

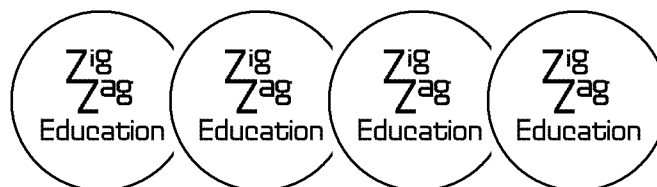
# Carol Ann Duffy: The World's Wife

## Teaching Pack



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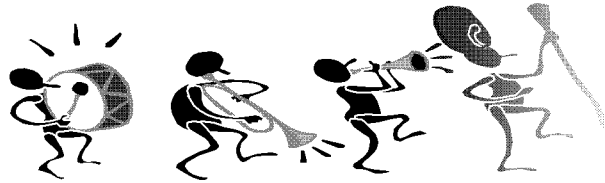


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Overall, what did you think about this resource? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I particularly like this resource because... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How does it help you or your students? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

It is better than some other resources because... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What might you say to a colleague in a neighbouring school to persuade them to use it? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

How well does it match your specification (& which specification is this)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other comments, suggestions for improvements, errors found (please give page number) \_\_\_\_\_

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# Teacher's Introduction

This resource that is intended to support teachers and students working with it and is specifically linked to the new AQA A AS specification to be taught from 2016.

The resource deliberately avoids the standard poem-by-poem approach that makes teaching and learning tedious and predictable: students will eventually have to develop their own approach when responding to the poems in the exams, so the resource encourages students to learn and teachers to teach in a variety of different styles, the resource is designed to appeal to as wide a variety of teachers and learners as possible, including those who can work through independently and during a teacher's absence.

Most teachers would argue that it is both unnecessary and unwise to try to create a collection such as this. Although one question will almost certainly name a poem, a candidate still has the option of another question if they feel unfamiliar with that poem; that reason, this resource deals with twenty of the twenty-nine poems, aiming to provide a broad cross-section of Duffy's themes, styles and concerns.

The poems and themes covered by the resource are:

## Life Changes

- *Little Red-Cap*
- *Penelope*
- *Mrs Lazarus*
- *Mrs Tiresias*

## Love

- *Anne Hathaway*
- *Queen Kong*
- *Demeter*

## Disdain

- *Mrs Icarus*
- *Mrs Aesop*
- *Mrs Sisyphus*
- *Frau Freud*

## Victims

- *Mrs Quasimodo*
- *Thetis*
- *The Devil's Wife*

## Religion

- *Pilate's Wife*
- *Pope Joan*
- *Queen Herod*

## Greed

- *Mrs Midas*
- *Salome*
- *Mrs Faust*

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## Teacher's Notes

The guide can essentially be used as a scheme of work: there is an introduction to familiarise themselves with the whole text and basic concepts of writing from a poet's perspective. From there on, sections of the scheme deal with groups of poems and tasks and areas of focus on each. Teachers will also find that there is a system that they should follow each section through in the right order: from essay planning, to producing a complete response under timed conditions. For this reason, the guide is modelled around practice exam questions.

Alternatively – as English teachers often do – teachers can dip into this guide with the resources on offer.

The guide is basically structured as follows:

### Teacher's Notes

Guidance for teachers on ways in which the resources can be used for that purpose.

### The Basics

A potted guide to the poems covered in that section, with a summary and explanation.

### Student Resources

Worksheets, tasks and exemplar questions that can be copied for students or used during and between lessons.

Page numbers are referred to on pages 7-8 and occasionally throughout the guide. The page numbers correspond with the pages in the following edition of *The World's Wife*.

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Language English

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## Introductory Resources

The following pages contain a series of resources that may help students find a series of problems that a) require a degree of contextual knowledge and b) a range of noisily expressed views – from female and male students alike!

Students should always ‘start with the end in mind’. There is some informal section: it’s important for students to know, from the outset, the task that they are ending with. This is, of course, a resource that can be visited again towards the end.

Here, then, are some notes and suggestions to accompany the resources in this section.

### Where Do You Stand?

- This sheet contains some provocative statements that students can express their views on. It is essentially a way of opening a debate about female roles and it also allows students to express their own views on feminist issues.
- The teacher can use it in a number of ways – merely as a starting point for discussion, or as a way of ‘grading’ students on a scale from ‘traditional’ to ‘liberal’ with regard to their views.

### The World’s Husband?

- The sheet is self-explanatory, but as well as introducing the central idea, it also encourages students to think through the creative process that Duffy has used. This can be explained to them – perhaps after having done the task. It is also a fun way of checking understanding at the end of the text of course.
- Ideas like this often work best if the teacher works on an idea also, or perhaps encourages students to work in front of students on a whiteboard.

### Before Reading: links between poems

- There is one explanation sheet, one worksheet and one information sheet. Because there are a number of spin-off activities that could come from this, it is best to use the separate explanation sheet to introduce this activity.

Teachers who wish to introduce the exam format at an early point in the course may find this beneficial but also stressful for some students – may wish to distribute the introduction of this guide as part of the introduction to the text.

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## Where Do You Stand?

Consider and discuss the following:

A woman's place is in the home.

There are some things men  
always do better than women.

We should leave other cultures to define  
their own gender roles and levels of  
sexual equality, no matter how different  
they might be to our own.

If a woman earns more than her  
partner, it is still better for her to  
be the one to care for the children  
after school.

There is no place for women  
on the front line of a war.

Women should not be allowed to  
serve in the armed forces.

Page Three is just a modern day version  
of paintings of nude women  
by the Old Masters.

A woman who proposes to a man  
should be laughed at.

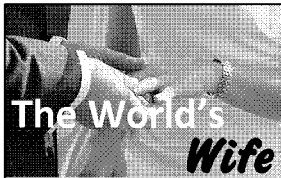
There is no place in the boxing  
ring for women.

It is right that men and women  
should earn the same for the same  
work.

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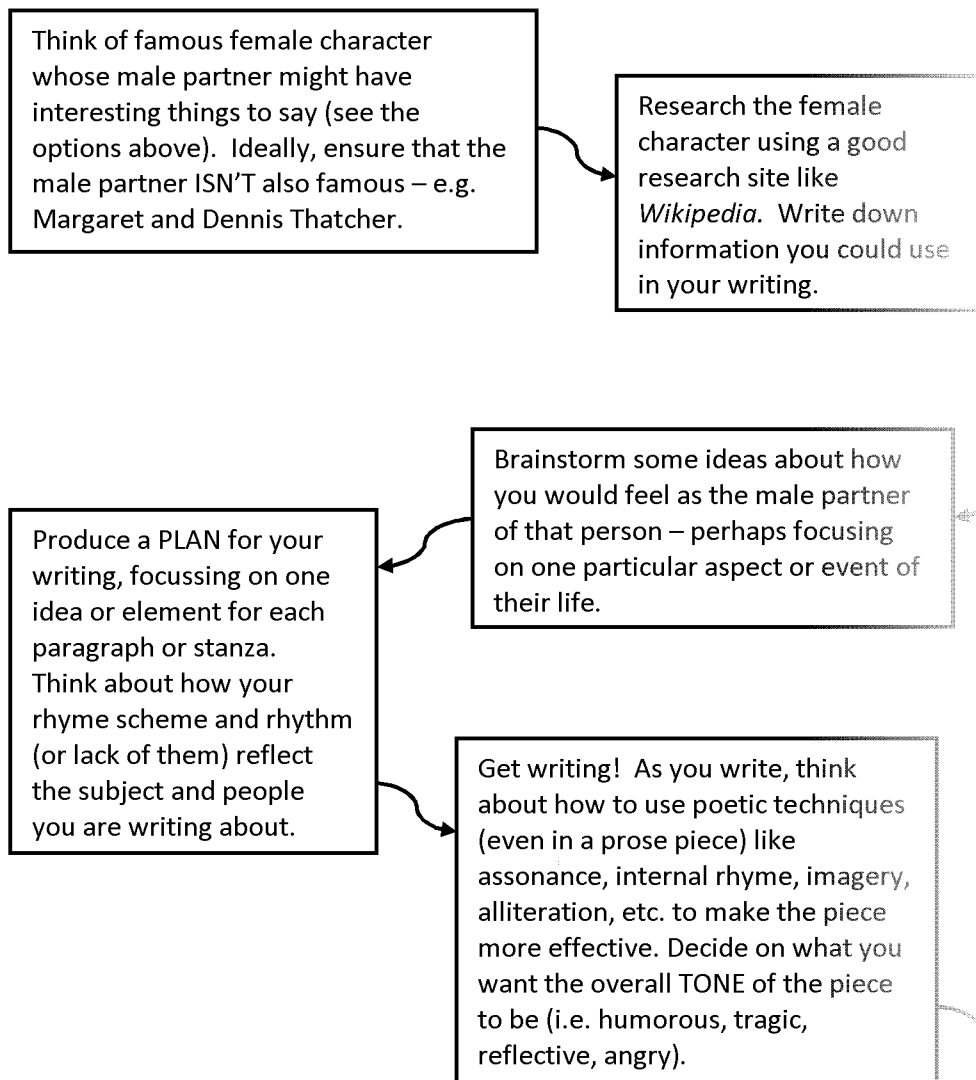
## The World's Husband

### Task

Carol Ann Duffy writes many of her poems from the viewpoints of various infamous men. Research a famous female character and write from the point of view of her partner. The female character could be:

- a famous woman from history
- a famous female character from a myth
- a famous female character from a religious story or book
- a female character from a fairy story

Your writing could be in the form of prose or poetry – follow the steps below to generate ideas and structure your work.



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## Before Reading: links between poems

Within the table on the next page, there is a grid featuring the titles of poems from *The World's Wife*. Listed alongside the poems are some key themes and ideas that appear throughout the collection. There is another copy of the table on the subsequent page, where you can mark the themes and ideas marked off. You may have different ideas about what is relevant to the poems.

There are various ways in which the grid could be used with students:

- Before reading any of the poems, students could take twenty minutes or so to read through the collection, reading some of the shorter poems, and dipping into longer ones. They could then indicate where they think poems include or touch upon the themes listed on the grid. If they think this *might* be the case, but are unsure, they could put a dot in the box with a pencil.
- An alternative to this is to create a five-minute exercise where pupils write down one theme or idea – this will also help you gauge your group's knowledge of mythology, history, etc. This could provide the basis for an initial impression/discussion of the poems in the collection.
- During reading, the table could be used as a method for recording which themes or ideas appear in which poems (one tick), which poems have been annotated (two ticks), which have had the themes or ideas discussed (three ticks) and which have been revised leading up to the final exams (four ticks). You could then devise a key or colour-coding system to highlight poems that have the same themes or ideas.
- After reading, a copy of the table could be distributed for a quick revision exercise. Students could be given five minutes to record which themes and ideas crop up in which poems.
- For more able students, the table could be a starting point for a debate on the relevance of all or most of the main ideas or themes, and whether there are any serious omissions. They could then devise their own ways of visually recording this with their own list.

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## Before Reading: links betw

Poem	Page	Classical Mythology	Autobiography	Religion/ Biblical	Humour	Life Changes
Little Red-Cap	3		✓			✓
Thetis	5	✓				
Queen Herod	7			✓		
Mrs Midas	11	✓				✓
from Mrs Tiresias	14	✓				✓
Pilate's Wife	18			✓		
Mrs Aesop	19				✓	
Mrs Darwin	20				✓	
Mrs Sisyphus	21	✓			✓	
Mrs Faust	23					
Delilah	28			✓		
Ann Hathaway	30					
Queen Kong	31					
Mrs Quasimodo	34					
Medusa	40	✓				
The Devil's Wife	42					
Mrs Lazarus	49			✓		✓
Pygmalion's Bride	51					✓
Mrs Rip van Winkle	53				✓	
Mrs Icarus	54	✓			✓	
Frau Freud	55				✓	
Salome	56			✓		
Eurydice	58	✓				
The Kray Sisters	63					
Elvis' Twin Sister	66					
Pope Joan	68			✓		
Penelope	70	✓				✓
Mrs Beast	72					
Demeter	76	✓	✓			✓

	Infatuation
	✓
	✓
/	
	✓
	✓
/	✓
	✓
/	
/	

# Life Changes

## Teacher's Notes

- *Little Red-Cap*
- *Penelope*
- *Mrs Lazarus*
- *Mrs Tiresias*

## Opening Exercise: Life Changes Worksheet

Much of Duffy's subject matter demands that the reader empathise with situations that they themselves in – many of which students will not have experienced. The worksheet encourages students to think through various stages in life and what the consequences of going through them might be. Shakespeare's 'Seven Ages of Man' from *As You Like It* could also be read alongside this. A creative spin-off of this could be that female students try to develop a 'Woman's' poem – perhaps after completing the worksheet!

## Readings

Teachers and students should read through the four poems in class. Ideally alongside the information boxes from 'The Basics' – so that the influences and essential elements of the poems can be set out before each reading. Should teachers feel that this 'surprise' element of some of the poems, then they can initially use these to introduce the poems, and release the rest at a later point.

## Group Exercise: Recon! worksheet

Using the worksheets, groups of students (ideally 4/5) take on one of the poems. They are given a brief amount of time to fill in the sheet which encourages them to explore the themes (aspects of life changes explored), structure (how the order of content reflects the poem's attitude), perspective (whose is the poem from and whether it might represent a particular viewpoint), language (how the words and images reinforce this). This should be a quick exercise. Findings can then lead to quick five-minute presentations which others take notes on. These can also be used for any other poem in the collection.

## Essential Essay Tips – Five Point Plan worksheet

This is essentially introducing the kind of essay questions that the exam will ask, equipping them with a planning strategy. Students should use their experience of writing a series of comparative notes. Another approach – perhaps where students learn to do this at this early stage – is to re-group students, this time where each group has four poems represented. A response to the plan is produced by each group, identifying key points of comparative points. It might be that the plan is put on an interactive whiteboard where they are collated by the teacher there. If there is time in the lesson (or as an activity for homework) students could try to come up with an overall conclusion of around three sentences. That the plan should be written up as an essay at this early stage.

## Extension Ideas

Students can search the collection for any other poems that explore changes in life or another. They could also read the poems more critically, and see if they would agree with the viewpoints expressed in the poems. In addition, students could look for an overall theme that links the four poems.

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## Life Changes

### The Basics

#### Little Red-Cap

<b>Groups</b>	Autobiographical, Gender Roles, Life Changes, Fairytales, Infatuation
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Penelope</i> , <i>Mrs Lazarus</i> , <i>Mrs Tiresias</i> and, to a lesser extent, <i>Mrs Quagmire</i>
<b>Background information</b>	
The story of <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> is known throughout Europe and is at least 500 years old. It tells of a young girl who visits her grandmother in the woods, only to be tricked by the 'big bad wolf'. The story has often been seen to show the vulnerability of uncorrupted girls to older men. It has also been explored more recently in films like <i>A Company of Wolves</i> and <i>Hoodwinked</i> . The poem is set during the French revolution and signifies Duffy's liberation from a predatory male!	
<b>Summary</b>	
The poet describes herself standing at the edge of the woods as a girl about to become 'the wolf' – someone older than her who both scares her and excites her. He takes her to his room and reads her poetry before seducing her into having sex. After ten years there, she sees that he has realised he only ever wanted one thing. She takes an axe to him, to find the bones of the wolf in his belly. Leaving him behind in the woods, Little Red-Cap emerges a more experienced woman, finding her freedom.	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
The poem focuses on Duffy's real-life relationship with the poet Adrian Henry. She was 17 when he was 38. At first, she is star-struck and infatuated by his charm and experience. As she grows older, she uses, and then explores ideas of liberating herself from an older and dominant man, finding her own path and freedom, both as a woman and as a poet.	

#### Penelope

<b>Groups</b>	Classical Mythology, Life Changes, Feminist
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Mrs Tiresias</i> , <i>Mrs Lazarus</i> , <i>Little Red-Cap</i> and to a lesser extent <i>Mrs Quagmire</i>
<b>Background information</b>	
The story of Penelope is told in Homer's <i>Odyssey</i> , one of the most famous and influential Greek epics. Odysseus, Penelope's warrior husband, has been away doing his bit in the Trojan War. Despite many men trying to win her over, she stays faithful to him by saying she will not remarry until he returns. She weaves a shroud for him, but every night she unravels it. When she has finished working on her tapestry, she asks Odysseus whether to give him up or not when she had finished working on her tapestry. Even when he is disguised as a beggar, she constantly through each day, not knowing that she is then picking it apart each night. When Odysseus is discovered, as she sets a second trial. A beggar who successfully completes the trial is rewarded with a prize. It turns out to be none other than Odysseus himself in cunning disguise. He wins back his wife and kills the other suitors, as you do.	
<b>Summary</b>	
Unlike some other poems, there are no modern references in this one. At the start of the poem, Penelope is waiting for her husband to return, but gradually forgets to miss him, taking up her needle and thread. The second stanza sees her busily embroidering many colourful, diverse images. In the third stanza, she is seen in a couple in a passionate embrace, perhaps thinking back to earlier days but without regret. In the fourth stanza, she arrives and she distracts them by pretending to be in mourning while she unpicks her work. In the fifth stanza describes how she sews herself, content in her new life without Odysseus – but when he does pick out but, resolutely, she goes to embroider it in again, determined that being seen as a woman who sews herself is the best way to be.	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
Duffy turns the original tale on its head. Instead of the faithful wife being rewarded for her loyalty to her husband's eventual return, she describes a woman who has found happiness alone and is content to stay that way!	

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## Mrs Lazarus

<b>Groups</b>	Life Changes, Classical Mythology, Feminist
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Mrs Tiresias, Penelope, Little Red-Cap</i> and, to a lesser extent, <i>Mrs M...</i>
<b>Background information</b>	
This is a story that originates from the New Testament. Hearing that Lazarus, the brother of Christ, has died, Jesus visits the household to comfort them. To their surprise, he asks for the stone to be pulled away, and calls the dead man's name. Miraculously, Lazarus steps from his tomb, having been declared dead four days earlier.	
<b>Summary</b>	
Unlike some other poems, this one is based in the area of origin – the Middle East. Mrs Lazarus, a widow, has lost her dead husband and, through subsequent stanzas, tries to come to terms with the emptiness she has to take on now he's gone. She gets to the point where she no longer remembers to look forward to her life again, even hinting at new relationships. Suddenly, she is faced with the possibility of declaring that her husband has returned from the dead. Mrs Lazarus is filled with a mix of emotions. I think about returning to something she has begun to move on from...	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
The poem explores ideas linking religious belief and grief, and asks questions about the nature of life and death, only to have them thrust into our lives once again. This could be a metaphor for divorce and separation being just a few. The reference to Lazarus' 'stench' is hardly...	

## Mrs Tiresias

<b>Groups</b>	Classical Mythology, Life Changes, Gender Roles, Infatuation
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Mrs Lazarus, Penelope, Little Red-Cap</i>
<b>Background information</b>	
Whilst out for a stroll, the prophet Tiresias sees two snakes having sex. He strikes the first snake, and is turned into a woman by the gods. Seven years later, he sees the snakes at it again, and strikes the second snake, turning – you've guessed it – into a man again. The god and goddess Zeus and Hera ask him about whether men or women enjoy sexual pleasure more. His answer displeases them, and he is punished a little. Sorry for Tiresias, Zeus give him powers of prophecy to make up for this.	
<b>Summary</b>	
Duffy opens by summarising what happened – that one day her husband 'came home' and she was a woman. She gives a modern spin on this classical tale. She goes back to describe this in detail – how he 'came home' one morning he was late back from a morning walk, only to finally return with the knowledge that he was a woman. She tries to live with his transformation – even helping him with his hair and putting up with his pains. Gradually, though, he rejects her and they split. He goes on to exploit his newfound fame and celebrity and having the gall to express what it is like to be a woman. The final section describes Mrs T. – with her new female lover – meeting her ex-husband at a party. They shake hands as they shake hands, and reflects on the irony of this situation.	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
The poem is a clever modern take on the idea of a man transforming into a woman. In the end, a woman's body, he remains partly male in terms of his behaviour. Duffy could be seen as a poet where people such as transsexuals blatantly discuss their experiences. Through all this, she explores the idea of being a man or a woman – and that this runs deeper than external appearances. The poem also touches on the age-old struggle between men and women everywhere.	

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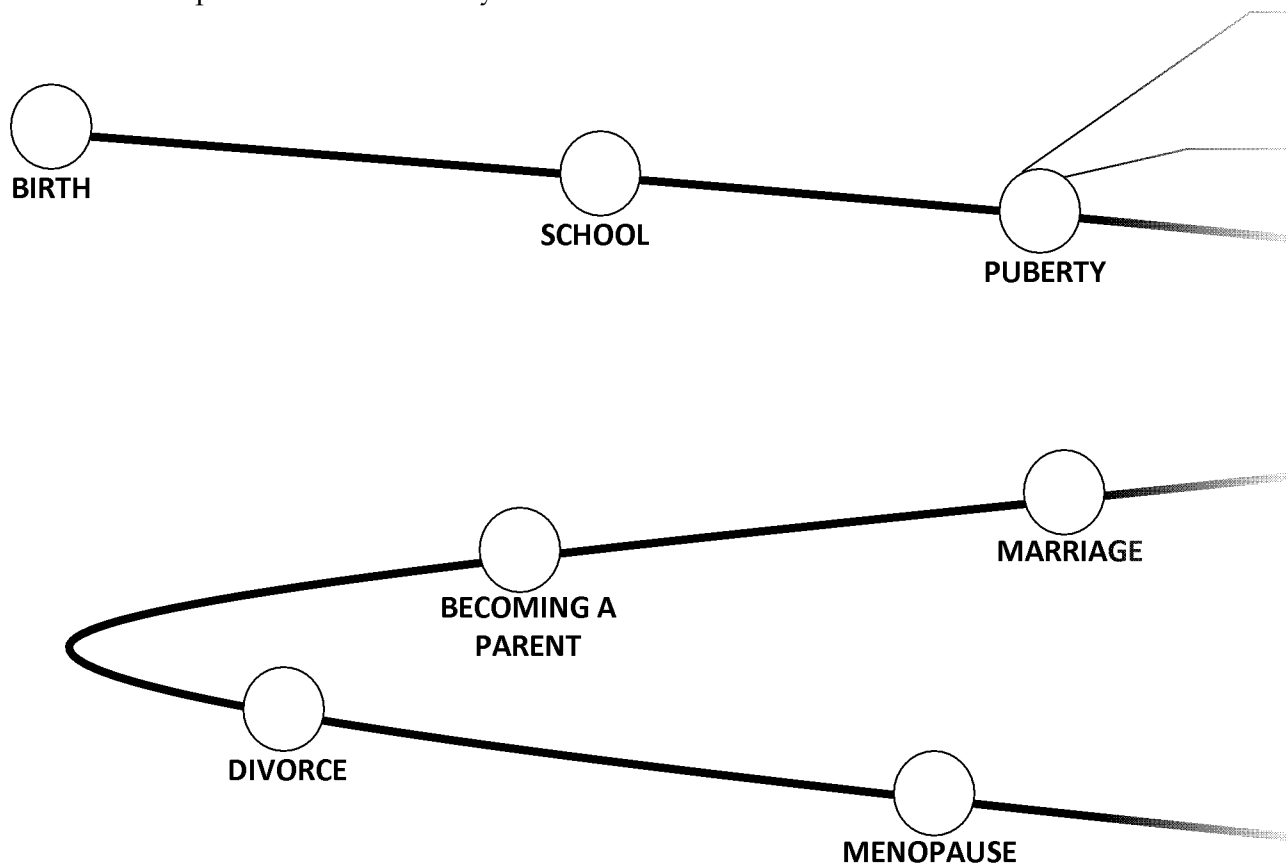




# Life Changes

## Timeline

What sort of events over a person's lifetime can change the way they look at the world? This timeline (not necessarily in the right order). Go through it and mark a) how these changes may affect people's world. An example has been done for you.



fe  
ople look at the

knowledge about sex,  
spots!

more cynical



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## The Seven Ages of Man

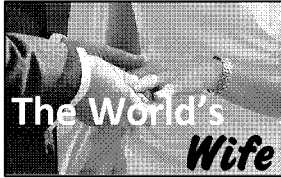
All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,  
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms;  
Then the whining school-boy, with his satchel  
And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,  
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,  
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,  
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,  
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws and modern instances;  
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts  
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,  
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;  
His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide  
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,  
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
Is second childishness and mere oblivion;  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

**William Shakespeare (from *As You Like It*)**

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## Recon!

Your group is to 'fly over the poem' **in ten minutes** and use the worksheet to report back from it using this sheet! **Remember:** you may be asked to report back on first

### Poem Title:

Key aspects of life change:

Aspect 1:

Aspect 2:

Notes on structure of poem:

How is it divided (sections, stanzas etc.)?

Is the poem chronological? If so, how?

Whose perspective is the poem written from?

A line that typically shows the narrator's attitude is:

**Pick out some key images of metaphors which capture elements of the poem**  
**Make notes on how and why each are effective in the poem**

Image 1 and how/why it is effective:

Image 2 and how/why it is effective:

Image 3 and how/why it is effective:

Image 4 and how/why it is effective:

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## Essential Essay Tips – Five

In the centre of this diagram, you will find a question similar to the sort of task you will find in your Unit 1 exam. The outer sections of the diagram represent each individual plan response.

Use your knowledge of the four poems (*Little Red-Cap*, *Penelope*, *Mrs Lazarus*, *Mrs Tiresias*) to write some comparative notes under each heading. Write your responses in bullet points rather than complete sentences – remember that this is only a plan. Point 2 has an example.

### Point 2: Structure

- *Little Red Cap*, *Mrs Lazarus* and *Mrs Tiresias* have a 'before and after' scenario in structure
- *Penelope* and *Mrs Lazarus* see a return to an original situation, but with *Penelope*, attitude has changed.
- *Penelope* has less a sense of chronological movement, more of spiritual development and growth – some of this with *Little Red Cap* also.

### Point 1: Key Aspects

How far do you agree with the view that *The World's Wife* is essentially about coping with changes in life and circumstances? In your answer, you should either refer to two or three poems in detail or range more widely across the whole collection.

### Point 4: Key Images

### Point 5: Other Techniques Language

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# Love

## Teacher's Notes

- *Anne Hathaway*
- *Queen Kong*
- *Demeter*

### Opening Exercise

The three narrators in these poems provide as diverse a collection of characters as you could find: following readings and brief initial discussion of the subject matter using the poems, students could find as many different ways to group / contrast the narrators as they like. With your help, they could be led to think about how the original sources vary, the settings of the poems, the relationships within the poems, and much more besides. All of this adds to the diversity and richness of the collection – something to bring to any cynical or dismissive attention!

### Focus: Form and Structure worksheet

An independent study task leading up to this sheet might be to research the variations – although this is mentioned on the sheet as well. When beginning the task, pay to go through the first half of it with students: this will give the sense of direction and what it deserves. It will be worth pointing out that they will be expected to include references to form in any essay they write about *The World's Wife*, no matter what the task! This will allow them to widen their own notes on the poems as well as open up other areas for discussion. The teacher about specialised techniques such as use of iambic pentameter as part of the task. As an extension activity, students could each pick one or two other poems in the collection and make their own comments on form or structure.

### Essential Essay Tips – Writing the Perfect Intro worksheet

Many students find beginning an essay to be one of the most difficult tasks and it can take a valuable time. The sheet uses a poem from this section – *Demeter* – and explains a different way of writing introductions. The task will certainly be useful and perhaps encourage students who struggle to make a start; but it might also help more able students to avoid going at a tangent in their opening. Whilst the sheet is essentially for information, it is a good one to read, and should be re-capped during revision.

### *Queen Kong*: Spot The Difference!

The worksheet is to be done independently by the student and focuses on the differences between film and poem. The purpose is to encourage the student to think about how Duffy has used sound in a poem (it might be worth mentioning that this is the only time she uses sound in a poem). Having got students to fill the sheets in, it could be worth discussing the significance of the differences between film and poem, and how this fits into Duffy's range of sources in the collection as a whole.

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## Love

### The Basics

#### Anne Hathaway

<b>Groups</b>	Love, Infatuation, Gender
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Queen Kong</i> , <i>Demeter</i> and, to a lesser extent, <i>Mrs Lazarus</i> and as a co
<b>Background information</b>	
Anne Hathaway was married to Shakespeare, who was younger than she was, in 1 children together. She lived in Stratford-on-Avon, and for much of the time Shakes London. This has caused much speculation as to how strong their marriage was, o Shakespeare may have written some of his sonnets to other lovers while married. I 1616, Shakespeare famously left Anne his 'second best bed', providing commentate marriage.	
<b>Summary</b>	
Duffy writes as Anne. She writes in sonnet form, a favourite of Shakespeare's, and, extended metaphor through the poem. This is one of comparing his writing to the wonderful, imaginative and sensitive writer, so he also is as a lover in their 'second kept for guests of their household. In the first three lines, she describes the ecstasy all the magical places he conjures up in his plays – 'castles, torchlights, clifftops'. C focuses on words, sometimes using sexual innuendo: 'a verb dancing in the centre develop this idea into their passion being a drama of his making. In the final rhyme memories she has of him in the 'casket' of her head.	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
This is one of the best known poems in the collection, and is very positive and sens their relationship, turning all negative ideas about what their relationship might ha some of the other poems, it clearly celebrates a passionate and thoroughly enjoyed and a woman.	

#### Queen Kong

<b>Groups</b>	Love, Sex, Gender, Infatuation
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Anne Hathaway</i> , <i>Demeter</i> and, to a lesser extent, <i>Little Red Cap</i> , <i>The D</i>
<b>Background information</b>	
This poem is based on the 1933 film <i>King Kong</i> . In the film, a film maker travels wit to a secret island in search of its mysteries. The girl is kidnapped – the film maker i going to sacrifice her to a huge beast – a giant gorilla called Kong. Remarkably, Ko but she is rescued. The film maker takes Kong back to New York to exhibit him, on more. One of the most iconic scenes in cinema is of Kong with the girl, climbing the fending off attacking planes. In the film, Kong is eventually killed. Duffy's poem i imagining a female Kong falling in love with the film maker...	
<b>Summary</b>	
In the first stanza, she describes lying in bed with her love, and reflecting on what She goes back in time to describe how she first 'scooped him up' on the island, and boring island life, bringing various pleasures to her. Eventually he leaves her to tal Lovesick, she pursues him and finds him full of memories of her. She re-lives the s Building and, unlike in the movie, they enjoy 'twelve happy years' of domestic blis grief and sadness, and reflects on just how much she loved him.	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
As Duffy knows, the story she describes is ridiculous – it's hardly realistic to imagin her human lover in New York! As always, there is a pointed deeper meaning: throu her film-maker, we see how many men create sex objects out of women, giving the expressing their own affections. As in the movie, though, we feel sympathy for the unrequited love.	

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## Demeter

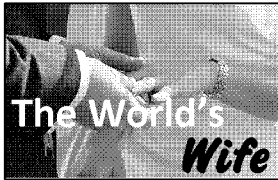
<b>Groups</b>	Love, Life Changes
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Anne Hathaway, Demeter</i> and, to a lesser extent, <i>Little Red Cap</i> (also a
<b>Background information</b> Another story from ancient mythology. Hades, the King of the Underworld, kidnaps Demeter, to claim her as a wife. As the goddess responsible for fruitful harvests, Demeter's grief, and the earth becomes barren of crops. Demeter finally persuades Hades to let her go on the condition that Persephone has not eaten anything while in the underworld. In fact, eaten four seeds, the earth is fruitful for the three quarters of the year that the year is barren for the remaining time. The myth is used to explain the two main seasons of the year. <b>Summary</b> The poem needs to be read from the perspective of Demeter, but also from Duffy's perspective. As explained in the section below, life before her daughter is there is described as 'hard' by the lack of warmth in the poems she writes too. In the second stanza, she describes things deeply and warmly. The third describes the journey from afar of her daughter's new birth. As they meet, there is a quiet feeling that life and warmth has returned, and the poet can make a fresh start.	
<b>In a nutshell</b> This essentially autobiographical poem is a very fitting and moving end to the collection. It tells of Demeter's changing feelings as her daughter returns to her life; it paints a picture of the feelings Duffy has as they are made more warm and moderate by her own daughter's arrival. It creates an impression of Duffy's journey as a poet – from the loud-mouthed and angry to a moderate observer of human nature that produced this very collection!	

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## Essential Essay Tip

### Focus on Form and Structure

The **form** of a poem tends to refer to the type of poem that it is. So, because *Anne Hathaway* is written in iambic pentameter and ends with a rhyming couplet (ask your teacher if you need to check this), you can fairly safely assume it's a **sonnet**. We can also use the term more loosely. *Queen Kong* has a 'narrative' style or form.

The **structure** of a poem is closely connected to the form. It can refer to specific parts of the poem, the way the rhythm and rhyme schemes hold the poem together; or it can refer to the sequence of events and / or subject matter within the poem.

#### Task

Below, you will find a series of questions that relate to the FORM and STRUCTURE of *Queen Kong* and *Demeter*. Try to answer them as fully as you can in your notebook. Back up points where you can. Some of the questions also contain additional information that you should also add to your notes. These are in **bold**.

#### *Anne Hathaway*

1. The poem is a sonnet. Research the sonnet form and why some poems are written in this form. Go on to write about why you feel Duffy has chosen this particular form.
2. **Sonnets often contain rhyming couplets in the final two lines.** What is the effect of this couplet give *Anne Hathaway* at its closure? How does this leave us feeling about her emotions at this point in her life?
3. **There are only a few sonnets in the collection.** Find them, and make a list of the poems. How many has used the form in each case. Why would she choose the sonnet form for these poems?

#### *Queen Kong*

1. Why might you refer to *Queen Kong* as having a 'narrative' form? Why do you think Duffy has chosen this approach?
2. **Some, but not all of the narrative poems in the collection are written in chronological order.** Re-read the first two stanzas of *Queen Kong* and comment on whether they are in chronological order. Comment on why Duffy has ordered things as she has.
3. In your own words, write a summary of between ten and twenty words of the first stanza – then comment on the way in which Duffy has structured events in the stanza.
4. **Each of the stanzas has seven lines of poetry.** Why do you think Duffy has chosen this sense of uniformity bring to the poem?

#### *Demeter*

1. **Duffy probably intended to write this poem as a sonnet as well.** Why do you think she has chosen this subject matter for this choice of form?
2. Comment on the way in which Duffy has chosen to structure her sonnet. Comment on how lines are grouped, and what each group contains in terms of subject matter.
3. In keeping with the sonnet form, Duffy has used a rhyming couplet at the end. How does this give a satisfying ending, not only to the poem, but to the collection?

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## Essential Essay Tip

### Writing the Perfect Introduction

Writing an introduction can be one of the trickiest parts of essay writing. This sheet will help you write a short but relevant intro that you should be able to apply to any essay question on *The World's Wife*.

What **NOT** to do in an introduction...

- **DON'T** ramble. A good intro need only be two or three sentences long.
- **DON'T** directly answer the question. This makes the rest of your essay predictable.
- **DON'T** refer to yourself. Phrases like 'I am going to...' or 'I think that...' are uncertain, and can make your style sound immature and too informal.

### Essay Question

Duffy completes *The World's Wife* with the autobiographical poem *Demeter*, with the view that, in terms of subject matter and style, this poem is an appropriate addition to the collection?

### What To Do



Your intro should only be two or three sentences long. The first sentence, show that you understand the question by using the key words, as a statement. Look at this example:

*'In Carol Ann Duffy's 'The World's Wife', the moving and powerful poem is the final poem in the selection.'*

This is a simple but direct opening. Note how we've used the word 'autobiographical' to show an immediate knowledge of the poem to give an immediate personal response.



The second sentence of your intro. should tell your reader what you will do to answer the question. Here is an example with the same question:

*'By looking at key features and themes of the poem, and the context of the collection, we can see whether or not it reads as an appropriate addition to the whole collection.'*

And it's as simple as that – a two-sentence introduction that states the main points of your essay.

### Task

Have a go at writing an introduction for the following essay question:  
How far do you agree with the view that *The World's Wife* is 'too much concerned with the theme of female insecurities'? In your answer, you should either refer to specific poems in detail or range more widely across the whole collection.

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## Queen Kong: Spot the Differences

In *Queen Kong*, Duffy's inspiration comes from the classic monster movie *King Kong*. In the columns alongside these elements of the original film's plot, Duffy's poem departs from the original, and state why you think Duffy made the first one has been done for you.

Elements of the original plot	How Duffy's <i>Queen Kong</i> differs	Why it differs
The film maker is the central character in the film.	<i>Queen Kong is the central character.</i>	<i>She is the central perspective.</i>
The 'monster' in the movie is male.		
The film-maker's girlfriend is the object of the monster's attraction.		
On the island, the film-maker is portrayed as someone seeking a money-making venture.		
When in New York, King Kong causes chaos in the streets.		
King Kong doesn't let his captive escape.		
King Kong only has a brief time with his captive before the movie's ending.		
King Kong is portrayed as having no real intelligence or sensitivity.		

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# Disdain

## Teacher's Notes

- *Mrs. Icarus*
- *Mrs Aesop*
- *Mrs Sysiphus*
- *Frau Freud*

N.B. Teachers might wish to include *Mrs Darwin* in this grouping. It compares poems, and is featured in the exam-title worksheet in the section, but is not in 'The Basics' section, as there is very little to say or glean beyond the basic or 'chimpanzee' joke!

## Opening Exercise

Many of the poems in this section have a distinct focus on making the reader through the poems and discussed them in brief, students could each select a that they find particularly funny, telling the rest of the group why they like. Reluctant male students might like to explore whether the humour is exclusively more able students might like to discuss whether the humour works on even for example, meant to laugh at, rather than with, the bitterness of Mrs Aesop digs at their unfortunate spouses?

## Focus: Rhyme

The guide to 'rhyme' on the sheet is very rudimentary: although almost all examples of words that rhyme, it is a lot harder to accurately define what rhyme to understand how it works. The sheet aims to develop an understanding of students to think about *how* they write about rhyme in the context of an essay to emphasise that many other poems use rhyme in various different guises, Duffy's careful use of this technique should obviously extend beyond these

## Essential Essay Tips – Making the Perfect Point.

This sheet gives advice about following a simple and well-known method for exemplifying it. It uses the poems in this section as an example, but teachers in other sections and groups of poems. Attention might be drawn to the section uses comparative phrases – something which is always going to be important points out after attempting the task at the foot of the sheet – the whole procedure confidence to structure complete points.

## Poem Focus: *Mrs Aesop*

As one of the longer poems in the group, students can work through this sheet appreciate Duffy's use of proverbs as well as her caustic humour!

## Creative Exercise (no accompanying worksheet)

This exercise can be linked back to the opening one. By recapping on what is of poems funny, students can draw from the technique to write their own, s. The teacher could limit the selection to a group of three or four famous people characters from mythology or science. It might be that guidelines follow Mr limited to three or four lines and one use of rhyme.

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## Disdain

### The Basics

#### Mrs Icarus

<b>Groups</b>	Disdain, Humour
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Mrs Darwin, Mrs, Aesop, Frau Freud, Mrs Sisyphus</i>
<b>Background information</b>	
In a story from Greek mythology, Icarus helps his father escape the island of Crete by carrying wings made of wax. Although, for this reason, his father warns Icarus not to fly too close to the sun, Icarus is carried away with his abilities and does so. Predictably, the wings melt and Icarus falls to his death.	
<b>Summary</b>	
Like so many women, Mrs Icarus is forced to stand and watch while her husband achieves greatness. However, she is very aware that he is about to make a total fool of himself, despite her own feelings.	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
This very short poem essentially contains one joke. Mrs Icarus is in the role that many women find themselves in – having to carry the embarrassment of living with a man who is a genius. It demonstrates the submissive stance many women have to take in order to keep the peace. The ‘pillow’ rhyme seems very contrived but, for that reason, obvious and funny!	

#### Mrs Aesop

<b>Groups</b>	Disdain, Humour, Feminist
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Frau Freud, Mrs Sisyphus, Mrs Icarus</i> and, to a lesser extent, <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> (revenge!)
<b>Background information</b>	
Aesop is a Greek storyteller well known for his ‘fables’ – stories that use animal characters to illustrate human nature, and which end with some sort of proverb or moral. Probably the most famous is ‘The Tortoise and the Hare’, but there are many others.	
<b>Summary</b>	
From the outset of the poem, Mrs Aesop tells us how utterly boring it is living with a ‘wise man’ but how she ultimately gets her revenge. Before that, she tells us how she couldn’t resist making up silly stories or banging out the same morals and proverbs. Her voice, it is droning and tedious: she could ‘barely keep awake’. She decides to take revenge by telling a story that he will remember. Her references to ‘taking a razor sharp axe’ to the ‘little red riding hood’ are hard to interpret and also comment on his appalling performances in the story of Loretta Bobbitt, an American who became infamous for cutting off her husband’s head one unfortunate night!	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
Although the poem is narrated by ‘Mrs Aesop’, we get a very clear impression of the satisfied nature of the husband she is imagining being married to – a man who is a genius and basks in his own wisdom. Typically for Duffy, the woman then goes on to tell us how she gets her revenge. The situation could typify many modern-day scenarios where the woman is expected to live along with the husband’s supposed skills!	

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## Mrs Sisyphus

<b>Groups</b>	Disdain, Humour, Feminist
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Mrs Darwin, Mrs Aesop, Frau Freud, Mrs Icarus</i>
<b>Background information</b>	
In Greek mythology, Sisyphus is a character who tricked the gods, and was ultimately condemned to an eternity of pushing a huge boulder up a hill, only for it to topple. He would then have to try to push it back up again, for the same thing to happen. The character has come to be an embodiment of futility.	
<b>Summary</b>	
Duffy takes on the role of Sisyphus' wife, watching helplessly and with disdain as he does his job over and over again, without any real meaning or purpose. The first section of the poem shows she has got increasingly frustrated with him over time. In the second section we see she elaborates on this, describing his dogged and pointless determination, causing her pain and increasing her sense of loneliness. She compares her lot to the wife of N. P. Johann Sebastian Bach, the composer.	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
Rather than make any direct connection to the Sisyphus of mythology, Duffy uses the image of a wife having to suffer alone as her husband becomes obsessively involved in his work. The poem's contrived 'irk' rhymes throughout, though, lends itself much more to a comic tone. As the range of poems shows, the problem is an age-old one, not merely restricted to the modern world.	

## Frau Freud

<b>Groups</b>	Disdain, Humour, Feminist
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Mrs Darwin, Mrs Aesop, Mrs Sisyphus, Mrs Icarus</i> and, to a lesser extent, <i>to a lesser extent</i> (a nutshell' below)
<b>Background information</b>	
Sigmund Freud was the German pioneer of 'psychoanalysis' – a branch of psychology that seeks to explain human behaviours by looking back to the subconscious sexual feelings that he believed influenced children. He famously used the phrase 'penis envy' to describe how women, as children, are jealous because they don't have a penis, and that their later behaviour in life is dictated by this.	
<b>Summary</b>	
Duffy takes on the voice of 'Frau Freud' addressing a group of amused women about their lack of a penis. She draws her attention to the fact that she has a very experienced view of the penis, having had more than about thirty different names. This draws attention to the fact that, in a male world, there are far more names for the penis than there are for the equivalent female parts, thus highlighting the importance and obsession with his own equipment! However, at the end of the poem, she turns the men down by commenting on how unattractive and unsexy the flaccid penis is. In the end, she feels rather sorry for it!	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
Many feminists disagree completely with Freud's ideas, claiming that women are not envious of the luxuries a man enjoys because he has a penis – rather than being envious of the penis itself. In the experienced and mocking voice, Duffy turns Freud's ideas upside down, presenting them as knowing better. Duffy uses the sonnet form (note the final rhyming couplet in each of the four poems) as an ironic comment on how many women think of the male member. The much more genuine use of the sonnet form in Anne Hathaway.	

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## Focus: Duffy's Use of

- **Rhyme** is where two words sound the same apart from the very first sound or ph 'house / mouse'. A one-syllable rhyme is called a masculine rhyme, whereas rhy are called feminine rhymes.
- **Half-rhyme, near-rhyme** or **para-rhyme** is where two words sound very similar, l 'seal / sole'.
- **Internal rhyme** describes two words rhyming within the lines of a poem, rather l of the lines, which is more typical and traditional.

As we can see throughout *The World's Wife*, rhyme can achieve different sort of feelings in the reader, or to establish the tone or mood of the narrator of t create a feeling of uniformity or romance; or a string of listed rhymes can cr poem. Sometimes a poet will use 'forced' or 'contrived' rhymes, where attie to the rhyme by making it obvious – as if the word was merely chosen just b other reason. This can be done to the extent that we can virtually anticipate

The examples below are taken from the group of poems mentioned above. I record *how* Duffy is using rhyme, and the *effect* you think it is intended to be notes or on the back of this sheet, go on to write each example up as some st an essay. The first one has been completed for you.

Example	Type of rhyme (see definitions above)	Int
Ensuring all the lines in the first section of <i>Mrs Sisyphus</i> rhyme with each other.	<i>Masculine rhyme, perhaps contrived</i>	<i>Can a also a</i>
Rhyming 'rammer' with 'slammer' and 'dick' with 'prick' in <i>Frau Freud</i> .		
The rhyming of 'hillock' with 'pillock' in <i>Mrs Icarus</i> .		
The rhyming of the first and last line in <i>Mrs Darwin</i> .		
Using many similar-sounding words like 'cork', 'park', 'gawp', 'quirk' in <i>Mrs Sisyphus</i> .		
Using the words 'prepossess' and 'impress' in the second line of <i>Mrs Aesop</i> .		

Here is a write-up of the first example as it might appear in an essay:

*Duffy's very deliberate use of forceful masculine rhyme in the first section of 'Mrs S narrator's contempt and anger whilst allowing the reader to anticipate what might line. The contrived use of quite obscure words such as 'dirk' meaning 'dagger' and lend the opening of the poem a very comic feel.*

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## Essential Essay Tip

### Making the Perfect Point

Having chosen your essay title and written your plan, it's important that you have so express your points in a clear, structured way. Here are some tips and ideas about h

#### The PEE chain

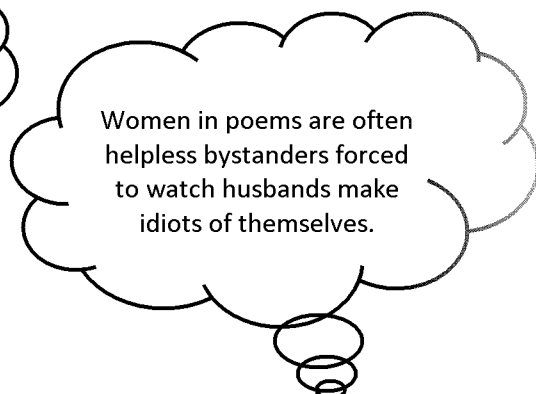
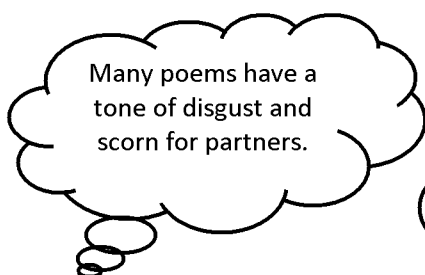
This is a well-known method that you might have heard of before. To follow your basic POINT clearly, back it up with an EXAMPLE (your quotation from an EXPLANATION. Remember not to repeat yourself between your point. is an example:

Notes from plan	Written up point	
<i>Mrs Sisyphus</i>	<i>Like other voices in the collection, Mrs Sisyphus describes her sense of isolation within a relationship:</i>	This mad
<i>isolation from husband</i>	<i>'But I lie alone in the dark.'</i>	The succ
<i>similar in many poems.</i>	<i>The darkness symbolises her lack of hope, and can also be seen in other poems such as 'Little Red Cap' where Duffy describes the wolf's 'dark, tangled' lair.</i>	The deta quot need colle

#### Essay Question

How far do you agree with the view that the voices in *The World's Wife* frequently express contempt for the behaviour of men in relationships and marriages...?' In your answer, refer to two or three poems in detail or choose from a wider range across the collection.

Below, you'll find a series from notes from a student's essay plan. The student has chosen *Icarus*, *Mrs Sisyphus*, *Mrs Aesop*, *Frau Freud* and *Mrs Darwin*. Have a go at writing your notes, paying attention to following the PEE chain method. You'll need to be concise and clear, that you choose short and relevant EXAMPLES to back up your points. Your EXPLANATIONS show fully how your examples back up your points.



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## Poem Focus: *Mrs Aesop*

### Questions on the whole poem

1. Aesop is well known for his famous sayings (proverbs) as well as his fables. Which ones can you find in the poem – are any of them used with irony at Aesop's expense?
2. List the complaints Mrs Aesop makes against her husband. In what way is their marriage 'stale'?

### Stanzas 1-2

3. How does the line 'the bird in the hand shat on his sleeve' dictate the tone of the poem to the reader about what is to come?

### Stanzas 3-4

4. Comment on the effect and significance of Duffy's use of the simile 'slow as a snail'.
5. At the end of the third stanza, Duffy uses a favourite technique: the onomatopoeic 'clunk'. Comment on the humour and impact of this, and the extent to which it might mimic the life of a married couple.
6. Duffy uses the effect of 'enjambment' between the fourth and fifth stanzas: the poetry runs onto the next line. Why do you think she does this, and why is it important at this moment in the poem?

### Stanza 5

7. Comment on the various meanings of Duffy's line 'the cock that wouldn't crow' – how does it change two lines later in the same stanza?
8. The poem ends with one of the many proverbs. How do you as a reader interpret this? What does it do at the end of the poem?

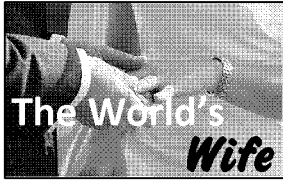
### Finally...

This isn't the only poem that 'hints' at the wronged or suffering wife taking revenge – cutting off – or at least threatening to cut off – her spouse's manhood. Find other poems in the collection that are written about or hinted at in the collection and collect supporting quotations. Is there a recurring idea in Duffy's poetry? Do you think there is any more to it than the dark humour?

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## Victims

### Teacher's Notes

- *Mrs Quasimodo*
- *Thetis*
- *The Devil's Wife*

### Opening Exercise

Two of the poems in this section contain graphic images that are likely to be uncomfortable. Following readings of the poems, students could be asked to identify phrases each that make them feel uncomfortable or awkward. This could lead to a discussion of what it is, exactly, that makes them feel the way they do about that selection of words and its place in poetry for such strong language and disturbing ideas.

### Poem Focus: *The Devil's Wife*

As this is a substantial and important poem, a worksheet has been included to encourage a deeper level of focus.

### Focus: Symbolism

This worksheet, probably best attempted by students alone, explores Duffy's use of symbolism in this selection of poems. As a precursor to this exercise, or even after it, the teacher could be encouraged to broaden to look at other examples beyond this grouping, and to discuss how Duffy's use of symbolism is when compared with other poets.

### Essential Essay Tips – Integrated Quotations

This sheet follows on from the one that advises students on how to make clear and effective quotations. It encourages them to integrate quotations into the main body of the text and to ensure that they are short and relevant. The technique should also enable students to make their own points. Some students may find this skill difficult to master – the task at the end of the sheet is designed to help. The teacher may find benefits in checking and / or marking!

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## Victims

### The Basics

#### Mrs Quasimodo

<b>Groups</b>	Victims, Feminist, Obsession, Revenge
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>The Devil's Wife</i> , <i>Thetis</i> , <i>Queen Kong</i> and, in terms of revenge, <i>Mrs Ape</i>
<b>Background information</b> Quasimodo is the central character of Victor Hugo's novel <i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i> . He is a deformed and hides away in the cathedral, ringing the bells that he loves. Much abuse is ordered to abduct the beautiful gypsy Esmeralda, only to be publicly flogged for it. She brings him water while he is in the stocks, he falls in love with her. She is finally executed on the gallows, from where Quasimodo rescues her, to take her into sanctuary in the cathedral. The novel has been made into a number of successful film adaptations. Duffy's poem is written from the perspective of the equally ugly partner – someone who doesn't figure in the novel or films – who is rejected. When Esmeralda comes along!	
<b>Summary</b> The first stanza establishes Mrs Quasimodo's love of the bells and how she is rejected. In the next, she is in the city, lurking alone in the shadows and frightening cats with her ugly appearance. She describes her first meeting with the bell ringer Quasimodo – how she feels right ring. Her passion is raw and animalistic: 'He fucked me underneath the gaping, stricken bells'. They have a blissful marriage and enjoyment of sex, despite their combined ugliness. Their relationship is intimate. The single line of the next stanza – 'So more fool me' – signals the fact that she has been rejected. The next stanza is ambiguous – signalling perhaps a loneliness and time for reflection. When she sees him 'watch the gipsy' in the next stanza, she realises that she is perhaps in lust – with someone far more physically beautiful than herself. Another stanza shows her 'known' displays her shattered confidence. The following verse reflects on Esmeralda given sanctuary' adding poignancy to her injury. In the next devastating stanza, the speaker expresses her loathing realising that she cannot compare to the woman she has been betrayed for – at herself inside are some of the most upsetting and sad lines Duffy writes in the entire collection. 'Mongol. Ape.' In the final section of the poem, she wreaks revenge by destroying Quasimodo, perhaps a metaphor for castration.	
<b>In a nutshell</b> With the poem, Duffy finds a voice for all women who have been betrayed and rejected for being younger or more beautiful 'model'. Also, though, we are reminded of what they go through in a hurt and downward spiral of confidence that leads to bitter revenge.	

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## Thetis

<b>Groups</b>	Victims, Feminist
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Mrs Quasimodo</i> , <i>The Devil's Wife</i> and linking to the birth of children, <i>Duffy</i>
<b>Background information</b>	
In classical mythology, Thetis is a Nereid (one of fifty daughters of Nereus) living in the sea. She can transform into other shapes – something Nereus can do in the original. The god Zeus wanted a child being born who has too many powers. She has a son called Achilles, whom she made immortal. Unluckily, Achilles' heel isn't touched by the water, and this weakness leads to his death in life.	
<b>Summary</b>	
Thetis first turns herself into a singing bird, only to be crushed by a man's fist. Then she turns into a fish, but he has her wings clipped. She takes on the form of a 'shopper' who is strangled, then a fish, but she is caught by a fisherman, and a quick series of other changes ends in various degrees of success – a reference to childbirth.	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
The character of Thetis reflects how difficult it can be for a woman to make an impact on the world. She can take on many forms and guises, only to experience failure and brutality at the hands of men. For a woman, it takes something more dramatic like childbirth to enable you to make an impact. This can be linked to other poems that show women suffering at the hands of men.	

## The Devil's Wife

<b>Groups</b>	Victims, Obsession, Icons
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Thetis</i> , <i>Mrs Quasimodo</i> and in relation to: modern 'icons', <i>The Kray Sisters</i>
<b>Background information</b>	
In 1965, Myra Hindley and Ian Brady were charged and convicted of sexually assaulting six or seven children and young adults. They recorded some of these sessions on tape in the Yorkshire Moors. Despite various appeals for parole, Hindley died in prison in 2001, in a psychiatric hospital, where he remains on hunger strike. Rarely has such a horrific crime attracted as much outcry as the 'Moors Murders'. In the poem, Duffy bravely takes on the voice of Hindley as the 'devil'.	
<b>Summary</b>	
The poem is divided into five clear sections. 'Dirt' describes the forming of the bond between them, an unnatural and sexual chemistry emerging. The next stanza reflects chillingly on their potential victims, but also portrays the relationship's numbing effect on Hindley's commitment to the murder in a way that avoids facing the real truth – 'we buried the doll'. As they are at the end, it reflects on how she still hankered for Brady's attention: 'I wrote to him every day' – she was over her. 'Bible' reflects on long periods in prison, where she clings to various private psychiatrists (she famously befriended Lord Longford – a charitable but misguided figure judged) – to explain and perhaps make excuses for what she did. The next stanzas blame Brady solely in a confused stream of consciousness: 'Can't remember no idea not in the end' in the cell, reflecting on how she is vilified by the public but hoping for 'morning' to come. In the final section, 'Appeal', Hindley states the various ways she may have been executed or be incarcerated for decades. In actual interviews, Hindley had said she wished she was dead. The value of life and punishment with Duffy's clever phrasing 'If life means life means life' suggests imagine Hindley achieving some realisation of what she had done to herself and to the public when she committed those awful crimes with Ian Brady.	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
This is a difficult poem but key to the collection. Alongside some of the other poems, it shows how infatuation can cause a seemingly normal person to behave in shocking ways – and how they can exaggerate this. Duffy also questions public reaction to events like this and how 'life' is defined. Although Duffy does not excuse what Hindley has done, by using her as narrator she makes it more ambiguous.	

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## Poem Focus: *The Devil's Wife*

### Questions on the whole poem

1. Research the story of the 'Moors Murderers' – Ian Brady and Myra Hindley. How do these cases stay in the consciousness of the public for so long? Can you think of any other cases that compare to this one?
2. What is the significance of Duffy choosing to write as Hindley? Why does she make this decision? What are the risks for a poet in doing this?
3. Look at the way that Duffy has structured the poem, especially in terms of the stanzas for each section. Having read the poem, what is the significance of each section?
4. Having read the poem through a number of times, how are you left feeling about Myra Hindley? Duffy's ways of presenting her? Is it a sympathetic portrayal? Give reasons for your answer.

### Questions by section

#### Dirt

5. In the first stanza, Duffy uses staccato (short and abrupt) sentences to create a specific effect. What effect does this have in terms of how we perceive Myra Hindley?
6. Duffy has Hindley conveying two different emotions towards Brady (the first and second stanza). Identify what they are, using supporting quotations to illustrate.
7. How is Brady's violent nature conveyed in the second stanza? Why does this have such an effect on her, and what does this suggest about the power of violence on women?
8. What kind of atmosphere is established in the third stanza? Pick out three phrases and state what they mean literally, and comment on the effect of each upon the reader.

#### Medusa

9. What do you think the words 'I flew in chains' imply in the first stanza?
10. What is the significance of Hindley 'carrying the spade'?
11. Comment on the choice of the words 'Medusa stare'.
12. How does Duffy capture Hindley's vernacular in the third stanza in this section? What effect does this have on the reader's responses to Hindley?
13. Explain the fourth stanza in your own words – what is the effect of Brady's words? How does Hindley therefore being *The Devil's Wife*?

#### Bible

14. How does the style of this section differ from other areas of the poem? What effect does this have, and the effect that it has upon the reader.
15. Comment on the way that Duffy uses repetition in this section. Find three examples and try to explain why this is so.
16. What is significant about the line: 'Didn't see didn't know didn't hear'? What effect does the punctuation here?

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18. How does the length of this section contribute towards its effect?

19. The last three lines of *Night* signify a change in attitude that Duffy wants. How would you describe this, and what does it tell us about how Duffy sees life?

20. Comment on the content of and deeper meaning in this section. In what appropriate ending to the poem?

21. Why does Duffy start the first ten lines of the section with 'If...'?

22. What do you think is meant by the line ‘If life means life means life means life’? How does it reflect any attitudes Duffy has towards what happened to Hindley?

23. How effective do you find the final two lines of the poem?

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## Focus: Symbolism

Carol Ann Duffy frequently uses symbolism to represent ideas or emotions of the poems. The three poems featured on this sheet are prime examples. **Symbolism** is used to describe something that represents a deeper and more meaningful theme, linked to the main subject of the poem.

### Examples of Duffy's use of symbolism in *Thetis*, *Mrs Quasimodo* and *The Devil's Wife*

*But I felt my wings / clipped by the squint of a crossbow's*

Thetis turns herself into other creatures and elements. As an albatross, she is the *Ancient Mariner*. Here, her albatross is the female being held back and injured – the male influence represented by the harmful cross bow.

*he fucked me underneath the gaping, stricken bells*

It is fitting that Mrs Quasimodo has sex with Quasimodo underneath the bells – describing them as 'gaping' and 'stricken', Duffy emphasises the fragility and vulnerability of the character herself – she is wide open to being abused and rejected, something

*coloured lights in the rain*

This is a literal image of the typical seedy British fairground in the rain, but with symbolism: the tragic irony of a place that is meant to be colourful and enjoyable, but is ultimately something much more disturbing and sinister. This is emphasised by the following description.

#### Task

Here are some further examples of symbolism from the poems. In your own words, you think these images are symbolic of, and how they fit into the context of the poem as a whole. Remember - you will need to look at the poems to see where the images are used.

- ...coiled in my charmer's lap (*Thetis*)
- ...my kisses burned, / but the groom wore asbestos (*Thetis*)
- one evening in the lady chapel on my own (*Mrs Quasimodo*)
- thumped wound of a mouth (*The Devil's Wife*)
- He held my heart in his fist and he squeezed it dry (*The Devil's Wife*)
- ...these are the words that crawl out of the wall (*The Devil's Wife*)

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## Essential Essay Tip

### Integrated Quotations

Your teacher will probably keep banging on about the importance of backing up points with text. **Integrating** your quotations within your own sentences, though, makes your response more polished and stylish way. Here's how...

*When Thetis changes her shape in the poem, it is often to a creature or element that is at the mercy of someone or something seemingly stronger and more controlling:*

*'Snake. / Big Mistake. / Coiled in my charmer's lap.'*

*As the snake, she is at the mercy of the 'charmer' – the man who uses his cunning before revealing his real, destructive purposes.*

(63 words)

This is a perfectly suitable example explanation. The quotation is from the point of view of the snake, so there's nothing wrong with it. It's a more stylish way of saying it.

This example also makes a point, uses more than one example, and explains the examples given. The way the student **captures or integrates quotations within their own sentences** enables them to make more detailed points and explanations and use more examples. The response also reads in a much more fluent way and avoids issues with paragraphing and when to start a new line.

*As a snake, Thetis is a 'jungle-floored' in the grass with a power and cunning domineering attitude.*

### Task

Below are some general points about the poem *Mrs Quasimodo*. Develop each point and include integrated quotations and explanations within your points. Try to limit each point to no more than eighty words.

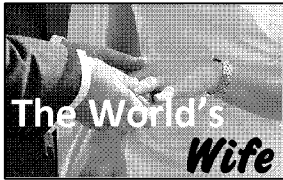
- In the first stanza, she describes herself as an outcast of the village, but her behaviour towards the bells shows how she is being pulled towards the city and her fated love.
- Her descriptions of herself in the second stanza are self deprecating, but she is well-placed in the city.
- Her first encounter with Quasimodo seems to bring an immediate attraction, but she gets out of their first sexual encounter.
- Their early days, described in stanza four, show that they are intimate but all their relationships are often short-lived and not backed up by emotional and physical commitment.
- When she talks of having a private name for his penis, Duffy echoes a similar moment in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.
- In the fifth stanza, there are hints (such as when she describes herself as wallowing) that the relationship has ended.
- The first mention of the gypsy puts the idea in the reader's mind that someone has betrayed her by a younger or more physically beautiful woman.
- Mrs Quasimodo's description of the gypsy is especially poignant, as she notes that she has no sense of malice towards her; this makes her more aware of her own ugliness.
- In the last stanza on page 37, her language shocks and upsets the reader as her rejection has led to self-disgust and hatred.
- In the final section of the poem, her act of destroying the bells shows how a subtle but devastating – but it comes at the cost of losing self-respect.

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## Religion

### Teacher's Notes

- *Pilate's Wife*
- *Pope Joan*
- *Queen Herod*

### Opening Exercise

The teaching group should be divided into three groups, each preparing a poem from the three in this grouping. They should also prepare a three-minute presentation on how religion and religious themes are involved in their poem. Teachers could compare the poems primarily on how *important* religion actually is within the context of the poem. The different groups can ultimately be drawn together – if they are collected in a larger group – to discuss how religion Duffy actually is in terms of context of poems and what – if anything – it says about her religious beliefs.

### Focus: Voice

This worksheet comprises of a series of questions asking students to think about the poems from a different perspective in these three poems. This can, of course, be widened into a larger discussion where students will need to know each of the poems reasonably well before attempting to answer the questions.

### Poem Focus: *Queen Herod*

As this is a substantial and important poem, a worksheet has been included to help students to encourage a deeper level of focus.

### Essential Essay Tips – KPT: The Key Poem Technique

This sheet introduces a second planning technique that works especially well when you have to write about three or four poems in a comparative way. This is always going to be a complex task and following the steps through gives candidates a very strong, concrete structure to follow. Teachers might like to go through the end task with the class rather than get students to do it individually. Ultimately, the technique can be put into practice with any essay question, whether in sketching out initial plans to essay questions, or following through with the final answer under test conditions.

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## Religion

### The Basics

#### Pilate's Wife

<b>Groups</b>	Religion, Disdain
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Pope Joan, Queen Herod, Salome</i>
<b>Background information</b>	
Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, doesn't want to be publicly responsible so he asks the Jewish crowd to decide whether Jesus or the thief Barrabas should be saved and Jesus crucified. In the New Testament, this story has to have nothing to do with Christ, and that Pilate symbolically 'washes his hands' and distances himself from the final decision. The poem is written from Pilate's wife's perspective.	
<b>Summary</b>	
In the first stanza, she immediately comments on Pilate's hands. Duffy often writes them to Christ's later in the poem. These initial comments show her opinion of Pilate as effeminate. In the next stanza she describes her boredom beyond Rome, and how it aroused her interests. The next two stanzas describe other impressions of Christ – a man rather than as the messiah. She finds him alluring and intriguing. The penultimate verse is ambiguous in that it tells Pilate to have nothing to do with him, but suggests her own reason. We then learn of Pilate washing his hands, leading to Jesus – 'the prophesied execution. In the clever final line, Pilate's wife declares that she didn't believe him that Pilate did – an interesting reflection and twist on the story.	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
Pilate's wife is represented as a fairly normal woman who is bored with her situation. Duffy doesn't take on a feminist tone, though, Duffy instead choosing to explore interpretation and though these ideas of attraction, magnetism and faith.	

#### Pope Joan

<b>Groups:</b>	Religion, Feminism
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Queen Herod, Salome, Mrs Aesop, Demeter, Pilate's Wife</i> and also, with
<b>Background information</b>	
The story of Pope Joan has never been proven historically, but goes as follows: in the 13th century she travelled across Europe disguised as a monk and her reputation led to her becoming Pope. She was discovered as a woman when she gave birth to a child by the roadside. Some versions say she was dying at that point; in others, she is stoned to death. Although the Catholic Church has been various historical claims that she did, and she has gone on to become a figure in literature and film.	
<b>Summary</b>	
Duffy takes on the voice of Pope Joan throughout the poem. At the start of the poem she is a priest and pope – able to change the bread and wine of the Catholic mass into Christ (transubstantiation). The reference to 'snakes' in line five is an ironic reference to Eve (responsible for the Fall of Man in the garden of Eden). Duffy goes on to describe how she becomes a non-believer. She addresses a female audience at this point in the poem ('you') and reflects on the <i>real</i> miracle of childbirth compared to the falsity of the miracles of the church.	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
Although the poem has a feminist edge, Duffy's main aim is to try to bring the reader to consider to be the truly wonderful and miraculous thing in life – childbirth. This, a man is capable of, and has therefore been played down by men throughout history. Her own child is further explored in the final poem of the collection, <i>Demeter</i> .	

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## Queen Herod

<b>Groups</b>	Religion, Feminism, Disdain
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Salome, Pope Joan, Demeter, Little Red-Cap, Pilate's Wife</i> and with reference to <i>the</i>
<b>Background information</b>	
In the New Testament, Herod was the King who was alive at the time of the birth of the kings' wish to follow a star that would lead them to a newborn king, Herod tries to find out about what they discover at the end of their journey. They distrust him, though, and the meaning of Christ's birth, help Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus flee. In a fury, Herod kills new-born boy children in Bethlehem, hoping to put an end to any threat to his own power. Herod's queen, and the kings become three queens to give the poem its feminist angle.	
<b>Summary</b>	
The opening stanza describes the arrival of the three queens one Winter, their confident treatment they receive. In the second stanza, with a twist on the original story, the queen when Herod is asleep. They ask to see her daughter, and give her the metaphoric gift of 'happiness', instead of the traditional gold, frankincense and myrrh of the original story. The queen look out for the 'star in the East' which forewarns the new daughter of all males who will oppress her over the course of her future life. The queen suckles her child, pondering on and then is told. She watches the queens leave in the sixth stanza, aware of their strength and the twist. The next stanza sees her ordering for all male new-born children to be killed – again, a twist. The next stanza sees the prophesised birth of the 'Boyfriend Star' – symbolic of the new world where women find themselves in with lustful, selfish young men. The final three stanzas reflect on the power of mothers against the 'thunder and drum' of a male world.	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
This is one of Duffy's more obscure poems – possibly because she twists the original story. Essentially, despite its religious backdrop, it's really about the camaraderie and strength they can stick together to survive and be strong in a world that has been run by men. It shows how women can survive – alone or together – in such circumstances.	

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## Focus: Voice

In *nearly all* of her poems in this collection, Duffy narrates with a voice other than her own. We encourage you to think about the **tone** and characteristics of the **voices** she chooses and what the effect of that choice is upon you, the reader.

### Questions

1. Consider WHO the narrator actually is, and what position in society she occupies. Is there any indication of where she has come from, her background, or how she has achieved her role? How does this give the reader an initial impression?
2. In terms of how Duffy sets her characters up, comment on each of these. How do they have a particular effect on the reader's impression of the character in each case?
  - 'I longed for Rome, home, someone else.' (from *Pilate's Wife*)
  - 'They were wise. Older than I. / They knew what they knew.' (from *Queen Herod*)
  - 'having made the Vatican my home, / Like the best of men.' (from *Pope Joan*)
3. In each case, how *confident* do you think the voice of the poem comes across? How do they achieve their achievements? Write a comment about each of the three in relation to this, with a quotation in each case.
4. Is there any sense of a changing voice in any of the three poems? Deal with this by looking for where you feel a character's voice changes in terms of emotion, tone, mood etc. How does Duffy achieve this using poetic techniques and language?
5. Are there any specific characteristics of voice in any of the poems? For example, Duffy uses the word 'nowt', meaning 'nothing' in the Northern English dialect. Hindley spoke. Although there might not be accents, you might be able to identify the words each narrator uses, and what this tells us about the kind of person they are.
6. In each of the three poems, look at HOW the narrator expresses her opinions. Find examples and comment on them in each of these cases:
  - Pilate's Wife towards Pilate
  - Pilate's wife towards Christ
  - Queen Herod towards the three wise queens
  - Pope Joan towards the men of the Vatican.
7. Finally, having answered these questions, how much sympathy do you feel for the central voice in the poem? Consider this in the light of how they come across. How much of themselves they reveal, and the way in which they 'speak' through their poems.

### Extension

Widen your notes to consider the 'voices' in some of the other poems. You could choose narrators from the ones you feel you have the most sympathy with down to the ones you have the least sympathy with. You could also identify 'voices' you feel *ambivalent* to – that is, you like or have mixed feelings about.

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## Poem Focus: *Queen Herod*

### Questions on the whole poem

1. Research the original story of Herod and the infamous 'slaughter of the Innocents' in the Bible. Why do you think this story might have appealed to Duffy as a poet?
2. There are nine main stanzas or sections of the poem. Summarise what happens in each and explain Duffy's overall sense of structure through the poem. For instance, comment on the balance of descriptive / narrative and reflective verses.
3. Look at the section in italics and suggest why Duffy might have used this form.
4. Throughout the poem, how does the 'voice' of Queen Herod come across? How does your response, you might compare her perspective to other female characters in Duffy's work?
5. How does the poem compare with other poems influenced by religious stories? Is there anything which links it with or makes it stand apart from these others?

### Stanza 1: lines 1-15

6. What is the significance of the 'ice in the trees' in the opening line?
7. Duffy describes the Queens as the 'vivid three'. How does she use language in this section to make them sound impressive, commanding and worldly-wise?

### Stanza 2: lines 16-39

8. How does Queen Herod's description of her child ('the soft bowl of her head') reflect her attitude towards her own daughter?
9. Comment on how the gifts of the queens towards the daughter reflect the original story of the three kings bringing gifts towards the infant Christ.
10. What is the significance of one of the queens looking towards Queen Herod?
11. How does the section in italics reflect some of Duffy's other poems in the collection? What attitude towards the intentions of men as a whole?

### Stanza 3: lines 39-48

12. How has Queen Herod's attitude been changed by the other queens, as seen in the original story?
13. What is the significance of the symbolic line, 'a peacock screamed outside'?

### Stanza 4: lines 49-65

14. Contrast the imagery and mood of this scene to that in the original stanza. What is the difference in terms of the way the narrator starts to see the world around her?
15. How would you explain the real meaning of the 'warnings' of the Black Queen? How does this relate to our real world?

### Stanza 5: lines 66-77

16. How do Queen Herod's actions in this stanza reflect the original story?
17. How does Duffy use language and imagery to convey the narrator's mood?

### Stanza 6: lines 78-89

18. How do the descriptions of the various stars in this section reflect the original story of the Black Queen?
19. Comment on Duffy's choices of adjectives in this section, and how they reflect the suitors for Queen Herod's daughter.

### Stanzas 8, 9, 10: lines 90-98

20. How would you explain these lines and relate them to a) the rest of the poem and b) the original story as a whole in your own words?
21. Comment on the way Duffy has set these final stanzas out in regular triplicate. What effect does this have upon the reader?

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## Essential Essay Tip

### KPT: Key Poem Technique

This sheet will be looking at another method of planning an answer. It works particularly well if you choose a point of view, and then ask how far you agree. Using this method, we will be using *Pope Joan*, *Pilate's Wife* and *Salome* as **comparative poems**. The technique involves taking one of your poems as the **key poem**, and comparing it to three or four other poems.

### Essay Question

How far do you agree with the view that 'despite the religious backdrop of the poems, *The World's Wife* has very little to do with religion'? In your answer, you should discuss two or three poems in detail or range more widely across the whole collection.

#### Paragraph 1

Write a general introduction (see sheet 'Writing the Perfect Intro').

#### Paragraph 2

Make a point about your KEY POEM (*Queen Herod*), in the light of the question.

Paragraph 3: Compare *Pope Joan* to the key poem in the light of the question.

#### Paragraph 4

Make a second point about your KEY POEM (*Queen Herod*) in the light of the question.

#### Paragraph 5

Bring in your third poem (*Pilate's Wife*) and compare it to the KEY POEM (*Queen Herod*) in the light of the point you made in paragraph 4.

#### Paragraph 6

Make a third point about your KEY POEM (*Queen Herod*) in the light of the question.

Paragraph 7: Compare *Salome* to the key poem in the light of the question.

#### Paragraph 8: Conclusion

Bring your four poems together in a conclusion which states finally whether you agree / disagree with the statement given.

**Remember** to keep relevant to the focus in the question (here – whether or not religion is important). You should make references to **form**, **structure** and **language** throughout your points.

### Task

Using the KEY POEM TECHNIQUE, develop the paragraphs outlined here by writing in note form the actual points you would make, and jotting down some ideas you might use within each paragraph.

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## Greed

### Teacher's Notes

- *Mrs Midas*
- *Salome*
- *Mrs Faust*

### Opening Exercise

Following a quick reading of the three poems, find as many ways as possible the nature of the various characters' greed in each of these poems. Students of modern life and gender into the discussion? Do men and women have attitudes towards gaining power and acquiring material goods?

### Poem Focus: *Mrs Faust*

Again, as this is a substantial and important poem, a worksheet has been included to encourage a deeper level of focus.

### Essential Essay Tips – Conclusions to die for!

With this sheet, students are given tips with regards to closing their exam response as well as being given advice, they are encouraged to evaluate good and bad examples. The essence of the advice is to stress that the best conclusions are about leaving a strong impression of your work rather than merely summarising what has already been said.

### Balloon Debate: *Mrs Midas*, *Salome*, *Mrs Faust*

The sheet outlines the main rules of a 'balloon debate'. This is essentially a debate split into three groups, each trying to justify why their allotted character should stay in the balloon which is plummeting towards the ground, and why the other two characters should be thrown out to 'lighten the load'. As the sheet says, there are just two rounds, so teams must prepare arguments for their character, the second only coming into play if they survive the first round. A teacher, an individual, or the teacher can act as the judge. During each round, teams must state why their own character is staying in the balloon, and they must also state why other characters should be thrown out! **It is essential that all students read the texts of the poems.** Judges and teams should be reminded of this throughout the debate. This will make students more familiar with each poem.

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## Greed

### The Basics

#### Mrs Midas

<b>Groups</b>	Classical Mythology, Life Changes, Feminist, Greed
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Salome</i> , <i>Mrs Faust</i> and, to a lesser extent, <i>Mrs Tiresias</i> , <i>Mrs Sisyphus</i> , <i>Mrs Midas</i>
<b>Background information</b>	
King Midas is granted one wish by the god Dionysus. Greedily, he wishes for the power that all he touches into gold. At first, this works brilliantly until the old fool realises that doing so cuts him off from everything he needs to live a normal life. Desperate, he returns to the river and should bathe in the river. Midas does as he is told, and returns to normal, a humble man in a humble boot!	
<b>Summary</b>	
As Mrs Midas, Duffy describes a picture of domestic comfort shattered by the greed of King Midas, who turns all he touches into gold. Once in the house, he behaves differently, smug and self-satisfied. He fearfully moves all objects (including herself!) out of reach. Despite dreams of having a normal life, he decides enough is enough, and he moves from his temporary exile in the spare room back to the main house. King Midas from the myth, he is doomed forever to be a strange man surrounded by gold.	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
Despite the sad beauty of some of the imagery, the poem shows us how one person's greed can affect another's relationship. As with Mrs Tiresias, Mrs Midas initially takes the brunt of the consequences of her husband's actions. The poem offers practical solutions – the modern angle on the tale suggesting that this is a common problem for headstrong and ambitious men.	

#### Salome

<b>Groups:</b>	Greed, Religion, Feminist
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Mrs Faust</i> , <i>Mrs Midas</i> and, in terms of biblical connections, <i>Pilate's Wife</i> , <i>Salome</i>
<b>Background information</b>	
From the New Testament, Salome is the step-daughter of King Herod of Galilee who was a Jewish Baptist. In a famous scene often depicted in works of art and film, Salome performs a dance for her father, who subsequently grants her any wish she desires. She asks for John the Baptist's head on a platter. This is granted! Duffy takes on the perspective of Salome, but in a modern, hard-living woman after a night out with the girls!	
<b>Summary</b>	
In the opening stanza, Salome wakes up with someone beside her – a 'head on the platter' – her night on the tiles. She thinks him rather dishy, and kisses him to find that his lips are cold. To feel the effects of her hangover, she calls for her maid in stanza two, reflecting on the power she has waited upon. The third stanza finds her declaring 'never again', resolving to 'clean up her act'. The final stanza refers to all of her previous 'conquests' as 'lamb to the slaughter.' The final stanza finds her once more – now seeing it is just that as she flings back the sheets to reveal the severed head of John the Baptist.	
<b>In a nutshell</b>	
Duffy creates a darkly humorous character with her modern-day Salome. We might sympathise with her displeasure whilst judging this selfish, indulgent creature – but are we also perhaps a little more judgemental? We might judge her more harshly because she is a woman? Are we uncomfortable with her power? More associated with 'lads' out on the town?	

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## Mrs Faust

<b>Groups</b>	Greed, Life Changes
<b>Link poems</b>	<i>Mrs Midas, Salome, Mrs Tiresias, Mrs Lazarus</i> and, in terms of religious belief, <i>Joan</i>

### Background information

*Faust* is the story of a doctor who dabbles in the occult and makes a pact with the devil. In terms of wealth and power during his life on Earth, he will give up his soul. Known in a number of forms, it is best known through the 17<sup>th</sup> century play *Doctor Faustus* and Goethe's *Faust*, written just over 200 years later. In the former, Faust is destroyed by the devil, whereas in other versions he repents and his soul is saved. As with other stories, this poem is told from Faust's wife's perspective as she also gets drawn into his wayward, extravagant couple in a very modern context.

### Summary

In Stanza 1, their early married life is explored – a time of academic success. In Stanza 2, Mrs Faust has more and more material goods to show for his success and Mrs Faust declares her love. In the next stanza, they begin to live separate lives – him paying for other women, her indulging in her own crazes. Faust's lust for the trappings of wealth are further described in stanza five, and Mrs Faust overhearing him make his pact with 'the other' – obviously the devil! Stanza 7 describes Faust's position of increasing power, then going on to do things previously thought impossible. Stanza 8 becomes increasingly farcical and far-fetched here. Stanza 9 goes on to describe his fall from power – perhaps a comment on modern media moguls investing their interest and finance in the occult. In the meantime Mrs Faust indulges in surgery, travel and various image changes. Stanza 10 compares Marlowe's tale with Faust's meeting with Helen of Troy culminate in Faust being destroyed. Stanza 11 As Mrs Faust reflects on the whole story, having gained everything and nothing, she smirks – he never actually had a soul to sell in the first place!

### In a nutshell

There are many humorous, clever and rich images in this funny poem; and Duffy could be said to say that she is solely critical of men. In this poem, Mrs Faust is just as greedy and indulgent as Faust is a reflection on modern couples who live life at a selfish, breakneck pace and ultimately have a 'soulful' take on life. Duffy also ultimately questions what the soul is – we might contrast this against her take on Christianity in *Pope Joan* and *Pilate's Wife* here.

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## Poem Focus: *Mrs Faust*

### Questions on the whole poem

1. Research the story of *Faust* or *Faustus*. In each case where the story is told, what is the tale? Do you think that Duffy's version, told from Mrs Faust's point of view, is a new tale? Explain your answer.
2. Throughout the poem, Duffy uses a number of devices to create a sense of movement through a number of changes at high speed. Try to pinpoint these techniques in the poem, and describe the effects of each upon the reader.
3. Duffy chooses to include a number of references that place the tale in a modern context. Give quotations which show this, and comment on how each reflects today's society. How does this give this poem a modern context, whereas in other poems, such as *Pilate's Wife*, the poem is set in a historical context?
4. Duffy has deliberately structured her poem into fifteen stanzas of nine lines each. Give reasons why she might have chosen to pick such a regular and fixed structure. How does the collection use such a regular form?

### Stanzas 1-3

5. What does the first stanza seek to establish? How does Duffy's use of internal rhyme encourage the reader to move through the verse?
6. Mrs Faust seems very aware of how she comes across. Pick out two examples from the poem, and explain how it contrasts to her husband's.
7. What is the effect upon the reader of Duffy rhyming 'chronic irritation' with 'irritation' in the third stanza?

### Stanzas 4-6

8. In the fourth stanza, Duffy plays with the sounds of words in interesting ways. Pick out three words which have similar sounds (remember, they don't necessarily have to rhyme). What is the effect of this technique given the subject matter in this section?
9. Why does the narrator describe the cigar smoke smell as 'oddly sexy' in the fifth stanza? How does this represent in terms of the nature of the pact Faust makes with the devil?
10. How is the phrase 'the world...spread its legs' an amusing metaphor with which Duffy describes the actions after the pact?

### Stanzas 7-10

11. Comment on how Duffy contrasts the fantastical with the real in this section.
12. How does Mrs Faust respond to her husband's actions? Is there any irony in her response? Is she 'enlightened'?

### Stanzas 11-12

13. Helen of Troy features in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. How does Duffy put a modern twist on the tale?
14. Why do you think Duffy chooses to give some of the poem (the part in italics) a different voice? How does the voice differ from Mrs Faust's?

### Stanzas 13-15 (end)

15. Comment on the way that Duffy has Faust 'oddly smirking' as he's dragged to his death.
16. Given that Faust leaves all his ill-gotten gains to his wife, why does she say 'I'll be well'?
17. How might the final lines in the poem extend to become a comment on modern life? Is it a neat and fitting ending for Faust's existence? What is the significance of Mrs Faust saying 'I'll be well' after he'd gone?

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## Essential Essay Tip

### Conclusions to die

There are **two things** that make the lasting impression on the person marking your essay: how you start and how you end. Always try to leave five minutes at the end of the exam to write a de essential tips about how to do this...

### Essay Question

How far do you agree with the view that, in *The World's Wife*, Duffy is 'primarily concerned with the failings of human nature'? In your answer, you should either refer to two or three poems or range more widely across the whole collection.

- Start with the end in mind. As you plan your essay before writing, think through what you want to conclude. What is your answer actually building towards? Frame your conclusion around this. Then start to write your introduction – it will give your essay purpose as you write.
- Keep your eye on the clock. Make sure you have left enough time at the end of the exam to write your conclusion. If you have already given some thought to this, it shouldn't take up too much time.
- Try to do more than summarise. Rather than use the conclusion as a loose summary of what you have said, try to tie all your points together to say make a 'super-point' which draws everything together.
- Leave your own 'footprint'. Try to get in a personal response to the poems in question. You should try to avoid referring specifically to yourself (don't, for example, use phrases like 'I think that...') but instead use phrases such as 'Duffy powerfully conveys...' or 'Duffy shows...' or 'Duffy makes you think...'
- Avoid writing 'In conclusion...' or 'In summary...' at the start of your concluding paragraph. If everybody does it, it doesn't make it right. It isn't! Examiners have read it a thousand times.

### Examples

Below are some examples of conclusions written by students who are responding to the essay question on this page. Put them in order (best to worse) and write a teacher's 'critique' of each.

#### Example A

*In conclusion, as I have said, Duffy is largely concerned with human failings, but she also shows how it can be possible to overcome these in poems like 'Demeter'.*

#### Example B

*Ran out of time – see plan for conc.*

#### Example C

*Whilst showing human failings, Duffy's sense of humility, Duffy's sense of autobiography and life positive post-script.*

#### Example D

*I think that Duffy is essentially concerned with human failings. All the points I've made in this essay clearly show this.*

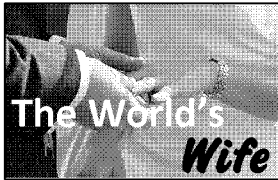
#### Example E

*On the one hand Duffy IS concerned with human failings, on the other, though, she isn't. It's a bit of an opinion, really. That's what I think.*

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## Balloon Debate

- Mrs Midas
  - Mrs Faust
  - Salome
- These three characters are all tempted by the trappings of luxury. But are they worthy of saving? This exercise will help you decide.

Your class will be splitting into three groups. Each one will represent one of the characters. They are all in a hot air balloon which is losing height rapidly and needs to be lightened. Each group should provide a three-minute argument of why your character should stay in the balloon and the other two should be thrown out to lighten the load! Whoever is the judge will decide which group is best, and then who becomes the eventual winner! You will be given extra credit for using words of the poem when making your character's case! Use the sheet to build your case.

### Your character:

#### Round 1

Your arguments for your character	Textual support
Your arguments against the other two	Textual support

#### Round 2 (if you get this far!)

Your arguments for your character	Textual support
Your argument against the other one left	Textual support

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## About The Exam

### What To Do In The Weeks Leading Up To It

#### How do I know if I'm covering enough?

It helps if you have read ALL of the poems – after all, the collection takes nowhen, say, a novel. Ideally you will also know a) something about the source that Duffy wrote each poem, and b) the general 'tone' and content of each poem.

That said, you are not really expected to know ALL of the poems inside out – the and understanding of *every* line of *every* poem! As a good rule of thumb, a good poems (making sure these are key poems of a decent length) will probably enable questions. If you're unlucky, one of the questions could name a poem you don't have the option of going for the other question, which will not name a poem.

So, what do we mean by a 'good knowledge' of a poem? Well, here are some ideas:

- You will need to know enough about the original source that gave Duffy. This involves knowing about any references in the poem that refer back to the source.
- You will need to know what the poem has in common with other poems – subject matter and style.
- You will need to have informed an opinion beforehand about the narrator's life and relationships.
- You will need to be aware of the overall form and structure of the poem within it. Remember that you don't have to memorise these, as you have your copy. You will, though, need to be able to know where to find them.
- It will also help if you have 'favourite parts' of these poems – lines that are outrageous or hilarious or disturbing. These will help you write about the poem in a genuine and enthusiastic way.

#### How do I best prepare?

- Settle on the poems that you intend to work with and KEEP READING. As you become more familiar with them, the more you will see and understand within them and grow to enjoy them. Have your copy by your bed so that you can pick it up at night.
- Make a set of revision cards for each poem. On each card, summarise the poem, how it links well with, and write some key quotations. If there is room, outline the themes it employs in that poem too.
- In your notes, make more detailed analyses of each poem. As you do this, you will be constantly finding links between poems, as this is what you will have to do in the exam.
- Keep going over the sheets that give advice on various aspects of writing. Make yourself so familiar with the planning techniques that you know exactly what to do.
- As you get nearer to the exam, use practice questions to write ten-minute plans. These plans can be developed, by adding introductions, conclusions, or a final point would lead each point.
- Make time to practice writing whole responses. Ask someone to choose a poem for you and give yourself an undisturbed hour in which you can answer it. Then ask them to mark it – or if he or she is busy, to glance over it and give some points for improvement. Try to do this at least once a week when you are less than a week from the exam.

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## About The Exam

### The Exam Essay

#### What is the format of the exam?

Your Unit 1 exam paper is split into the three options for the paper. The option is *The Struggle for Identity in Modern Literature*. In Section A, you will spend about 30 minutes on a compulsory question called *Contextual Linking*. You will then go on to Section B, where you will answer two questions on Carol Ann Duffy's *The World's Wife*. You only have to answer **one** question. You should spend about an hour on it. You will be allowed to have your copy of the book, but it mustn't have *any* notes written on it.

#### What types of questions are likely to crop up?

There are **two** main types of questions.

##### Type 1

The question will give you the name, and perhaps some information about one poem, and then ask you how the poem relates to the collection as a whole. This could be by:

- asking you to argue whether, in subject matter and style, the poem is 'key' to the collection.
- asking you to argue whether, in subject matter and style, the poem is typical of the collection.
- asking you whether, in subject matter and style, the poem is fitting as an opening poem to the collection.

In this type of question, you will be expected to refer to other poems in the collection.

##### Example

Duffy published *Mrs Midas* (page 11) several years before its inclusion in *The World's Wife*. Do you agree with the view that, in terms of subject matter and style, this poem is the key to the collection?

##### Type 2

The question will give you a controversial statement, either indirectly or as a direct statement, about the collection of poems. There is no named poem. You will then be asked to argue whether you agree or not, by referring to two or three poems in detail or ranging more widely across the collection as a whole.

##### Example

How far do you agree with the view that *The World's Wife* is 'nothing but feminist poetry'? You should either refer to two or three poems in detail or choose from a range across the collection.

#### Which should I answer and why?

This obviously depends on how confident you feel about each question. That's the first thing to avoid. If, for example, you don't feel very familiar with the named poem, then you won't want to waste valuable planning time reading and interpreting it. If you've either really enjoyed or spent a lot of time on, then it's an ideal choice for you to be the strongest element to influence your decision.

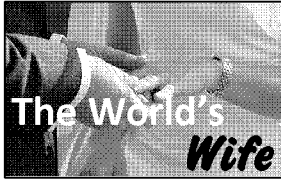
If, having read the critical opinion in the Type 2 question, a series of obvious points emerge that you feel happy writing about, then it would seem a good choice to go for. A statement brings out a strong feeling in you – either in support of it or against it – that brings out some strong, effective writing in you.

Whatever your choice, there are very important considerations and strategies that you need to answer the question effectively.

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## About The

### Exam Questions

Here are some examples of the types of questions that are likely to cr

Duffy begins the collection with *Little Red Cap*. To what extent do yo  
of subject matter and style, this poem is an appropriate one to introd

How far do you agree with the view that *The World's Wife* 'portrays  
In your answer, you should either refer to two or three poems in deta  
whole collection.

Duffy's poem *The Devil's Wife* has been greeted with both praise and  
*The World's Wife*. To what extent do you agree with the view that, in  
typifies the content of the collection as a whole?

To what extent do you agree with the view that Duffy 'uses the one  
*World's Wife*? In your answer, you should either refer to two or three  
widely across the whole collection.

Carol Ann Duffy concludes the collection with *Demeter*. To what ext  
in terms of subject matter and style, this poem is an appropriate conc

Remind yourself of the poem *Mrs Quasimodo*. How far do you agree  
subject matter and style, this poem is the key to the whole collection?

A critic once criticised Duffy for 'portraying men as weak and shallow  
you agree with this viewpoint? In your answer, you should either re  
or range more widely through the collection.

Remind yourself of the poem *Mrs Faust*. How typical, in terms of sub  
the rest of the collection?

\*Please note: at the time of writing, none of these titles have appeared as past questi  
or any other examining board.

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