

# ***Poetry from 1789 to the Present Day***

Anthology Resource Pack  
for GCSE Eduqas

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# Teacher's Introduction

## About the Pack

This pack is designed to support students and teachers working with the GCSE English Literature Eduqas Poetry Anthology (last exams in 2026). This resource will provide teachers with the opportunity to develop a programme of study for their students, and it will also help to improve the skills of their students as preparation for the unseen poetry comparison.

### Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

The poems in this anthology provide a useful starting point for students to build and develop their confidence. They will hopefully be able to progress from gathering their initial thoughts and impressions to coming to a secure understanding of the main themes of the poems and then moving on to some close analysis of the effects of language and structure. In the early days of teaching poetry, it may be helpful for students to collect a selection of poems that they enjoy and they can then simply explain to their peers what they like about their particular choice. These poems could be displayed on a 'living wall' and students could then add to them over the weeks as their understanding of poetry techniques grows. This would be useful for preparing students for both the anthology and the 'unseen' section of their GCSE English Literature exam.

Removing the fear factor when introducing poetry is essential, and this 'starter' activity has often proved to be successful in my own teaching. I usually begin by introducing students to pictures they haven't encountered before and pass round pictures of paintings, or copies of my own favourites. I then encourage the students to decide what they can 'see' in the picture and to come up with a reason to justify their opinion. Less able students could be encouraged to think along the lines of 'I think the picture shows... / I think the picture is about... because...' More-able students could be encouraged to think more freely and might think about the use of colours to suggest mood/atmosphere. After listening to their answers, I go on to explain that there are many possible meanings and interpretations to a picture or painting and this is exactly the same with a poem. Different people can see or read different meanings behind the words, but, just like the pictures, as long as they can back up their viewpoints sensibly, they will always earn credit and marks. Students often panic when they don't immediately 'get' the poem on a first reading. I always explain that this is normal and very few people (even teachers!) understand everything about a poem the first time they read it.

These materials are divided into four topic areas that can be used either in a linear way or as helpful revision where teachers and students can 'dip' into particular poems or themes:

- Introducing the anthology
- The poems in the anthology
- Key themes or topics of study
- Exam preparation

*December 2024*

# What is included in the Pack?

## The poems

For each of the 18 poems in the anthology, you will find the following:

- Summary sheet
- Analysis of the poem
- Comprehension and deeper-thinking questions and suggested or possible answers

The following provides an overview of the sections together with some possible uses for each type of resource in the pack.

## Summary sheets

These provide a quick glance bullet-pointed notes under these subheadings:

- Brief overview of the poem
- About the poet (biographical information)
- Contextual information (what has shaped the poem)
- Language close-up (in-depth focus on the effect of language)
- Key words
- Key themes

## Suggestions for using the summary sheets

After reading the poem once, students could be given a blank copy of the summary sheet. The sheet could be divided up so each student is responsible for researching/answering a different section.

## Analysis of the poem

This section provides a more in-depth focus on the poem, but it does not aim to be a guide in any way. Instead, it should be used as a catalyst for students to explore and develop their own interpretations and reactions to the poem.

## Suggestions for using the analysis of the poem

Students can consider the suggestions in the 'Make the Link' boxes in greater detail and develop their own based on the points suggested there.

## Comprehension and deeper-thinking questions and suggested answers

In this section there will be a series of comprehension-type questions based on a poem. Some questions will be straightforward (in order to ascertain understanding) while others will require inference. Answers will be provided, although again these are not exhaustive and are only suggestions. A series of 3–5 questions will allow the student to consider some aspects of the poem in depth – such as themes, contextual issues and the effect of language. Again, the answers are only suggestions to be comprehensive and should be viewed as springboards to further discussion/analysis.

## Suggestions for using questions and suggested answers

The comprehension questions could be used as a starter activity or as a homework task. The deeper-thinking questions could be used to stimulate group discussion. Students could create their own questions for the class to answer in order to check and consolidate their own understanding.

## Key themes

The themes are split up as follows and share a similar pattern to the Poems section:

- Comparison mind map
- Analysis of the theme
- Comprehension and deeper-thinking questions and suggested answers

## Comparison mind map

Poems connected by theme(s) are listed here.

## Analysis of the theme

The analysis here is intended to instigate further consideration and consolidation of the theme.

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# Specification Information

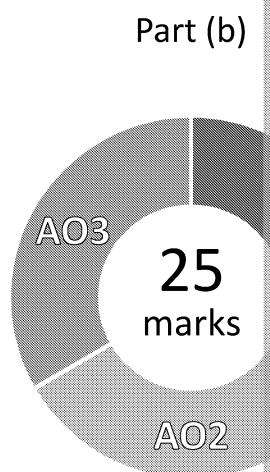
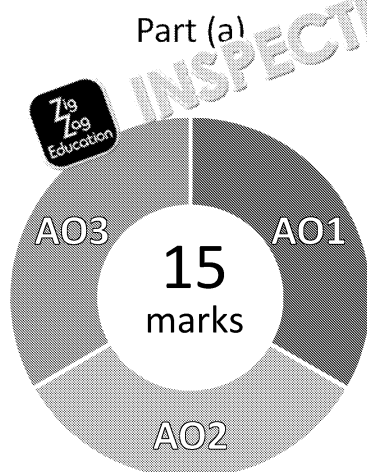
This resource will support the teaching of Eduqas GCSE English Literature Component 1 from 1789 to the Present Day.

## General guidance

- All of the poems in the anthology will need to be studied in order to prepare.
- This is a closed book, written exam.
- Copies of the anthology are not permitted in the exam, although the titles of the poems will be on the exam paper to aid recall and memory.
- For each poem, students will need to think about the different contexts of the poem and the poet's use of language, structure and form.

## Structure of the exam

- One two-part question per text (both parts must be answered).
- The first question (Part a) will be on one printed poem from the anthology and will be worth 15 marks.
  - AO1: 5 marks
  - AO2: 5 marks
  - AO3: 5 marks
- The second question (Part b) will be a comparison between the printed poem and another poem from the anthology. This question will be worth 25 marks.
  - AO1: 8.33 marks
  - AO2: 8.33 marks
  - AO3: 8.33 marks
- Eduqas recommends spending 20 minutes on part (a) and 40 minutes on part (b).
- Component 1 overall (sections A and B) is two hours long and is worth 40% of the total GCSE grade.



## Assessment objectives

All the assessment objectives are assessed equally on a scale of 1 to 5 as follows:

- **AO1** includes reading, understanding and responding to texts; thinking about the writer's purpose and how he/she achieves this. Evidence from the poem is needed to support answers.
- **AO2** is analysing language, structure and form to create meaning and effects. Evidence from the poem is needed to support answers.
- **AO3** is understanding the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written. Evidence from the poem is needed to support answers.

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# Introducing the Anthology

## What is an anthology?

An 'anthology' is simply a collection or group of poems; in this case, written between 1910 and 1960.

## What is this anthology about?

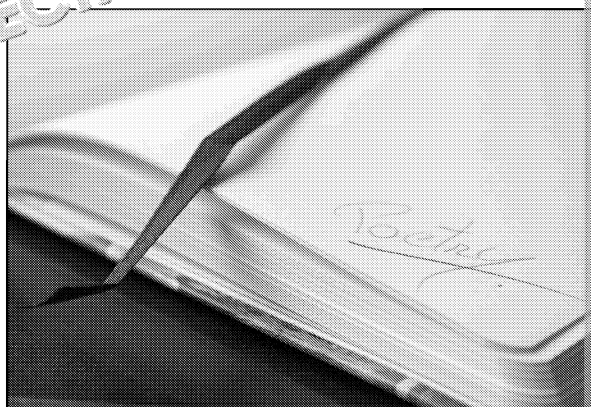
This poetry anthology contains 18 poems by different poets – some modern, some traditional – which cover timeless themes such as love, loss, war, nature, the passing of time, growing up and so on. You will study how each poet explores and presents the themes in different ways across the 18 poems. This resource pack will help you to understand the poems and support your language and understanding of the poems' contexts.

## What do you think poetry is?

Poetry has been defined as 'an impassioned feeling expressed in imaginative words that can convey a particular feeling or emotion and/or it can describe an experience or an event'. It can sum up the way we feel at certain times and it has the power to unite people because of its ability to express shared feelings.

Here are some definitions of poetry from well-known people. It might be worth looking at the poems in the anthology and perhaps discuss them in class:

- 'If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry.' T.S. Eliot (poet)
- 'Poetry is plucking at the heartstrings, and making music with them.' Dennis Lee (poet)
- 'Poetry is language at its most distilled and powerful.' Rita Dove (poet)
- 'Poetry is a language in which man explores his own amazement.' Christopher Marlowe (poet)
- 'Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood.' T.S. Eliot (poet and critic)



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### How do I write about a poem?

There is no one particular way or 'plan of action' to get to grips with a poem. You might be given the title and asked to write about the images suggested by the poem, or you might be given the title and asked for any images suggested by the words. Perhaps you will be given random lines from a poem that you have to write about. When you do eventually read the entire poem, you may find it useful to write about the poem in a few words. When you have studied the poem in detail, it is often interesting to write about your thoughts with your final ideas and to consider whether your initial point has changed or not.

After your first reading, you might want to make a few notes about the following:

- What is the storyline in the poem?
- What sort of mood or atmosphere is conveyed in the poem? Gloomy? Thoughtful?
- Are there any key words or phrases that stand out to you? Why do you find them interesting?
- If you could ask the poet two questions about the poem, what would they be?

You then need to read the poem again in order to become more familiar with the poem. You might find it helpful to read the poem aloud. When you are reading the poem, pay attention to the punctuation used. Make sure you read to the punctuation mark, not to the end of the line. This will help you to develop a clearer understanding of the storyline and rhythm of the poem.

Begin to focus more closely on the language and theme of the poem. Ask yourself:

- Who do you think is speaking? Is it written in the first or third person?
- Is the poet using imagery? If so, to what effect?
- Is there any contrast in the poem?
- What is the main message that the poet is trying to get across to the reader?
- How does the poet want the reader to feel after reading the poem?

Think about the form and structure of the poem. Ask yourself:

- Does the poem follow a particular structure?
- How is the poem organised into stanzas?
- Does the poet use rhyme? To what effect?

Remember to have confidence in your own opinions. The good thing about poetry is that you can have your own view and as long as you can back up your ideas by using evidence from the poem, you are fine.

### How can I compare the poems in this anthology?

The 18 poems in this anthology are linked in different ways. As you read and study the poems, think about whether you can see any connections in theme or style between the poems. You might find the Comparison Mind Maps in the Key Themes section of this resource as a starting point. As you begin to notice other links, think about the form or structure of the poem, the language, tone and the main images, and make a note of any similarities or differences. Writing about and comparing two poems, so it is a good idea to get used to finding links between the poems as you go along. This will make it easier for you in the actual exam.

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### About the Author

- Born 1963 in West Yorkshire
- Poet, playwright and novelist
- Professor of Poetry at Sheffield University
- Often writes about issues affecting society

### Contextual Information

- The poem was originally shown as part of a television documentary, *Forgotten Heroes: The Not Dead*.
- In the programme the poem was read by Laura Beddoes, whose husband, Eddie, was part of a peacekeeping force in Bosnia in the 1990s.
- Eddie was severely injured and psychologically damaged and so was discharged from the army.

### Language Close

- Metaphor: 'porcelain collar bone', 'white silk of his punctured lung', 'tins of metal beneath his chest' – suggesting the injuries and broken body of the soldier.
- Enjambment: sentences run over lines/stanzas – suggesting the length of time it takes the soldier's wife to 'find' her husband again.
- First-person narrator: 'Then, and only then, did I come close' – creates a closeness with the narrator and invites sympathy.
- Repetition: 'only I', 'men' – emphasises the extent of the physical and emotional suffering endured by the husband and wife.

## Topical Manhunt (2008) by Simon Armitage Visual Overview

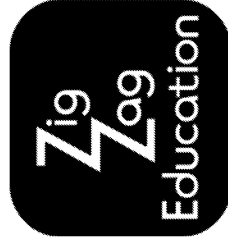
### Brief Overview of Poem

The poem is about a soldier returning home from suffering terrible physical injuries and post-traumatic disorder. It tells us how his wife tries to look after him and search for the man he once was. She traces the outline of his body with her finger as she searches for a clue to help his recovery. However, he remains distant from her and doesn't communicate his feelings. The main themes are the presentation of war and how a relationship can endure suffering and how war can affect families and relationships.

### Key Words

- 'porcelain' – delicate or fragile china
- 'rudder' – used to steer a ship
- 'punctured' – ripped or torn
- 'foetus' – an unborn child in the womb

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# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

The poem is presented as a series of couplets. Some of them are rhyming couplets. The first couplet describes a loving wife exploring her soldier husband's damaged body. It begins with a direct description but then becomes more metaphorical as she describes examining his lungs, ribs and a bullet in his chest but then moves on to his mind as she tries to understand his past. The first person helps the reader to identify with the soldier's wife as she tries to draw him back in spite of his physical and psychological injuries.

## The Soldier

The poem focuses on the physical and psychological suffering of a soldier on his return from war. The range of poetic devices used by the poet to present his shattered body and mind and create a sense of loss is blown hinges. His 'lower jaw' emphasises how difficult it is for him to communicate. The metaphorical 'closed off' level it could also hint at his desire to remain 'closed off' by not talking about his experiences. His 'jaw' could be compared to a door that will not open and again suggests he is closing himself off from his wife. His 'porcelain collar bone' reminds us of delicate things that are broken. This in turn could suggest the fragility and vulnerability of the human body, contrasting with stereotypes of strong-bodied soldiers. His 'punctured lung' is described as 'parachute' to suggest the delicate quality of the soldier's body. Just as a torn parachute is of no use, this damaged lung will make him feel useless and less of a man.

## The Relationship

Although this poem uses the backdrop of war, it is also about the enduring strength of love. The soldier's wife is running her finger along her husband's body, tracing his injuries and his feelings and behaviour. The first two lines emphasise how their relationship had been intimate with 'passionate nights' but now it has evolved from the 'first phase' into another phase. She is in an active role as her husband is essentially passive and uncommunicative, as is suggested by the 'trace' and 'handle' verbs. Her tenderness is stressed in the action of 'trace' and 'handle' as she is also approaching her nursing in quite an organised and almost scientific manner. This implies how she is at pains to treat him carefully and she is aware that she could lose him. The poem suggests that she is desperately trying to care for his pain and empathise with him. Her determination is emphasised in her devotion and her determination not to give up on him as she searches for him. The 'broken ribs' and 'with the search' in her journey to recapture the essence of their relationship.

## Time

There are frequent references to the passing of time, 'after the first phase', 'after passionate nights', 'only then', 'then', suggesting how the healing process will be a very slow and gradual one. Her painstaking effort is implied by the way she 'bind(s) the struts' as if she is slowly climbing a ladder to rebuild him and mend his ribs. Even at the end of the poem the reader is still unsure as to how successful she has been in her quest as 'then, and only then, did I come close'. Clearly, she is allowing things to proceed at his own pace and doesn't force him to do anything he doesn't want to. However, she has only 'come close' and the reader is left to wonder whether or not she will actually find her husband and recapture the relationship they once shared.

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## Comprehension Questions

1. Who is the narrator of the poem?
2. What has happened to the soldier?
3. List all the injuries that the soldier is suffering from.

## Deeper-thinking Questions

1. What is the significance of the title 'The Manhunt'?
2. What sort of rhythm does the poem have? What is the effect of this?
3. Why do you think the poet has chosen to use the metaphor 'the frozen river'?
4. Why does the poet use the metaphor 'a sweating, unexploded mine buried deep'?
5. How does the poet present the loving relationship between the soldier and his wife?

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### About the Author

- Born in Durham, England, 1806
- Her younger brother drowned
- Lost her faith in religion for a time
- Married poet Robert Browning
- Died in Florence, Italy

### Contextual Information

- Elizabeth Barrett Browning had many sad experiences in her life.
- Her father disapproved of her relationship with Robert Browning so they eloped to Italy to marry.
- She wrote 'Sonnet 43' for Robert (before they married) which was part of a series of 44 sonnets for him, called Sonnets from the Portuguese.
- She suffered from poor health but it did improve when they were living in Italy after their marriage.

### Language Close-up

- Question: 'How do I love thee?' – suggesting the rest of the sonnet will be her answer to this question.
- Metaphor: 'I love thee to the depth and breadth and height my soul can reach' – a spatial image stressing how her love takes her over completely.
- Repetition: 'I love thee' – suggests the strength and undying nature of her devotion and love. 'And' suggests the intensity of her love.
- Enjambement: 'to the level of every day's most quiet need' – stresses the constant and continuous nature of her love.

## Sonnet 43 (1850)

by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

### Brief Overview of Poem

'Sonnet 43' is a poem written to her husband Elizabeth Barrett Browning declares her undying devotion for him. As a result of her father's disapproval of her relationship, she had to find secret ways to communicate her love for Robert, and this collection of poems was a secret nickname for her – 'my little Portuguese'. The poem is written in the form of a Petrarchan sonnet. The theme of the poem is love and its enduring quality. Love is portrayed as being so powerful and uplifting that it gives her the strength to overcome her religious and faith are also explored.

### Key Words

'ideal Grace' – the Grace of God  
'quiet need' – ordinary or simple need



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# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

This poem is a sonnet so it is 14 lines long. It is written in iambic pentameter which is a form of poetry. Sonnets are traditionally love poems and this one is addressed to her husband. It was written when they were engaged. It is a Petrarchan sonnet and has the following rhyme scheme: CDCDCD. There is frequent enjambment which helps the poem to flow and sound like a conversation. Her constant and everlasting love. The use of first-person narrative helps to make the poem more intimate. In fact, the poems were not originally intended for publication. It was only after they were published as Robert Browning's that they deserved a wider audience.

## Love

This is an autobiographical account of the poet's feelings for her husband and the nature of their love. Despite the ecstatic nature of her love, there is also a note of sadness as she reflects on the fact that her husband has now saved her. The opening question – 'How do I love thee?' – defines her feelings and order her thoughts. Her love is at once described through metaphors such as 'depth', 'breadth', 'height' and 'sight', emphasising that the extent of her love cannot be contained by any man-made barrier. The repetition of the conjunction 'and' suggests excitement as the extent of her love makes her almost breathless. The honesty of the poet is evident as she states that 'I love thee freely as men strive for Right', suggesting how she loves him because she actually wants to, not out of duty or necessity. She loves him 'purely' because of the innocence of her love and that she has nothing to gain financially by marrying him. She is enthusiastic as the poet proclaims how she loves him 'with the breath / Smiles, tears, and all about me', stressed by the exclamation here. The words here also imply how perhaps even in the most difficult relationships there may be both 'smiles' and 'tears' because love is such a complex emotion. The phrase 'I love thee' is repeated nine times which emphasises the strength of her love.

## Religion

There are many words connected with religion in the poem, such as 'Being and Ideal Grace', 'saints' and 'if God choose'. Many of the words associated with this theme seem quite negative and suggest how the poet did not always have a positive view of religion. She has clearly suffered pain and disillusionment in the past, but perhaps she is suggesting that her husband's love has saved her. She did lose her faith, as suggested in 'I seemed to lose with my old saints', and her 'old griefs' seem to refer to arguments with her family over inheritance. However, now she has channelled those intense and negative feelings into a more positive emotion – love for her husband. She now loves him with the same depth of feelings she once had for her 'lost saints'. Perhaps she considers her husband to be her spiritual salvation instead of religion? However, all faith cannot be lost as she concludes the sonnet with 'if God choose / I shall but love thee better after death.' This might imply that she believes in God controlling the future, and if an afterlife exists, she and her husband will be reunited. Maybe her love can transcend death?

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## Questions

### Comprehension Questions

1. Is the poem written by a first-person narrator? What is the effect of this?
2. Is this a modern poem? Why or why not?
3. How many different ways does the poet love her husband? List them.
4. Which phrase is repeated eight times? Why?

### Deeper-thinking Questions

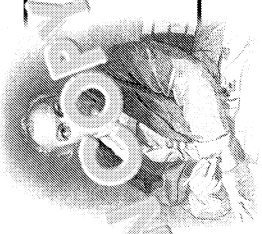
1. Why is the sonnet written in iambic pentameter?
2. Why do you think the poet begins with the question 'How do I love thee?'?
3. What does the phrase 'by sun and candlelight' suggest about her feelings?
4. Why does the poet end the poem with 'I shall but love thee better after death'?
5. Explain what you think the poet means by 'to the level of every day's / Most commonplaces'.

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## London (1794) by William Blake



### About the Poet

- Lived and worked in London
- One of the best-known Romantic poets
- Although unrecognised during his lifetime, Blake's work is now celebrated as a visionary
- Also a painter, printer and visionary

### Contextual Information

- 'London' comes from Blake's collection *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.
- 1790s London was a place of commerce.
- Homelessness and prostitution were problems that Blake felt were overlooked.
- 1789 saw the French Revolution – Blake suggests something similar could happen in London.

### Language Critique

- **Repetition:** 'marked' – weakness, marks of 'woe' – emphasises the repeated sense of frustration and despair he claims to find.
- **Rhyme:** 'street'/'meet'; 'flow'/'woe' – the simple rhyme scheme is deceptive and contrasts with the complex/serious problems presented.
- **Plosives:** 'Blasts the new-born infant's tea, / And blights with plagues the marriage hearse' – the use of plosive sounds (the harsh 'b' sounds) in 'blast' and 'blights' lends a desperate tone to the speaker's complaint.
- **Anaphora:** 'every' – each line beginning in the same way to emphasise the far-reaching effect of despair.

### Brief Overview of Poem

The speaker takes a late-night walk through capital city. Rather than highlighting scenes of beauty in London, Blake directs us to the 'marks of weakness, marks of woe' in 'every face'. It presents a bleak and hopeless scene of an almost hellish place.

There is a lack of individuality in the poem. The 'sweepers', the soldier and the 'harlot' are unnamed and represent all the people of their type. Blake suggests that 'every' inhabitant of the city, from the 'infant' to the 'harlot' is blighted with pain, difficulty and conflict.

### Key Words

- 'chartered street' – suggests that every street is legally mapped out, or under the control of the state; implies constrictions
- 'Thames' – the large river that flows through the middle of London out to sea
- 'manacles' – chains
- 'harlot' – prostitute
- 'woe' – sadness/sorrow
- 'appals' – shocks / fills with horror
- 'hapless' – unlucky/unfortunate
- 'blights' – spoils/ruins
- 'hearse' – vehicle taking a coffin to a funeral



# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

The poem is divided into four quatrains (four-line stanzas). The four stanzas are ordered and organised well, as each one deals with a distinct picture of life in London. The next. There is a steady rhythm and a regular rhyme scheme which creates a sound that is deliberately ironic as songs are meant to be cheerful and uplifting, whereas the poem is melancholic and bleak. There seems to be no hope for the future as suffering is perpetual and new life seems to be born into suffering with 'the new-born Infant's tear' and in 'the

## Night Walk

The speaker describes a night-time walk through the city of London. He is appalled by what he sees. There is 'woe' in every face he meets, from the babies to the adults. The poem shows a city that is blighted with despair. There is a strong sense of hopelessness running through the poem. Images that we might usually connect with hope, such as the river, the new-born child, a wedding, are instead shown as damaged or painful. 'Marriage, which should be a celebration of life and love in the form of a new beginning, is associated with a 'hearse' which is symbolic of death and mourning. Blake seems to be suggesting that there is nothing positive in what he sees and that death and pain are inevitable.

### Make the Link

Compare the setting in this poem to the desert in 'Ozymandias'. How does the image of London in the poem change your view of the future? Could the 'works' of the poem be a warning?

## Power

The power of the state to control the city is shown in the opening stanza, where the River Thames, a natural feature of London, is 'chartered' or controlled. There is a sense of oppression in the poem and each person we meet is suffering. The chimney-sweeper is crying, the harlot is cursing. There is no joy for the ordinary inhabitants of the city. Their 'palace walls', suggesting that injustice is at the heart of the city. When he refers to 'palace walls' Blake is referring to the French Revolution. He is suggesting that the populace of London would do anything to overthrow the ruling powers.

Notice how Blake uses a simple rhyme scheme in this poem that contrasts with the weight of his subject matter. The rhyme seems innocent and childlike, but the content is bleak and filled with despair.

## Language

The language in this poem is simple. The use of monosyllabic words used for the poem's simplicity belies the dark and complex subject matter. The poem that deals with politics, war and mankind. It might also suggest that the 'manacles' keeping the people in misery, are also less difficult to break. The poem suggests that the woes are brought on by the state, but the mood of the poem is one of hope. The change of viewpoint changes the meaning of the poem.

## Context

In 1789, the poor people of France rebelled against the monarchy and aristocracy and overthrew the ruling class. The French Revolution was a time of great frustration, anger and despair felt by the people in the face of their king's failure to acknowledge their poverty, food shortages and the dreadful living conditions. As a result, the king and queen, Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were among those publicly executed. A new government was then formed by the people to represent the people and run the country more fairly and democratically. Blake was a supporter of the revolution but was disillusioned and sickened by the extent of the child labour, pervasive poverty and the violence of the revolution.

### Make the Link

Blake presents the lives of the lower class in the poem. Darker also writes about living in difficult conditions but the mood of the poem is one of hope. Why do you think the poem is so powerful?

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Blake argued strongly against child labour. He uses the chimney sweeps in this poem to criticise the power of children by society. Young children from poor backgrounds were sent up chimneys to sweep them free from soot. This was a dirty and dangerous job in which many children lost their lives. Blake criticises the power in the city by referring to 'How the chimney-sweepers cry.' He is also quite scathing about the Church of England as he criticises the Church of England as he felt it was ignoring the plight of the poor and the children who were exploited into working in the streets.

### Make the Link

Compare how William Blake writes about power and control in 'London' with how power is presented in 'The Hunchback of Notre-Dame' by Victor Hugo or 'Ozymandias' by Shelley.



### Make the Link

Compare how William Blake describes people and places in 'London' with how D.H. Lawrence describes people and places in 'Living Space'.

## Questions

### Comprehension Questions

1. Where is the speaker wandering?
2. At what time of day is the poem set?
3. List three characters that the speaker encounters.
4. How does the poet describe the sound made by each character?
5. Which natural feature of the city does the speaker mention?
6. Which words are repeated in the opening stanza, highlighting the way the city is described?
7. What building stands in contrast to the city streets?
8. How does the harlot speak?
9. Which contrast is set up in the final line?
10. Is the poem written in the first or third person? What effect?
11. Is this a poem set in the twenty-first century? How do you know?
12. Which words are repeated to emphasise the mood of bleakness?

### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Who has the power in this poem?
2. How is this poem relevant today?
3. What does Blake suggest about the human experience?
4. How do you think Blake feels about organised religion?
5. What is Blake suggesting when he writes about 'the mind-forg'd manacles'?
6. What is Blake suggesting about religion when he mentions 'the black'ning Church'?
7. Why does Blake include the reference to 'the Palace walls'?
8. What relevance do you think this poem has for a modern-day reader?
9. Blake wrote two collections of poems – *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. Which collection do you think 'London' is taken from, and why?

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### About the Author

- Born 1887. Died 1915.
- Brooke fought in World War I and died in 1915 from blood poisoning caused by a mosquito bite.
- Famous for idealistic poems.



### Contextual Information

'The Soldier' was written in 1914 at the start of World War I. In 1914, people were idealistic and optimistic as a result of positive and jingoistic propaganda. Over 20 million lives were lost on both sides in World War I, and poems written in the latter stages of the war ('Dulce et Decorum Est') are more brutal, violent and realistic.

### Close-up

- Personification: 'England bore, shaped, made aware...' – suggests England is a kind of mother figure.
- Repetition: 'England' and 'English' – emphasises the patriotism in the poem.
- Comparative: 'a richer dust concealed' – suggests superiority.
- Metaphor: 'a pulse in the eternal' – suggests a belief in an afterlife.
- Alliteration: 'laughter' – has a positive friends' memory.



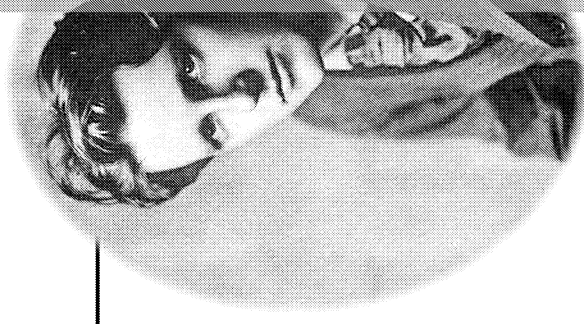
## The Soldier (1915) by Rupert Brooke

### Brief Overview of Poem

The poem was written in sonnet format at the start of World War I. It is told in the first person from the perspective of a young soldier going to war. The tone is patriotic, uplifting and not morbid as he stresses that he is willing to sacrifice himself for his country, safe in the knowledge he will be happy in the afterlife. Although it is a poem about war, it could also be considered a love poem as it is a love for one's country and land.

### Key Words

'bore' – created / gave birth to  
'roam' – travel/wander  
'blest' – blessed



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# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

This poem is a sonnet so it is 14 lines long. It is written in iambic pentameter and Sonnets were traditionally love poems, but this one is not written to a person. Instead, it is written for his country. The sonnet is divided into an octave (eight lines) and a sestet (six lines). The rhyme scheme: ABABCD CD and EFGEFG. The traditional form of the poem reflects the traditional themes that are being expressed.

## Patriotism

This poem was written at the beginning of World War I when propaganda was used to encourage men to volunteer for the army. There was a strong patriotic feeling in England at the time and enthusiasm about the war. This poem is written in first person and presents a very idealised view of the actual realities of fighting. Instead, it focuses on the soldier's pride in his country. The words 'England' and 'English' are mentioned six times and this is a key feature of the sonnet. In fact, England is personified in 'England bore, shaped, made aware' which suggests that the soldier sees his country as a mother figure that can be given to. This is influenced by the Romantics in this poem and writes about the English countryside with 'her ways to roam' and 'washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home'. This is a very idealised view of England which is clearly uppermost in the soldier's mind as he goes to fight. It is a country that uses alliteration in 'sights and sounds' and 'laughter learnt of friends' and 'things about the home he leaves behind'.

## Death

The poet writes about death in a remote, unrealistic way reflecting the view that death in battle is an honourable thing. All the soldier wants is for people to remember that he died fighting for his country. It was usual at this time for soldiers to be buried in the country in which they were killed and so he explains that there will be 'a richer dust concealed' within the 'rich earth' if he is buried at home. The use of the comparative 'richer' suggests a superiority and this reinforces the very patriotic tone of the poem. He views death in a very positive way with 'all evil shed away' and he reveals a belief in an afterlife in the metaphor 'a pulse in the eternal mind'. The soldier feels that he has done his duty and 'gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given' and so for him his death is a glorious victory.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how Hardy writes 'The Soldier'.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how Owen presents 'The Soldier'.

## Questions

### Comprehension Questions

1. Who is the speaker in this poem?
2. 'In that rich earth a richer dust concealed'. What is the poet referring to in this line?
3. 'Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given'. What is the poet saying?
4. What is the poet's view of England?

### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. In this poem, the speaker is thinking about his death. Why do you think it has been written this way?
2. This poem was written before Rupert Brooke went to fight. Do you think he would have written it later or why not?
3. When this poem was published it was very popular, but now people tend to prefer poems written by poets such as Wilfred Owen. Why do you think this is?

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## She Walks in Beauty (1815) by Lord Byron

### Brief Overview of Poem

The poem is an idealised portrait of a woman poet has just met for the first time. He is clearly impressed by her physical beauty but he also feels this must reflect her inner beauty. The main theme of this is not the beginning of a personal relationship. Instead, the poet seems to admire her from a distance and not expect anything in return.

### Key Words

'clouds' – region with a particular type of weather  
'her aspect' – her appearance  
'gaudy' – excessively bright and showy  
'impaired' – damaged  
'grace' – elegance  
'tress' – a lock of hair  
'eloquent' – communicates clearly

### About the Author

- Born in London in 1788
- One of the Romantic poets
- Described as 'mad, bad, and dangerous to know' because of his scandalous reputation
- Travelled widely in Europe and fought in the Greek War of Independence
- Died when he was 36 from a fever that turned into sepsis

### Contextual Information

- Wrote this poem after meeting a woman at a party in London. She was probably Anne Beatrix Wilmot, who was married to his cousin.
- It appears to have been unrequited love which was unusual for Byron as he had many lovers.
- Was originally intended to be a poem as part of a collection called 'Hours of Melodious Music'.

### Language Close-up

- Simile: 'She walks in beauty like the night...' – this suggests her dark beauty.
- Alliteration: 'cloudless climes', 'starry skies' – this emphasises her perfection.
- Assonance: 'like'/'night'/'climes'/'skies', etc. – this flowing feel to the lines suggests her gentle beauty.
- Contrast: 'dark and bright', 'tender and true', 'gaudy day' – she is a new type of beauty.
- Rule of three: 'soft, so calm, yet eloquent' – this emphasises his admiration of the woman.

# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

The poem is split into three six-line stanzas. The metre is iambic tetrameter and the rhyme scheme is ABABAB with alternating lines rhyming. This type of structure was very typical of the Romantic poets and reflects the traditional form of the poem, which is a sonnet. The traditional form of the poem reflects the traditional form of the poem, which is a sonnet. The traditional form of the poem reflects the traditional form of the poem, which is a sonnet.

## Love

The poem is about love, but not about a relationship; instead, it is a kind of idealisation. The poet sees the woman as perfect in every way and admires her from afar. Her 'love is innocent' and so he regards her as pure and unattainable. It is an emotional response, rather than a logical one, to seeing a beautiful woman, and is very typical of the way in which the Romantic poets viewed the world. It has echoes of the medieval courtly love tradition where a knight would admire and serve a lady but not expect anything in return.

### Make the Link

Compare how the poet's admiration for the woman in 'Beauty' with the poet's admiration for the woman in 'Browning with his husband in 'S

## Beauty

The poet begins by describing the woman as 'like the night / Of cloudless climes and starry skies'. He compares her to a clear night sky with many bright, sparkling stars. It has been suggested that the 'black dress decorated with sequins' which he goes on to say 'All that's best of dark and bright / In her eyes', so the simile is also probably referring to her dark hair and bright eyes. The poet uses 'climes' and 'starry skies' and assonance in 'like'/'night'/'climes'/'skies' which gives a sense of rhythm and emphasises the woman's gentle beauty. He then contrasts this idea by contrasting it with 'gaudy day' which suggests that he finds her soft type of beauty very attractive.

This idea of light and dark is continued in the second stanza. He seems to think that the woman is 'one ray the less' or 'one ray the more', it would mean that she is beautiful. He then continues by describing her hair in 'raven tress'. The adjective 'raven' is used to describe her hair and is contrasted with the next line, 'softly lightens o'er her face'.

In the third stanza, he comments on the perfection of her cheek, brow and smiles. This is rather personal to the modern reader, but Byron was drawing on a long tradition of poets who have praised women and praised their appearance. The rule of three (tricolon), 'so soft, so calm, so sweet' shows how much he admires her beauty.

However, the poem does not only focus on physical beauty. He feels that, because she is so lovely, this must reflect her character as well. Her 'thoughts serenely sweet express' and the alliteration here suggests calmness and integrity. The poet also refers to 'days in goodness spent', 'a mind at peace', and 'a heart whose love is innocent' which sums up his admiration for the woman.

### Make the Link

Compare how the poet's admiration for the woman in 'Beauty' with the poet's admiration for the woman in 'Browning with his husband in 'S

## Comprehension Questions

1. What is the poem about?
2. List the different parts of the body that the poet admires.
3. What devices are used in the poem?

## Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Do you think this is a typical Romantic poem? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think Byron chose to compare the woman to the night sky?
3. Do you think the poet was right to assume that physical beauty reveals inner beauty?

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### About the Author

- Born 1954 in Lahore, Pakistan
- Came to UK as a baby
- Glasgow
- Travels in the UK reading her poems to thousands of school students each year
- Divides her time between London, Wales and Mumbai

### Contextual Information

- Describes the slums of Mumbai. People migrate from all over India in search of a better life.
- They construct their homes from discarded materials like corrugated metal sheets, wooden beams, etc.

### Language Close-up

- Simple language: 'That is the problem', 'Nothing is flat or parallel' – this reflects the simplicity of the homes.
- Personification: 'nails clutch at open seams' – this suggests that the homes are very unstable.
- Symbolism: 'these eggs in a wire basket' – these eggs represent hope.
- Imagery: 'bright, thin walls' – this suggests that the homes are beautiful but fragile.

## Living Space (1997) by Imtiaz Dharker

### Brief Overview of Poem

The poem describes the slums of Mumbai where crowded together but somehow manage to build homes. These living spaces are very unstable but collapse, which the poet thinks of as a miracle. Although the poem is about people living in poverty, it creates a sense of hope as these people firmly believe they can build lives for themselves and their families.

### Key Words

- 'parallel' – side by side and having the same direction
- 'between them continuously'
- 'crookedly' – bent out of position
- 'vertical' – upright

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# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

The structure and form of the poem mirrors the insecure buildings that are being described. The poem is written in free verse with lines of uneven lengths and there is frequent use of enjambement. The line 'leans dangerously' is the longest line in the poem and seems to stretch out from the insecure buildings. However, there are some rhymes ('that nails/clings/seams', 'space/place') which hold the poem together in the same way that the insecure homes are held together with different materials. The middle stanza is squeezed between two much longer stanzas which imitates the way in which the insecure homes have been squeezed into a very small space.

## Power/Insecurity

The poem describes homes in Mumbai that are fragile and could collapse at any time, reflecting the insecure lives of the people who live in the homes and their lack of power to change their situation.

The first stanza focuses on the homes themselves. They are unstable because they are made of 'crooked' materials and there 'are just not enough straight lines'. The language is simple and direct. The words 'crookedly' and 'dangerously' show how precarious the buildings are and the poet is warning that they have not toppled over. The nails are personified as they 'clutch at open seams' and also emphasises how unstable these structures are.

In the middle stanza the verb 'squeezed' demonstrates how the homes are crowded together. This emphasises the difficult living conditions but, ironically, it is probably the reason that they don't collapse.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how Blake writes about conditions in 'London'.

## Power/Hope

The focus changes in the third stanza to the people that someone has hung up in a wire net in an unstable building. They are 'fragile' 'pieces of white' which could easily break but are held together for the people who live there. They show that someone is making a home there and it is an act of defiance. The verb 'dares' suggests that the community is not going to be defeated by their poverty. The verb 'dares' and the positive words 'white', 'bright' and 'light' are also used to show hope.

In the last line, 'the bright, thin walls of faith', the poet presents us with a positive image. The walls might be 'thin', like the walls of the living space, but they are also 'bright' which demonstrates the determination of the occupants to improve their lives, which gives them a kind of power.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how Wordsworth writes about 'The Solitary Reaper' and 'Excursion'.

## Questions

### Comprehension Questions

1. What is the problem with these homes?
2. What has been hung up in a wire net?
3. Find three words in the third stanza which suggest hope.

### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. What is the significance of the title, 'Living Space'?
2. How does the structure of the poem emphasise the theme of insecurity?
3. How does the language of the poem demonstrate the theme of hope?

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## As Imperceptibly as Grief by Emily Dickinson

### Brief Overview of Poem

The poem is about the end of summer, and Dickinson uses a number of images to describe this. However, her poems can usually be interpreted in several ways, and this one appears to be about the passing of death, and religious beliefs.

### Key Words

- 'imperceptible' – so subtle that you barely notice
- 'treachery' – treachery, being deceitful
- 'distilled' – describes a substance that has been purified
- 'sequestered' – being isolated or hidden away
- 'dusk' – evening time, just before it gets dark
- 'harrowing' – disturbing
- 'grace' – in this context, it probably refers to the love of God (an undeserved, forgiving love)

### About the Author

- Born in 1830 in Amherst, Massachusetts, USA
- Her family background was Calvinist (Calvinist)
- She never married and most of her life as a poet, but she did have friends who she wrote to regularly
- Most of her poems were not published until after her death when she was 55

### Contextual Information

- She was influenced by the Romantic poets and Shakespeare.
- She had a lot of experience of sickness and death with her family and friends and she appears to have suffered from depression.
- She used unconventional punctuation, and liked to use capital letters, and words that she considered to be important.

### Language Close-up

- Simile: 'as imperceptibly as Grief' – the summer fades very slowly. 'Grace, As Guest, that would be gone' – towards the end of summer things seem to change more quickly.
- Personification: 'Nature spending with herself Sequestered Afternoon', 'Summer made her light escape' – nature and summer are like people who can disappear afternoons and then suddenly reappear.
- Metaphor: 'Summer has tapsed away' – this could refer to summer's death.

# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

The poem is 16 lines long and consists of one stanza. There is a regular rhyme scheme and most of the rhymes are slant rhymes (half-rhymes rather than full rhymes). The poem uses enjambement and dashes at the ends of lines, which makes it a very flowing poem, and it seems to follow the poet's thoughts. There is also an unusual use of capital letters, which is probably because Dickinson considered to be important.

## Nature

The poem begins with a simile to describe the passing of summer: 'As in a Grief' to be saying that summer has slipped away so slowly that no one has noticed and a person gradually recovers from their grief when someone dies. This sets a reflection through the rest of the poem. Nature is personified as a woman who spends an afternoon quietly alone until 'The Dusk drew earlier in' because the days are getting shorter. The morning is 'foreign' because there are many hours of darkness until the new day dawns and, in the same way, there will be a long period of winter until spring comes again. The end of summer is shown to be a positive thing that does not need the help of a 'Wing' (like a bird) or a 'Keel' (like a boat) to make its 'light escape'. Instead, it moves 'Into the Beautiful', which could refer to the colours of the fall (autumn).

**Make the**  
Compare  
about the  
Imperceptible  
Keats with

## Death

Dickinson's poems usually have layers of meaning and frequently have references to death. Here, the end of summer can be interpreted as a metaphor for the end of life, and 'The Dusk drew earlier in' could refer to someone dying. In this interpretation, 'Into the Beautiful' can refer to heaven. This links with the mention of 'Grief' in the first line. The poem seems to present death in a fairly positive way with its suggestion of an afterlife. Dickinson was bereaved a number of times when family and close friends died, so she may have been trying to make sense of her own experiences of death when she wrote this poem.

**Make the**  
Compare  
Larkin with  
'As Imperceptible  
'Afternoon

## Religion

Dickinson struggled with religious belief. She clearly believed in God but gave up and may well have joined in with the religious devotions held at home. This struggle is shown in 'Grief / As Guest, that would be gone'. Here, the end of summer is compared to a guest in a hurry to go home, but there also appears to be a deeper meaning. God's love ('Grace' that is both polite and disturbing. It also appears to be something that doesn't last and found it difficult to have a consistent faith in God.

## Comprehension Questions

1. What time of year is Emily Dickinson writing about?
2. What is the tone of the poem?
3. List some of the words that the poet has given capital letters. Why do you think she did this?

## Deeper-thinking Questions

1. What words and phrases suggest that this poem is actually about death?
2. Do you think this poem ends in a positive or negative way? Why?
3. In what ways does this poem reveal Emily Dickinson's struggles with religion?

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### About the Author

- Born 1952 in Ohio, USA
- African American
- She was the US Poet Laureate between 1993 and 1995
- Now lives in Charlottesville, Virginia

### Contextual Information

- The poem was written for her husband Fred. They were married in 1979.
- The title means 'Cosy Defence'. She is justifying her happiness in a very ordinary marriage.
- Hurricane Floyd was a very powerful hurricane which struck the Bahamas and the east coast of the USA in 1999.

### Language Close-up

- Imagery: compares her husband to a 'medieval knight' in a 'dappled mare', 'chain mail' and 'set me free' – he is her romantic hero.
- Informal/colloquial language: 'Floyd's/Cussing up a storm' – suggests the power of the storm.
- Personification: 'Big Bad Floyd' – makes the storm seem threatening, but in a rather comical way.
- Simile: 'thin as licorice' – the boys were skinny but this image is developed in the following lines to show that the relationships were superficial and not the 'center'.
- Rhetorical question: 'When has the ordinary ever been extraordinary?' – encourages the reader to think about the nature of true love.

## 'Cosy Defence' Apologia (2004) by Rita Dove

### Brief Overview of Poem

The poet and her husband are working from home as a hurricane is 'nudging up the coast.' The first stanza focuses on her husband as her personal hero. In the second stanza, she remembers other boyfriends who all compare very unfavourably to the man she married. Finally, in the third stanza she talks about how happy they are even though they live very ordinary lives. The main theme of the poem is love, but in a very realistic setting.

### Key Words

- 'exudes' – discharges slowly and steadily
- 'matte' (matt) – not shiny
- 'dappled mare' – probably a light-coloured horse with different spots or patches of colour
- 'furrowed brow' – wrinkled forehead
- 'chain mail' – the armour of a knight
- 'reminiscences' – memories
- 'sissy' – feminine
- 'licorice' (can also be spelt 'liquorice') – a sweet that is sometimes sold as thin tubes
- 'eyrie' (can also be spelt 'eyrie') – the nest of a bird of prey. It is usually built in a high place.

Note: the poem uses US English (American) spelling.

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# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

The poem is divided into three 10-line stanzas. The subtitle tells us that it is 'for Rita Dove'. Initially, the poem is organised into rhyming couplets, but the pattern changes as the third stanza has mainly alternate rhymes. There is some enjambment which helps the poem's structure could reflect their strong love for one another and the change in the rhyme pattern could reflect the disruption caused by the hurricane. Throughout the poem, Rita Dove is addressing a very personal poem. However, she also seems to be aware of a wider audience as the poem is titled 'Cosy Defence'. She seems to be writing for her rather 'ordinary' but very loving, intimate audience who may expect something more dramatic from love and romance.

## Romance

In the first stanza she presents conventional images of romantic love but laces them with 'arrows to the heart', 'standing in silver stirrups', 'There you'll be, with furrowed brow / set me free'. These are references to Cupid shooting arrows to make people fall in love. The image of a 'knight in shining armour' who arrives to rescue the 'damsel in distress' from a dragon creates a romantic but realistic picture of what is evidently a warm, intimate relationship.

In the second stanza, she contrasts this with 'teenage crushes on worthless boys' like licorice (liquorice): 'Sweet with a dark and hollow center'. This simile suggests that these were very superficial. They are 'awkward reminiscences' that cannot compare with her relationship with her husband.

In the third stanza, she explains: 'We're content, but fall short of the Divine'. Although the poem is mundane for a romantic poem, it is clear that she loves her husband very deeply and cherishes this stolen time with you.'

## Reality

The poem contains a lot of references to day-to-day life. She begins with explaining the importance of the lamp like 'this lamp' and the importance of the pen 'drying matte upon the page' – reminds her of the reader. The lamp is important to her and how she cannot imagine life without him. He is part of every aspect of her life. Later, she mentions 'Twin desks, computers, hardwood floors'. The use of the adjective 'twin' suggests that there is a close connection between them, and the list emphasises that, even though they are working on separate projects, they are still together working side by side.

## The Hurricane

The reference to Hurricane Floyd sets the poem in a particular place and time and makes it clear that it is autobiographical. The hurricane is referred to as 'Big Bad Floyd' and the capitalised adjectives give the hurricane its own personality. This personification makes the hurricane seem menacing but in a rather comical way. There is a sense in which Pitagoras and her husband are cut off from the rest of the world and this gives her the opportunity to think about their relationship. The informal language 'cussing' and 'aerie' shows that the hurricane is dangerous but also safe. Her husband is 'huddled in your aerie' and she is 'perched in mine', and this suggests a sense of safety and sheltering from the storm in their nests. She is grateful for time to think about her relationship and concludes the poem with, 'I fill this stolen time with you.' The time is 'stolen' because it is taken away from her normal routine to think about their relationship.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how the relationship is presented in 'Apologia' to Browning's 'My Last Duchess' and 'Valentine'.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how the relationship is presented in 'Apologia' to Browning's 'My Last Duchess' and 'Valentine'.

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## Questions

### Comprehension Questions

1. What everyday objects does Rita Dove mention in the poem?
2. Why do you think she compares her husband to a medieval knight?
3. Who is 'Big Bad Floyd'?
4. What does she remember about being a teenager?
5. What does 'fall short of the Divine' mean?

### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Why do you think the hurricane causes the poet to think about her marriage?
2. What is the significance of the title of the poem?
3. Why do you think she finds her happiness 'embarrassing'?

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## Valentine (1993) by Carol Ann Duffy

### Brief Overview of Poem

The poem uses an extended metaphor of an onion to explore the theme of romantic love. It rejects the conventional idea of Valentine's Day and instead presents romance as something that can be painful as well as pleasurable.

### Key Words

- 'kissogram' – a novelty greeting delivered by a postcard who kisses it with a kiss
- 'platonic' – a very valuable, silvery-white metal sometimes used to make jewellery

### About the Author

- Born in 1955 in Glasgow but moved to Stafford when she was 6 years old
- Working-class family
- Feminist
- Professor at Manchester Metropolitan University
- Was Poet Laureate from 2009–2019

### Contextual Information

- Wrote 'Valentine' after she was asked by a radio producer to write an original poem for Valentine's Day.
- Duffy has had several long-term relationships with both men and women.
- She likes to break conventions in her poetry and look at things in new and original ways.

### Language Close-up

- Extended metaphor: the onion – 'It is a moon wrapped in brown paper' – the moon is an image of romantic love but it is hidden in something ordinary or even unpleasant.
- Negatives: 'Not a red rose or a satin heart', 'Not a cute card or a kissogram' – the poem rejects traditional images of romantic love.
- Simile: 'like the careful undressing of love' – explore lover' – extends the image of 'onion' to explore aspects of love.
- Adjective: 'fierce' – suggests danger.
- Antithesis: 'Obsessive and faithful' – shows the two sides of love.

# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

The poem is written in free verse and the stanzas are of different lengths. This moves towards relationships. There are three one-line stanzas that emphasise the rather Valentine's Day which is presented in this poem. One example of this is 'Not a red' does not rhyme but it uses unexpected images to explore the different aspects of

## Romance

The poem refers to traditional, romantic Valentine's Day gifts but makes it very clear 'Not a red', 'Not a heart', 'Not a cute card or a kissogram'. The poet uses very clear to reject the sentimental and unrealistic view of Valentine's Day the media.

## Reality

Instead, Duffy explores a more realistic view of romantic love that can be both 'po light' but it can also 'blind you with tears'. It can be passionate as is shown in 'fiery' is unusual and can also suggest controlling behaviour. This is followed up in the next in 'possessive and faithful' which also implies that there can be a sense of control. The poem ends in a negative way suggesting that love can even be dangerous, with the and the reference to a 'knife'.

## The Onion

The main image in the poem is an extended metaphor using an onion. This is a very Day gift. 'It is a moon wrapped in brown paper' describes the shape and colour of the moon is a traditional romantic image and the simile 'like a careful undressing of' not superficial and should not be judged by physical appearance. 'It will blind you' simile that refers to the way that onions make you cry when you cut them up and sometimes make you unhappy. The poem also refers to the strong smell/taste of the kiss' and will 'cling to your fingers'. This suggests being faithful to your partner but behaviour of causing pain when a relationship ends. The 'platinum loops' describe this refers to the image. The word 'platinum' implies something that is valuable and the poem that include the words 'lethal' and 'knife' hint at a darker side to long-term

### Make the Link 1

Compare how Carol Ann Duffy presents long-term romantic relationships in 'Valentine' with how Philip Larkin writes about marriage in 'Afternoons'.

### Make the Link 2

Compare how Carol Ann Duffy presents long-term romantic relationships in 'Valentine' with how Elizabeth Barrett Browning writes about love in 'Sonnet 44'.

## Questions

### Comprehension Questions

1. List the things that this valentine is not.
2. Why is the onion described as 'a moon wrapped in brown paper'?
3. Why does she say 'it will blind you with tears'?
4. What are the 'platinum loops'?

### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. What do you think is the main message of this poem?
2. Why do you think several of the stanzas have only one line?
3. What do you think the final two lines of the poem mean?

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### About the Author

- Born in 1840 in a tiny hamlet near Dorchester in Dorset
- Was famous for writing novels as well as poetry
- Trained as an architect but worked in London and then returned to Dorset to focus on writing
- Was married twice – Emma (1874) and Florence (1914) – but he did not have any children

### Contextual Information

- One of several anti-war poems that Hardy wrote at the time of the Second Boer War (1899–1902).
- Many people at the time thought that war was a glorious thing and that Hardy was unpatriotic for not supporting it.
- During the Boer War, communication was a relative problem. Official business including informing relatives of the death of a family member. Personal letters from the soldiers to their relatives/friends took much longer to arrive.

### Language Close-up

- Pathetic fallacy: 'tawny vapour', 'the fog hanging thick', 'summer weather' – the weather reflects the mood of the stanza.
- Simile: 'like a waning taper' – a gentle death.
- Alliteration: 'shamelessly', 'firelight flicker', 'fresh – firm – penned in highest feather', 'brake and burn' – emphasises important words.
- Euphemism: 'fallen' – he has died.

## An Apple in London (1899) by Thomas Hardy

### Brief Overview of Poem

The poet tells a story which is divided into two sections. Each section deals with the woman receiving a message. In the first part, she receives a telegram informing her that her husband has been killed in war. However, in the second part she receives a message from her husband that was written before he died, timing of the deliveries of the two messages in the poem emphasises the sadness of the poem.

### Key Words

- 'tawny vapour' – yellowish-brown fog
- 'waning taper' – a candle that is burning low
- 'the worm now knows' – a reference to death
- 'jaunts' – days out
- 'brake and burn' – bushes and streams, i.e. the countryside

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# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

The poem is divided into two parts with titles. Each part consists of 10 lines and is in two stanzas. There is a regular rhyme scheme (ABBAB CDDCD EFFEFGHHGH). Each section receives a message, and the titles support the meaning of the poem. It is quite a simple poem that emphasises the inevitable consequences of war on families everywhere.

## The Tragedy

In the first stanza, the poet creates a mood that implies that something bad is about to happen. The woman is described as 'passively, and pathetic fallacy is used in 'tawny vapour' to suggest a menacing atmosphere. The phrase 'like a waning taper' that implies a dim light that might be extinguished.

In the second stanza, the messenger arrives with the telegram. The harsh sound of the telegram 'interrupts the flow of the poem to show that this is a life-changing message for the woman. The phrase 'understand' emphasises her confusion which is also shown in the use of dashes in the telegram. The alliteration in 'though shaped so shortly' emphasises that this is a brief message with serious consequences. The term 'fallen' is a euphemism for death that was often used in the past for bereaved families.

## The Irony

Pathetic fallacy is used again in 'the fog hangs thicker' but the use of the comparison 'the fog hangs thicker' shows that the woman's situation is even worse than the day before. The postman delivers a letter written before his death. The alliteration of 'firelight flicker' creates an intimate atmosphere. The phrase 'the woman' because her husband has died and will not be returning to her. The phrase 'the woman' is an unpleasant reference to his death and a sharp contrast to 'fallen' that was used in the first stanza.

In the final stanza, she reads the letter which is full of hope for the future. The adjective 'something' that is alive, and 'home-planned' suggests they are relaxing together in the future. 'Summer weather' contrasts with the fog in the earlier stanzas and suggests happiness. Although in a way the letter may have been a comfort to the woman, it is a sad poem because it shows how much she has lost.

## War

Hardy wanted to write a poem that showed that war was meaningless and brought great pain and suffering, not only for the soldiers but also for their loved ones. The woman is not named but is called 'a wife' to show that she represents all the thousands of war widows that are the consequence of every war. The setting is a domestic one, and the soldier – when he writes – does not mention the war but talks about familiar things. The poem is both personal and universal and this helps the reader to identify with the woman and have some understanding of her loss.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how the poem 'A Wife in London' is similar to 'The Manhunt'.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how the poem 'A Wife in London' is similar to 'Dulce et Decorum Est'.

## Comprehension Questions

1. What is the 'tawny vapour'?
2. What happens to the woman's husband?
3. What does the woman receive in the third stanza?

## Deeper-thinking Questions

1. What is the effect of the phrase 'the street lamp glimmers cold'?
2. What is the effect of the dashes in the last line of the second stanza?
3. Do you think the woman was glad to receive the letter, or do you think it just made her realise her loss?

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### About the Author

- Born in 1939 in Northern Ireland; he was a Roman Catholic
- He won a scholarship so was able to attend boarding school and then a university in Ireland
- Lived most of his life in the Republic of Ireland but also spent time in England
- Died in 2013

### Contextual Information

- Written in 1966.
- Heaney's father was a farmer and cattle dealer so he grew up in a rural setting. His early poems were based around the area where he grew up in Northern Ireland.
- The 'flax-dam' was an artificial pond used to store and ferment flax. Flax can be used to make linen and this was an important industry in Northern Ireland at this time.
- Collecting frog-spawn and watching it develop into tadpoles and then small frogs was a common childhood activity for him.

### Language Close-up

- Alliteration: 'flax-dam festered', 'heavy headed', 'jampotfuls of the jellied specks'
- Assonance: 'heavy headed', 'punishing sun'
- Simile: 'frogspawn that grew like clotted water', 'loose necks pulsed like sails'
- Personification: 'angry frogs', 'great slime kings' – shows the power of nature.
- Onomatopoeia: 'slap and plop'
- Extended metaphor – whole poem can be seen as a metaphor describing the transition from childhood to adulthood.
- Military language: 'coiled', 'bombs', 'threats', 'mud grenades' – see the frogs as menacing.
- Rule of three (tricolon): 'I sickened, turned, and ran'

## Devotion of a Naturalist (1966) by Seamus Heaney

### Brief Overview of Poem

The poem appears to be autobiographical. The first stanza describes the poet's childhood experience of collecting frogspawn in the spring. He wrote it home and to school, and the teacher, Miss Keegan, would explain to the children about frogs. It was an innocent, educational experience that he enjoyed.

However, in the second stanza he describes how when he returned to the flax-dam when he was older, there were many adult frogs there and they were 'glooming' – suggesting and threatening. He is frightened and runs away.

### Key Words

- 'naturalist' – someone who studies the natural world
- 'flax-dam' – artificial pond (see Contextual Information)
- 'townland' – colloquial term for a farm or land around it
- 'blowflies' – insects that make a loud sound when they fly
- 'frogspawn' – the eggs of a frog which are surrounded by transparent jelly
- 'clotted' – thickened
- 'tadpoles' – the frogspawn hatches into tadpoles which can swim around. Later, they develop into frogs.
- 'grenades' – exploding weapons

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# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

This poem is probably autobiographical. The poem is divided into two stanzas of contrasting experiences with nature. The first stanza recounts a childhood experience, the second stanza recounts another experience when he is older. The poem is written in iambic pentameter but the use of enjambment helps the narrative to flow.

## Humans and Nature

The opening lines of the poem describe the speaker's childhood. The flax-dam is smelly and uninteresting species. There is alliteration in 'flax-dam festered' and this helps to create a sense of decay. Alliteration and assonance are also used in words like 'heavy headed' which adds to the sense of decay. There are words that suggest decay (e.g. 'rotted') and heat (e.g. 'sweltered'), as well as words that suggest life (e.g. 'slobber', 'specks').

The speaker is probably Heaney as a young boy is keen on exploring the natural world. He is fascinated by 'dragon-flies', 'spotted butterflies' and 'bluebottles' as well as the 'warm thick slop' which particularly fascinates him. However, the simile 'grew like clotted water' has connotations of decay and suggests a darker tone.

The lines are a little like a children's science book with the references to 'slobber' and 'specks' and this continues with the teacher's simple explanation of the life cycle of a frog, which is appropriate for primary-aged children. The speaker is excited by nature and feels a sense of wonder and fascination. He is a 'frogspawn' and studies it.

The turning point (volta) in the poem comes with the opening lines of the second stanza. At that time has passed and the speaker is older. 'Then one hot day when fields were full of frogs' is a line which leads into a description of a much more hostile environment. The frogs seem to be threatening him. He sees them as 'obscene threats' and 'poised like mermen' which suggests they are dangerous. There is harsh 'coarse croaking' (alliteration) and a 'bass chor' which suggests a noisy and unpleasant environment. The words 'slap' and 'pop' suggest a sense of violence and danger.

The speaker is horrified and runs away. His reaction is emphasised by the use of the rule of three (tricolon) in 'I sickened, turned, and ran'. The speaker is frightened of the frogs as they seem to want to eat him, presumably because he took their frogspawn. He is younger. He thinks that if he puts his hand in the spawn it will clutch it. The final line of the stanza is monosyllabic which emphasises the harsh ending. It seems that he comes to understand the darker side of nature and realises that it is actually more powerful than human beings.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how Keats presents 'Naturalist' or 'Nature' in 'Ode to a Nightingale'.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how Hughes presents 'Nature' in 'The Wind' or 'The Wind'.

## Innocence and Experience

This poem is often seen as an extended metaphor that explores the transition from childhood to adulthood. In the first stanza he is young and innocent, in the second stanza he is experienced and understands the world. He is in control of his small world and has a sense of wonder and fascination. He is a 'frogspawn' and studies it. The use of the terms 'daddy frog' and 'mammy frog' emphasises this young and innocent perspective.

However, all this changes for him in the second stanza. The frogs are like an army and 'sat cocked on sods'. The rule of three (tricolon) – 'I sickened, turned, and ran' – is a realisation which may represent his moment of growing up and understanding the world as a difficult and dangerous place.

## Questions

### Comprehension Questions

1. What does the speaker see at the flax-dam?
2. What does he collect there and take home?
3. What does this grow into?
4. What frightens the speaker in the second stanza?

### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. What is the effect of the verbs 'festered' and 'sweltered'?
2. What language technique is 'coarse croaking'? What is the effect of this?
3. What other sounds are mentioned? What effect is created?
4. Why do you think he describes the frogs as 'obscene threats'?

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### About the Author

- Born in Yorkshire in 1930. Working-class family.
- Was married to the poet. Sylvia Plath, who committed suicide.
- His second wife, Cilla, was a nurse and they lived in Cumbria.
- Became Poet Laureate in 1984
- Died in 1998

### Contextual Information

- This poem was published in 1960.
- Hughes was fascinated with the natural world. He spent much of his childhood exploring the Yorkshire countryside.
- He enjoyed country pursuits such as hunting and fishing.
- He appreciated the beauty of the natural world and also understood its value.

### Language Close-up

- Simple, clinical language: 'I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed', 'Now I hold Creation in my foot' – the hawk does not feel the need to explain his actions.
- Frequent use of 'I', 'my', 'me': 'I sit', 'my inspection', 'are of advantage to me' – shows the dominance of the hawk.
- Violent language: 'perfect kills', 'tearing at heads'
- Extended metaphor: the hawk is a symbol of power and control. Military leaders are known to use war as a way of extending their power and control are often referred to as hawks.

## Hawk Roosting (1960) by Ted Hughes

### Brief Overview of Poem

The poem is written from the viewpoint of a hawk. He sits on a high branch and looks down on the earth. He reflects on how powerful he is and explains that he has no intention of allowing any creature to dominate him. The poem is about the natural world but it can also be seen as a metaphor for conflict between humans.

### Key Words

- 'inaction' – the opposite of action
- 'falsifying' – altering something to render it untrue
- 'buoyancy' – this usually refers to floating on water but here it means being supported by the air
- 'sophistry' – false arguments
- 'allotment of death' – causing death to happen
- 'assert' – cause others to accept authority by forceful behaviour

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# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

The poem is a dramatic monologue and is written in first person so we see everything through the hawk's eyes. It is made up of six four-line stanzas that are very controlled and this reflects the hawk's control over his environment. It has a very steady and calm pace and this emphasises the hawk's confidence because he does not allow himself to be rushed by anything.

## Power and Control

The poem begins with 'I', which immediately focuses our attention on the hawk who is the speaker. His initial position shows that he is in total control. It continues with 'my' which emphasises his ownership and the fact that he feels perfectly safe and does not have any enemies.

In the second stanza, the hawk describes a world that has been arranged to suit his convenience of the high trees' and that the air and sun 'are of advantage to me'. The hawk is seen as the 'earth's face' is turned 'upward for my inspection'. This idea is continued in the line at the end of the third stanza, 'Now I hold Creation in my foot'. The language used is simple and clinical and this emphasises the arrogance of the hawk.

The hawk makes it clear that he has power over life and death. He can 'kill where I please' and is in charge of 'the allotment of death'. He does not feel that he has to explain his actions 'because it is all mine'.

The sixth stanza is made up of four short statements in which the hawk declares that he intends to retain his power and control and to 'keep things like this'. The short sentences emphasise the dominance of the hawk.

## Violence

The hawk is presented as a violent creature who kills without emotion. He likes to kill and does not feel the need to explain his actions. His 'manners are tearing off heads'. The poem shows how violent nature can be but it is even more shocking if we see this poem as an analogy for conflict in the human world. Military leaders who crush all opposition and are kept in power through war are often referred to as hawks.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how Seamus Heaney presents 'Hawk Roosting' in 'Naturalist'.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how Seamus Heaney presents 'Hawk Roosting' in 'Naturalist'.

## Questions

### Comprehension Questions

1. Who is the speaker in this poem?
2. What happens in this poem?
3. List phrases that suggest that the hawk is ruthless.

### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Why do you think 'I' and 'my' are repeated throughout the poem?
2. How is the theme of power presented in this poem?
3. Why do you think some people see this as a poem about war?

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### About the Author

- Born in London in 1795
- One of the Romantic poets
- Was in love with Fanny Brawne but was too poor to marry because of Keats' lack of money and prospects as a struggling poet
- Died from tuberculosis aged 25

### Contextual Information

- Like all the Romantic poets, Keats had a deep appreciation of nature. He wrote this poem after a countryside walk.
- He probably knew that he was dying when he wrote this poem.
- 'To Autumn' is an ode (a poem that is written in praise of something).

### Language Close-up

- Alliteration: 'mists and mellowing' – the 'm' sound in 'mists' and 'mellowing' suggests a gentle, soft atmosphere.
- Sensory language: 'To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees' (sight), 'fume of poppies,' (smell), 'swallows twitter in the skies' (hearing), etc.
- Personification: 'Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun', 'may find / Three sitting careless on a granary floor' – suggests autumn brings fruitfulness and is a peaceful season.
- Rhetorical question: 'Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?', 'Where are the red-fruits hid Spring?' – makes the reader think about the harvest.
- Simile: 'like a gleaner' – suggests harvest.
- Onomatopoeia: 'soft-dying day' – imitates the sound of the day ending, being pressed.
- Metaphor: 'soft-dying day' – could suggest death.

## To Autumn (1820) by John Keats

### Brief Overview of Poem

The poem is an ode that praises the season of autumn. It traces the way that autumn moves from the end of summer toward winter and describes it as a season of harvest with abundant crops. It presents autumn as a beautiful, peaceful season but there are hints of sadness as it refers to the passing of time and hints at the approach of death.

### Key Vocabulary

- 'conspiring' – secretly working together
- 'thatch-eaves' – part of the thatched roof of a house
- 'gourd' – a type of fruit
- 'kernel' – the inside of a nut
- 'o'erbrimm'd' – provided more than enough
- 'clammy' – damp and sticky
- 'granary' – a storehouse for grain, e.g. wheat
- 'winnowing' – blowing air through grain to remove chaff
- 'half-reap'd' – partly harvested
- 'furrow' – a long, narrow trench made in a field
- 'swath' – a row of corn in the field cut by a scythe
- 'gleaner' – someone who gathers left behind crops
- 'cyder-press' – a place where apples are pressed to make cider
- 'stubble-plains' – bare fields after harvest
- 'gnats' – flying insects
- 'sallows' – willow trees
- 'bourn' – a small stream
- 'hedge-crickets' – insects that make a chirping sound
- 'the red-breast' – a robin

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# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

This poem is an ode which is a traditional form of poetry that was used by poets to praise the pastoral tradition which are poems that celebrate the countryside. Here, the poem has three 11-line stanzas and is written in iambic pentameter. It also has a regular rhyme scheme (ABABCDEDCCE FGFGHIJHIJ KLKLMNOMNNO). The poem is one of several that praise different things.

## Nature

The poem was written in 1819 and describes a very different countryside from the traditional farming methods where all the work would have been done by people. It is very important to the poem that the year and everyone in the village would have helped to

The first stanza focuses on early autumn, which is the time that the fruit ripens. It is a 'mellow fruitfulness' and the alliteration of 'mists and mellow' emphasises this. It leads us into descriptions of an abundant harvest. Autumn and the sun are personified as friends in 'Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun', who work together to 'load and bend with apples' the trees. The noun 'ripeness' and the verbs 'swell' and 'plump' of tasty fruit and even the bees are producing vast quantities of honey in their 'dauling language' in this stanza presents a vivid picture of a warm, bright season full of opportunity.

The second stanza moves on to mid-autumn and becomes more metaphorical. Autumn is a woman (possibly a goddess of fertility) who can be seen sitting in the granary or store with the rhetorical question 'Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?' and the different places where she may be found. Autumn is seen as being gentle and peaceful 'winnowing wind' and sleepy in 'drows'd with the fume of poppies'. The alliteration gives an impression of a gentle breeze and 'the fume of poppies' suggests a strong, but pleasant smell compared to a woman who collects 'herve' in the simile 'like a gleaner' who 'bends her head across a brook' and 'some with a patient look' who watches the apples 'blossom'. These images present autumn as a leisurely season where time passes slowly.

In the third stanza, the poet addresses autumn directly and reassures her that she is not alone. Harvest is now over and the year is moving towards winter. This stanza is full of references to music. The poet asks 'Where are the songs of Spring?' and then goes on to describe typical autumn sounds. There is the 'wailful choir' of gnats and the bleating of 'full-grown lambs'. In addition, the 'hedge-cricket's sing', 'the red-breast (robin) whistles' and the 'swallows twitter'. It is a celebration of the creatures that can be heard as autumn turns into winter.

**Make the Lark**  
Compare how the Lark presents nature in 'Roosting'.

## Passing of Time

In spite of the positive presentation of autumn in this poem, there is an underlying sense of the passing of time in the last stanza. Keats was very aware of the passing of time and probably knew that he was writing this poem. The three stanzas move from early to late autumn and the final stanza is a metaphor for approaching death. There are references to 'the soft-dying day' and the 'rosy hue' of sunset. The metaphor for approaching death. The 'grate' of autumn which suggests grieving for the signs of approaching winter, such as the reference to the robin, which is often associated with winter. Swallows which are getting ready to migrate to warmer countries, and winter is represented as a season where everything has died. However, it is possible to interpret the ending of the poem more positively as winter is part of the cycle of life. This would mean that after winter would be spring and this could hint at the Christian belief in eternal life.

**Make the Lark**  
Compare how the Lark presents 'Autumn' and 'Roosting'.

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## Questions

### Comprehension Questions

1. What plants are ripening in the first stanza?
2. What language technique is used in the word 'oozings'? What effect does this have?
3. List the different creatures that are mentioned in the third stanza.

### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. The poet uses a lot of sensory language and examples in the poem of some of the senses. Why do you think Keats has chosen to do this?
2. What is the significance of the 'full-grown lambs' in the last stanza?
3. What references do you find in the poem that suggest that Keats may have been influenced by the Romantic movement?



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### About the Author

- Born in 1922 in Coventry
- Studied at Oxford University
- Worked as a librarian at Hull University
- Wrote novels as well as poetry
- Never married but had a long-term relationship with women



### Contextual Information

- Written in late 1950s. Published in 1964.
- Time of great social change. After wartime austerity, people now had more money to spend. Televisions were just becoming popular as people were now able to afford them.
- Larkin lived near a park with a children's playground. He would walk through the park on his way to and from work.
- At this time, women did not work after marriage. There was a clearly defined male/female roles.



### Language Close-up

- Simple, everyday language: 'And the albums, lettered / Our Wedding, lying / Near the television' – emphasises the ordinary, rather boring, lives that the families lead.
- Metaphor: 'Summer is fading' – the seasons changing can also represent the ways in which things change with people get older.
- Sibilance: 'win, and sandpit' – soft sounds create a pleasant picture.



## Afternoons (1964) by Philip Larkin

### Brief Overview of Poem

This poem is a rather bleak picture of life in post-war Britain. Marriage is presented as unfulfilling with husbands and wives leading separate lives having to provide for and care for demanding children. It reflects Larkin's rather cynical view of marriage and family life.

### Key Words

- 'es a fur' – these people live on a house/estate
- 'albums' – books of photographs
- 'courting-places' – quiet places where lovers meet

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# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

The poem is divided into three eight-line stanzas. The lines are short and there is enjambment even between the stanzas. This stripped-back structure combined with the simple language creates a mundane, unromantic tone. This supports the theme of the poem where romantic love is destroyed by marriage and family life.

## Passing of Time

The poem opens by setting the scene. 'Summer is fading' and 'the leaves fall in on the impression of summer passing and autumn is on its way. It continues in the second stanza with 'their courting-places'. Here, the wind is seen as a destructive force and there is a sense of deteriorating as time passes. Finally, in the third stanza, he says that the women's 'looks' suggests that they are putting on weight and generally losing their looks as they grow older. It seems to be that, as time passes and everyone gets older, life becomes mundane and they look forward to as they are pushed 'To the side of their own lives.'

## Marriage and Family Life

Marriage and family life are presented as unfulfilling. The husbands go to work in order to support their families while the wives look after the homes, deal with 'an estateful of washing' and care for the children. The romance seems to have died and this is presented in the symbol of the wind 'ruining their courting-places' and in the description of the wedding album lying discarded by the television. The courting-places are still used by lovers but they are all teenagers who are still hopeful of finding happiness in their relationships.

However, the children do not seem to notice any of this as they run around and play, and the 'pleasure of that swing and sandpit' presents quite a pleasant picture. Their mothers have been 'setting the table' so they behave like animals or birds that have been released from cages. The children search for 'unripe acorns' which reflects their immaturity and innocence and then 'expect to be taken home' which shows that they are very demanding.

The overall message is that the hope and excitement of youth fades away with the marriage and family life brings disillusionment.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how Larkin presents marriage in 'Apologia'.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how Larkin presents family life in 'Afternoons' with Wordsworth's 'Prelude'.

## Questions

### Comprehension Questions

1. What time of year is it?
2. Why is the time of year significant?
3. Where is the poem set?

### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. What is the significance of the wedding albums?
2. Do you think this is a depressing poem? Why or why not?
3. How does the poem reflect Larkin's rather cynical view of marriage and family life?

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### About the Author

- Born in 1893 in Oswestry, Shropshire
- Educated at the Birkenhead Institute and at Shrewsbury Technical School
- Is well known as a poet who wrote about World War I
- Died in 1920 in France aged 25

### Contextual Information

- The title is taken from the Latin phrase 'Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori', which means 'It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country'.
- Written during World War I and published after his death in 1920.
- Aims to present the brutality of war by describing a gas attack.

### Language Close

- Similes: 'like old pack animals', 'like sacks', 'coughing' – shows how war has changed ordinary soldiers.
- Verbs: 'trudge', 'limped' – shows how hard it is for them to march.
- Exclamations: 'Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!'
- Present participles: 'guttering, choking, drowning' (also rule of three / tricolon) – makes it seem like it is happening right in front of us.
- Alliteration: 'watch the white eyes writhing in his face' – emphasises suffering.
- Graphic language: 'gargling', 'froth-corrupted lungs', 'terrible sores' – shows the severity of the suffering.
- Direct address: 'my friend' – possibly ironic.

## Dulce et Decorum Est (1918) by Wilfred Owen

### Brief Overview of Poem

This poem was written to show the harsh realities of World War I. It contrasts sharply with the work of poets like Rupert Brooke ('The Soldier') who presents a romanticised idealised view of war. It starts with a description of a group of exhausted soldiers and then leads into a gas attack where one man is too slow to put on his gas mask and suffers a painful fate. The concluding lines of the poem are addressed directly to those who support the war and asks them to stop presenting it as a glorious adventure.

### Key Words

- 'trudge' – walk slowly and with heavy steps
- 'blood-shod' – their feet were covered in blood
- 'ecstasy' – extreme emotion – it demonstrates their panic
- 'froth-corrupted' – effects of the poison gas
- 'zest' – enthusiasm
- 'ardent' – enthusiastic

# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

The poem is divided into four stanzas of different lengths. It is mainly iambic pentameter with a consistent rhyme scheme with alternate lines rhyming. The two-line stanza in the first stanza emphasises the poet's nightmares about the dying soldier. The final stanza uses direct address to people in England who were promoting the war and encouraging men to go and fight. The poem was originally dedicated to Jessie Pope, a poet who was famous for writing pro-war poems.

## War and Suffering

The poem begins with a description that is designed to shock. Instead of brave, young men at war, we see a group of soldiers returning from the battlefield. They are 'Bent double' and 'Knock-kneed, coughing like hags'. These two similes present images of men who are exhausted and traumatised by what they have experienced. They are clearly suffering as they do not notice the gas shells dropping behind them. The verb 'trudge' shows just how tired they are, and they are described as 'drunk with fatigue' which suggests that they are too exhausted to think clearly.

The pace quickens with the exclamations 'Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!' and they put on their gas masks too late and breathe in the deadly gas. The present participles ('yelling', 'stumbling', 'guttering, choking, drowning') make you feel as if this is happening in front of your eyes. The poet is suffering for yourself. The poet can do nothing to help him and so 'saw him drown in the green sea' describes the chlorine gas which was a yellow-greenish colour.

The graphic language continues with further descriptions of the intense suffering of the soldier. The alliteration of 'watch the white eyes writhing in his face' emphasises this. The description continues with 'blood come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs' and the similes 'obscene as cancer' and 'bitter as the cud'. Nothing is left to the imagination and the cumulative effect of this language is to present a realistic and horrific picture of war.

In the last stanza, Owen uses direct address in 'My friend, you would not tell with such high zest' to speak to the propagandists who were encouraging young men to enlist by describing war as a glorious, exciting adventure. Owen was not unpatriotic but he wanted people to understand the truth about the First World War. The title 'Dulce et Decorum Est' comes from the Latin phrase 'Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori' which means 'It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country'. Owen calls it 'The old Lie' because it does not present an accurate picture of the realities of war.

**Make the**  
Compare how  
Dickinson's  
Decorum Est  
Grief'.

**Make the**  
Compare how  
Armitage's  
in 'Dulce et

## Questions

### Comprehension Questions

1. How are the soldiers described in the first stanza?
2. What changes in the second stanza?
3. What happens to the soldier who does not put on his gas mask in time?

### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Why do you think that the poet uses such graphic language in this poem?
2. What do you think the reaction would have been when this poem was first published?
3. Do you think people react to the poem the same way today?

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### About the Poet

- One of the Romantic poets of the nineteenth century
- Wrote several long poems such as 'Queen Mab'
- He was an atheist and a radical politician
- Died aged 29, after a boating accident

### Contextual Information

- A report by the Roman historian Diodorus Siculus claimed that the largest statue in Egypt was that of Ozymandias (probably Ramesses II).
- Shelley was interested in the power of poetry to influence and survive.
- The French ruler Napoleon landed in Egypt in 1798.

### Close-up

- Alliteration: 'cold command', 'boundless and bare', 'lone and level sands' – emphasises these phrases, making them harsh.
- Framing device: 'I met a traveller...' – the speaker disappears from the poem, reporting the traveller's words instead. Creates even more distance between the reader and the king.
- Use of adjectives: 'cold', 'shattered' – shows the king as cruel and over lines, Enjambement: 'an over lines, adding the total nature of poem; emphasises the endless passing of time.

## Ozymandias (1818) by Percy Bysshe Shelley

### Brief Overview of Poem

The speaker meets a traveller who tells him of a giant statue he came across in the desert. The statue was of a king who lived a long time ago, but it is now broken and surrounded by sand. The writing on the pedestal demanding that the king be impressed by the king's mighty work is, however, nothing remains of this anymore.

The poem presents a powerful leader in the past, Ozymandias, but also suggests that power is fleeting. Everything else, cannot stand the test of time, also looks at the power of words to outlast civilisations.



### Key Words

- 'face' – face
- 'pedestal' – the base of the statue
- 'Ozymandias' – another name for King Ramesses II, a powerful Egyptian ruler
- 'colossal' – huge

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# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

This poem is a sonnet so it is 14 lines long. It is written in iambic pentameter. It has a rhyme scheme (ABABA CDCED EFEF). It could be argued that the use of iambic pentameter is reminiscent of a clock ticking, and suggests the steady passing of time. The sonnet evolved in the 1200s and is still used by poets today. It could signify the way the

The poem makes use of a framing device as the original speaker ('I met a traveller from an antique land'). The traveller in turn tells the speaker about a statue he has seen in the desert. The statue is vast and broken into pieces, with the head in the sand and the legs standing without a body. On the pedestal of the statue there is an inscription demanding that the reader 'Look on my works... and despair!' All around the statue is empty desert.

## The Statue

In this poem an unnamed speaker tells us how he meets a traveller 'from an antique land'. The traveller in turn tells the speaker about a statue he has seen in the desert. The statue is vast and broken into pieces, with the head in the sand and the legs standing without a body. On the pedestal of the statue there is an inscription demanding that the reader 'Look on my works... and despair!' All around the statue is empty desert.

## Power

We see power in the king whose 'colossal' statue lies in the desert. However, the statue is broken, so this suggests that power does not last. We can assume that he was important in his time as the pedestal mentions were great. We also see power in the hands of the sculptor and 'sneer of cold command' in the face of the statue. Overriding all of this though is the power of nature. The king is no longer alive and the desert has reclaimed his kingdom over time. Similarly, nature has destroyed his statue.

It could also be argued that the speaker who opens the poem has power. He relates the story to the reader. Or that the poet, Shelley, has the ultimate power as this sonnet has endured for years and, like the statue itself, has endured both nature and time.

## Despair

The language in 'Ozymandias' is straightforward. Shelley uses the storytelling of the image of the 'shattered' statue in the desert and the language is conversational. The speaker is that of the king whose words appear on the pedestal: 'Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!' The emphasis on his name in the poem's title, and in this declaration ('My name is Ozymandias'), suggests the king's sense of self-importance. It is only his name that has lasted, and even then, it is only a shadow of himself that has long since ceased to exist. It is almost a warning to leaders to remember that their power is fleeting.

The sand stretches away from the statue in all directions and the alliteration in the 'boundless and bare', 'lone and level', and 'vast and lonely' creates a sense of isolation. Although Ozymandias intends for us to 'despair' at the fact the statue is broken, the despair comes with the emptiness of the desert and the sense that all efforts are in vain.

## Creating Distance

The sense of distance of time and place is created in this poem through language. The framing device of the speaker and the traveller with his description of the statue creates a distance from the statue itself. The king depicted by the statue is then even further away as he has been dead long enough for the statue to fall and his kingdom to return to sand.

The word 'antique' in the first line adds to the feeling of passing time. It is an adjective usually reserved for particularly old and precious objects and seems unusual here describing a place. This creates a linguistic distance between the readers and the traveller.

**Make the**  
Compare  
Shelley or  
passing of  
'To Autumn'

Compare  
Shelley or  
power in

**Make the**  
Compare  
Shelley or  
power in

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## Questions

### Comprehension Questions

1. Who is the speaker in the poem?
2. What is in the desert?
3. Who was Ozymandias?
4. Where does the traveller come from?
5. What does he say about the sculptor?
6. What sort of ruler was Ozymandias?
7. What size is the statue?
8. What traditional poetic form is used in 'Ozymandias'?

### Deeper-thinking questions

1. What is the significance of the desert in this poem?
2. Why does Shelley use the sonnet form for this poem?
3. How does Shelley present power?
4. Who is more powerful – the artist or the dictator?

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### About the Author

- Born in Fiji in 1974 but was brought up in Abergavenny, South Wales
- Studied at New College, Oxford and the University of East Angles
- Has written several plays as well as poems and has worked as a TV presenter and journalist
- Is Professor of Creativity at Swansea University

### Contextual Information

- Refers to a specific battle in World War I which took place close to Mametz Wood in Northern France. Around 4,000 Welsh soldiers were killed and many of them were buried there.
- Owen Sheers visited Mametz Wood on the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle and near it had reverted to farming, the skeletons were still being used on a regular basis.
- While he was there, he saw a photograph of a recent discovery of twenty skeletons which inspired him to write the poem.

### Language Close-up

- List: 'A chit of bone, the china plate of a shoulder blade, the relic of a finger', etc. – shows how fragile the human body is.
- Alliteration: 'blown and broken bird's bones' – emphasises important words
- Metaphor: 'nesting in the guns' – the guns were hidden in the ground
- Simile: 'a hand working a foreign body to the surface of the skin' – suggests healing.

## Mametz Wood (2005) by Owen Sheers

### Brief Overview of Poem

The poem is set near Mametz Wood, many years after the battle, and begins with a description of farmers finding human remains when they are ploughing their fields. The poet refers back to the battle and then focuses on a specific discovery of a grave containing twenty soldiers. The skeletons have linked arms and look almost like they are dancing and singing. The poet emphasises the waste of young lives in the war.

### Key Words

- 'chit' – fragment
- 'relic' – an object surviving from an earlier time
- 'flint' – a hard grey rock
- 'sentinel' – a soldier whose job is to stand and keep watch
- 'mosaic' – a picture made from small pieces of stone, glass, etc.
- 'macabre' – a dance of death

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# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

The poem is divided into seven three-line stanzas. There is occasional rhyme. This stanzas could suggest the neat pattern of a ploughed field. The occasional longer line the same way that war disrupted the young lives of the dead soldiers.

## Passing of Time

The poem opens with the words 'For veterans' 'wards' which sets the theme of the poem. It was clearly a long time ago but it is still having an impact today. The farmers 'tend' the land which suggests that the land is healing after being ravaged by war. It is now the past kept alive as the bones of soldiers keep 'turning up under their plough'.

As the poem continues there are constant references to the past. It says 'even now' which suggests that Nature is still watching over the dead soldiers. It is 'reaching back into' memories of their sacrifice 'like a wound working a foreign body to the surface of the earth'. The act of remembering helps to bring healing to the land but there is also an implicit healing as well. One of the reasons that Owen Sheers wrote this poem was that he felt forgotten. The poem suggests that it is only when we acknowledge the past that we can move forward.

This phrase 'in boots that outlasted them' reminds the reader that the soldiers were still in their boots when they died. They have been buried a long time and it is 'only now' that their voices have 'slipped' into the present. This metaphor suggests that the soldiers are finally being given the recognition they deserve.

## Effects of War

The poem begins by explaining that the remains of soldiers are regularly found described as 'wasted young' which reminds us that they did not get a chance to live. The list of fragments that have been found: 'a chit of bone', 'the china plate of a shoulder', 'a finger'. The skull is particularly fragile and it is emphasised in the use of the metaphor 'egg'. This list of fragments shows us how vulnerable the soldiers were.

The inevitability of their deaths is shown in 'told to walk, not run, towards the trees'. The guns are hiding like nesting birds in the trees and there is no chance for them to escape.

The description of the twenty skeletons that are 'linked arm in arm' suggests a sense of comradeship in death as well as life. The war brought men together from many different backgrounds and they fought together and died together. The skeletons look like they are singing and dancing as their jaws have 'dropped open' and they have paused 'mid dance-macabre'. It is a graphic description that evokes the horrors of war but also shows the way that they supported one another.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how Owen Sheers' 'Mametz Wood' and Brooke's 'The Soldier' present the effects of war.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how Owen Sheers' 'Mametz Wood' and Brooke's 'The Soldier' present the effects of war.

## Comprehension Questions

1. What do the farmers find when they plough their fields?
2. What happened to the soldiers in this poem?
3. In the poem, how many skeletons were found?

## Deeper-thinking Questions

1. What is the effect of describing the skeletons as looking like they are singing?
2. Why do you think Owen Sheers wrote this poem?
3. How is the theme of the passing of time explored in this poem?

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## Excerpt from The Prelude (1850) by William Wordsworth

### Brief Overview of Poem

'The Prelude' is a long piece of work that details the poet's spiritual journey in relation to 'Man, Nature and Society'. This extract describes his childhood memories of skating on the lake. It is a very famous poem about nature that reveals how Wordsworth enjoyed playing outside in the countryside when he was a boy.

### Key Words

'frosty season' – winter  
'twilight' – early evening when it is just starting to get dark  
'summons' – call to go home  
'rapture' – extreme happiness  
'confederate' – shared  
'din' – loud noise  
'steep cliffs, mountains' – tall, jagged  
'tumult' – loud, confused noise  
'alien' – unusual, strange

### About the Poet

- Born in 1770
- Romantic poet
- Studied at Cambridge
- Lived most of his life in the Lake District
- Was a keen skater in his life
- Became a poet in 1843

### Contextual Information

- This is an extract from a much longer autobiographical poem (14 books) subtitled 'The Growth of a Poet's Mind'.
- When he was about eight, he moved to Hawkshead to go to grammar school. It was near Esthwaite, a small lake, and he may have learned to skate there. This may be the setting for the poem.
- Hare hunting was very popular at the time. It was a blood sport that involved hunting hares with packs of dogs.
- It was in the months after his death that the poem was written.

### Language Close-up

Onomatopoeia: 'hiss'd', 'tinkled' (sounds)  
Assonance: 'we hiss'd along the polish'd ice' (sounds)  
Simile: 'every icy crag tinkled like iron' (sounds), 'like an untir'd horse' – he is full of energy.  
Alliteration: 'all shod with steel' – emphasises the important words.  
Metaphor: 'evening died away' – refers to the passing of time or childhood.

# Analysis of Poem

## Structure and Form

This extract is part of a much longer autobiographical poem and so is not a complete incident from his childhood. It is written in iambic pentameter and is unrhymed, a form for this type of poem at the time that Wordsworth was writing. The speaker describes how much he enjoyed skating on the lake with his friends. It is really a look back in time to share the experience with him.

## Nature

The poem begins by setting a scene: 'And in the frosty season, when the sun / Vies with the snow for the day's dominion'. Further on, we are told that 'The village clock toll'd the precise time'. It is also described as a 'happy time' and a 'time of rapture' so the tone is positive.

The poem continues with 'We hiss'd along the polish'd ice' which uses onomatopoeia and assonance to recreate the sound of the boys skating on the lake. They are shouting to each other as they skate ('not a voice was idle') and this echoes around the mountains ('the precipices rang aloud'). It is as if all the natural world is sharing in their fun, and this idea is continued in the simile 'every icy crag / Tinkled like iron' which also uses onomatopoeia to recreate the sound.

The positive mood is continued with the references to the stars that 'were sparkling clear' and 'the orange sky' which shows that there was a beautiful sunset. However, a note of sadness is introduced with the 'distant hills' that 'sent an alien sound / of melancholy'. This can be interpreted in a number of ways but it could suggest that perfect times like this do not last and this idea is reinforced as the 'evening died away' which could be a metaphor for the passing of time as well as the more literal meaning of the end of the day.

## Childhood

The poem also has a theme of childhood. The boys are thoroughly enjoying their time on the ice but they must go home. The cottage windows 'blaz'd' which suggests warmth, but the speaker is not going home. Instead, he is 'proud and exulting, like an untir'd horse / That cares not for his home'. The speaker is excited and energetic he is.

There is a strong suggestion of friendship in the use of the pronoun 'we' and the phrase 'we confederate'. They are pretending to be hare hunting, which was a common sport at the time. They are shouting to each other and imitating the sounds of the hunt ('Pack loud bellowing') and 'the din' echoes around the mountains.

When considering this theme, the 'alien sound / of melancholy' and description of the end of childhood or even growing old and moving towards death.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how Wordsworth presents the scene in 'The Prelude' with this poem.

**Make the Link**  
Compare how Wordsworth presents winter in 'The Prelude' with this poem.

## Questions

### Comprehension Questions

1. Who is the speaker in the poem?
2. What season of the year is it?
3. What activity are the children enjoying?
4. List words/phrases that show the speaker's enjoyment.
5. What games are they playing?
6. What happens at the end of the poem?

### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. What sounds does Wordsworth use to create a vivid description of the scene?
2. Do you think the speaker is happy in the poem? Why or why not?
3. How is the theme of childhood presented in this poem?

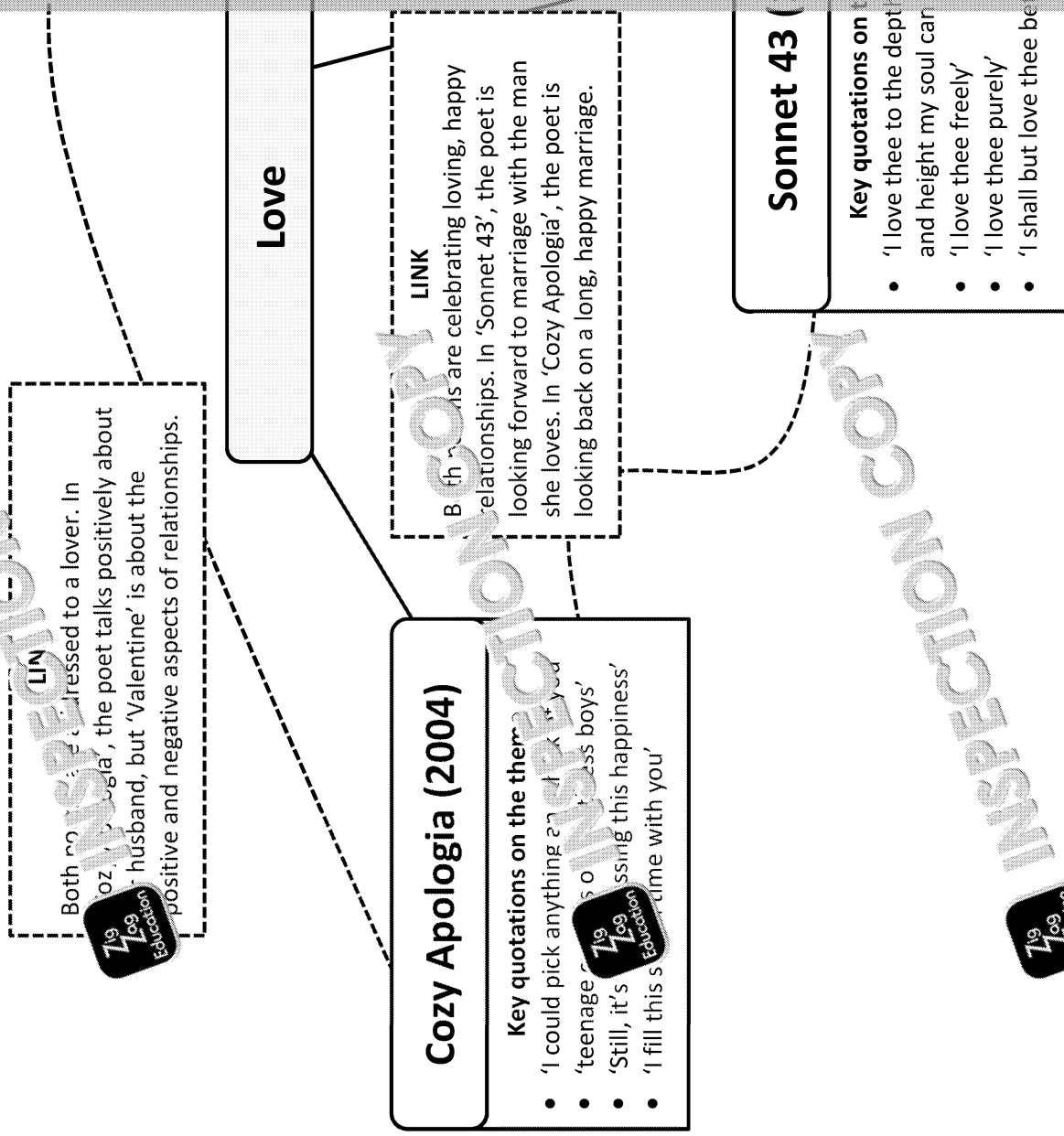
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## Key Themes

### Theme 1 – Love



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## Theme 2 – War

LINK

'The Soldier' presents an idealised view of war. 'Dulce et Decorum Est' presents the brutal realities of war.

### War

#### Dulce et Decorum Est (1920)

##### Key quotations on the theme

- 'like old beggars under sacks'
- 'He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning'
- 'the blood come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs, like the old
- 'The old

LINK

Both poems are about the tragic deaths of soldiers, but 'Dulce et Decorum Est' describes the soldiers' suffering in detail.

#### Mametz Wood

##### Key quotations on the theme

- 'The wasted young'
- 'a chit of bone', 'the reeling'
- 'told to walk, not run'
- 'their skeletons paused in the macabre'

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## Theme 3 – Nature

### LINK

The poems present a different view of nature, which is imperceptibly as it changes. It presents it as beautiful and peaceful. 'Death of a Naturalist' presents it as fascinating and threatening.

## Nature

### As Imperceptibly as Grief (1891)

#### Key quotations on the theme

- 'The Summer lapsed away'
- 'a Quietness distilled'
- 'The Dusk drew on like a heavy veil'
- 'our Summer light escape into the night'

### LINK

Both poems describe a similar time of year. They both present nature as beautiful and peaceful.

### To Autumn (1819)

#### Key quotations on the theme

- 'season of mists and mellow fruitfulness'
- 'to bend with apples the mossed turf'
- 'drows'd with the fume of poppies'
- 'gathering swallows twitter'

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LINK

Both poems are about autocratic, ruthless rulers. In 'Hawk Roosting', the hawk retains total control over his kingdom (for the moment) and in 'Ozymandias', the king has lost his power over his death.



Power

Hawk Roosting (1960)

Key quotations on the theme

- 'I sit in the top of the wood'
- 'Now I hold Creation in my foot'
- 'I kill where I please because it is all mine'
- 'I am going to keep this place for me'



LINK

In 'Hawk Roosting', the hawk has total control over his kingdom. In 'London', the people have no power and are controlled by those in authority.

London (1794)

Key quotations on the theme

- 'I wander thro' each charter'd street'
- 'In every cry of every Man'
- 'the mind-forg'd manacles I hear'
- 'And blights with plagues the living sould'



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## Theme 5 – Passing of Time

### LINK

Both of these poems look back towards the past. 'Mametz Wood' shows how the passing of time can bring healing when we look back. However, 'Ozymandias' suggests that the passing of time means that we can no longer find the past is no longer relevant.

## Passing of Time

### Mametz Wood (2005)

#### Key quotations on the theme

- 'For years afterwards the farmers found them'
- 'reaching back into itself for reminders of what had been'
- 'boots that had been there'
- 'have a sense of the past'

### LINK

'Mametz Wood' suggests that remembering the past can bring healing. 'To Autumn' is a poem about the cycle of life so it focuses on moving forward. This brings winter (death) but after that will come spring.

### To Autumn (1795)

#### Key quotations on the theme

- 'Thou watchest the last oozings'
- 'soft-dying day'
- 'full-grown lambs'
- 'gathering swallows twitter'

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## Analysis of Theme 1 – Love

### Poems on Mind Map

- 'Cozy Apologia'
- 'Valentine'
- 'Sonnet 43'

### Other Poems You Can Use

- 'The Manhunt'
- 'She Walks in Beauty'
- 'A Wife in London'
- 'Afternoons'

'Cozy Apologia', 'Valentine' and 'Sonnet 43' are all about romantic relationships. 'Cozy Apologia' is about love with no limits and it was written near the beginning of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's career. 'Valentine' compares well with 'Cozy Apologia' as both poems were written for a specific person. 'Cozy Apologia', Rita Dove is looking back on a long and happy marriage which seems to be a positive view of marriage even if it is less dramatic than Barrett Browning's appears to be. 'Valentine' also is about love, although Carol Ann Duffy explores both the positives and negatives of relationship. 'Sonnet 43' is about a lover, it is unlikely to be a specific person.

'A Wife in London' and 'The Manhunt' are both about the effects of war on romantic relationships. In 'A Wife in London', the husband has died so the wife is coping with grief and loss. In 'The Manhunt', the husband has survived but he has been injured and he is suffering from trauma. This makes it difficult for the wife to connect to him but it is a more hopeful poem as the wife is loving and patient and trying to help him.

'Afternoons' is also about love and marriage but it is a rather bleak poem that reflects negative attitudes towards romantic relationships. It links well with 'Valentine', which also is about love, and 'Cozy Apologia', which presents a much more positive view of relationships.

'She Walks in Beauty' is a poem about a woman that does not expect a response. It can be compared with 'Valentine' which expresses strong emotions, or 'Valentine' which takes a more positive view of love.

### Questions

#### Comprehension Questions

1. List the poems that are mainly positive about love
2. List the poems that are mainly negative about love.
3. What poems deal with the loss of love?

#### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. How does the context of each poem have an effect on the way that love is presented?
2. How do 'She Walks in Beauty' and 'Sonnet 43' present the adoration of another person?
3. How do 'Afternoons' and 'Cozy Apologia' present marriage?

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## Analysis of Theme 2 – War

### Poems on Mind Map

- 'The Soldier'
- 'Dulce et Decorum Est'
- 'Mametz Wood'

### Other Poems You Can Use

- 'The Manhunt'
- 'A Wife in London'
- 'Hawk Roosting'

'The Soldier', 'Dulce et Decorum Est' and 'Mametz Wood' focus on the deaths of soldiers. 'The Soldier' is a good poem to compare with 'Dulce et Decorum Est' as they present opposing views. 'The Soldier' links well with 'The Soldier' as they both consider the burial of soldiers, but 'The Soldier' has a more idealistic view whereas 'Mametz Wood' is much more realistic. 'Mametz Wood' can also link with 'Dulce et Decorum Est' as it does not present the suffering of the soldiers in such a graphic way.

'The Manhunt' and 'A Wife in London' are also about the effects of war, but the focus is different. 'The Manhunt' presents the wife trying to get close to her husband when he returns home, which is difficult because he is traumatised by his experiences, whereas the woman in 'A Wife in London' is waiting for her husband not returning at all.

'Hawk Roosting' is not primarily a war poem although some people interpret it that way. It is suitable to use for a more general question about the effects of conflict. It links well with 'The Soldier' as both poems describe the brutality of conflict. However, we see everything from the hawk's perspective rather than the victim.

### Questions

#### Comprehension Questions

1. What attitudes to war are shown in 'The Soldier' and 'Dulce et Decorum Est'?
2. What poems show the effects of war on soldiers?
3. What poems show the effects of war on people not involved in the fighting?

#### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. What poems try to persuade the reader to have an anti-war attitude?
2. How does the context of 'The Soldier' affect the way that war is presented?
3. How is suffering presented in 'Dulce et Decorum Est' and 'The Manhunt'?

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## Analysis of Theme 3 – Nature

### Poems on Mind Map

- 'As Imperceptibly as Grief'
- 'To Autumn'
- 'Death of a Naturalist'

### Other Poems You Can Use

- 'Prelude'
- 'Hawk Roosting'
- 'Ozymandias'

'As Imperceptibly as Grief' and 'To Autumn' focus on the beauty of nature. They also show the passing of the seasons and have connotations of death. 'Death of a Naturalist' is about nature with the passing of time but shows the transition from a child to an adult. The child sees nature as beautiful but the adult finds it threatening.

'Prelude' also links well with 'Death of a Naturalist' as the poet describes himself as a child. He is ice skating on the lake. It can also be compared with 'To Autumn' as one of the poems is about autumn. Both poems present nature in a positive way.

'Hawk Roosting' presents the brutal side of nature so it can be linked with 'Death of a Naturalist' as it shows that nature can sometimes be menacing. It could also be contrasted with 'To Autumn' and 'As Imperceptibly as Grief' which both present a much gentler view of nature.

'Ozymandias' is not primarily a nature poem but the desert is used to show the power of nature presented as being more powerful than humans. It can, therefore, be linked with 'To Autumn' and 'Death of a Naturalist' as they explore similar ideas.

### Questions

#### Comprehension Questions

1. What poems use nature to explore the passing of time?
2. What poems have references to death?
3. What poems show nature as sometimes being threatening?

#### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Why do you think so many of the nature poems explore the passing of time?
2. Why do you think so many of the nature poems have references to death?
3. How do 'To Autumn' and 'Prelude' present nature in a positive way?

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## Analysis of Theme 4 – Power

### Poems on Mind Map

- 'Ozymandias'
- 'London'
- 'Hawk Roosting'

### Other Poems You Can Use

- 'Living Space'
- 'Death of a Naturalist'
- 'Prelude'

'Ozymandias' is about an autocratic ruler who tries to extend his power after death. In fact, the statue now lies broken in the desert, which shows that power is not permanent. 'Hawk Roosting' presents another autocratic ruler who declares his intention of ruling forever, but the reader knows that the hawk will not live forever, so we know that power will end eventually as well. In contrast to these poems, 'London' describes people who are powerless. Their lives are dominated by institutions like the law and the Church and they have no choice in their own choices.

In 'Living Space', the people also have limited choices and lack power but the tone is different from 'London'. This is because they have moved to the city to find jobs and work, so they are living in cramped and difficult conditions but they are driven by hope, which gives them meaning to their circumstances.

'Death of a Naturalist' is about the power of nature so it can be linked with 'Hawk Roosting'. The poet seems to have power over nature when he collects frogs as a child but, when he grows up, nature can be very threatening and runs away from him. In 'Hawk Roosting', the hawk has power over everything around him and kills any creature it chooses.

'Prelude' shows nature having a powerful effect on the poet. This could be linked with 'Death of a Naturalist' which also shows nature having a powerful effect on the poet. However, 'Prelude' shows a positive effect, whereas 'Death of a Naturalist' describes both the positive and negative effects of nature.

### Questions

#### Comprehension Questions

1. What poems show that power does not last?
2. What poems present people who are powerless?
3. What poems show the power of nature?

#### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. What do the poems reveal about the negative aspects of power?
2. How do 'Living Space' and 'Prelude' present power in a positive way?
3. How do 'London' and 'Death of a Naturalist' present powerlessness?

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## Analysis of Theme 5 – Passing of Time

### Poems on Mind Map

- 'Ozymandias'
- 'Mametz Wood'
- 'To Autumn'

### Other Poems You Can Use

- 'As Imperceptibly as Grief'
- 'Death of a Naturalist'
- 'Afternoons'

'Ozymandias' is about a ruler who thought that he could almost make time stand still. He believed that his power and influence would last forever and he would always be remembered. In the poem his statue is broken down and is being covered by the desert sands. Time has passed. In contrast to this, 'Mametz Wood' shows how the passing of time can be a positive thing. The poet is concerned that the sacrifice of the soldiers at Mametz Wood had largely been forgotten. In the poem, he shows the skeletons being retrieved and the land being restored. This seems to suggest that the passing of time can be a positive thing and can bring healing. However, the passing of time is inevitable. We cannot stop time as it is part of the cycle of life. It can be negative or positive. The end of the poem shows the approach of winter but the next season is important and will eventually bring new life and another harvest.

'As Imperceptibly as Grief' links well with 'To Autumn' as it also explores the cycle of life moving away and also the day moving towards sunset. Both of the poems are about the passing of time. They explore ideas about death. Interpretations will vary on these two poems as some will see them as negative poems whereas others will want to emphasise their positive elements.

'Death of a Naturalist' also deals with the natural world but in this poem the passing of time has negative consequences. It links well with 'To Autumn' and 'As Imperceptibly as Grief' but it is more concerned with growing up and the loss of innocence rather than moving towards death.

'Afternoons' links well with 'Death of a Naturalist' and 'Ozymandias' as all three poems are about the passing of time. 'Afternoons' seems to suggest that growing up and getting older is a process that leads to living a very mundane life.

### Questions

#### Comprehension Questions

1. What poems show the passing of time to be a positive thing?
2. What poems show the passing of time to be negative?
3. What poems relate the passing of time to the natural world?

#### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. How does the context of 'To Autumn' affect the way that we view the poem?
2. Do you think we are meant to feel sympathy for the king in 'Ozymandias'?
3. How do 'Afternoons' and 'Death of a Naturalist' represent childhood and growing up?

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## Key Theme Answers

### Theme 1 – Love

#### Comprehension Questions

1. 'Cozy Apologia', 'Sonnet 43', 'A Wife in London', 'The Manhunt', 'She Walks in Beauty', 'Valentine', 'Afternoons'
2. 'Valentine', 'Afternoons'
3. 'A Wife in London', 'The Manhunt', 'Valentine', 'Afternoons'

#### Deeper-thinking Questions

##### Answers may include:

1.
  - 'Cozy Apologia' – This poem is rooted in the poet's personal experience of her husband and the successful relationships she had when she was a teenager.
  - 'Sonnet 43' – This poem is also rooted in personal experience. It expresses her feelings about to marry.
  - 'Valentine' – This poem was commissioned for a radio programme so, although based on poet's personal experiences, it is a more detached look at the positives of love relationships.
  - 'A Wife in London' – Hardy wanted to write a poem to show the effects of war. The poem describes a happy marriage that is destroyed when the husband is killed.
  - 'The Manhunt' – Armitage wanted to write a poem that showed the effects of war when they returned from fighting. This poem shows the way that it can affect a person's life.
  - 'Afternoons' – Larkin had a very cynical view of marriage and this is demonstrated in the poem.
  - 'She Walks in Beauty' – The poem is rooted in personal experience but it is a celebration of the woman that is typical of traditional love poetry of the time.
2. 'She Walks in Beauty' uses simile, alliteration and assonance to present an ideal woman Byron has just met, whereas 'Sonnet 43' uses metaphor and repetition to express passionate feelings for her future husband.
3. 'Afternoons' uses everyday language, sibilance and metaphor to explore ideas about marriage. Larkin presents it as unfulfilling and disappointing. 'Cozy Apologia' uses a more formal tone to present ideas about Rita Dove's long, happy marriage to Fred.

### Theme 2 – War

#### Comprehension Questions

1. 'The Soldier' is a very patriotic poem and suggests that war can be a glorious thing. It shows war as causing terrible suffering and seems to suggest that it should be avoided.
2. 'Dulce et Decorum Est', 'Mametz Wood', 'The Soldier', 'The Manhunt'
3. 'The Manhunt' and 'A Wife in London'

#### Deeper-thinking Questions

##### Answers may include:

1. 'Dulce et Decorum Est' is the only poem that directly addresses the reader about the horrors of war, but Owen was not unpatriotic and continued to fight. However, he was not being achieved and wanted the war to end as soon as possible. 'A Wife in London', 'The Manhunt' and 'Hawk Roosting' show the effects of war and conflict on people and their own mind. 'The Soldier' seems to be a pro-war poem.
2. 'The Soldier' was written early in the First World War when most people were positive about the war. It was before the big battles (when many lives were lost). Brooke was in service in Belgium but wasn't involved in any fighting before he died. This meant that he had no direct experience of war.
3. 'Dulce et Decorum Est' uses graphic language and imagery to describe the suffering in a gas attack. 'The Manhunt' uses metaphors to describe the long-term physical and psychological effects of a soldier who has returned home from war.

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### Theme 3 – Nature

#### Comprehension Questions

1. 'As Imperceptibly as Grief', 'To Autumn', 'Death of a Naturalist', 'Ozymandias'
2. 'As Imperceptibly as Grief', 'To Autumn', 'Hawk Roosting', 'Ozymandias'
3. 'Death of a Naturalist', 'Hawk Roosting'

#### Deeper-thinking Questions

##### Answers may include:

1. The day/night cycle and the rhythm of the seasons fit in well with ideas about which creatures are born and then die. It fits in well with ideas about human life.
2. The movement of autumn into winter seems to show the earth 'dying'. It is well with Christian beliefs about life after death. Also, nature has a cruel side animalising and eating other creatures.
3. 'To Autumn' uses sensory language to present the season as being beautiful. 'Hawk Roosting' uses sensory language (especially sounds) to present the winter scene as being beautiful.

### Theme 4 – Power

#### Comprehension Questions

1. 'Ozymandias', 'Death of a Naturalist'. It is possible to infer that meaning from 'Ozymandias'.
2. 'London', 'Death of a Naturalist', 'Living Space' (but they do have the power of nature).
3. 'Ozymandias', 'Death of a Naturalist', 'Hawk Roosting', 'Prelude'

#### Deeper-thinking Questions

##### Answers may include:

1. Power can be very one-sided. The people/creatures that have the power like Ozymandias have a good life but it is at the expense of oppressing others as can be seen in 'Death of a Naturalist'. Power does not last. Ozymandias died and has been largely forgotten and, although he had power, he will eventually die and be replaced by another hawk.
2. 'Living Space' shows the power of home through the symbolism of the eggs and shows the power of nature through the people and give them pleasure through language (especially through sounds).
3. 'London' shows the powerlessness of the people through the rigid structure of the city. 'Death of a Naturalist' shows powerlessness in the second stanza where the threatening adult frogs. This poem includes personification, onomatopoeia to present the frogs as unpleasant and powerful.

### Theme 5 – Passing of Time

#### Comprehension Questions

1. 'Mametz Wood', 'To Autumn' (possibly), 'As Imperceptibly as Grief' (possibly)
2. 'Ozymandias', 'Death of a Naturalist', 'Afternoons', 'To Autumn' (possibly), 'As Imperceptibly as Grief' (possibly)
3. All of these six poems – but some focus on it more than others.

#### Deeper-thinking Questions

##### Answers may include:

1. Keats probably knew that he was dying when he wrote this poem so for him 'To Autumn' is a poem about death. He was very young and had not had the opportunity to live a full life so this poem is a celebration of life in spite of his positive portrayal of the natural world.
2. Probably not. He is presented as a young and cruel so most readers are likely to see him as a young and cruel. He has been destroyed and has been forgotten with the passing of time.
3. Both poems show the world as innocent and carefree. In 'Death of a Naturalist' nature is presented as a cruel world. In 'Afternoons' children are presented as more demanding. In both poems the world is presented in a negative way. In 'Death of a Naturalist', the adult world is shown as a cruel world. In 'Afternoons' it is seen as being rather boring.

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# Exam Preparation

## General Revision Tips

- You need to revise all 18 poems as you don't know which poem you will be asked to write about.
- For Question 2, you need to revise a good selection of the poems in more detail so that you will have a wide choice and be able to write about one of them from memory.
- You need to revise content, language, structure and context for each poem.
- You also need to consider the different themes and think about links between poems.
- It is never too early to start your revision. It takes time to learn quotations.

## Learning Quotations

Some students learn quotations from all the poems; however, if you find this difficult, you can select a good selection of poems from across the different themes (e.g. war, love, nature) and focus on these. Some poems are particularly suitable to choose as they cover more than one theme (e.g. 'The Man He Killed' is both a war poem and a love poem, whereas 'Hawk Roosting' is about both nature and war, as is a war poem).

There are many techniques that you can use to learn quotations, but this is one you should use. It is a technique used to learn spellings.

- READ – read the quotation several times, preferably out loud
- COVER – cover it over with a piece of paper
- WRITE – try to write out the quotation
- CHECK – check whether you have written it correctly
- REPEAT – if it isn't correct, repeat the previous steps

You want to be as accurate as possible but don't worry too much if you make small mistakes. The aim is to memorise a good number of quotations so that you can use them as evidence in your writing.

## The Exam

- Question 1 – You have 20 minutes to write about the poem printed on the page. You need to analyse the poem and write about relevant context. It is a 'big picture' question. First think about the whole text before zooming in and working on details. You will not have time to write about everything so instead you will need to select the most relevant points. Make sure that you are covering all of the assessment objectives. (15 marks)
- Question 2 – You have 40 minutes to compare the first poem with a poem of your choice. You need to choose your second poem carefully as it must be relevant to the question and you will have to write about it from memory. The emphasis is on comparison. You can use the bullet points to help you cover all the relevant points. (20 marks)

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## Practice Exam Questions

1. How does Rita Dove write about love and marriage in 'Cozy Apologia'? Don't forget to consider context.
2. Choose one other poem in the anthology in which the poet also writes about love and marriage and 'Cozy Apologia'. Compare the ways that the poet presents love in both the poems.
  - Compare the content and the structure of the two poems.
  - Compare how the writers use language to create effects in the two poems (using appropriate terminology).
  - Compare the contexts of the two poems. You need to consider how context affects the ideas in the two poems.
3. How does Ted Hughes write about power in 'Hawk Roosting'? Don't forget to consider context.
4. Choose one other poem in the anthology in which the poet also writes about power and 'Hawk Roosting'. Compare the ways that the poet presents power in both poems. Remember to:
  - Compare the content and the structure of the two poems.
  - Compare how the writers use language to create effects in the two poems (using appropriate terminology).
  - Compare the contexts of the two poems. You need to consider how context affects the ideas in the two poems.
5. How does Rupert Brooke write about death in 'The Soldier'? Don't forget to consider context.
6. Choose one other poem in the anthology in which the poet also writes about death and 'The Soldier'. Compare the ways that the poet presents death in both poems. Remember to:
  - Compare the content and the structure of the two poems.
  - Compare how the writers use language to create effects in the two poems (using appropriate terminology).
  - Compare the contexts of the two poems. You need to consider how context affects the ideas in the two poems.
7. How does Seamus Heaney write about nature in 'Death of a Naturalist'? Don't forget to consider context.
8. Choose one other poem in the anthology in which the poet also writes about nature and 'Death of a Naturalist'. Compare the ways that the poet presents nature in both poems. Remember to:
  - Compare the content and the structure of the two poems.
  - Compare how the writers use language to create effects in the two poems (using appropriate terminology).
  - Compare the contexts of the two poems. You need to consider how context affects the ideas in the two poems.

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# Indicative Content for Exam Questions

1. The poem is 'Cozy Apologia' and the theme is love and marriage. You could include:
  - Written for her husband
  - Comment on the title
  - The use of the romantic image of the knight
  - The use of everyday objects
  - The comparison of her marriage with teenage relationships
  - The personification of the hurricane
2. Suitable poems for comparison: 'Sonnet 43', 'Valentine'. You could also use 'The Waste Land'. Use the bullet points in the question to help you structure your answer.
3. The poem is 'Hawk Roosting' and the theme is power. You could include:
  - Ted Hughes was fascinated with the natural world
  - Hughes grew up in the Yorkshire countryside
  - Dramatic monologue
  - Repetition of 'I', 'my', 'mine'
  - Simple, clinical language
  - Violent language
4. Suitable poems for comparison: 'Ozymandias', 'Death of a Naturalist', 'London', 'Space'. Use the bullet points in the question to help you structure your answer.
5. The poem is 'The Soldier' and the theme is death. You could include:
  - Written near the beginning of the First World War
  - Strongly patriotic tone
  - Sonnet
  - Repetition of 'England' and 'English'
  - Idealised view of death
  - Description of the English countryside
  - Brackets around the name
6. Suitable poems for comparison: 'Mametz Wood', 'Dulce et Decorum Est', 'Anthem for Doomed Youth', 'As Imperceptibly as Grief'. Use the bullet points in the question to help you structure your answer.
7. The poem is 'Death of a Naturalist' and the theme is nature. You could include:
  - Seamus Heaney grew up on a farm in Northern Ireland
  - Probably autobiographical
  - Contrast – experiencing nature as a child / an adult
  - Imagery
  - Use of alliteration and assonance
  - Military language
8. Suitable poems for comparison: 'The Prelude', 'The Wind', 'Hawk Roosting'. Use the bullet points in the question to help you structure your answer.

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## Sample Answers

1. Q1 How does Rita Dove write about love and marriage in 'Cozy Apologia'? [4 marks]  
references to context.

### Medium

In 'Cozy Apologia', Rita Dove writes about the love for her husband in 'defence'. They are working at home as a hurricane approaches. The poem consists of 10-line stanzas. This structure shows their strong love for each other.

In the first stanza, the poet sets the scene by mentioning ordinary things that remind her of her husband, such as 'this lamp' and 'the glossy blue'. These details suggest that their relationship is ordinary and boring but she then contrasts this with her description of her husband as her 'hero'. She uses the conventional idea of a knight in armour but makes it funny as she describes him on a horse with 'clippers'. This leaves us with the impression of a loving, caring relationship.

In the second stanza, she writes about memories of teenage romance as 'awkward reminiscences' and the boys are 'worthless'. They were 'like a dark and hollow center'. This imagery suggests superficial relationships from the time but had no lasting value.

In the final stanza, the writer uses personification to describe the hurricane as 'a storm', which suggests it is dangerous, but she feels safe at home with her husband. 'You're like a key in my hand / Aerie, I'm perched in mine'.

Rita Dove presents a realistic romantic relationship that is happy and secure.

### Commentary

This is a Band 3 response. It demonstrates a straightforward approach to the understanding of the key aspects of the poem. There is some comment on language and structure. It demonstrates some understanding of the relationships between texts and the context in which they were written.

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**High**

In 'Cozy Apologia', Rita Dove writes about her successful relationship and contrasts it with unsatisfactory romantic relationships that she experienced as a teenager. The couple are both working from home as Hurricane Florence approaches. The hurricane can be seen as a metaphor for how they are able to withstand the storm.

The poem is organised into three stanzas. It is mainly rhymed, but at the end of the poem the rhyme scheme changes to alternate lines rhyming. This could reflect the couple's love for one another, and the change in rhyme scheme demonstrates the disruption of the hurricane.

The poet presents her husband as a knight 'astride a dappled mare glinting' but this conventional romantic image is injected with humour in a very personal way with 'furrowed brow' and 'one eye smiling' and 'enemy'. This suggests a very ordinary person, rather than a hero, but someone who is willing to come to her aid if she is in need.

She compares her marriage with the inadequate relationships with which she was involved with when she was younger. The adjective 'worthless' suggests that these relationships were meaningless and this is reinforced in the simile 'thin as licorice with a dark and hollow center.' This suggests that she now realises that these relationships were very superficial.

The poem includes references to everyday objects like 'twin desks, cluttered with books' to create a sense of domestic comfort, and the 'twin desks' implies that they appear to be working in separate rooms. In contrast, the hurricane is personified as 'cussing up a storm'. The hurricane is personified which is threatening, but the poet feels safe at home with her husband as he is 'perched in mine'. This metaphor suggests birds sheltering in their nests.

The poem presents a very positive view of love and marriage. Their relationship is 'of the Divine' but this does not seem to be important to them. The poet describes her husband as 'cosy defence' and in the last stanza the poet poses the rhetorical question 'ordinary ever been news?' She explains that she is 'in content' and the final line, 'I fill this stolen time with you'.

**Commentary**

This is a Level 5 response. It shows a perceptive understanding of the text and refers to specific details including quotations. There is perceptive analysis of language and understanding of the relationship between the poem and the context in which it was written.

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2. Q2 Choose one other poem in the anthology in which the poet also writes about love and 'Cozy Apologia'. Compare the ways that the poet presents love in both poems. Remember to:
- Compare the content and the structure of the two poems.
  - Compare how the writers use language to create effects in the two poems (using appropriate terminology).
  - Compare the contexts of the two poems. You need to consider how context affects the ideas in the two poems.

### Medium

'Cozy Apologia' and 'Valentine' are both about love, but 'Valentine' is a poem by Carol Ann Duffy. 'Apologia' is about Rita Dove's love for her husband, who is addressed to a lover. 'Cozy Apologia' has regular stanzas and rhyme, showing a long-term relationship, but 'Valentine' is made up of stanzas of different lengths and rhyme so this might show a more casual attitude towards relationships.

In 'Valentine', the speaker rejects traditional romantic gifts in 'Not a rose' and instead gives her lover an onion. Most of the poem is an extended metaphor of an onion to talk about romantic love. 'It promises light', showing that love can also 'blind you with tears', which shows that love can be painful. The poet uses the image of a knight on a white charger but she makes her husband as the knight: 'There you'll be, with furrowed brow / And me free'. This suggests that she can rely on her husband at all times.

In 'Cozy Apologia', she always writes about her marriage in a positive way. 'At desks' that implies a connection and they are at home together. In contrast to the negatives as well as the positives in 'Valentine'. This is shown in 'possessive and faithful' and in 'Lethal' and 'cling to your knife' which could be dangerous.

'Cozy Apologia' was written when Hurricane Floyd was approaching. Rita Dove was at home with her husband and she started to think about love. She compares those boys with her husband and realises that the relationship with her husband is much more meaningful. In contrast to this, 'Valentine' was written when the poet was asked to write an original poem for Valentine's Day, so it is much less personal.

### Commentary

This is a Band 3 response. There is a very good discussion of similarities and differences in the understanding of key aspects of the texts and comments on language and structure. Some understanding of the contexts in which both the texts were written.

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**High**

Both 'Cozy Apologia' and 'Valentine' reject traditional images of romance. Towards relationships are very different. Rita Dove addresses 'Cozy Apologia' twenty years, Fred, and describes a deep, contented love which may not be the perception of romance but is, nevertheless, very satisfying and makes a contrast to this, Carol Ann Duffy presents a relationship which can be also cause pain and is unlikely to last forever.

The structure of the poems demonstrates the different attitudes towards love. 'Apollonius' has regular stanzas and a rhyme scheme which might suggest a more formal attitude towards relationships. 'Valentine' has irregular stanzas and is written in free verse so this might suggest a more open attitude towards relationships.

Both of the poems are critical of traditional romantic images. In 'Valence' traditional romantic gifts in 'Not a red rose or a satin heart' and 'Not a diamond' and instead offers her lover an onion. This is then used as an extended metaphor for a concept of romantic love. 'It promises light', demonstrating that love can be painful. Furthermore, 'It promises to blind you with tears', which shows that love can be painful. Furthermore, as 'Lethal' and 'Its scent will cling to your fingers' which has connotations of something that you can't escape from. Similarly, in 'Cozy Apologia', Rita Dove subverts the traditional romantic image of a knight on a white charger but she makes it amusing by presenting the knight as the knight: 'There you'll be, with furrowed brow', And chain mail glistening. This suggests an endearing rather than a threatening figure but also someone who is not ideal.

In 'Cozy Apologies' the poet always writes about her marriage in a positive way. The poet emphasizes connection and they are both working at home. Her use of the metaphor 'perched in mine' suggests birds sheltering in a nest. In contrast, Duffy writes about the negatives in relationships as well as the positives. She uses antithesis in 'possessive and faithful' to show that loving relationships can be both. The adjective 'fierce' in 'fierce kiss' can suggest both passion and violence.

The contexts in which the two poems were written are also very different. 'The Poet' is a personal poem that was written when Rita Dove was at home with her family during an approaching hurricane. She reflects on her marriage and realises that their relationship even though it may not conform to romantic norms. In contrast, 'The Poet' was written for a radio programme when the poet was asked to write an 'Open Day'. This makes the poem much less personal and more of a comment in general.

## Commentary

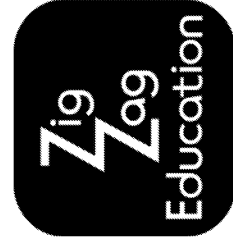
This is a 5 response. There is a wide-ranging discussion of the similarities perceived in the understanding of the texts and includes detailed analysis of language. The response shows assured understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they are written.

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About the Poet



Contextual Information

Language Close-up



Brief Overview of Poem

Key Words

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LINK

**[THEME]:**

**[POEM]:**  
Key quotations on the theme

**[POEM]:**  
Key quotations on the theme

LINK



# Answers

## ***The Manhunt (2008), Simon Armitage***

### **Comprehension Questions**

1. The soldier's wife is the narrator (Laura Beddoes)
2. The soldier (Eddie Beddoes) has suffered horrific physical injuries. He is also suffering from a stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of what he saw and experienced whilst in Bosnia. He has been talking to his wife about his suffering and his experiences and has 'shut down' from his experiences.
3. There are physical injuries:  
Scarred face ('the face that he ran through his face'); shattered jaw ('the jaw'); shattered collar bone ('the damaged porcelain collar bone'); fractured shoulder ('the broken ribs'); punctured lung ('the parachute silk of his punctured lung'); broken ribs ('the broken ribs'); shrapnel debris in his chest ('the foetus of metal beneath his chest').  
There are also mental and psychological injuries:  
Emotional suffering ('his grazed heart'); panic attacks and an emotional unexploded mine buried deep in his mind').

### **Deeper-thinking Questions**

1. Answers might include:
  - It might at first suggest the poem is going to be about a police chase for a criminal.
  - It might initially suggest that the poem will have a threatening or dangerous tone.
  - However, on further reading, it might suggest how the wife (Laura Beddoes) is trying to piece her husband who has changed because of his experiences.
  - There might be some ambiguity in the title. Perhaps it might be implying that the man he once was before he left for war.
2. Answers might include:
  - The rhythm is slow and plodding and this might be the result of the enjambement in the stanzas. This might reflect the slow pace of time it will take the soldier to heal and his emotional journey will also be slow and painstaking. The image of 'climb the ribs' emphasises that the healing process will only work one step at a time.
  - The poem is broken and fragmented as created by the irregular rhyme scheme. This might suggest the feelings of the wife as she tenderly tries to piece her husband back together.
3. Answers might include:
  - His face might be permanently scarred and disfigured by injury.
  - His face might be frozen and numb with pain.
  - It might suggest how he has shed many tears because of his suffering and the psychological scars that are 'frozen' and hard to remove.
  - It might suggest some long-term hope for the future because something might happen perhaps he will heal in time and the emotional scars will lessen and fade.
4. Answers might include:
  - A comment on the verb 'sweating'. This suggests his stress and tension and how he relives the war.
  - The metaphor 'unexploded mine' might suggest a time bomb ticking away and so unpredictable that it could explode at any minute. This suggests the danger with anger and pain at any time.
5. Answers might include:
  - The opening 'after passionate nights and intimate days' suggests their closeness before the war.
  - The verbs, such as 'trace', 'explore', 'handle and hold', 'mend', 'bind', 'climb' and 'feel' suggest her patience and unswerving devotion to her husband.
  - The verbs suggest slow, careful handling as if she is scared about hurting him.
  - The ambiguity of the ending, 'Then, and only then, did I come close'.

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## Sonnet 43 (1850), Elizabeth Barrett Browning

### Comprehension Questions

1. It is written by a first-person narrator and this might create a more intimate feel. The fact that it is indeed autobiographical might make it seem more heartfelt and genuine.
2. It is not a modern poem and was published in approximately 1850. Some of the language is archaic (old-fashioned) and some key words are capitalised to suggest how important the ideals and values: 'Being', 'Ideal', 'Grace', 'Right' and 'Heaven'.
3. She loves him in eight different ways: she loves him completely; she loves him constantly; she loves him freely; she loves him purely; she loves him in a powerful way; she loves him in all different moods: she will love him even after she has died.
4. 'I love thee' is repeated eight times to stress the extent of her devotion, the fact that her love is enduring and never-ending.

### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers might include:
  - Iambic pentameter has five stressed and five unstressed syllables in each line.
  - This might suggest how steady, predictable and reassuring her love is.
  - It might be used to reflect the constant and repetitive beat of her heart, the constant steadfastness of her love.
2. Answers might include:
  - The use of the opening question might engage the reader. What will her answer be?
  - It might make the reader question his/her own concepts of love and the nature of love.
  - Love is such a universal concept the reader at once feels a connection with it.
3. Answers might include:
  - She loves him by day and night.
  - She loves him constantly, at all times of the day.
  - Her feelings for him never change.
  - Perhaps she loves him in all lights?
4. Answers might include:
  - Readers might consider this as a negative/depressing or positive/uplifting poem.
  - Perhaps she considers this to be the most significant way in which to love someone – to love someone so deeply that it will last for eternity and so would continue for ever.
  - Perhaps she believes that the strength of her love can defeat even death.
5. Answers might include:
  - She can also love him in an ordinary, day-to-day way.
  - This type of love might be 'quiet' and understated but it is valid and not less than the other type of love she also feels for him.

## London (1794), William Blake

### Comprehension Questions

1. The speaker is wandering through the streets of London.
2. At midnight.
3. Answer could include: chimney-sweeper, soldier, harlot, new-born infant.
4. Man – cry; infant – cry of fear; chimney-sweeper – cry; hapless soldier – sigh; new-born infant – tear.
5. The River Thames.
6. 'chartered' and 'mark'
7. The palace.
8. The harlot speaks of the children.
9. The first line suggests that even the hopeful image of a marriage is plagued by the harsh reality of London.
10. First person helps the reader to share Blake's frustration and anger. He is expressing his own opinions about the state of the city and the living conditions he sees around him.
11. This is not a modern picture of London. Archaic vocabulary is used – 'harlot', 'charter'd', 'every cry'.
12. 'Charter'd', 'every cry'.

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### Deeper-thinking Questions

- Answers might include:
  - The speaker has the power to hold the reader and give their point of view.
  - The people in the palace have the power over the members of the lower classes.
  - The mind has the ultimate power and we entrap ourselves with our own thoughts.
  - The city has the power.
  - The law has the power owning every street.
- Answers might include:
  - Child labour still exists in some parts of the world.
  - We still live with an unfair society, with huge wealth at one end of the scale.
  - We have mapped and 'claimed' most of the known world, so it could stretch on for ever and far beyond the London of the poem.
- Answers might include:
  - He suggests that life is harsh and difficult.
  - He implies that we are imprisoned by our own invented rules within society.
  - He says that all life is suffering.
- Answers might include:
  - He implies that the church is corrupt.
  - He suggests that there is no charity being offered to the impoverished members of society.
  - He presents a 'black'ning Church' suggesting that Christianity might have been lost and now is becoming tarnished and unpleasant.
- Answers might include:
  - People's minds are restricted and trapped as the city has taken away their freedom.
  - People trap themselves with their own thinking.
- Answers might include:
  - The church symbolises restriction and entrapment.
  - The church / Religion is oblivious to the suffering of the poor.
  - The money spent on the church fees should be redirected to help the less fortunate.
  - The soot from the chimneys is blackening the walls of the church.
  - The corruption of the church.
  - The church may have started off with good intentions but has become 'black'.
- Answers might include:
  - The ruling classes are oblivious to the suffering of the lower classes and are trapped in their own 'walls' in their own enclosed world.
  - Could be a reference to the French Revolution.
  - Unless living conditions change, the people of London could rise up against the ruling classes as happened in France.
- Answers might include:
  - Child labour and exploitation are still in existence in some parts of the world.
  - Inequality still exists. We still see discrepancies in the distribution of wealth and extreme poverty.
- Answers might include:
  - Songs of Experience*
  - As the title suggests, *Songs of Innocence* is about the innocence of childhood and has a positive and uplifting tone. In contrast *Songs of Experience* depicts the harshness of industrialised life and how it affects people.

### The Soldier (1915), Rupert Brooke Comprehension Questions

- A soldier (possibly the poet) writing before he went off to war.
- The soldier is referring to his body being buried abroad if he is killed in battle. He is referring to the ground where he is buried. This is presumably because he is English and has never been abroad.
- The soldier seems to be saying that his death would 'give back' to the country that he is fighting for.
- This poem presents a very idealised view of England. He sees his country as a beautiful and peaceful place.

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### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers may include: This poem was written near the beginning of the war and was encouraged to think positively about fighting for one's country. Like most young men, he was very naïve when he volunteered to fight and had no idea of what it would be like.
2. Answers may include: It is difficult to know as Brooke died in 1915 before the end of the First World War, but many soldiers did become disillusioned as they did not see the end and the death toll was very high.
3. Answers may include: Attitudes to war have changed since the First World War and many other soldiers returned with physical and mental trauma. We are now more aware of the realities of war because of television and the Internet, and are more inclined to see war as a terrible thing.

### *She Walks in Beauty (1815), Lord Byron*

#### Comprehension Questions

1. It is an idealised portrait of a woman that Byron met.
2. Eyes, hair, face, cheek, brow.
3. The contrasts are between light and dark, e.g. 'dark and bright'. Linked to the day and night, e.g. 'tender light' / 'gaudy day'.

#### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers may include: It is a broadly typical Romantic poem because it uses a lot of comparisons with nature. It also talks about emotion rather than logic and order. However, most Romantic poets admired the countryside during the daytime and most people prefer the night-time in this poem.
2. Answers may include: It could be simply because she is wearing a sparkling brooch. He was thinking about the infinity and mystery of space. This woman had beauty that could not be compared to earthly things.
3. Answers may include: Most people would say that the two things are not comparable. However, not very important. Instead, Byron is describing a perfect woman.

### *Living Space (1979), Sujat Dharker*

#### Comprehension Questions

1. There are not enough straight lines. This is because the homes have been made of mud-brick.
2. Some eggs.
3. White, bright, light.

#### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers may include: Possibly ironical. There is not much space. Possibly emotional. The poem is about the lives of the poor.
2. Answers may include: Uneven lines. Free verse. Enjambment. Different number of syllables. Reflects the unstable buildings – shows how insecure the lives of the occupants are. Could collapse at any minute.
3. Answers may include: Symbol of the eggs, which are unbroken in spite of the poverty.

### *As Imperceptibly as Grief (1891), Emily Dickinson*

#### Comprehension Questions

1. The end of summer.
2. Reflective, thoughtful.
3. For example: Grief, beautiful, beautiful. She wants to emphasise these words.

#### Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers may include: 'Grief', 'The Dusk drew earlier in', 'Into the Beautiful'. These words have deeper meanings and all of these words and phrases can be interpreted in different ways.
2. Answers may include: You might find the poem a bit depressing as it is about death, but the poem finishes with the summer making her 'light escape' and the last line suggests a positive ending. This could be because of the glorious colours of the autumn. Dickinson's belief in life after death.

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- Answers may include: Grace (the love that God has for us even though we do not deserve it) is a central concept in the Protestant tradition that Dickinson grew up in. However, she also suggests that she finds God a bit frightening, though she does also describe God as a comfort to reflect her struggles with personal faith though there is also reference to heaven which suggests that she had a firm belief in life after death.

### ***Cozy Apologia (2004), Rita Dove***

#### **Comprehension Questions**

- Lamp, pen, compact disc, fax machine, desks, computers, etc.
- The 'knight in shining armor' is a popular romantic image.
- The husband is not a knight.
- Having a relationship with teenage boys rather than real relationships.
- Their relationship is not wildly romantic.

#### **Deeper-thinking Questions**

- Answers may include: They are cut off from the rest of the world by the apartment building which reminds her about how safe and secure she feels with her husband.
- Answers may include: An apologia is a formal written defence of one's opinion or actions. She is not at the highs or lows of relationships but she wants to explain that she is very happy in the middle. The word 'cozy' (cosy) suggests something very warm and comfortable.
- Answers may include: Because their relationship is very ordinary when you compare it to the romantic ideal about love and romance.

### ***Valentine (1993), Carol Ann Duffy***

#### **Comprehension Questions**

- Red rose, satin heart, cute card, kissogram.
- Onions have a brown outer layer. The inside is round and creamy-white which is the heart.
- Onions have a very strong smell when you cut them. It can irritate your eyes.
- The onion rings that you can cut when you are chopping it.

#### **Deeper-thinking Questions**

- Answers may include: The poem is saying that there is a big difference between the ideal of love presented in films/books/songs and real life. Real relationships can be much more complicated.
- Answers may include: This emphasises these lines. They really stand out and are important about them.
- Answers may include: These lines can be interpreted in more than one way. It suggests that romantic love stay with you for a long time – but that can be a positive thing or a negative thing.

### ***A Wife in London (1899), Thomas Hardy***

#### **Comprehension Questions**

- The fog.
- He has been killed in the war.
- A letter from her dead husband.

#### **Deeper-thinking Questions**

- Answers may include: 'The fog is cold' suggests something that is faint and lacks warmth. The husband's death is a cold reality.
- Answers may include: This shows that the woman is confused and is finding it difficult to understand the telegram.
- Answers may include: There can be different opinions as we are not told about the woman's feelings. She is glad to have a last letter from him and to be reassured of his love, but it is also more painful as it is a vivid reminder of what she has lost.

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## ***Death of a Naturalist (1966), Seamus Heaney***

### **Comprehension Questions**

1. Bluebottles, dragonflies, butterflies.
2. Frogspawn.
3. It develops into tadpoles and then into small frogs.
4. He finds the adult frogs at the pond very threatening. He thinks they may wait for some of their frogspawn.

### **Deeper-thinking Questions**

1. Answers may include: They suggest rot, decay and a rather unpleasant smell.
2. Answers may include: Onomatopoeia. The sounds are very harsh and it suggests an unpleasant experience.
3. Answers may include: Onomatopoeia – ‘slap’, ‘plop’. ‘bass chorus’ – indicates a united group. ‘farting’ – is an unpleasant sound. It all adds up to an impression of something threatening him.
4. Answers may include: They are ‘kings’ because they seem more powerful than the tadpoles of their own small world at the pond. ‘Slime’ adds to the unpleasant description.

## ***Hawk Roosting (1960), Ted Hughes***

### **Comprehension Questions**

1. The hawk.
2. Not very much. The hawk is sitting and reflecting on his life and how he controls it.
3. ‘perfect kills’, ‘I kill where I please’, ‘tearing off heads’, ‘allotment of death’

### **Deeper-thinking Questions**

1. Answers may include: These words emphasise the absolute power of the hawk. He is in control.
2. Answers may include: It is presented through the first person point of view of the hawk, who is very confident. He likes to control everything and has no concern for any other creature. He is very organised to make his life better and has no intention of allowing anything to happen to him.
3. Answers may include: The term ‘hawk’ is sometimes used to describe leaders who are very powerful and forceful. The poem can be seen as an extended metaphor for a leader who is willing to use extreme violence against any enemies.

## ***To Autumn (1820), John Keats***

### **Comprehension Questions**

1. Grapes (vines), apples, gourds, hazelnuts.
2. Onomatopoeia. The sound of the word suggests that something is being squeezed.
3. Gnats, lambs, hedge-crickets, robin (red-breast), swallows.

### **Deeper-thinking Questions**

1. Sight – different examples of ripe fruit, e.g. apples, fields, the sunset, cider being pressed.  
Hearing – gnats, lambs, hedge-crickets, robin, swallows, etc.  
Smell – ‘fume of poppies’  
Touch – ‘clammy cells’  
Taste – ‘sweet kernel’  
It brings the description alive and helps the reader to experience the poet’s feelings more effectively.
2. The ‘fruit’ of autumn would have been born in the spring so it emphasises the cycle of life.
3. The references to death are mainly in the final stanza because it is describing the end of life, and the ‘rosy hue’ of the sunset supports this idea. The ‘wailful choir’ of the funeral especially as they ‘mourn’. The ‘gathering swallows’ are preparing to leave that Keats is preparing to die.

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## ***Afternoons (1964), Philip Larkin***

### **Comprehension Questions**

1. End of summer – probably about September.
2. September is a time of change with the leaves beginning to fall. This suggests that summer has changed. It is also a sign that winter is approaching which suggests that the beauty of summer is fleeting.
3. In a children's playground in a park.

### **Deeper-thinking Questions**

1. Answers may include: Wedding album, which is usually seen as an important souvenir, suggests that they are disordered, the televisions which seems to indicate that the past does not match up to the present and wedding.
2. Answers may include: Yes – growing up is seen as bringing disillusionment and a loss of innocence. No – it is a realistic poem that shows that things change as you get older.
3. Answers may include: Larkin never married so he is looking at marriage and family life from a distance. He describes women who are no longer young and beautiful who are preoccupied with children, and husbands who are busy working. He considers how young life can be unfulfilling. However, (probably because he has never experienced it) he only seems blind to the fact that marriage and family life can be loving and happy.

## ***Dulce et Decorum Est (1920), Wilfred Owen***

### **Comprehension Questions**

1. They are exhausted. Some of them are wounded and some of them are ill.
2. There is a gas attack so they rush to put on gas masks. One of the soldiers fails to get a mask on in time.
3. The gas suffocates him and he suffers terribly as he dies. The other soldiers try to help him but are too exhausted.

### **Deeper-thinking Questions**

1. Answers may include: The poet wanted to expose the reality of war and the suffering that it caused.
2. Answers may include: Many people were shocked and surprised and it caused a lot of controversy. Others thought it was unpatriotic.
3. Answers may include: People are probably still quite shocked by this poem because it was first published in 1920. This is because we are much more familiar with the horrors of war through graphic videos on television and the Internet.

## ***Ozymandias (1818), Percy Bysshe Shelley***

### **Comprehension Questions**

1. There are effectively two speakers: the 'I' of the opening phrase and also the 'traveller' who tells the story.
2. The broken statue of a king is in the desert. The head has been toppled from the body, suggesting that the king was overthrown, or that time and nature have led to the statue's destruction.
3. He was a king. The remains of his statue 'stand' in the desert.
4. All we know about the traveller is that he comes from, or has recently travelled from, the sea.
5. He says the sculptor must have made a true depiction of the king in his work, 'sneer of cold command' which seems convincing and real.
6. The speaker implies that Ozymandias must have been cruel. The words 'from his vast fane' imply that his use of power was tyrannical.
7. The statue is 'colossal' and 'majestic', suggesting that the king was full of self-importance.
8. 'Ozymandias' is a name that is no longer used, suggesting that the king's power is now forgotten.

### **Deeper-thinking Questions**

1. Answers might include:
  - It represents the passage of time.
  - It shows how nature, ultimately, is more powerful than man – all of Ozymandias' power is destroyed by nature.
  - It is an arid, harsh place, perhaps reflecting the king's cruel authority.

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2. Answers might include:
  - The sonnet form is traditional and, unlike the statue, has stood the test of time.
  - The sonnet uses iambic pentameter, which might suggest the steady passage of time.
3. Answers might include:
  - Power is presented as something that is abused. The king has ruled through fear.
  - Power is presented as transient. Despite the 'works' that Ozymandias has made, he is now seen but desert.
  - Nature is ultimately more powerful than man. Ozymandias' statue has been destroyed long after he is gone.
  - There is a futility in man's pursuit of power as nothing lasts.
4. Answers might include:
  - The artist is more powerful because paintings, sculptures, music and poetry can last.
  - The dictator is more powerful because he/she can order books to be burnt and people to be silenced.
  - The dictator is more powerful because they can demand the creation of statues depicting themselves.
  - The artist is more powerful because they can undermine the dictator in their work.
  - Neither the dictator nor the artist holds any real power. Nature and time are more powerful.

### ***Mametz Wood (2005), Owen Sheers***

#### **Comprehension Questions**

1. The remains of dead soldiers.
2. They walked into an ambush and thousands were killed.
3. Twenty.

#### **Deeper-thinking Questions**

1. Answers may include: It suggests their comradeship and reminds us that they enjoyed life before they were killed. It emphasises the tragic nature of their sacrifice.
2. Answers may include: The poet wanted people to remember the young men who died. They did not want to be forgotten. It is possible that the poet was inclined to think that war is a glorious thing.
3. Answers may include: Ideas about the need to remember the past and learn from it. The poem can bring healing, etc.

### ***Excerpt from The Prelude (1850), William Wordsworth***

#### **Comprehension Questions**

1. The poet. This is an autobiographical poem and he is writing about his childhood.
2. Winter.
3. Ice skating on the lake.
4. 'happy times', 'rapture', 'proud and exulting'
5. Imaginative games. They are pretending to be taking part in a hunt.
6. It gets dark so they will have to go home.

#### **Deeper-thinking Questions**

1. Answers may include: He hears the village clock, 'clear and loud... toll'd six'. The boys skate 'hiss'd' on the ice. The boys imitate the sounds of the hunt, 'resounding bellow'. The noise echoed around the mountains, 'the precipices rang all round'. There is an 'alien sound of melancholy' from the distant hills.
2. Answers may include: It is a poem that is mainly positive but towards the end it is because it is getting dark and the fun will have to end. It could also be interpreted as the end of childhood and loss of innocence.
3. Answers may include: Ideas about it being enjoyable to be outside in the countryside. The landscape being beautiful and impressive, etc.

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