a different group of people ('wise men', 'Good men', 'Wild men', etc). Thomas uses 'light' and 'dark' to represent, respectively, life and death. Throughout the poem, his choice of vocabulary links to this simple symbolism, with frequent use of words which are related to light ('lightning', 'sun', 'blaze'). In every stanza, the poet uses an imperative – the two refrains ('Do not go gentle into that good night' and 'Rage, rage against the dying of the light') – to command his father to fight death. Repetition of these lines makes them memorable and adds emphasis and gives the effect that they are a desperate plea. To make this even more evocative, Thomas uses violent, stressed, monosyllabic words ('forked', 'burn', 'fierce').

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select some key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- be taken from the repeated lines, analysing the effect of the repetition
- focus on features of Thomas's language and its effect in presenting his 'advice' to his dying father
- pick out the effect of words that seem to you striking or unusual and that convey Thomas's ideas about approaching death.

▼ LANGUAGE

'Blind eyes could blaze like meteors'

'there on the sad height'

▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT

This is a striking simile because normally you would not expect blind eyes to be 'fiery' in this way: 'meteors' suggest objects that have a really powerful impact.

His father is placed by Thomas in a high place, perhaps his deathbed, showing him being separated from the world of the living. Note that it is the poet who is sad, not the place where his father is dying.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

The main themes of the poem are the approach of death and the father-son relationship; there are other poems in the collection that have clear thematic links to this. Some of the poet's emotions, for example, anger and defiance, may also suggest connections with other poems. You may feel that the attitude to death in Thomas's poem is very different from others in the collection.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Why does the writer think that people should fight against the approach of death? Is it that he does not want to lose his father or are there other reasons for his attitude to life and death?
- How do the different forms of imagery, including personification and metaphor, add to the presentation of the ideas in the poem?
- In what ways do the very set form and structure of the poem contribute to its effect on the reader? (Think especially of rhyme, rhythm and use of repetition.)
- Look carefully at the tone of the poem. How does this help your understanding of the poet's feelings?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING, INNOVATION

- 1 Re-read 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night' and 'Poem at Thirty-Nine'. Compare the presentation of a parent's death in 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night' and 'Poem at Thirty-Nine'.
You should make reference to language, form and structure.
Support your answer with examples from the poems. **(30 marks)**
- 2 Re-read 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night'.
How do the poets present death in 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night' and one other poem in the Anthology?
You should make reference to language, form and structure.
Support your answer with examples from the poems. **(30 marks)**

'REMEMBER' CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Christina Rossetti was born in London in 1830 and died in 1894. She was part of a family of writers and artists, the best-known being her brother, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who was a leading figure of the Pre-Raphaelites. She suffered frequently from illnesses, including depression. The poem 'Remember' suggests that she wrote it when she was convinced she was about to die. However, she lived for many years after the poem was written in 1849 and after its publication in the collection *Goblin Market* in 1862. She never married, but she was engaged. She broke off the engagement when her fiancé, James Collinson, became a Catholic. It is not known for sure if the poem is addressed to Collinson, but many people believe him to be the most likely person, as there are references to plans for a future life together.



▲ A veiled statue

Remember(1) Words associated with memory and time are repeated throughout, bringing focus to these themes.

silent land(2) A metaphor for death.

When you can no more hold me by the hand, / Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay. (3-4) Emphasis is drawn to this passage through alliteration.

you planned(6) Notice the wording 'that you planned', not 'that we planned'.

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand

5

late(8) It will be too late then for him to give her advice.

Yet(9) The start of the sestet.

remember(14) Why might remembering make her lover sad?

It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

10

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

GENERAL VOCABULARY

vestige literally, a footprint: a definite trace

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

sonnet a 14-line poem with a formal structure, consisting of a set pattern of lines; the Shakespearian sonnet contains three quatrains and a couplet (four and two lines respectively); the Petrarchan sonnet contains an octave and a sestet (eight and six lines respectively)

FORM

This is a Petrarchan or Italian **sonnet**, rather than the Shakespearean sonnet, which you have met in studying 'Sonnet 116'. Both types of sonnet contain 14 lines and use the iambic pentameter rhythm.

'Remember' has an eight-line section (the 'octave') followed by a six-line section (the 'sestet'). It does not have any rhyming couplets, but there is a carefully structured rhyme scheme, which is different in the octave and in the sestet. In the octave the rhyme scheme is ABBAABBA, while in the sestet it is CDEEDE.

CONTENT

Much like 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night', 'Remember' features repeated imperatives which command a loved one. The poem begins as an appeal from the narrator to a loved one to remember her after she dies. Repetition of the phrase word 'remember' and the phrase 'remember me' emphasize the desperation of the narrator. The reader does not know who the narrator is addressing, though 'tell me of our future that you planned' suggests it is addressed to a lover or spouse.

The definite change of tone when the octave ends is, therefore, very noticeable. The first eight lines are all asking the lover to remember her. However, in the sestet, the idea is introduced that it might actually be better in some ways to forget, at least 'for a while' – and the sentiment of the final lines is that the narrator would prefer her beloved to be happy rather than remember her, if it is a choice between the two ('Better by far you should forget and smile...'). Such a change in tone is typical of the sonnet form and is called the 'volta'. In Petrarchan sonnets, it occurs at the beginning of the sestet (line 9).

ACTIVITY 1

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

▼ ANALYSING LANGUAGE

Work with a partner and select some key phrases from the poem, adding them to the table. These may:

- show how Rossetti thinks the person addressed should act after her death
- focus on features of her language and its effect
- pick out the effect of words that seem striking or unusual to you and that convey Rossetti's ideas.

▼ LANGUAGE	▼ COMMENT ON MEANING/EFFECT
'Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay'	This is a line that is interesting because it seems to switch from talking definitely about the journey into the metaphorical land of death to a 'real' situation.
'darkness and corruption'	These words themselves suggest death (the decaying of the body), but here they also seem to suggest bad thoughts in his mind that she does not want him to have.
'Remember me when I am gone away'	The start is a very direct and clear request, but the reader does not yet know that she is referring to death rather than going away on a journey.

LINKS WITH OTHER POEMS

The themes of love and death are, as you have seen, found in various ways in a number of the poems. There are interesting contrasts between their treatment in this poem and in, for example, 'Poem at Thirty-Nine' and 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night'. Another theme is time: some poems look back, some look forward, some do both. Think about the different ways in which time is discussed in the different poems.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ▶ Why do you think Rossetti refers to the 'silent land'? Does this seem to be a positive or negative image to you? Why? How do you think the writer felt about dying?
- ▶ Give your thoughts on how a lover (perhaps a fiancé) might have reacted to the poem.
- ▶ Discuss the way the writer uses the ideas of remembering and forgetting in this poem.
- ▶ Explain the change that takes place from the octave to the sestet and how this affects your overall reading of the poem.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

A03

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, DECISION MAKING,
INNOVATION

- 1 Re-read 'Remember' and 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night'.
Compare the presentation of death and mourning in 'Remember' and 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night'.
You should make reference to language, form and structure.
Support your answer with examples from the poems. **(30 marks)**
- 2 Re-read 'Remember'.
How does the poet communicate feelings of sadness in 'Remember' and one other poem in the Anthology?
You should make reference to language, form and structure.
Support your answer with examples from the poems. **(30 marks)**