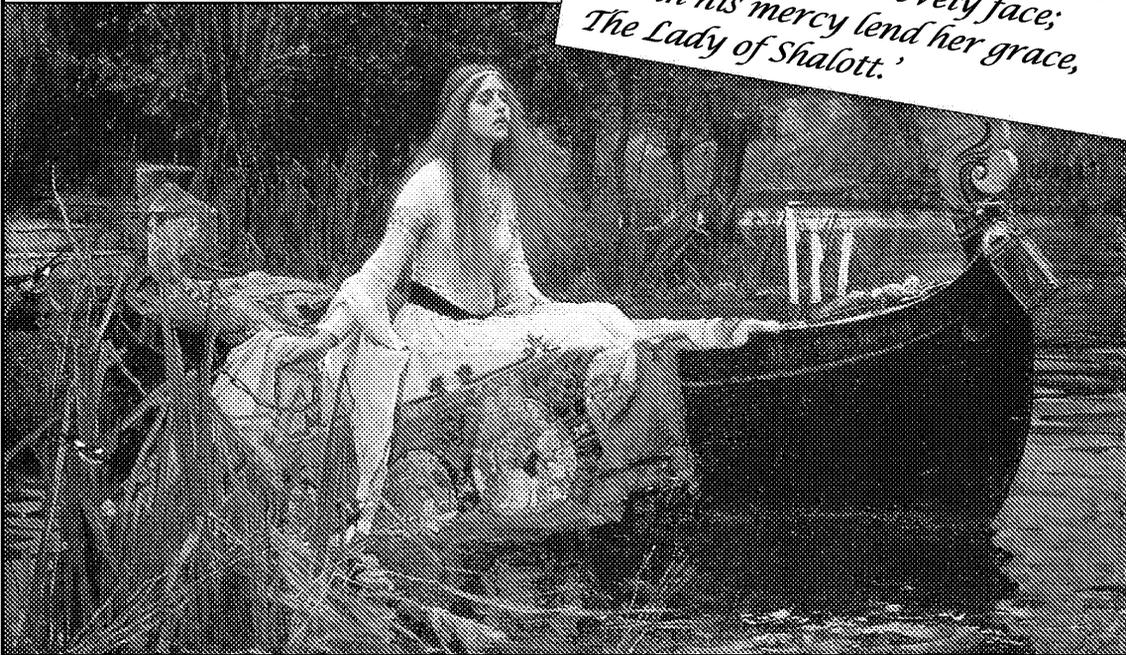


# Alfred Tennyson Poetry

*Comprehensive Guide for International Baccalaureate: Language A: Literature, Part 2: Detailed Study*



*But Lancelot mused a little space;  
He said, 'She has a lovely face;  
God in his mercy lend her grace,  
The Lady of Shalott.'*



POD 7053

[english@zigzageducation.co.uk](mailto:english@zigzageducation.co.uk)  
[zigzageducation.co.uk](http://zigzageducation.co.uk)

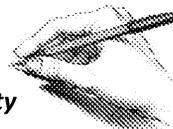
ZigZag is a large community of over 6000 teachers & educationalists.  
Review new titles or publish your own work

**Fancy being involved?**

Then register at...

**[publishmenow.co.uk](http://publishmenow.co.uk)**

*The Professional Publishing Community*



Alternatively email new resource ideas directly to...

**[publishmenow@zigzageducation.co.uk](mailto:publishmenow@zigzageducation.co.uk)**

# Contents

Thank You for Choosing ZigZag Education.....	
Teacher Feedback Opportunity .....	
Terms and Conditions of Use.....	
Teacher’s Introduction .....	
Exam Information.....	
Guidance for Teachers in the use of Sample Assessment Material .....	
Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Brief Timeline .....	
Biographical Overview .....	
Cultural Contexts.....	
Key Themes in the Poems.....	
The Poems.....	
‘The Outcast’ .....	
‘Mariana’ (1830).....	
‘The Lady of Shalott’ .....	
‘Morte d’ Arthur’ (1842).....	
‘Break, Break, Break...’ .....	
‘The Lotos-eaters’ .....	
‘Ulysses’ .....	
‘Locksley Hall’ (1842).....	
‘The Golden Year’ (1846).....	
From <i>The Princess</i> .....	
‘The Splendour Falls...’ .....	
‘Tears, Idle Tears’.....	
‘Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal’ .....	
‘Come Down, O Maid’ .....	
From <i>In Memoriam A. H. H.</i> (1850) .....	
From ‘Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington’ (1852) .....	
‘The Charge of the Light Brigade’ .....	
From ‘Maud’: A Monodrama (1855).....	
‘Tithonus’ (1860).....	
‘Northern Farmer – New Style’ .....	
From ‘Merlin and Vivien’ ( <i>Idylls of the King</i> ) .....	
‘To E. FitzGerald’ in ‘Tiresias’ .....	
‘Crossing The Bar’ (1889).....	
‘June Bracken and Heather’ .....	
Further Prompts for Discussion.....	
Sample Assessment Material .....	
<i>Individual Oral Commentary</i> .....	
<i>Sample Assessment 1</i> .....	
<i>Sample Assessment 2</i> .....	
<i>Sample Discussion Questions for Higher Level</i> .....	
Select Glossary.....	

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## Teacher's Introduction

This guide is intended to support the study of Alfred Lord Tennyson's poetry, specifically in the teaching of the International Baccalaureate: Language A: Literature, *Part 2: Detailed Study*. The guide focuses on the 22 poems contained in the selection of *Everyman's Poetry*, edited by Michael Baron. There is a huge body of academic criticism about Tennyson whose work is, of course, canonical to poetry of the nineteenth century. In recent years, Tennyson's work has been subject to critical approaches, which reconsider his writing within the cultural contexts of empire and nation, and between faith and the sciences of geology, physics and astronomy.

I have not brought the biographical aspects to bear upon the work to any great extent for some interesting readings relating to a complex and even contradictory character. Biographies and studies which do highlight the early relationship with Arthur and his family of origin, and in his own family. Rather I have tried to relate Tennyson to his cultural and historical contexts; I have offered some analysis that takes in to account and how these relate to meaning and content. I hope too to have given some indication of contemporary critical reception was. These are not of course exhaustive reading points and ideas, which might be applied across other poems in the groupings, but emphasise the dominant themes and preoccupations that recur in this collection.

Tennyson has a varied and large oeuvre occupying various genres ranging from the *Idylls*, to the brief, personal and intimate in 'June Bracken and Heather', and 'New Style'. The collection of poems given in this edition gives a very good selection, comprehensive, given that the oeuvre is very diverse in terms of metrical form, added, appeal, and indeed, quality. Some of the selections here are extracts from *Princess* and the *Idylls*, and the student clearly benefits from that judicious choice of direct verse; long blank verse attempting epic proportions; heroic couplets in serious public occasions, as well as a good deal of dialect poetry.

However, to the modern reader, some of Tennyson's poetry, while not appearing so, may for a number of reasons be unappealing and may offer many challenges. An apparent refusal to enter the political and cultural debates of the day in any meaningful way brought criticism from his peers, and may equally alienate today's reader. Further, mythical and classical settings may initially alienate the modern reader, particularly wider reading in Victorian poetry, for much Victorian poetry did draw upon the past. As he writes within the Parnassian tradition: the use of archaisms and other mannerisms of traditional poetic language can be irritating to the reader accustomed to modern contemporary poetry.

Where there is a lack of appeal this arises from its lack of continuity, on the whole, with the legacy of modernist poetry, its forms, language and preoccupations. Tennyson was not a radical poet formally, or one who wished to rigorously interrogate the politics and social issues of his day thematically. He does not, on the whole, offer the emotional and personal aspects found in Thomas Hardy's poetry, nor the engaging vigour, dexterity and surprises of Robert Browning's verse, yet with careful and sustained reading, much of the collection here will reward the careful student.

### Note to teachers:

The discussion activities provided with the poems have been replicated to a minimum of 3 per page for ease of photocopying.

L Randolph and T Kellock, September 2016

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED



Regis  
any  
resc  
ye  
de

\* res  
sugge  
oc

# Exam Information

## International Baccalaureate: Language A: Literature Part 2: Detailed Study

The International Baccalaureate Language and Literature courses direct students to explore the role of language in society. Language assists in the quest for meaning for a society. Students will explore the role of language to their contexts, exploring questions of message and worth. Students will also explore how language develops and develop their own critical approaches to texts.

The Language A: Literature course focuses on texts as a means of experiencing and exploring different interpretations and perceptions. In addition to the course direction, students will engage in the close analysis of extracts. Students are required to demonstrate a strong knowledge of the text and an ability to analyse literary techniques and effects.

Students will need to demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of the text and be able to relate their ideas to the wider text. They will need to analyse the language, structure and content of different literary techniques. They should comment on how the writer's choices affect the meaning. Their response will need to be organised and structured in a logical manner and presented clearly and fluently.

### Individual Oral Commentary

Assessment: Oral Commentary (30 marks) (15%)

Students deliver an oral commentary and answer questions on an extract (approximately 100 lines) from *Doctor Faustus*. Students will not know which extract they will be assessed on in advance. They are required to answer a series of related questions following their commentary. This is done in an interview style.

### Structure of Assessment

- **Start:** Students provided with extract and guiding questions.
- **Preparation time:** 20 minutes, during which time students may study the extract and answer the questions and make notes.
- **Total delivery time:** 10 minutes, made up of 8 minutes of commentary and 2 minutes of further questioning by their teacher.
- **Commentary:** Up to 8 minutes of analytical commentary, delivered in a logical and clear expression.
- **Responses to questions:** 2 minutes to respond to probing questions from the teacher in an interview style.

#### Please Note:

The Higher Level (HL) assessment requires students to present a commentary and answer probing questions on a part 2 text which **must** be poetry. They will follow this with questions focused on **one** of the **other** part 2 texts.

For teachers and students using this guide to prepare for the discussion element of the assessment, the guiding and probing questions may be used as the basis for the discussion. We have included further discussion questions at the end of the sample assessment material section.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED



# Guidance for Teachers in the use of Sample Assessment Material for Tennyson

## Sample Assessment Material for Tennyson

This material may be used as a practise assessment for students to conduct with complete in pairs or small groups to provide constructive criticism and learn from adapted by changing the guiding and probing questions or by replacing the extract text. Students and teachers could use the assessment objectives provided by the assess and critique responses.

Teaching or revision suggestion: Students could record their oral commentary using a recorder on a mobile phone. The recording could be used for self- or peer- assessment or teacher for feedback, as an effective means of practising for the assessment.

## Guiding Questions

These are questions provided by the assessor to guide the student towards a significant point in the extract. They should be broad enough to allow the student to demonstrate their understanding of the text as a whole, and encourage analytical and critical thinking. One or two questions should be included in the sample material, for the assessor to select during the oral commentary and the needs of the student.

## Extract

The extract should be approximately 40 lines in length. The content should be selected to allow comment on significant themes and ideas in the text and to analyse appropriate textual features.

## Probing Questions

These are questions directed to the student after they have completed the oral commentary to provoke more extensive exploration and analysis of the extract. If students have completed the oral commentary in sufficient detail, the probing questions may be used to support these students. Differentiated sample questions have been included in the sample material, for the assessor to select during the oral commentary and the needs of the student.

## Sample Discussion Questions for Higher Level (HL)

These questions are designed to support and sustain HL students in a further 10-15 second part 2 text selected by the teacher. The range of questions is intended to support a range of texts; however, some questions will logically have more relevance to certain texts; it is down to the teacher's judgment as to which questions will best support an effective discussion.

INSPECTION COPY

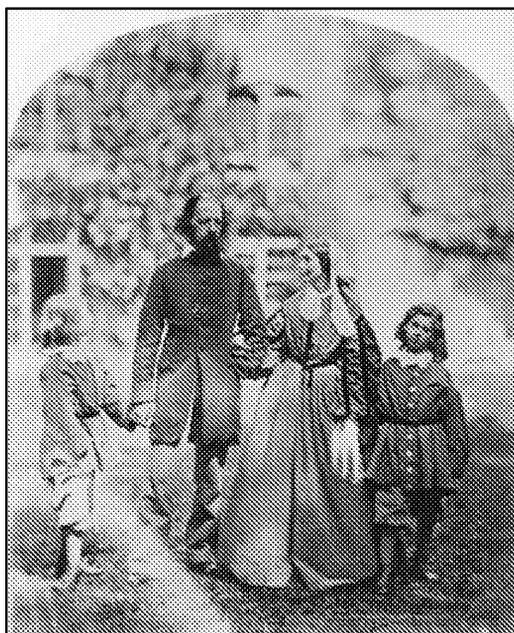
COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED



# Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Brief Timeline

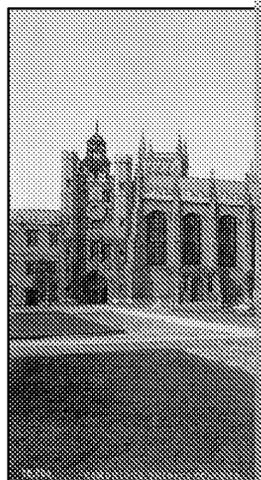
INSPECTION COPY

- Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*. Makes trip to Pyrenees with Hallam 1830
- September, death of Arthur Henry Hallam 1833
- Engagement to Emily Sellwood 1838
- Engagement broken off 1840
- Loses fortune invested in a woodcarving business 1843
- Receives Civil List Pension of £200 pa 1845
- The Princess* 1847
- Appointed Poet Laureate, after Wordsworth's death 1850
- Publishes 'in Memoriam A.H.H.'
- Marriage to Emily Sellwood, 13 June

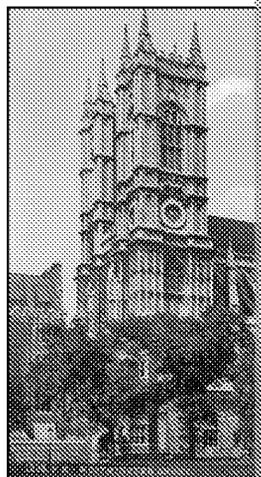


- Tiresias and Other Poems*. *Idylls* completed 1885
- Son Lionel dies from 'jungle fever' contracted in India 1886
- Demeter and Other Poems* 1889
- Dies 6 October. Buried in Westminster Abbey 1892

- 1809 Born, Somers
- 1827 Enters Trinity



- 1851 Son stillborn
- 1852 Son Hallam born - 'Ode on the Death of the Great Captain Ross'
- 1853 Moves family to Farnham
- 1854 Son Lionel born
- 1855 'Maud'
- 1859 *Idylls of the Kings*
- 1864 *Enoch Arden*
- 1868 Moves to Alton
- 1869 *The Holy Grail*
- 1884 Made a peer of the realm, Tennyson



**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## Biographical Overview



It would be difficult to overstate that Alfred Lord Tennyson's career that spanned the length of Victorian England amounted to a veritable industry. He was read and read widely by a mixed social class, and is recognisable from various portraits and cartoons in the public domain. He was photographed keenly by painter Margaret Cameron.

Alfred Tennyson was born in 1809 on 5 August 1809 to a clergyman and Elizabeth (née Fytche) Tennyson. They had eight children, one who died in infancy. The family was creative, all wrote and read together. Various members suffered from various health problems, including illness, epilepsy, heavy drinking, and it seemed to have had their effect on him. He regards considerable periods of his life as a significant degree, about his being. Various understandings of that family ancestry and biological diseases and health conditions after Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* receiving the more modern scientific work until after 1889, and the publication of work on heredity.

Tennyson studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he joined the Apostles Club, forming lasting friendships, writing and discussing poetry with his peers. It was a very formative period who formed a deep bond with Arthur Henry Hallam, during an intense friendship that ended in Hallam's early death. It was a relationship that left a profound and far-reaching impact on Tennyson and his life. The 'In Memoriam' elegies, now considered by most to be his best work, were included in the Baron edition, were written as a response to his grief at Hallam's death.

Whilst the relationship with Hallam was not avowedly or openly homosexual as we would term it, such close, loving male friendships might be better understood within a range of relationships which were not unusual for the culture in the period. The relationship may or may not have involved intimacies, but it clearly offered Tennyson a satisfying and deeply intimate connection. The publication of 'In Memoriam', many reviewers and other readers, famously including Elizabeth Barrett Browning, found consolation in it on the death of her husband, Prince Albert, made no objection to Tennyson's man as beloved. It was written within the parameters of a recognised poetic form, as love sonnets had been addressed to a young man.

Tennyson and Hallam travelled together in France and the Spanish Pyrenees, assisting in the cause against a reactionary Spanish monarchy. Homosocial bonds were further strengthened when Hallam became engaged to Tennyson's sister, Emily. In 1830, Hallam introduced Tennyson to Miss Sellwood, whom he would later marry. Alfred left Cambridge shortly after taking the degree, in 1831. His engagement to Emily was initially broken off by his father's disapproval.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



A period of a decade between 1840 and 1850 during which Tennyson did not publish as the 10-year silence, yet he was still writing and redrafting. During these years Tennyson spent much time depressed, and receiving the then fashionable, now discredited, hydrotherapy, which Charles Darwin, amongst other Victorian luminaries, would credit to their mental and physical ill health. In 1845 Tennyson was granted a Civil List Pension to relieve some financial insecurity.

After a long engagement, even by Victorian standards, he married Emily Sellwood in 1841, who was in domestic and private service, in a vicarage at Shiplake, near Reading. He was now 40, and his honeymoon in the West Country included a visit to Arthur Hallam's grave. The first son, Charles, was stillborn. Their second son, Hallam, was born in 1852, and the third, Lionel, in 1854.

Following William Wordsworth's death, in 1850 Tennyson succeeded him as Poet Laureate, a position awarded by the Crown on advice by government to a poet who is deemed to be the best of the day. In the Victorian era this meant writing about events in the royal family as well as national events. A notable collection this gives us 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington'. Hallam Tennyson died on a sea journey, in April 1886. Alfred Lord Tennyson died at Aldworth 6 October 1892, and he was buried in Westminster Abbey in October 1892. His son Hallam and his daughter Alice wrote Tennyson's *Memoir* and it was published in 1897, a year after Emily's death.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## Cultural Contexts

### The Role of the Poet and Poetry

Of course it is the novel that is synonymous with literary innovation during the nineteenth century. It became the dominant form of literary production in which social and moral questions were addressed thematically and structurally. The novel directly and vigorously addressed the issues of the time, through its experimentation with, and development of narrative and character. Within this wider cultural framework that we must situate the poetry of the period, and the limits of what it could realise as a literary form. Whether or not poets could compete with their form in relationship to the novel, the field of poetry was produced in opposition to the novel. Poetry, traditionally a form of high art, and dominated by a male elite, stood in contrast to the novel, against a rapidly popular mass market form, cheaper methods of production, and more widely available and affordable books to a wider readership.

Arthur Henry Hallam's review essay 'On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry' (1831), discussed what he saw as the key features of Tennyson's poetry. He expressed his interest in aesthetic effects, and how this corresponded to the poetic tradition of the time. The aestheticism of the verse concerned its effect of communicating the love of beauty. Tennyson recognised this as its intention, rather than to be didactic. Tennyson himself shared his views about the role of poetry, and it has been argued that this significant essay anticipated the later treatment of image and symbol.

Key to the conception of the artist and the expressive aesthetic in the Romantic and Victorian era was the close association of poet with notions of the 'genius'. The artist was seen as working outside the material and cultural economic conditions of the time. In the pursuit of 'pure' self-expression, poets having special access to the realm of emotion and imagination, sources giving rise to their creativity. Genius was deemed a force of nature that was not subject to social constraints or mores. Perhaps the major poets to influence Tennyson were Byron, and in some aspects Tennyson adhered to the Romantic idea of divine inspiration. The role of the poet and great art, and its interpretation by the art critic and writer, John Ruskin, is explicitly in both the early poem, 'The Mystic' (1830), and in the later, 'The Ancient and Modern' in the poem, 'The Golden Year' he gives himself and his peers the Romantic property of genius that he saw for the poet.

Tennyson's early aesthetics, his aims for a poetry of feeling, of the cultivation of beauty and pleasure and sensation in the subjective contemplation of the aesthetic, ran against the utilitarian goals. The philosophy and economics of utilitarianism, developed by Jeremy Bentham and philosopher John Stuart Mill, which Charles Dickens famously railed against in *Hard Times*, devalued the status and value for poetry, which in their scheme could not have the status then accorded to it along with philosophy and history. Its recommendation to a logical and practical approach in a complex industrialising society ran against the values of an exuberant and irrepressible imagination in the genius of artistic and creative impulse and production.

If, for Tennyson at the start of his career, poetry should be 'art for art's sake', as a high form of art defined partly in contrast with the novel as a low form of art, it was a prerogative. Poetry needed to address spirituality and religious faith as orthodox and conservative. Consolidating the country's morals, English poetry was considered by some to have a role in national culture, and the imperial race, given the role of Britain as an imperial power and others. The social and moral role of poet was valued, and this sense of respect was evident when Tennyson took on the title of Laureate in 1850. Although his poetry was very popular and made him a very rich man, Tennyson was not a particularly original thinker or philosopher. He received beliefs and ideas, never quite taking on the mantle of spokesman deemed necessary. He lived through a great deal of social, cultural and political change, but his chief reason for writing was to address these issues obliquely, if at all. When he did address the social issues, his conclusions are neither thorough nor sophisticated, without the radicalism of the

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



form that other writers sought and achieved. Tennyson's work has had a mixed and enjoyed popularity in many quarters, there were critics and peers who found his work in his own age. His major series of poems, the *Idylls of the King*, for its revival of mythic time to be antiquated, and was criticised, even satirised, as being out of touch with the issues that a poet should be addressing, as Baron in his introduction to the selection.

Women poets of this period, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, and others, wrote on political and moral topics: slavery and abolition, the discontents of marriage, and others. In her long prose poem, 'Aurora Leigh' (1857), expresses the opinion of many contemporary poets. She outlines what poetry she places value upon: 'I do distrust the poet who discerns times, / And trundles back his soul five hundred years, / Past moat and drawbridge'. In this section she continues to develop what she thinks the role of the poet in her time should be.

‘ if there's room for poets in this world  
A little overgrown (I think there is),  
Their sole work is to represent the age,  
their age, not Charlemagne's,— this live, throbbing age,  
That brawls, cheats, maddens, calculates, aspires,  
And spends more passion, more heroic heat,  
Betwixt the mirrors of its drawing-rooms,  
Than Roland with his knights at Roncesvalles.<sup>2</sup> ’

Barrett Browning observes that, 'King Arthur's self / Was commonplace to Lady Guinevere / Minstrels seemed as flat / As Fleet Street to our poets',<sup>3</sup> thereby, albeit obliquely, criticising the romanticising of the past and of a wilful cultural blindness not to find and create interesting and burning issues of emancipation, subjecthood and equality, around him. Significantly, she presents a very female and maternal figure for the poet (traditionally presented as passive) who works with cultural Creativity:

‘ catch / Upon the burning lava of a song  
The full-veined, heaving double-breasted Age,  
That when the next shall come, the men of that  
May touch the impress with reverent hand, and say  
Behold, — behold the paps we all have sucked!  
This bosom seems to beat still, or at least  
It sets ours beating: this is living art,  
Which thus presents and thus records true life.<sup>4</sup> ’

For Barrett Browning, a valuable cultural inheritance has an enduring vitality that teaches us both of the past by providing a truthful record.

When Tennyson chose to write about the Greek and Roman heroes and deities, it was not a subject matter that all of his contemporaries thought suitable for poetry. It posed difficulties to those who wished to invest poetry, like the novel, with the realism of characters. Bernard Richards cites how Gerald Manley Hopkins remarked to Robert Bridges: 'Believe me, the Greek gods are a totally unworkable material; the merest frigidities of living work of art they are brought into.'<sup>5</sup> To reach for, and to revive myth in a culture of uncertainties and rapid social change, was to offer reassurances to the reader of the past. Tennyson's use of myth allows us to analyse cultural stresses and perceive where they lie, and religious faction and doubt, and scientific advance.

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 'Aurora Leigh', Fifth Book, edited by Cora Kaplan, (London: The Women's Press, 1993), p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp.200–207

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp.210

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp.215–223

<sup>5</sup> *The Letters of GMH to RB*, edited by C C Abbott (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 217, cited in *English Romanticism*, ed. Richards (London: Longman, 1988).

## Science and Faith

Alfred Tennyson's poetry, especially the later work, in many ways typified the poet he was interested in science, geology, astronomy, and the new 'science' of psychology. The time he endeavoured to, and succeeded in preserving and renewing his religious faith. Tennyson, like so many of his contemporaries, his interest in these radically and new expressions of anxiety about the world that science was discovering and the impact on his own society in particular.

Tennyson inhabited a culture where the fields of science, psychology, sociology and history were not as highly specialised and professionalised as they are now. Instead they shared different disciplines published together in widely read periodicals and read by a common audience. There were shared vocabularies and discourses between the fields of literature and science and their writing; she cites how

‘(a)mong contemporaries, scientific writers invoke [...] by far the most frequently. Tennyson was, Huxley held, the ‘first poet since Lucretius... who has taken the time to understand the work and tendency of the men of science’. Huxley even ascribes an insight into scientific method shown in Tennyson's ‘In Memoriam’ was ‘quite that of the greatest experts’.<sup>6</sup>

Whilst Tennyson took an active interest in science, and incorporated its recent ideas into his thinking, and the pervasive notes of melancholy and nostalgia from his simultaneous belief in the progress of gradualism and evolutionary meliorism contrasted with his sadness at secular thinking and the scientific discoveries shaking faith and understanding.

Beer has cited how the scientist and author of *The Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin's theory in solar physics of entropy, and the realisation that the sun would eventually run out of sufficient heat and life to sustain life on Earth:

‘Believing as I do that man in the distant future will be a far more perfect creature than we are, it is an intolerable thought that he and all other sentient beings are doomed to complete annihilation after such long-continued slow progress. To those who fully accept the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul, the destruction of our world will not appear so dreadful.’

It is well documented how Darwin's crisis in faith and belief in God fundamentally affected his health. For Tennyson, this desire to believe, and to have others believe in the immortal soul was a pressing one, and a belief rehearsed both privately, in letters and in conversations.

## Poetic Techniques and Form

In poetry's hierarchy of genres and forms, epic and tragedy rank highest, and it is in the production in these areas that Tennyson wished to accrue the cultural capital associated with the epic features long metaphors, myths and legends like those deployed or developed in the *Idylls*, the use of tragic attitudes, but their relevance or significance may be at a distance for those who may have little knowledge of the central story and the main characters.

Tennyson's use of blank verse, for writing a long narrative or prose poem, moved from the *Ulysses*, the *Idylls*, and ‘St Simeon’. Blank verse is unrhymed and has an iambic pentameter but within this metre there is of course much variation in style. For a useful discussion of blank verse, see Philip Hobsbaum's treatment of blank verse.<sup>8</sup> Using the term ‘blank verse’ clearly distinguished, see Philip Hobsbaum's treatment of blank verse.<sup>8</sup> Using the term ‘blank verse’ that the type of blank verse that Tennyson uses is Miltonic in that it is based on the iambic pentameter which characteristically uses heavy stresses, resonant vowel sounds, and longer pauses to create the rhythm. When it utilises heavy stresses it can create an atmosphere of portend.

<sup>6</sup> *Open Fields: Science in Cultural Encounter*, Gillian Beer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 211

<sup>7</sup> Charles Darwin in 1876 in *Autobiographies of Charles Darwin and Thomas Henry Huxley*, ed. G de Beer (London: Duckworth, 1976), p. 220. Cited by Gillian Beer, *Open Fields*, p. 220

<sup>8</sup> *Metre, Rhythm and Verse Form*, Philip Hobsbaum (London: Routledge, 1996), pp.10–21

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



Tennyson deploys this to great effect. His blank verse has a literary vocabulary, not natural speech, thus it is suited to the epic narrative, as in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Tennyson's contemporary, may be said to have used a more Shakespearean form of monologues closer to a natural speech rhythm, and makes greater use of enjambement that strains the rhythm.

Tennyson's approach is highly pictorial: he often writes to create a visual picture of scenes, objects, people, the effect of light, sounds and atmosphere. Much of his poetry work, and Tennyson is preoccupied with the state of stasis or suspended animation through a number of language devices. Therefore Tennyson's work readily lent itself to the Pre-Raphaelites, who aimed at a mixture of high realist detail and typological symbolism. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood chose to paint scenes which acted as homage to Tennyson, both them as well as professionally. An illustrated collection of Tennyson's poems published in 1870 brought together a range of illustrators and painters, including Pre-Raphaelites such as

One of Tennyson's main modes is within the expressive poetry of sensation and the analytical. He could explore the more interesting psychological aspects of a narrative through characters, particularly through the dramatic monologue encountered for example in 'Locksley Hall' in this collection.

A good deal of Tennyson's poetry was written in what can be described as the Parnassian manner popular in the era, and was defined as such by fellow poet, Gerald Manly Hopkins, in his categories of poetic style. The Parnassian style is a form of poetic diction of long tradition, and in its work its features can be found. For a lively and detailed discussion of the Parnassian treatment, which gives considerable attention to Tennyson.<sup>9</sup> The extensive use of alliteration and romanticism in Tennyson's verse style; an overall atmosphere of cultural tradition and allusion; the deliberate use of 'poetic' rather than colloquial and living language; the poetic world, often of the past and extensive reliance on techniques such as alliteration and the poetic coinage of verbs from nouns.

Prefixes and suffixes figure frequently, and may be deemed more poetic sounding. In Tennyson we find the use of 'dis', such as in 'disedge', 'dislink', similarly with the suffixes may make a noun into a verb; Tennyson also often makes nouns perform verbs, as in 'Mariana'. Elisions are common: for example in 'Morte d'Arthur' we have 'o'er' and 'conjoining nouns also abound: 'Deep-meadow'd', 'orchard-lawns', 'topaz-lights'. The use of archaism and creating another poetic world.

We also find the technique of periphrasis: the replacement of a word not considered in the lexicon, particularly as a means to avoid the colloquial. Again, in 'Morte d'Arthur' we find 'fringed his lips' (p.220) for beard, which unfortunately has a comic effect. Too much may bring the reader too forcefully back into the present, and interrupts the sense of an event occurring in a remote past, if not the actual past. Therefore all these techniques of poetic diction, evoking another 'sphere', amounting to an anti-realism.

Allusions abound throughout Tennyson's work, and situate him within the poetic tradition unconsciously. His work refers to literary forebears, poets and other writers, to pictorial art. Allusion is a method by which the poem can generate its meanings artistically, both formally and in the language of its phrasing. Whilst some allusions (reference to Shakespeare) other more reminiscent phrasing may be evocative of Shakespeare may be unconscious or not intended to refer to a specific text or definite meaning. In contemporary times, Tennyson's strengths and successes lay in other directions. Today, toward. For example, his dialect poems, rooted in his Lincolnshire upbringing, he does not present in his attempts at epic.

<sup>9</sup> *English Poetry of the Victorian Period*, Bernard Richards (London: Longman, 1988).

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## Key Themes in the Poems

### Loss and Longing

The dominant tone and theme of his poetry was invested with the sense of what as the 'passion of the past'. Nostalgia for times past was a common theme to Victorian culture, which in part seems symptomatic of a disengagement with the present (of course a present of rapid, radical and widespread change: a dissolution of social order about by the development of industrialism; the growth of cities changed communities; culturally the growth of agnosticism and atheism challenged private and public institutions; must have contributed to this melancholic longing for the past and pervading sense of loss. Figures are frequently alienated from their community and/or family, a theme with atomising effects of industrialism and of the philosophy of utilitarianism. Tennyson's sense of conscience and peril of the individual and invests it with a wider public resonance.

### Madness and Despair

Tennyson's poetry explores states of being at the depths of human misery, melancholy, and these states were historically associated with genius and the figure of artist or poet. In Romantic theories of poetry. Increasingly toward the end of the century ideas of genius came to see this not as an inspired and mystical state but rather as a pathology and a symptom of cultural decline. If inspired, visionary cultural leadership is one aspect of the poet's role, its proximity to the mad and bad.

### The Role of Art and Artist

There is a tension between Tennyson's aspiration to uphold the ideal of the poet as independent from the 'real' world and its concerns and claims, and the role for the poet in a nation of values for an imperial nation undergoing religious doubt and other massive social changes. This might explore and identify what the shifts are in Tennyson's writing career; can the poet's role be contrasted with the later in terms of subject matter and aesthetic? Poems published after 1850 are more public in nature and more outward looking in their engagement with the Laureateship or to other changes and a broader and more gradual change?

### Love and Devotion

Many of the poems explore feelings of love, primarily those in romantic relationships but also between men and comrades. In Victorian poetry, especially from the early 19th century, a continuum in which religious and human love and devotion figured in the exploration of the self. Devotion is explored in great depth in 'In Memoriam', where a religious dimension of love and relationship. Arthur Hallam evolves into a semi-divine, even Christ-like figure, an embodiment of perfect qualities. In particular, Hallam's own attitude to his faith is inspirational, with Tennyson a devotee or disciple. Candidates might wish to compare poems addressing love, and consider how these contribute to the meanings; what is the role of love for the reader today and why?

### Identity: Masculinity and Nationhood

Some of the poems, such as the 'Ode to the Duke of Wellington', were written as commissions to otherwise mark a national event, and form part of the duty of the Poet Laureate. Poems of instances of imperial and military activities influencing Tennyson's thought. Concepts of honour, loyalty and patriotism are explored in a majority of poems included in the syllabus: 'The Light Brigade', and the 'Ode', and through a more classical vein in 'Ulysses', 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', 'of 'Locksley Hall' and 'Maud', and the knights of the *Idylls*, especially in 'Morte d'Arthur'. How masculinity can be defined in contrast to that of the Orient, an East that is figured as 'The Lotos-eaters'. Even Tithonus is trapped in a slothful torpor in his union with Eos, but he has cherished and sanctified the ideal social unit as the home and family, how is Tennyson's sense of more deeply expressed in ideas of the homeland or nation?

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED



## Nature and Science

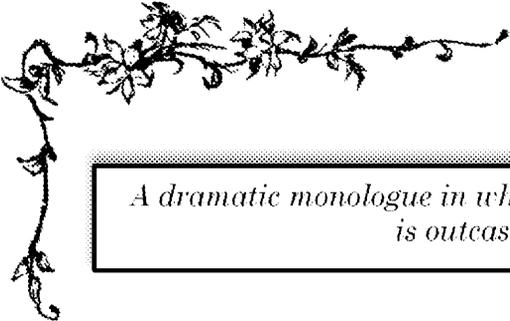
The nature constructed by an optimistic Romanticism – a spiritual and sometimes inspiration and appreciation of the sublime which promoted fine sensibility and in the nineteenth century to a vision of a natural world more complex and contradictory and to faith. Discoveries in science meant nature would become characterised as itself in the struggle for survival. With the discovery of entropy and the death of the world and religious certainties were challenged, and humanity was not seen as the highest point of evolution.

Correlative between states of feeling and thoughts with the natural world receive treatment; scientific language and tropes are embedded in Tennyson's writing. In to how its inexorable laws meant the overturning of species or types into others forms and ultimately of all life with the end of the solar system. Seeking to wed new understandings of the natural world, for many Victorians, 'gradualism', a pace change, especially without rapid revolution was an appealing one. Students might representations of natural and social order are enmeshed and how their treatment to his contemporaries, and to later poets, such as Hardy.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## 'The Outcast'

*A dramatic monologue in which the speaker describes the home as is outcast and explores the state of dispossession*

As a dramatic monologue this poem shares its form with a number of others including points of comparison deriving from both form and themes. The speaker's description of the pain of loss of heritage, patrimony, and community. Each stanza explores a corner of a sunlit hills, and deserted hall. Each, regardless of season or time of day, is figured as a landscape and in which the speaker situates himself as a pariah. As with others of the dramatic monologue 'Tithonus', 'Ulysses', 'Maud', and 'Locksley Hall', we must piece together meaning from a fragmentary and subjective description given by the outcast. We might fruitfully consider to whom and perhaps even why they are able to give a monologue, without interrupting their return to native as outcast or displaced, dispossessed of state or patrimony, and estranged from one's home and family, is a recurring one in the above mentioned poems, and especially in the state of madness or confused and painful thoughts and feeling states.

The outcast's state of mind is disordered, and the poet deploys the technique of the dramatic monologue to the extent that we find the internal landscape of the protagonist projected onto the landscape. The mood of the first stanza is dreamy and melancholy. The speaker hears the wind in the hills as a sign of unhappiness: '*sunless days*' (3) of '*broken loves*' (3), and amongst the shadows of the hills '*Memory's widowed eyes*', finds ghosts. In the second stanza the sense of an almost exhausted speaker is heightened through the four repetitions of 'Each' opening the stanza. Every feature of the hills evoke painful memories in the speaker. In the adjectives used to describe the hills find intimations of a troubled and inchoate past: '*broken stile*', '*wavy path*', '*hollow*', '*babbling*', '*noisy wrath*', amongst '*knotted reeds*'. Each aspect of the place brings to mind '*To this worn mind and fevered brain*' (19–20).

The Father's Hall is imagined as abandoned, empty, ruined, and significantly, 'void'. This may be symbolic of the father-land or nation, and might express the experience of dislocation from cultural or national identity and place.

Again, as in 'Tithonus', the speaker seems condemned to a state of stasis, in which he is in a state of physical and emotional exile. At one level, this poem explores one of the central issues that was preoccupied: the role of the poet, the issue of poetic cultural heritage and his relationship to his own patrimony. To this extent we will see how it relates to poems as various forms of 'Memoriam'.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## 'The Outcast': Discussion Activities

---

1. With a partner, discuss what state of mind the outcast is in. What techniques does he use?
2. Talk about what may have happened to him? Why do you think this?
3. With your partner, look closely at the language and metre. Discuss how they create different atmospheres in each of the three stanzas.
4. In groups, discuss how 'The Outcast' treats the state of mind of its central characters in 'Maud' and to 'Locksley Hall'.
5. Objective correlative is a technique that the poet uses here, and to great effect. Give examples to explain its use in both poems.
6. With your partner, discuss how the themes of return and dispossession in the poems relate to those in 'Ulysses'.



## 'The Outcast': Discussion Activities

---

1. With a partner, discuss what state of mind the outcast is in. What techniques does he use?
2. Talk about what may have happened to him. Why do you think this?
3. With your partner, look closely at the language and metre. Discuss how they create different atmospheres in each of the three stanzas.
4. In groups, discuss how 'The Outcast' treats the state of mind of its central characters in 'Maud' and to 'Locksley Hall'.
5. Objective correlative is a technique that the poet uses here, and to great effect. Give examples to explain its use in both poems.
6. With your partner, discuss how the themes of return and dispossession in the poems relate to those in 'Ulysses'.



## 'The Outcast': Discussion Activities

---

1. With a partner, discuss what state of mind the outcast is in. What techniques does he use?
2. Talk about what may have happened to him. Why do you think this?
3. With your partner, look closely at the language and metre. Discuss how they create different atmospheres in each of the three stanzas.
4. In groups, discuss how 'The Outcast' treats the state of mind of its central characters in 'Maud' and to 'Locksley Hall'.
5. Objective correlative is a technique that the poet uses here, and to great effect. Give examples to explain its use in both poems.
6. With your partner, discuss how the themes of return and dispossession in the poems relate to those in 'Ulysses'.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## 'Mariana' (1830)

*Mariana waits in the desolate and remote grange for her affianced poet creates a stifling and lonely atmosphere of decay and ruin, state of mind through detailed depiction of the natural surroundings.*

The poem is framed with reference to Shakespeare's play, *Measure for Measure*; it gives us the character of Mariana, the abandoned fiancée of the corrupt judge, Angelo, isolated in the secluded country house, awaiting his return. Her passivity and stoicism in waiting for the deceitful Angelo, who wishes to break off the engagement because her dowry has been lost. Angelo bargains to have sex with the nun, Isabella. In Shakespeare's play, Mariana is paired with Isabella, who participates in a plot to entrap Angelo by having sex with him in place of Isabella, then obliges him to marry her having consummated their marriage. This bawdier characteristic and element of the Jacobean plot would not be appealing to the Victorian audience, and it is her controlled and poignant suffering that is instead depicted.

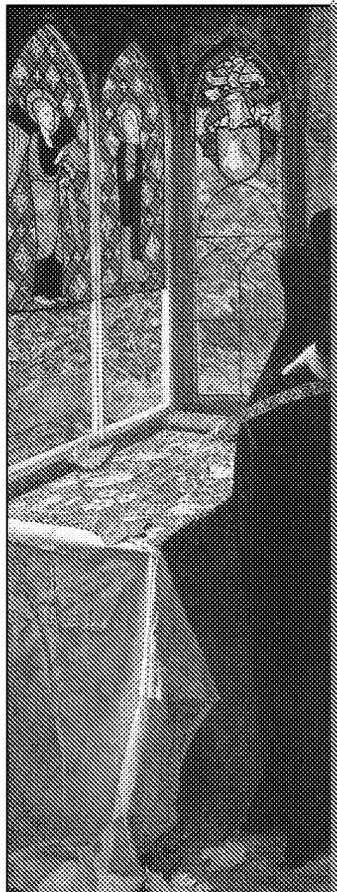
The play's themes of justice, betrayal and truth, and in particular the wronged woman, give this poem its moral centre, as Tennyson projects what Mariana's state of mind might be on to her surroundings. It is an accomplished and early example of the technique of objective correlative, or pathetic fallacy, the projecting of inner feelings on to outward settings, that would be much used by Tennyson in other poems. The poem is a very visual one, and it achieves this through an extensive description of domestic and natural details. These hallmarks of a realistic Victorian gaze, and this attention to exhaustive detail is developed in the visual arts of the time; indeed Mariana was painted later by John Everett Millais in 1851 and even in the poem. See illustration on p. 21.

Overall, as in such a large group of Tennyson's poems, 'Mariana' has a static effect of despondency and disappointment, and thus is one of the earliest manifestations of this mood and longing in Tennyson's work. There is no narrative development; consequently, the poem focuses on Mariana's narrow world and wretched state of mind. The stillness is partially created by the rhyming stanzas and the repetition (seven times) of Mariana's spoken refrain:

'My life is dreary, / He cometh not', she said;  
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary, I would that I were dead!'

The refrain alters little as the verse progresses, except to conclude:

'Then said she, 'I am very dreary, He will not come', she said;  
She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
Oh God, that I were dead!'



INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



Internal rhyming and alliteration clot the metre further, creating a claustrophobia with language that conveys neglect and loneliness: *'crusted/rusted'* (2, 3), *'sad and worn'* (7), *'dews were dried'* (14). Mariana's thoughts and feelings of passivity and dreaming state. They are projected onto both the domestic surroundings and even the natural world. *'A sluice with blacken'd waters slept / And o'er it many, round mosses crept'* (38–40), has a particularly nightmarish quality. The surroundings of with its one poplar tree (41) and the flat, (20) even, *'level waste'* (44) landscape of no colour in this natural landscape, all is monochromatic: *'blackest'* (1), *'gray-eye'* (38), *'silver-green'* (42), *'gray'* (44), *'white'* (51), with the result of appearing almost to thrive or show seasonal change. The emphasis is upon diurnal rhythms – day and night – to indicate the monotonous passing of time, rather than seasonal changes, creating

The fifth and sixth stanzas evoke something of the Gothic with their focus on domestic spaces: *'glimmer'd thro' the doors / Old footsteps trod the upper floors / Old voices called from the pane; the mouse / Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd, or from the crevice'*

From the first stanza which rapidly establishes that the *'grange'*, her home, is an obverse of what the cherished Victorian home and hearth – and as the woman's world – of mid-century writers, most notably Dickens, should be. This is therefore working against the grain as it mourns the failure of a marital union and home-life, a disturbing and pitiful image for the way in which it portrays a young woman so unnaturally positioned: unable to fulfil her domestic duties of home and family.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## **'Mariana': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, identify the techniques used to create the mood of the poem, and discuss how they affect the reader's response.
2. In groups, share your ideas on Mariana's feelings, based on the mood of the poem.
3. In groups, look at the painting by J E Millais (1851). Share thoughts on the impact of the painting. How does this compare with the poem?
4. Now discuss the differences between the paintings of Mariana by Millais (1851) and J.M.W. Turner (1842). How do their meanings compare and contrast with Tennyson's poem?



## **'Mariana': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, identify the techniques used to create the mood of the poem, and discuss how they affect the reader's response.
2. In groups, share your ideas on Mariana's feelings, based on the mood of the poem.
3. In groups, look at the painting by J E Millais (1851). Share thoughts on the impact of the painting. How does this compare with the poem?
4. Now discuss the differences between the paintings of Mariana by Millais (1851) and J.M.W. Turner (1842). How do their meanings compare and contrast with Tennyson's poem?



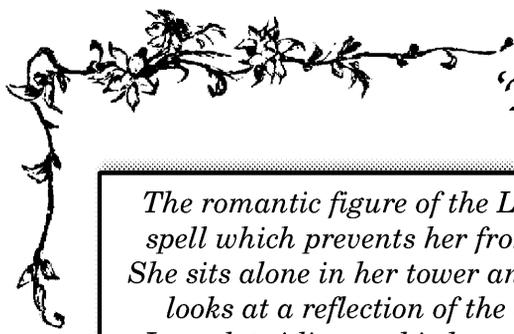
## **'Mariana': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, identify the techniques used to create the mood of the poem, and discuss how they affect the reader's response.
2. In groups, share your ideas on Mariana's feelings, based on the mood of the poem.
3. In groups, look at the painting by J E Millais (1851). Share thoughts on the impact of the painting. How does this compare with the poem?
4. Now discuss the differences between the paintings of Mariana by Millais (1851) and J.M.W. Turner (1842). How do their meanings compare and contrast with Tennyson's poem?

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## 'The Lady of Shalott'

*The romantic figure of the Lady of Shalott is confined within the spell which prevents her from direct contact with the outside world. She sits alone in her tower and weaves a tapestry, unable to look directly at a reflection of the city of Camelot through her mirror. When Lancelot riding on his horse through the fields brings the curse upon her, she looks at him; she is then bound to drown herself on the river that runs past the castle. When the knights find her body in the boat, Lancelot comments upon her beauty.*

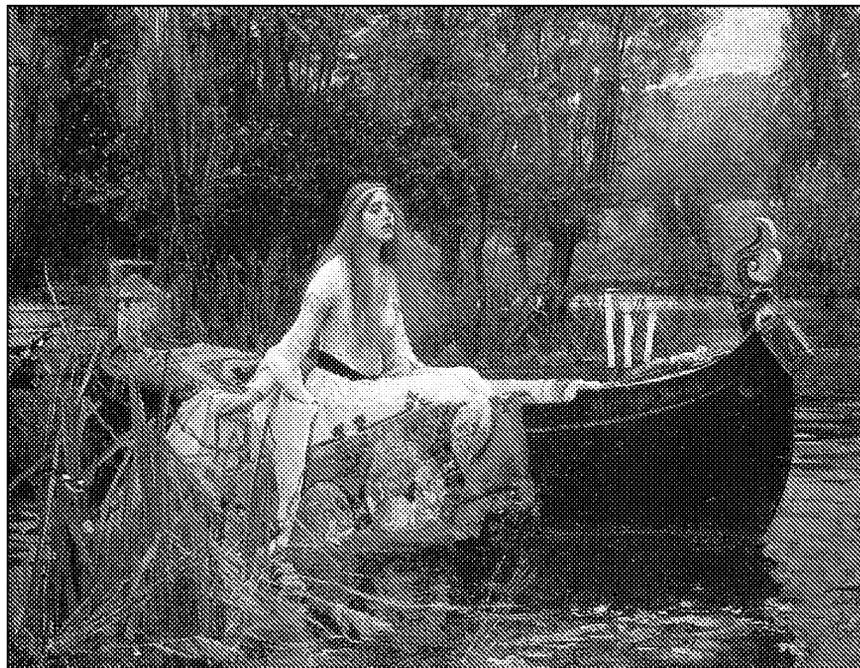
The poem is an early composition, first published in 1833. It is a lyrical and romantic work that participates in the Arthurian legends, it is of a different poetic form than 'Morte d'Arthur' series. The narrative traces the movement from the Lady's imprisonment to her liberation, to experience, and its concomitant reference to sexual desire. Yet typically of so-called 'feminine' poetry, despite the unfolding of a story, it is concerned with the state of stasis, and this is reflected in the poem's structure.

The poem has extreme metrical regularity; the even rhythm gives the poem its almost hypnotic quality. The rhyming lines followed by a fifth shorter give a measured pulsing, delivering a dreamlike atmosphere partly created by a predominance of lightly stressed syllables. This can lead to some words that may seem not to contribute to the meaning, and become necessary to maintain the rhythm. For example, 'the mirror blue / The knights come riding two and two' (60). The speed changes again in the fifth stanza of part three: the rhythm is more rapid although the eighth line is longer, there are lighter stresses within the feet. The repetition of 'She' creates drama as it emphasizes the isolation of the Lady.

*' she left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces thro' the room,  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She look'd down to Camelot. (109–113)*

The rapidity in the change of pace is used to signal the dramatic moment when the Lady looks out with the real world, and with her emotional life.

As with the poem, 'Mariana', states of emotion are rendered through imagery and metaphor.



J W Waterhouse, 'The Lady of Shalott', 1888

say the  
an ov  
accur  
Tenn  
his us  
and t  
dram  
sheav  
blue,  
clear  
flood  
wan  
bank

Sir La  
dram  
sust  
a hea  
meta  
cata

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



almost fairy-tale-like scene: the *'gemmy bridle glitter'd free / Like to some branch golden Galaxy'* (82–84), *'bridle bells'* (85), *'blazon'd baldric'* (87), *'silver bugle'* (88), *'saddle-leather'* (92), *'helmet and the helmet-feather / Burn'd like one burning flame'* (93). Jewelled colour and light of surfaces and textures are lovingly detailed: the *'purple bright'* (97), *'bearded meteor, trailing light'* (98). With his knightly beauty and prowess, Lancelot has no substance as a real person or even a substantial figure in the poem's symbolic world. He features as a catalyst, a romantic and manly figure who might have been a part of the world of human relationships and society.

We might consider the Lady of Shalott as an artist figure, mystical and mythical, or a curse – laid on her by whom we do not know – condemned to weave alone. She is isolated from her community in her tower about her, in their midst but not of them. Her observations of the world and others reads rather like a stock inventory of village and court inhabitants of the Middle Ages:

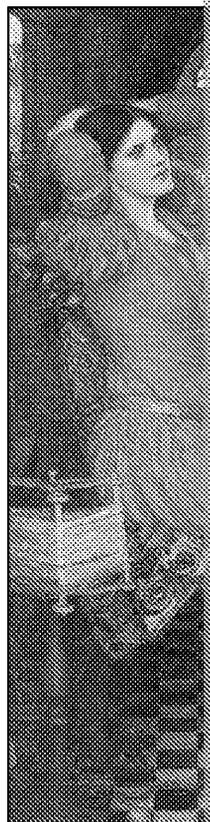
‘  
*the surly village-churls,  
 And the red cloaks of market girls [...]  
 Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 An abbot on an ambling pad,  
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad, (52–58)* ,

Divorced from this cast of medieval characters, she is reduced to seeing only the reflection of herself in her mirror. At the end of part two she sees a newlywed couple, and expresses her longing for the world, *'I am half sick of shadows'* (71) suggests she is mourning the loss of this as well as her physical, sexual and emotional connection with others, and this awakening of desire is linked with Sir Lancelot. Once she enters in to the world about her, with Lancelot's appearance, it is her sexual desire that leads to her demise. When she writes her name upon the wall to allow her to know the real world of Camelot, that she realises her subjectivity or selfhood. But the same desire, being, must be the same episode of her death. She is characterised by passivity and isolation. In common with what is almost a leitmotif in Victorian art and literature, the dead body is picturesque: *'Lying, robed in snowy white / That loosely flew to left and right – / The leaves upon her falling light'* (136–138). Indeed, this image from the poem becomes eroticised in the painting by the Pre-Raphaelite painter, J W Waterhouse (1888).

The final stanza approaches bathos: Lancelot's reaction is woefully inadequate, even absurd, and indicates no depth of feeling, and thus the poem ends very flatly:

‘  
*But Lancelot mused a little space;  
 He said, 'She has a lovely face;  
 God in his mercy lend her grace,  
 The Lady of Shalott.'* (168–171) ,

Is Lancelot's vague regret meant to illustrate knightly chivalry? Are we invited to see it is a rather weak and ineffective response, or does it in its very inadequacy illustrate the loss that the Lady has lived with in failing to enjoy any strong human bonds? The remoteness of the subject matter, and the poet's interest in describing how a scene looks, rather than entering into the emotional world of the characters, here, gives this poem a lack of depth or liveliness that might involve the reader such as in *'Maud'* or *'Locksley Hall'*.



J W Waterhouse, 'The Lady of Shalott', 1915

**COPYRIGHT  
 PROTECTED**



## **'The Lady of Shalott': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss the extent to which the poem comments upon the role of contrast between her room, and the sights outside her window. How could work?
2. What images of femininity does the poet present here and in 'Mariana'?
3. Rewrite some stanzas of the poem as a dramatic monologue from the point of view of Mariana. Read your work to your classmates, and explain your creative choices.
4. In groups, discuss a selection of other literary or pictorial representations of beautiful women.



## **'The Lady of Shalott': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss the extent to which the poem comments upon the role of contrast between her room, and the sights outside her window. How could work?
2. With your group, discuss the poem's ability to engage our feelings. How is it different from 'd'Arthur'?
3. Rewrite some stanzas of the poem as a dramatic monologue from the point of view of Mariana. Read your work to your classmates, and explain your creative choices.
4. In groups, discuss a selection of other literary or pictorial representations of beautiful women.



## **'The Lady of Shalott': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss the extent to which the poem comments upon the role of contrast between her room, and the sights outside her window. How could work?
2. With your group, discuss the poem's ability to engage our feelings. How is it different from 'd'Arthur'?
3. Rewrite some stanzas of the poem as a dramatic monologue from the point of view of Mariana. Read your work to your classmates, and explain your creative choices.
4. In groups, discuss a selection of other literary or pictorial representations of beautiful women.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## 'Morte d'Arthur' (1842)

The poem explores the themes of honour and loyalty as codes of conduct, the death of King Arthur, the dissolution of the Round Table, and his knights, Sir Bedivere. The mortally wounded Arthur is carried by boat to a lake. Bedivere is tasked with returning Arthur's sword, Excalibur, to the lake. Bedivere, after overcoming his initial reluctance, does so, rewarded. Arthur meditates upon the values of his life, the observance of chivalry, and is put out to sea in a boat, mourned by the three queens.

The series of poems, *Idylls of the King* was popular with a very large audience and less enthusiastic. John Sterling, in 1842, had objected that 'the miraculous legends are very near to us, and as reproduced by any modern writer must be a mere ingenious fiction'. Poems (1842)', in *Tennyson: The Critical Heritage* edited by J Jump (1967), p. 119.

Yet of the Victorians, Tennyson was not alone in his interest in the medieval period. In poetry, prose, and in art – though not to a great extent in fiction – were fascinated by the past of the Renaissance. The period abounds with architecture, literature, fine art, and the Middle Ages, by Browning, William Morris, Rossetti, Ruskin, Carlyle, and the Pre-Raphaelites, even the more aesthetic, Aubrey Beardsley. Why did the period appeal to the Victorians? The Victorian period was most emphatically Victorian; in Tennyson's making the Middle Ages at best evocative, and creates a romanticised, unmaterialistic and incomplete vision of the Middle Ages on realistic, historical detail.

For 'Morte d'Arthur', Tennyson would have drawn upon Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* as well as other sources of the Arthurian legends. The *Idylls of the King* were written over 28 years, during which time they were revised and extended. This early poem, which was composed shortly after Arthur Hallam's death, and as well as the eponymous *Idylls*, has biographical parallels in the poet's interest in the belief in an after-life.

As a recreation of the world of the Middle Ages, the *Idylls* is a failure in historical accuracy. It is a comment effectively upon the present. The Victorians tended to appropriate the Middle Ages for their uses rather than accurately portraying its details, or recreating the concerns and values of the Middle Ages, which doesn't have any of the spirit of the original text. In the anonymous poem, 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', the language, narrative and style are more ribald and bawdy in its treatment of sexual relations between men and women, and more strange in its treatment of religion and the supernatural. Tennyson does not use



of the fourteenth century, for example courtly manners, sexual mores or roles, but rather project his own values, particularly those of a masculine and civilised society, endangered by the times, such as chivalry, and by reinstating religious faith. Arthur intones '... / *changeth, yielding place to new, / And God's will be done*' (240–241) and extolling the necessity of a return to humanity.

Although written in blank verse, and as a dramatic monologue, it is written in the Parnassian style, and as such uses a poetic vocabulary to create a lost, or imagined world. Poets use of 'thou', 'thee' and 'thy', as well as 'seest', were not in common usage in a natural language, rather situate, and in their consistent use in a discrete, poetic world. Sometimes he uses 'uplifted him' (6), 'unsolders' (14) to suit

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



Strongly lyrical, sonorous effects are created through alliteration and internal rhyme. The words enact the sense and meaning: *'Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men / The sea-wind sang / Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam'* (47–49). The poem uses repetition in the manner of the oral tradition, which makes the form akin to the fairy or folk tale, with individual words and sounds being repeated, it is a significant element in the speech. In the oral tradition – and Tennyson wishes to allude to Homer and the classical tradition – a key as a mnemonic strategy to the storyteller, when telling stories aloud was the norm before the published word and widespread literacy. The act of repetition is central to Sir Bedivere's betrayal of the King, his failure to throw Excalibur into the lake, his dishonourable reasons; he wishes to keep the sword, firstly he is overcome by the sword's power: *'For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks / Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinths / He gazed so long / That both his eyes were dazzled'* (56–59). Then the second time he is to throw the sword as a relic to testify to the King's fame and honour in the future:

‘*What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt? But were this kept  
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,  
Some one might show it at a joust of arms, [...]*  
*To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honour and much fame were lost* (98–109) ’

Both Bedivere's and Arthur's speech repeat the words of the text so that the narrative becomes theirs: Arthur describes how the Lady of the Lake rose from the lake to deliver his sword, *'rose an arm / Clothed in white samite, mystic wonderful'* (30), and later the narrator reports that when Excalibur *'rose an arm / Clothed in white samite, mystic wonderful'* (45). Then a third time, Arthur describes himself how he returned Excalibur to the lake, *'an arm / Clothed in white samite, mystic wonderful'* (59). This powerful technique, which has the effect of harmonising each of the voices so that they speak with one voice, bestows prophetic power and truthfulness upon Arthur and inevitability in the narrative. There is a strong incantatory effect from the repetition, a sense of mysticism or magic.

Tennyson reinstates masculine codes of honour and loyalty, as well as the admissible beliefs and practices. Arthur advises Bedivere,

‘*Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and to those who call them friend?*' (247–253) ’

The *Idylls* extensively explore the relationship of the practices of private life and public duty, for example of Arthur and Bedivere, to national, civic responsibility. The disloyalty and betrayal toward Arthur and the Camelot he belongs to, highlights a lack of loyalty to sovereign and the nation, symbolically as betrayal of particular notions of national identity and the British values are drawn out and explored throughout the poems in the series; as we will see, the sexual sin of courtly love between Merlin and Vivien, stands opposed to the purity of the Grail quest.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## **'Morte D'Arthur': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, talk through the use of repetition in the poem and the various ways it is used.
2. With your partner, identify and discuss the values and qualities that are valued in the poem. Which qualities are valued now?
3. With a partner, explain your understanding of the Parnassian style. How does it differ from the Parnassian style?
4. In groups, talk about the treatment of codes of masculinity (e.g. integrity, power) in the poem. How does it compare to that in 'Merlin and Vivien'.



## **'Morte D'Arthur': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, talk through the use of repetition in the poem and the various ways it is used.
2. With your partner, identify and discuss the values and qualities that are valued in the poem. Which qualities are valued now?
3. With a partner, explain your understanding of the Parnassian style. How does it differ from the Parnassian style?
4. In groups, talk about the treatment of codes of masculinity (e.g. integrity, power) in the poem. How does it compare to that in 'Merlin and Vivien'.



## **'Morte D'Arthur': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, talk through the use of repetition in the poem and the various ways it is used.
2. With your partner, identify and discuss the values and qualities that are valued in the poem. Which qualities are valued now?
3. With a partner, explain your understanding of the Parnassian style. How does it differ from the Parnassian style?
4. In groups, talk about the treatment of codes of masculinity (e.g. integrity, power) in the poem. How does it compare to that in 'Merlin and Vivien'.



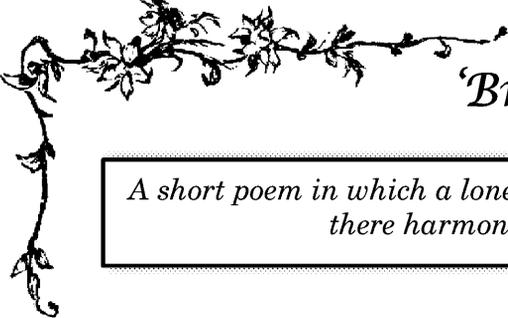
## **'Morte D'Arthur': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, talk through the use of repetition in the poem and the various ways it is used.
2. With your partner, identify and discuss the values and qualities that are valued in the poem. Which qualities are valued now?
3. With a partner, explain your understanding of the Parnassian style. How does it differ from the Parnassian style?
4. In groups, talk about the treatment of codes of masculinity (e.g. integrity, power) in the poem. How does it compare to that in 'Merlin and Vivien'.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## 'Break, Break, Break...

*A short poem in which a lonely speaker stands at the sea, watching the waves break there harmoniously, and mourns his loss of happiness.*

This poem is set at the sea shore, both a naturalistic and symbolic setting, which is an objective correlative. Its style is oblique or indirect, and meaning is compressed. In many of the poems, the reader is not given any context or details of the speaker's meaning or sense from: what is important is the focus on the process of how the world, the response of allowing his affective emotions to well up, to be felt, and to be expressed.

The opening lines, which are also the poem's title, use repetition and pause to evoke the sound of waves breaking, and are used in the final stanza to give a concluding unity to the whole. The overall tone of the poem is elegiac, eloquent and sad. With the passage of time, the speaker seeks the sounds in nature to speak for his feeling of loss, longing, and grief. Grieving is often likened to the breaking of waves, sometimes overwhelming the speaker. The breaking gently in its cyclical rhythm of receding and returning.

The source of grief, as with other of Tennyson's poems, is unknown, and in itself is rather a state of feeling and being that the poet intends to explore. It is possible that the death of a child, and memories are strongly evoked through the living children he meets. Significantly, the figure of the child – here notably the children of the labouring class or the 'sailor lad' (7) – has been seen historically, especially in the philosophy of Rousseau, as more in harmony with nature. They are innocents without adult experience; their lack of full socialisation, enables them to express their raw feelings. The child is seen as having a freer and greater facility to express their feelings spontaneously in song and playful shouting.

The speaker, by contrast, is an isolated figure in an indifferent nature, the harsh sea, which he has no real relationship or commune with, unlike that seemingly alien speaker, paradoxically, bemoans his inability to 'utter / The thoughts that arise in his mind'. In its imagery, symbolism and language, speaks eloquently of the passing of time, and of a shared past. The language is of a more natural register and more colloquial than that of the speaker. It speaks more directly and engagingly to us.

The passage of the vessels on the sea: the '*stately ships go on / To their haven unknown*' is symbolic of the passage of death in to the afterlife. The speaker mourns the '*touch of a voice that is still!*' (11–12). As an image it echoes that of the sail in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' which expresses many of the same feelings and tone. The poet has, briefly, but intensely, engaged us, drawn us into the world of an individual's feelings of solitude.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## **'Break, Break, Break...': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss how the structure of the poem contributes to the subject matter.
2. With your partner, share your understanding of how the voice or tone of the poem is conveyed.
3. In groups, share your thoughts on which of Tennyson's other short poems are most similar to this one.  
a) technique, b) tone.



## **'Break, Break, Break...': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss how the structure of the poem contributes to the subject matter.
2. With your partner, share your understanding of how the voice or tone of the poem is conveyed.
3. In groups, share your thoughts on which of Tennyson's other short poems are most similar to this one.  
a) technique, b) tone.



## **'Break, Break, Break...': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss how the structure of the poem contributes to the subject matter.
2. With your partner, share your understanding of how the voice or tone of the poem is conveyed.
3. In groups, share your thoughts on which of Tennyson's other short poems are most similar to this one.  
a) technique, b) tone.



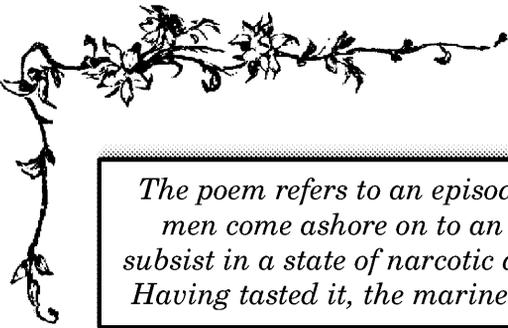
## **'Break, Break, Break...': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss how the structure of the poem contributes to the subject matter.
2. With your partner, share your understanding of how the voice or tone of the poem is conveyed.
3. In groups, share your thoughts on which of Tennyson's other short poems are most similar to this one.  
a) technique, b) tone.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## 'The Lotos-eaters'

*The poem refers to an episode in Homer's The Odyssey when two men come ashore on to an island where they are met by the lotus; they subsist in a state of narcotic apathy from eating the delicious lotus. Having tasted it, the mariners come under its spell, and wish to remain on the island.*

Tennyson uses the Spenserian stanza of nine lines, a strong rhyme scheme – *abab cdcd eed* – to set out this episode from *The Odyssey*. The eight heroic lines form two linked quatrains, and the characteristics of the Parnassian style are here and put to work to create the state of lassitude that the inhabitants live in, and subsequently, the sailors' unresponsive and uninspiring speech and actions but ends, by contrast, with a hypnotised chorus sung by the islanders which establishes, with repetition, in the second line that the island is a place where it is *'land where all things always seem'd the same'* (24). Further, he chooses many words that suggest stillness and lassitude throughout; *'languid', 'swoon', 'weary', 'pause', 'slow-dropping', 'linger'd'*. He also makes use of repetition of this central concept to strengthen the mood: *'the sea, weary the oar, Weary the wandering fields of barren foam'* (41–42). Some of the words also contribute to the softness of tone and dreamy mood: *'slender stream', 'linger'd lo'*

The landscape is presented in terms that are approximate, somewhat vague, in its description of an imaginary place, without specific temporality or locality:

‘  
*They saw the gleaming river seaward flow  
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,  
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,  
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,  
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.* (14–18) ,

Coinage of words, such as *'up-clomb'*, and *'deep-asleep'* serve scansion purposes and the phrases are romantic and poetic sounding: *'clefts the dale', 'winding vale', 'wave-rolling'*. Too does Tennyson's characteristic technique of inverting the order of subject and verb contribute to the poetic sounding, and imaginary, place. Yeats appears to allude to these lines in his poem *Innisfree* (1888), to the lines: *'slow-dropping veils of thinnest fine, pale, muslin fabric. 'Peace comes dropping slow / Dropping from the veils of the sky like a soft petal, like the fall of a shadow, like a half-defeathered quill, like a poppy, like a curl of smoke, like a pensive shawl, like a veil.'* The choice of foot and the onomatopoeic 'dropping' contribute to a utopian and dreamy atmosphere.

Tennyson describes the state of trance into which they pass as nightmarishly solipsistic, as they lose touch with their surroundings in the natural world and from each other. Ulysses' men have lost touch with the world both so vital and necessary to the sailor, and more broadly, what is a profound loss of touch with the world more generally: *'to him the gushing of the wave / Far far away did seem to mourn / As if his fellow spake / His voice was thin, as voices from the grave; / And dawned on him as if awake'* (33–35). His experience of the world is reduced to the inner world of his own mind: *'his own beating heart did make'* (36). A concomitant effect which Tennyson invites us to consider is the loss of the most cherished of manly interests and possessions: *'sweet it was to dream of Fatherland, / Sweet it was to dream of Fate, / Sweet it was to dream of Fate's slave'* (39–40), but ultimately they choose only a perpetual state of longing, and hence a loss of self. Curiously, whilst formally the effect is soporific and sonorous, aesthetically harmonious, the state of existence it describes is one of abjection, it is almost to be buried alive.

This apathy toward home, belongings and belonging, is part of this abject state, and a loss of touch with the social order. The reduction of experience to an atomistic, isolated self, from a sense of community is a theme that Tennyson explores recurrently, in *'Ulysses', 'The Lady of Shalott', 'The Outcast'*, and elsewhere.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## **'The Lotos-eaters': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss how diction is used to contribute to the mood and setting of the techniques which Tennyson uses here.
2. In groups, discuss your understanding of how the form contributes to the success of the poem.
3. 'The Lotos-eaters' takes as its central motif the state of dislocation and of alienation. Which other poems it can be compared to thematically, and how.



## **'The Lotos-eaters': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss how diction is used to contribute to the mood and setting of the techniques which Tennyson uses here.
2. In groups, discuss your understanding of how the form contributes to the success of the poem.
3. 'The Lotos-eaters' takes as its central motif the state of dislocation and of alienation. Which other poems it can be compared to thematically, and how.



## **'The Lotos-eaters': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss how diction is used to contribute to the mood and setting of the techniques which Tennyson uses here.
2. In groups, discuss your understanding of how the form contributes to the success of the poem.
3. 'The Lotos-eaters' takes as its central motif the state of dislocation and of alienation. Which other poems it can be compared to thematically, and how.



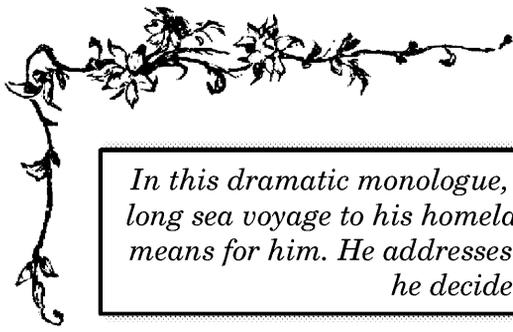
## **'The Lotos-eaters': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss how diction is used to contribute to the mood and setting of the techniques which Tennyson uses here.
2. In groups, discuss your understanding of how the form contributes to the success of the poem.
3. 'The Lotos-eaters' takes as its central motif the state of dislocation and of alienation. Which other poems it can be compared to thematically, and how.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





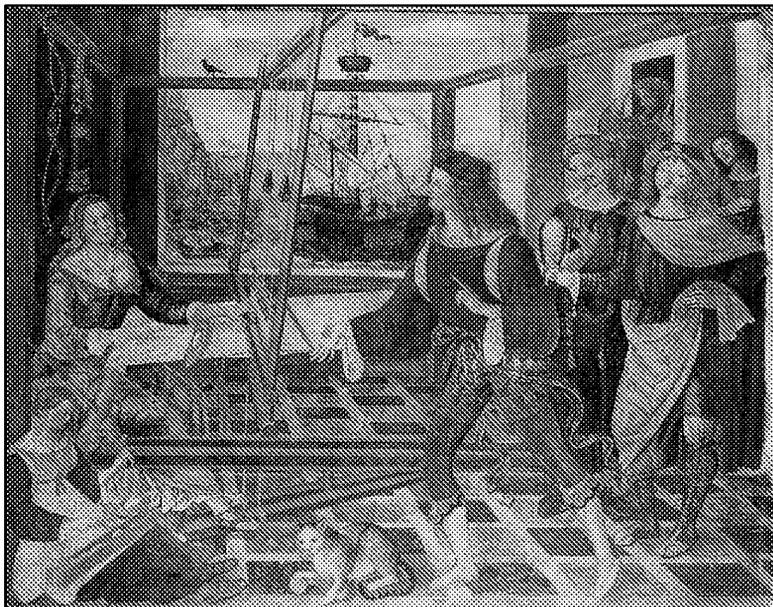
## 'Ulysses'

*In this dramatic monologue, the speaker, the Ulysses of myth, describes his long sea voyage to his homeland and estate, his feelings and thoughts, and what he means for him. He addresses his sailors and contemplates what he decides to leave again to seek other adventures.*

In Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*, the hero, Odysseus (or Ulysses, as the Roman name), returns to his wife, Penelope, and son, Telemachus, who have fought off the treacherous suitors, and who have been some 10 years consuming Ulysses' wealth. Homer's original dactylic hexameter, that is to say a metrical foot of one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed, is replaced by Tennyson's blank verse (unrhymed, five stress lines) is a dramatic monologue. The poem depicts the hero's safe return to his native land, yet it changes Homer's conclusion to his travels, which problematises the homecoming that has been delayed.

In Homer, the return is long-awaited, and the suitors are killed or driven out, through the anticipation toward the triumphal restoration of Odysseus to power. Yet instead of a happy reunion and joyful restoration of the status quo, Tennyson offers us a view of alienation within his own land. It could be, ideologically, a troubling portrayal of a way in which those values associated with home and home rule are rejected and, finally, pall. The fruitfulness of the pastoral traditionally associated with the home and family are inverted: 'By this still hearth, among these barren crags / Matched with the peaceful security and serenity the restless Ulysses states: 'I cannot rest from travel, / How dull it is to pause, to make an end, / To rust unfurnished, not to shine in use.' In the home and the domestic sphere was idealised by the mid-Victorians, Tennyson is offering an unpalatable image of homecoming and the restoration of married and family life.

The poem offers a portrayal of an heroic masculinity that is restless and unbound by domestic identity: his son Telemachus is described as almost emasculated by being embedded in the domestic act by 'soft degrees', he who is 'centred in the sphere / Of common duties, decent, / Tenderness, and pay / Meet adoration to my household gods' (39-42). Having consolidated his sovereignty upon Telemachus, convincing himself of the youth's virtues as ruler,



The Return of Odysseus, 1509

*I mine. / There he is silent or his patient wife faithful to him, aggression of the condemned as*

There may be – eternal adventures elusive, and the experience is untravelled wherever and for the ultimate adventures and just beyond the use of the term in Tennyson to the quest for dimensions for

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



Pleasure and pride in one's place of birth and the comforts of returning to home and patriotism have failed, to give way to the triumph of the individual and self that Ulysses his own people are *'a savage race'* (4), they are *'a rugged people'* (37), and *'(s)ubdue them to the useful and the good'* (38). Rather than the patriarch, viewing whom he is connected and has responsibility, they stand in the way of his self-exploring individual realisation.

As with all dramatic monologues, the reader is forced to ask: to whom is this addressed? The tone of voice changes, and becomes more politicised. It is seemingly an opening line, and seems musing and reflective in tone, with its use of enjambement: *Greatly, have suffer'd greatly both with those / That loved me, and alone; on shore / It drifts the rainy Hyades / Vext the dim sea'* (7–11). It seems to move to become a personal reflection: *'My mariners [...] you and I are old'* (45) and later *'Come, my friends, / 'Tis not too late / We are presented with his personal reflection on needing to struggle against the responsibility as ruler, and as an ageing man who is 'made weak by time and fate of travel'* (6). Outward looking, these later lines have more of a political flavour of the speaker, his ambitions and desires are consolidated from line 43, just over halfway through the monologue: *work of noble note, may yet be done'* and then he moves in to action, giving command: *and sitting well in order smite / The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds / To sail / On my baths of all the western stars until I die'* (58–61).

His identity has been forged in his adventures and conquests, he seeks to do 'Some great work' and his men have *'One equal temper of heroic hearts', they are: 'strong in will / To die / Or to yield'* (68–70). Patriotism is to be found not by staying at home, but by leaving home and the spirit of empire?

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## **'Ulysses': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, talk through the narrative. When does the voice change? Who is the voice?
2. With your partner, discuss the changes and evolution in the narrative.
3. Is Ulysses a bold hero, or a selfish deserter? Discuss in groups.
4. In groups, share your thoughts about how this dramatic monologue compares to other forms of this form.



## **'Ulysses': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, talk through the narrative. When does the voice change? Who is the voice?
2. With your partner, discuss the changes and evolution in the narrative.
3. Is Ulysses a bold hero, or a selfish deserter? Discuss in groups.
4. In groups, share your thoughts about how this dramatic monologue compares to other forms of this form.



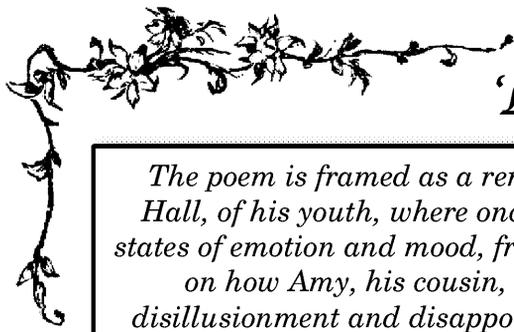
## **'Ulysses': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, talk through the narrative. When does the voice change? Who is the voice?
2. With your partner, discuss the changes and evolution in the narrative.
3. Is Ulysses a bold hero, or a selfish deserter? Discuss in groups.
4. In groups, share your thoughts about how this dramatic monologue compares to other forms of this form.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## 'Locksley Hall' (1842)

*The poem is framed as a reminiscence by a soldier, revisiting the Hall, of his youth, where once he held a courtship. The speaker states of emotion and mood, from tenderness, regret, to recrimination on how Amy, his cousin, betrays his love, and relates his thoughts of disillusionment and disappointment. Blaming their separation on age he moves into a diatribe against these values, and imagines concluding he would rather choose a life with the promises of the Locksley Hall and its failed promises behind.*

The poem is written in trochaic heroic couplets, or trochaic heptameter (with a spondee), the form's heritage dates to Geoffrey Chaucer and *The Canterbury Tales*, it rose to prominence in the seventeenth century to narrate the heroic tragedy. The lengthy lines are representative of colloquialism; another of Tennyson's dramatic monologues in which he develops themes and feelings it very much anticipates 'Maud'.

The monologue begins romantically: the setting of the natural world and its seasons, and its thoughts and feelings:

“  
*In the Spring a fuller crimson comes up on the robin's breast;  
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;  
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.* (17–20)

The night sky and its constellations, an ancient source of wonder, indicate the universe would 'Look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West. / Many a night I saw the stars / Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid' (8–10). This opening and its order, creates a setting that makes courtship and lovemaking both inevitable.

His nostalgic tone changes to heap bitter insults upon Amy as he reveals how she is *shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no more! [...] Falser than all fancy fathoms, false and servile to a shrewish tongue!*' (42) perhaps such as Amy, is treated, a political statement of its absence. Middle-class women who were unable to make their living independent upon their family connections for marriage. They then became dependent on their family standing, for their living through that wedlock. For Tennyson, there is no question under the rhetoric of the woman question: Amy is dismissed as shallow.

He almost takes a masochistic delight in imagining the conjugal relationship of her degradation, addressing his cynicism in directives to Amy, and concluding with *myself wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand!*' (56). He explores the fundamental dilemma of the lover, who cannot reconcile his feeling and memory of past love with the present. It threatens the core of his understanding of nature of love as eternal: 'Where is the record of the mind? / Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind?' As in 'Maud', this poem bemoans marrying for social advancement:

“  
*Curse be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth  
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!  
Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!  
Cursed be the fold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool!* (59–62)

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED



The speaker moves from his own private, domestic experience to a vision of the world in which he can find industrious occupation: *'Hide me from my deep emotion, O that I might feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife'* (108–109). He recalls how his own productivity of *'Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new'* at the centre he has a vision of a the world governed by industry and the spread of free federation of universal law. Yet without personal satisfaction in his private life, his youthful dream has ceased and that its *'order festers'* (133), asking rhetorically, *'I have not harvest of his youthful joys, / Tho the deep heart of existence beat for ever like'*

Finally he turns to mocking the once beloved woman as she becomes a mother, an old guard: *'O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part / With a little hood and daughter's heart'* (93–94). On reflecting on being humiliated by his fellow soldier's heartedness, he moves in to a broader, misogynistic vein, proclaiming:

*'Weakness to be wroth with weakness! Woman's pleasure, woman's pain –  
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain:  
Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine – (149–152) ,*

To retreat from this natural order of things, he imagines a return to the Orient with his uncle. He pictures himself as a wanderer who leaves his own society, and *'this steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind'*, behind to seek a remote remove from European trade, he imagines would be a tranquil and tropical Eden. A characteristic technique of inverting syntax, Tennyson puts verb before subject, and lushness in the language: *'Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trail of heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree'* (162–163). In his fantasy, he dispense with social rules governing *'passions'* (167), and allow him to *'take some of my dusky race'* (168). Yet he goes on to realise that he holds *'savages'* to be lower than a *'Christian child'*; although he imagines his offspring would be fit, strong and wild, *'lowly, herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains, / Like a beast with lower pains!'* (175). Considering himself as the epitome of civilisation, he claims inheritance: *'I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time–'* (178).

It is through this contrast with the Orient, the pre-industrial countries of the world, his perspective on his own society, and to find the colonial centre as more civilised than *'a cycle of Cathay'* (184). He moves from his own, private, biographical identity with which to restore his sense of a vigorous masculinity. He appeals to his being an orphan: *'Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun / of my spirit hath not set'* (185–187). As in *'Ulysses'*, the spirit of the quest invigorates expression without the burden of emotions and desires for the domestic: *'For this seaward, and I go'* (194).

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## **'Locksley Hall': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss the parallels between 'Maud' and 'Locksley Hall'. Talk about themes.
2. Write an extract from a journal entry, or in heroic couplet, in the voice of Ann and explain your work in groups.
3. In pairs, discuss your understanding of the speaker's switches in mood. How? Examine the elements of style, choice of language and syntax.



## **'Locksley Hall': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss the parallels between 'Maud' and 'Locksley Hall'. Talk about themes.
2. Write an extract from a journal entry, or in heroic couplet, in the voice of Ann and explain your work in groups.
3. In pairs, discuss your understanding of the speaker's switches in mood. How? Examine the elements of style, choice of language and syntax.



## **'Locksley Hall': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss the parallels between 'Maud' and 'Locksley Hall'. Talk about themes.
2. Write an extract from a journal entry, or in heroic couplet, in the voice of Ann and explain your work in groups.
3. In pairs, discuss your understanding of the speaker's switches in mood. How? Examine the elements of style, choice of language and syntax.



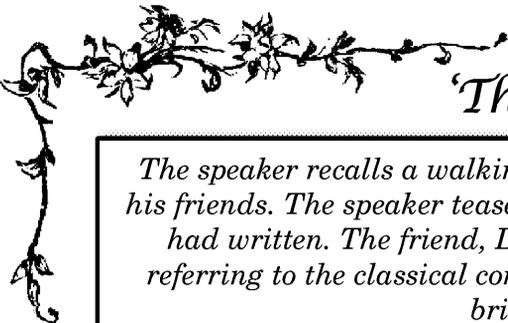
## **'Locksley Hall': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss the parallels between 'Maud' and 'Locksley Hall'. Talk about themes.
2. Write an extract from a journal entry, or in heroic couplet, in the voice of Ann and explain your work in groups.
3. In pairs, discuss your understanding of the speaker's switches in mood. How? Examine the elements of style, choice of language and syntax.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## 'The Golden Year' (1846)

*The speaker recalls a walking tour in Snowdonia, a mountainous region in Wales, with his friends. The speaker teases his poet friend to break his silence and write. The friend, Leonard, recites his verse about the 'golden year', referring to the classical conception of a new era, and conceives of a new age, bringing about of a new peaceful age.*

'The Golden Year' adopts a colloquial style of writing and handles its topic with a realism that perhaps with the aim to soften any didactic quality in exploring social issues. The poem as a whole, that is metrically structured with a fifth line concluding, 'golden year'. The poem is based on the annual movements in the solar system and is contextualised within a more natural world through the use of the metaphors of the daily 'ebb and flow' of the oceans' tides, and the encroachment on the shore; eroding the land over a vaster timescale. Metaphors of erosion are applied to the social sphere: the erosion of the aristocracy as a result of the global changes transformed by the heat of the sun, '*wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps, / slowly melt / In many streams to fatten lower lands*' (32–34). This was a widespread social change that saw the creation and expansion of a middle class and for whom the aristocracy and the old order degenerate and a block to progress. In contrast, the free movement of trade, expansion of the printed word and tract, and the missionary role of the Church are lauded. In this it is a form of evolutionary meliorism, or gradualism: no revolutions here. Just across the channel from the brutal civil barbarism to overthrow the old regime was a horrific example of the black

The terms of the golden year are rather imprecise, although all are contemporary to the poem; they include a colonial spread of culture around the world, including the publishing of the Church (43), and the growth of free trade:

‘*Fly, happy, happy sails, and bear the Press;  
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross,  
Knit land to land, and blowing havenward  
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,  
Enrich the markets of the golden year.* (42–46) ’

In a benevolent and positive '*happy, happy [...] happy*', view of what would later be seen as territories are gained and come under cultural and economic control with a peaceful metaphor: '*Knit land to land*' (44). The speaker expresses a desire for a broad – and equal – equality, uniting humanity across continents: '*When shall all men's good, / Be equal good, / Peace lie like a shaft of light across the land, / And like a lane of beams athwart the land*'. The speaker, James, comments on Leonard's vision, initially declaring it to be too remote for their generation or the next. James, who is likened to a wise, even wild, bearded man (wild clematis is also known as old man's beard), in his expression of strong feelings about the rocks, and insists that as writers they must conceive of and believe in the coming of a new age, an analogy of a seedsman preoccupied with only harvesting instead of sowing for the future. The labour – writing poetry – will hasten on the coming of the age, even though they are aware that '*every hour must sweat her sixty minutes to the death*' (67), a line that refers to the connection between industry, labour and quantifiable outcomes. Yet Tennyson does not question the values of the capitalism that extracts the greatest price from its workers. The ability to bestow the mantle of the statesman upon the poets, rather as the Romantics did

The concluding stanza, from the perspective of the initial speaker, situates us back in the landscape of the poem opens, but it is one that has changed for the reader, from the timeless and picturesque lakes and mountains. The speaker instead registers how the landscape is directly marked by man's industry; the hills are quarried for slate, we can hear the wind blowing touchingly, through pararhyme, onomatopoeia, and the repetition of the hard consonant: '*flap / And buffet around the hills, from bluff to bluff*' (74–76). The closure is dramatic and carries a message to be underlined; change is happening, even the ancient landscape of the poem as the ingenuity of man is to put it to use.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



### **'The Golden Year': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss the combination of personal and colloquial with a grand and successful technique? Do you see this technique elsewhere in Tennyson?
2. Write a close analysis of the language used to imagine the golden year. What with and why?
3. Do you think that the speaker approves of the changing landscape, why?



### **'The Golden Year': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss the combination of personal and colloquial with a grand and successful technique? Do you see this technique elsewhere in Tennyson?
2. Write a close analysis of the language used to imagine the golden year. What with and why?
3. Do you think that the speaker approves of the changing landscape, why?



### **'The Golden Year': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss the combination of personal and colloquial with a grand and successful technique? Do you see this technique elsewhere in Tennyson?
2. Write a close analysis of the language used to imagine the golden year. What with and why?
3. Do you think that the speaker approves of the changing landscape, why?



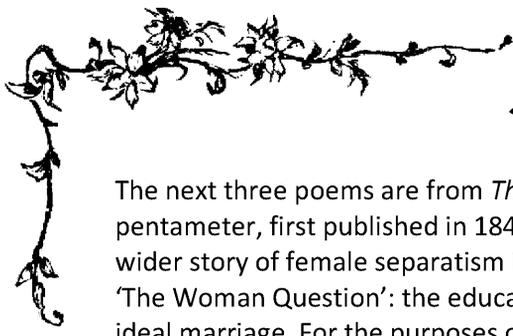
### **'The Golden Year': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss the combination of personal and colloquial with a grand and successful technique? Do you see this technique elsewhere in Tennyson?
2. Write a close analysis of the language used to imagine the golden year. What with and why?
3. Do you think that the speaker approves of the changing landscape, why?

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## From *The Princess*

The next three poems are from *The Princess*, a narrative and discursive poem in pentameter, first published in 1847, but subsequently revised. These lyrics are part of a wider story of female separatism in a university of women established by a Queen to address 'The Woman Question': the education of women, and of the role of women in an ideal marriage. For the purposes of discussion of the poems in the selection, we do not intend to examine *The Princess*, but rather treat the following as isolated lyrics. Barbara Leigh offers a critique of much of Tennyson's opinions on marriage in *The Princess*. It is regrettable not to examine these issues here, we can note that Tennyson's treatment of marriage was not original nor even especially well handled, and subsequently omitted.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED

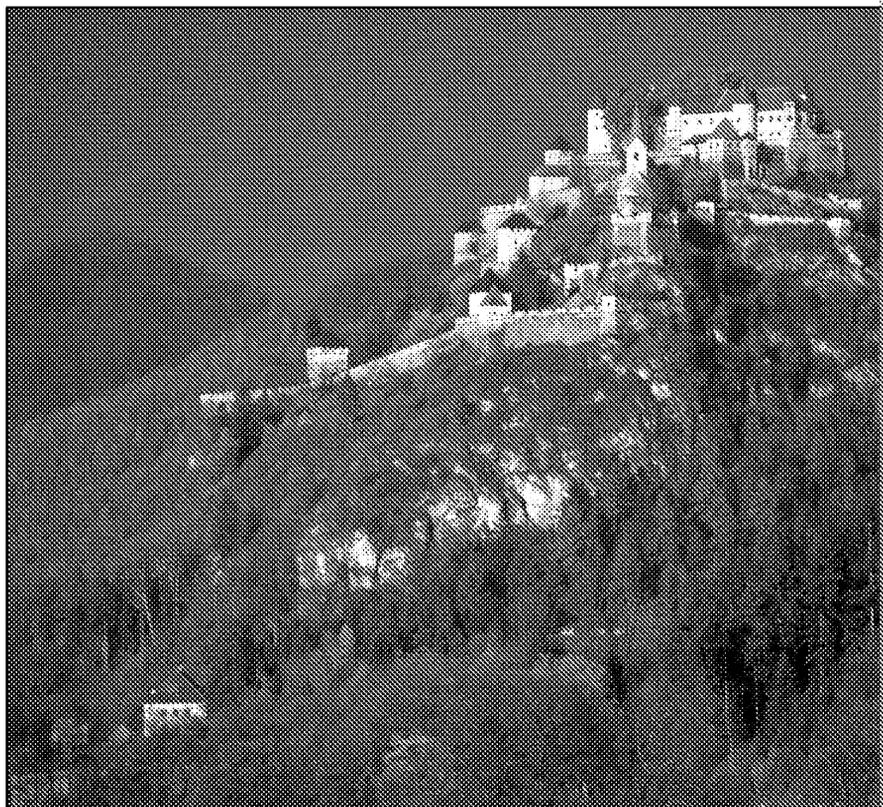


## 'The Splendour Falls...'

This poem gives us a picturesque, mountainous landscape at sunset animated with the sounds of bugles blowing and their answers.

This short poem is a great example of Tennyson's technical skill with rhyme, phonetic language to render his subject. The verse is packed with rhyme; as well as the full rhyme scheme (abcbdddefgfdhijkdd), which contribute to the poem there are internal rhymes, 'falls on' (3), 'hear/clear' (6), 'far/scar' (9), 'die/sky' (13), 'roll / soul to soul' (15), and some (5, 17), 'snowy/story' (3), making it a powerful lyric. Alliteration and assonance contribute to the 'long light [...] lakes' (3), 'blow, bugle, blow' (5, 6, 12, 17), 'O hark, O hear' (7), 'snow' 'thinner, clearer, farther' (7), 'going/O' (8, 9), 'hill or field or river' (14). Tennyson's dramatic effect: the phonetic intensives of hard consonants coupled with commas effectively relate sound to meaning.

The theme of loss and endings is present even in this brief, even abstract lyric. The horn to blow is enthusiastic and expresses a delight in sound, yet the overall tone of the final group of six lines generates a more personal, emotional, even elegiac tone, as it addresses a lover: 'O love [...] Our echoes roll from soul to soul' and considers how 'faint', yet 'grow for ever and for ever'. Tennyson characteristically finds the sense of loss and relays something of the bitter sweet and momentary nature of pleasures in life.



INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED



### **'The Splendour Falls': Discussion Activities**

---

1. With a partner, explain your understanding of the syntactical structure and
2. With your partner, discuss the production of tone in the verse. Comment pa



### **'The Splendour Falls': Discussion Activities**

---

1. With a partner, explain your understanding of the syntactical structure and
2. With your partner, discuss the production of tone in the verse. Comment pa and metre.



### **'The Splendour Falls': Discussion Activities**

---

1. With a partner, explain your understanding of the syntactical structure and
2. With your partner, discuss the production of tone in the verse. Comment pa and metre.



### **'The Splendour Falls': Discussion Activities**

---

1. With a partner, explain your understanding of the syntactical structure and
2. With your partner, discuss the production of tone in the verse. Comment pa and metre.



### **'The Splendour Falls': Discussion Activities**

---

1. With a partner, explain your understanding of the syntactical structure and
2. With your partner, discuss the production of tone in the verse. Comment pa and metre.



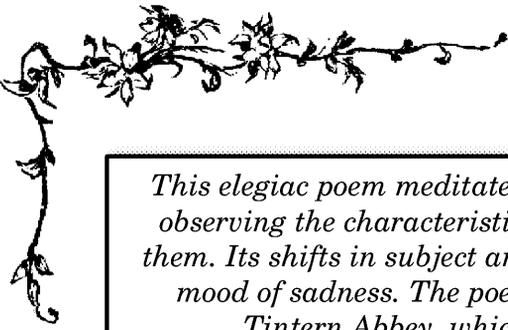
### **'The Splendour Falls': Discussion Activities**

---

1. With a partner, explain your understanding of the syntactical structure and
2. With your partner, discuss the production of tone in the verse. Comment pa and metre.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## 'Tears, Idle Tears'

*This elegiac poem meditates on the nature of remembering, rather than observing the characteristics of a particular person and the speaker. It shifts in subject and its aims contribute to the overall mood of sadness. The poem was written at the atmospheric and atmospheric atmosphere of Tintern Abbey, which is not far from where Arthur Hallam died.*

This poem is highly lyrical, although it doesn't rhyme, for the lack of rhyme contributes to a softened atmosphere and communicates so effectively that the theme which preoccupies the speaker is the keynote of sadness and mood of reverie at the passing of time and the loss of the speaker. The poem is one of personal emotion and tells us of the kind of crying: the speaker sheds tears, which nonetheless spring from 'divine despair'. In describing the immediate passage of feeling passing from the heart to well up in the eyes, the poem opens up a range of emotions, and in this draws upon the Romantic mode of exploring sensibility and 'poetry of the heart' was deemed a more feminine idiom, because it explored interiority which were traditionally seen as belonging to the irrational, the realm of the feminine. Appropriated by male writers, they could be aligned with the Romantic project. An almost colloquial, although there is considerable alliteration: '*depth of some divine fancy feigned*' (17). The object of remembrance is not singular then, and moves between seasons, and both lovers, '*lips that are for others; deep as love / Deep as first love*' and friends: '*all we love*' (9) and '*our friends*' (7). In this it has some similarities to elegies of 'In Memoriam'. The keynote of endings is communicated in the refrain '*that are no more*', further emphasised by the repetition of the alliterating '*so sad*'.

A universal and timeless perception of nature provides imprecise images of 'happily evoked in the image of the sail, and the dawn chorus of '*half-awaken'd birds*' (12) in the contrast of, and movement between, states of dark and light. These provide vivid imagery, and may refer to cognitive or emotional states of illumination in the act of enlightenment of religious feeling in the comparison of the absence and void of 'the *underworld*' (7), and in '*dark summer dawns*' (11). The motif of the glowing white '*beam glittering on a sail*' (6), which is repeated in the effects of the dawn light in '*casement slowly grows a glimmering square*' (14).

There is a movement through the poem from the individual's subjective, affective shifts in the second stanza outwards, with the speaker finding a role to speak for others through pronouns '*our friends*' (7) and '*all we love*' (9). The poem attempts to enact a collage of the individual life. With this shift we can perceive the poem's reach and aim, and raise questions about the role of the poet in relation to the heart, and more specifically to the heart.

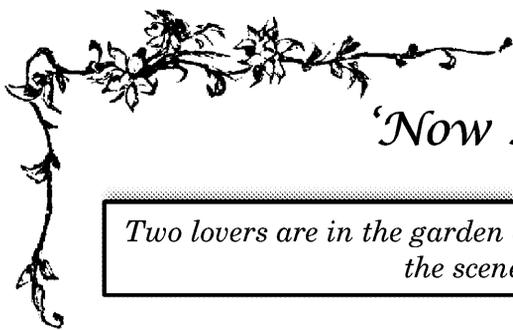
The experience of grieving can be very isolating; how can culture offer ways to grieve for loved ones that allows for a communality of experience? How might poetry as a form psychologically sustain or fortify the speaker or the reader?

What is the function, role or purpose of the act of remembrance? By universalising the experience, Tennyson could powerfully speak for others in their bereavement, and for the speaker's uniqueness of the experience; themes that will be revisited in greater and sustained detail.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## 'Now Sleeps the Crimson Peacock'

*Two lovers are in the garden of a palace, as the twilight fades to night, the scene and invites his beloved to come to him.*

This poem is modelled on Persian poetry and has an almost startling eroticism and symbolism. It offers striking and strange, unfamiliar and exotic images with contrast. The purple of the porphyry stone fountain, the vivid blood-red of the crimson peacock (7), and ghostly 'milkwhite' (5) of the peacock with its archetypal oppositions of light and dark, receive an ambiguous treatment. The mood is dreamy and soft, inviting and sensuous with verbs like 'sleeps' (1), 'drips' (5), 'glimmers' (6), 'lies' (7), 'slides' (9), 'leaves' (9), 'folds' (11) and extensive appeals to the senses and the figurative language approach something decadent.

Despite the immediacy of the present moment described by the speaker in the first stanza, there is nothing of urgency, it is one of repose, even lassitude. The stillness of the scene, the rustle of the trees as night falls, is carried in to the voice of the speaker, whose passive personal pronoun 'me' rather than being the subject of the sentence, as the subject is repeated in each of the stanzas and couplets, and has the effect of situating the speaker as the lover, whose repeated invocations: 'waken thou with me', 'open to me', 'open to be lost in me' (4, 6, 8, 10, 13, 14) lack an urgency, but whose repetition nonetheless points toward the speaker's concluding expression of desire.

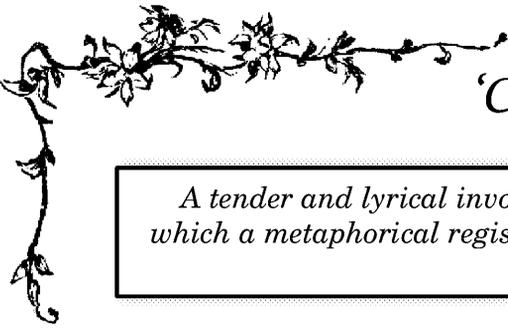
The third and fourth stanzas offer metaphors of erotic desire drawn again from the sky; the physical act of lovemaking is transmuted into cosmic and celestial terms. Danaë, a princess who was impregnated by Zeus in the form of a shower of gold, 'stars' (7) so his lover's 'heart lies open unto me' (8). The movement of the shooting star (gold/ semen) 'leaves / A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me' (10).

The ending offers some ambiguity about the consuming nature of desire, and indeed the momentary annihilation of self in the act of lovemaking and sexual consummation 'my bosom and be lost in me' (13, 14). The image of the lily closing up pale petals in the darkness of the night with its corollaries of innocence and sexual experience, also the movement of the lily actually becoming submerged under the water (it has a way of returning to the lake), does not happen in actuality.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## 'Come Down, O Maid'

*A tender and lyrical invocation by the lover in his courting of which a metaphorical register contrasts frigid mountain heights valley.*

The poem delights in evoking a lushness, a cornucopia, in the lover's courtship and found, and the blank verse form, with metrical variation in its feet, forms an appeal as it imparts a spoken quality. The poem's melodious resonance and sensuality of biblical metre, syntactical structure and language, specifically from that of the Song of Solomon, contrast with the biblical metre, syntactical structure and language, specifically from that of the Song of Solomon. However, rather than liken the beloved to specific objects, as do the Song of Solomon, Tennyson projects a personified Love into the environment. The speaker tells the beloved to be found, and thereby where is the proper place for their courtship and lovemaking.

The poem establishes two central and contrasting realms: the cold mountain heights of the pastoral and bucolic. The harvest of these realms is evoked through images of leaves, grapes and vulpine rust: *'red with spirted purple of the vats / or foxlike in yellow of the 'maize' (10)*, in contrast to the monochromatic and cold *'silver horn of the 'white ravine' (14)* and dark waterfall of *'dusky doors' (17)* and *'water-smoke reaches of the mountain to the vitality of the embodied, corporeality valley and wine, although perhaps characteristically of Tennyson, in periphrasis, which is acting as a euphemism, evokes a very sensual image: 'red with spirted purple of the allusion to the Song of Solomon, when Love is described as 'foxlike in the vine' (1*

There is action and movement created through the onomatopoeic *'roll'* and the *'the torrent out of dusky doors: / But follow; let the torrent dance thee down'* (17) – the change in which the subject switches from a third figure, 'Love', to the person of the poem concludes, lending an urgency to his wooing. He urges her *'So waste no sounds of 'sweet' and 'sound' are repeated as the entreaty intensifies and becomes* With the last three lines there is another shift in tone – voice – and pace, with the dactylic stresses. There is great beauty in the deployment of phonetic intensive, onomatopoeia, to create a slow and mellow ending; we have the 'liquid' consonants in the final three lines:

‘  
*Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,  
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees (29–31)*  
，

The recurring dactylic feet of the line *'Myriads of rivulets hurrying'* (29) and again to slow down, and with the pauses on line endings, create a slower rhythm. These sounds, which are more melodious than the short sounds, and this creates a slow between two lovers.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



### **'Come Down, O Maid': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss the ways that variations of tone and pace are achieved.
2. How effective is this as love poetry? Share your thoughts with the group.



### **'Come Down, O Maid': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss the ways that variations of tone and pace are achieved.
2. How effective is this as love poetry? Share your thoughts with the group.



### **'Come Down, O Maid': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss the ways that variations of tone and pace are achieved.
2. How effective is this as love poetry? Share your thoughts with the group.



### **'Come Down, O Maid': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss the ways that variations of tone and pace are achieved.
2. How effective is this as love poetry? Share your thoughts with the group.



### **'Come Down, O Maid': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss the ways that variations of tone and pace are achieved.
2. How effective is this as love poetry? Share your thoughts with the group.



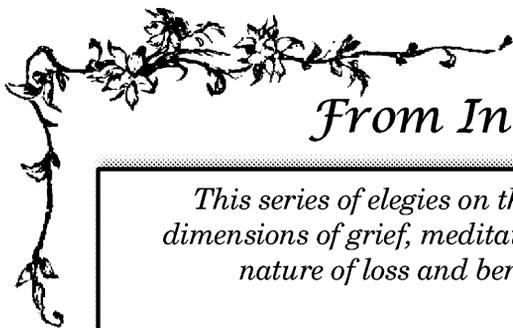
### **'Come Down, O Maid': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss the ways that variations of tone and pace are achieved.
2. How effective is this as love poetry? Share your thoughts with the group.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## From In Memoriam A. H. H.

*This series of elegies on the death of Arthur Hallam explore both dimensions of grief, meditating on both the individual beloved and nature of loss and bereavement giving personal and communal evolutionary accounts.*

In September of 1833 the sudden death of Arthur Hallam would have a deep and and on his work. Hallam was on a tour of the continent with his father, when he had a haemorrhage in Vienna, Austria. It was a massive shock to the Tennyson family, especially Emily, to whom Hallam was engaged to be married. Whilst the bereavement influenced the style of much of Tennyson's poetry, it is most explicitly addressed in 'In Memoriam'

'In Memoriam' is, rather than a single poem, a series of elegies written over a period of time, and form perhaps the most original and enduringly popular of Tennyson's poems about loss – it belongs primarily to its genre, yet it is not fully contained by the genre. It meditates so widely upon the subject of loss rather than on the beloved as elegiac poems. The verses break with tradition in their approach to the formality and some of the content. A number of the verses are included in this collection, the series is not given in full but it conveys many of the key themes and thoughts. The speaker moves through a number of concomitant emotions, allowing these expression and deep consideration: candour and hope are conveyed. Rather than discuss each verse in detail, I will give some close analysis and an indication of the themes and formal aspects across the given poems.

In form, the verse is written in octosyllabic lines, arranged in rhyming quatrains; the lines: *abba*. This stanza, of four four-stress lines has come to be called the In Memoriam stanza. Invented by Jonson, it was Tennyson's powerful poem which has made it famous. The structural restrictions very powerful emotions are conveyed. The second 'a' rhyme follows an elegiac pattern of mourning; it forms a movement of return. The line break (new sentence mid-line) contributes to the meditative feeling, as the poet's thought follows closely a natural speech rhythm. John Lennard makes an interesting point regarding 'In Memoriam', and the specific issue addressed by Tennyson in the fifth verse. Lennard notes which gives the sequence its unity – arch-rhymed quatrains in iambic tetrameter. The oscillating movement of the nature of grief, which expresses the continuity of the same time have kept him locked into the cycle of the mourning. He asks, 'what had divined the form that he would need of the extended grief he was just entering, and upon in his first grief came to trap him within that grief, and to prolong its grip on him'.

In the first verse the speaker tries to find comfort in belief in a place for the dead. The feeling of love and grief too intense and overwhelming to allow him to even begin to form a complex image of the yew tree, which recurs (see 39) that traditionally grows in churchyards with dead bodies buried and thus gives us an organic image of the body returning to the earth and disturbing. It makes the suggestion of death being part of the natural cycle as comforting. The absent beloved, in death, is indifferent, he will not know them or be touched by their presence. Instead the speaker likens himself to the yew tree, wishing for its nature of 'stubborn hardihood' and to cling to his beloved. The third verse introduces the poet reconciling himself with Death and the 'blindness' or indifference of Death as a priestess who governs the rites and sees the blind laws of the universe.

‘*The stars, she whispers, ‘blindly run;  
A web is wov’n across the sky;  
From out waste places comes a cry;  
And murmurs from the dying sun’ (3. 5–8)*’

<sup>10</sup> *The Poetry Handbook*, John Lennard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.161

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



This draws upon the recent understanding in solar physics of the laws of entropy with the heat death of our solar system. Death and doom is pervasive in the natural universe; the speaker wonders if he can admit this comprehension of Death in life or reject this notion as madness, as a *'vice of blood'* (4. 15). This 'struggle on the threshold' is the central intellectual and emotional aim of what will occupy him for most of the poem.

In the fifth verse Tennyson addresses the issue and process of writing, a public act. To write can adequately and morally justify writing about such deep profound and private grief. In writing poetry he finds a routine and structure, a form to control and alleviate pain. The public justification for his act of writing poetry and exempts charge of belittling his depth. *'words, like weeds,'* are his mourning dress ('weeds' used in the sense here of mourning). The formalities give some protection to express and contain the grief *'I'll wrap me o'er / The cold'* (5. 9–10), but can necessarily only give a socially acceptable indication of the experience of grieving.

The next verse explores the bleak cultural consolations that are made to the bereaved because death is 'common' it is any less significant for the individuals bereaved. The speaker speaks of others, exploring the tragedy of a common experience as not just his own but each family or friend left behind. Picturing the mother and father bereaved of the somewhat patriotic or heroic notion of the young soldier and sailor lost in battle, he shows that the two existences are rendered asunder. The moment of death, unbeknownst to the speaker, is described, with either parent in the act of celebrating their son, communally over the street or privately, at prayer (the mother). The moment of the sons' deaths are conveyed to the speaker as 'shot', which is linked to 'beat', and 'drops'. A romanticised and domestic image of the return of the dead son is also given; in these he appeals to the wider experience of the readership and gives voice to a shared feeling.

Verse 7 gives a more informal and intimate picture which recalls memories of the speaker's life outside the house on the street where his friend once lived. The speaker describes a shadowy shade haunting the familiar scene, a sense partly created by its allusion to Hamlet. The role of place in triggering somatic memory, that of feeling and sensation, is part of the poem to which the poem returns: *'my heart used to beat / So quickly, waiting for a hand / That is no more'* (7. 3–5). Yet the speaker cannot find him and in the third stanza is confused by the drumming its rhythm of hard consonants, conveying the banality of long grieving: *'On the bald street breaks the blank day'* (7. 12). The nature of memory is revisited.



Arthur Hallam

the individual, Hallam, and Tennyson's private grief. The poet's experience of the landscape and the more abstract and universal, than for example, the landscape he lived on, instead still retains traces of his friend. The memories of him and their shared pleasures are in contrast, verse 101 offers a broader picture of the change whether or not they are observed or not. The intervention or memory; nature is indifferent to the theme introduced in the third verse.

Verse 21 links back to the fifth verse, it extends the criticism that the poet may experience in writing. It takes them to three travellers overhearing his 'song'. The speaker's poetry might be considered weak, selfish and indulgent in an age of advances of the rational and scientific understanding of the world through science. The speaker's making is his own natural, instinctive and informed by his experiences, just as natural as the linnet's song. The melody and cadence of that song will change according to the speaker's

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



By verse 27 he reaches a point of solace in his state as a feeling sentient being, but can begin to see the richness of what he has gained through profound connection of having loved, despite the loss of love, although this is through bereavement, relationship as this verse is often interpreted today.

In verse 50 he appeals perhaps to his faith or his God, or perhaps to the beloved *near me when*'. The entreaty generates poignancy from its repetition becoming a sense of feeling is communicated powerfully through a set of images and metaphors that are metaphysical: *'wheels of Being slow'* (50. 4), time is, 'a maniac scattering dust', a (50. 7, 8). He sees meaninglessness in the lowliness of humanity as 'flies' who merely live their lifecycle, the cyclical rhythm reiterated through an additional internal rhyme on verse 96 he seeks strength in the faith that Hallam had held whilst alive, that through examining his conscience he had found, and arrived at a stronger faith and peace in dark, difficult times.

In the following verse 51 the poet expresses the ancient fear that, ennobled by death, those who would judge us and find our hearts impure. It simultaneously expresses a desire for *clear eye some hidden shame / And I be lessen'd in his love?*' (51. 7–8) and yet draws on the imagined omniscience of the dead from their spirit world who have benevolent parents and a child. He makes the request: *'Be near us when we climb or fall'* making the ancestors his guardians and arbiters, who have the wisdom borne of their perspective in eternity (51. 15), the dead may watch humanity, 'like God', and find forgiveness – 'make peace in all aspects.

Verses 54, 55, and 56 grapple with a broader cosmogony, seeking to find benevolent purpose, despite what science is telling the poet about nature. An almost Panglossian whilst acknowledging 'we know not anything', and 'so runs my dream', the last stanza turns to himself, as a man, to

‘ *An infant crying in the night:  
An infant crying for the light:  
And with no language but a cry (54. 18–20)* ,

The repetition in the line enacts the sound and meaning of a baby's crying. These lines are contemporaries with a powerful cultural currency, expressing the fear arising from a lack of understanding of our place in the universe, and the striving to articulate and explain the natural world. Gillian Beer has argued that this verse 'becomes an accepted description of the experience and the inadequacy of language to cope with the new understanding of the universe, of the universe'.<sup>11</sup> Instead of offering the conventional narrative of scientific, cultural – our achievements are dwarfed by the sense of our own insignificance in the face of species extinction. The old, anthropocentric view of man at the centre of the universe to understand events has increasingly been threatened and dismantled with a growing understanding of science, of the nature of life on Earth, its evolutionary biological and geological processes, and its eventual heat death. The metaphor of the pre-verbal baby, self-expressing in a state of darkness, isolated and yearning towards enlightenment or illumination, acknowledging that the benevolent universe has been shaken. Evolutionary themes are explored in verse 55 where the world and sees evidence of whole species – 'types' – as having become extinct. It goes the same way, despite its cultivation of a higher civilisation and religion of love, the shocking image of nature *'red in tooth and claw / With ravine shriek'* where the violence and struggle of the laws of nature appear to trump those of peace and justice. From doubt to greater faith and hope, these verses begin to formalise that doubt.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



<sup>11</sup> *Open Fields: Science in Cultural Encounter*, Gillian Beer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 212

Verse 90 examines loss and return: death is final and there is no return from it, in thought that the dead can return to the life they leave behind. Interestingly, and treachery in the family left behind: infidelity in wives after becoming 'brides in other families, and in offspring the *'hard heir'* (90. 15) who would only give them 'iron return would only *'shake the pillars of domestic peace'* (90. 19). By contrast, the male friend as pure and as ready to receive the beloved again, without any change.

The festival of Christmas is deployed as an annual marker of his bereavement in the lyrics, also 30 and 78 – which contribute to a sequential form to the series. In verse 106 Year and thus the future. The ringing of the bells marks aspirations for higher morning in the new [...] *Ring out the false, ring in the true'* (106. 5, 8) and with this the turning of the year: *'The year is going, let him go'* (106. 7). The church bell is of course but also belongs to an ancient community, and therefore shared, tradition; the bell onomatopoeia, and full rhymes with a long vowel sound: 'more/poor', 'snow/go

The scientific knowledge of geology is drawn upon in verse 123. The poet sees how the second stanza; forms change from solid to liquid, to gas: *'nothing stands / The / Like clouds they shape themselves and go'*. But unlike these massive contrasts by landscape, he identifies no such upheaval in his own feelings, but locates constant thoughts and dreams. This notion of 'Deep time', giving a cosmic perspective is in *Principles of Geology* (1830), which Tennyson had read in 1837, and is balanced as individual and their hopes and griefs.

The structure of the poem follows grief, through doubt, then toward faith. It moves from the individual to the 'race' in evolutionary terms. Tennyson's expression of the more spiritual, humanity participates in what was a dominant cultural expression of progressivism. In verse 118, he endorses a form of Cartesian dualism, separating the mind by repressing certain animalistic and somatic drives, especially sexuality and violence for a greater, more spiritual humanity:

‘  
*Arise and fly. The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;*  
*Move upward, working out the beast,*  
*And let the ape and tiger die (118. 25–28)*  
 ’

It was a view that would continue to gain popularity later in the Victorian era in the purity campaigners. Man's earthly and animal nature must be overcome through the repository of purity, and increasingly toward the end of the century, and into the national survival and racial progress. In verse 129 the beloved Hallam is melded with the divine *'and unknown; human and divine'* (129. 5) so that his early death almost becomes a perfection. This part of reconciling himself to Hallam's being dead is through seeing him as eternal. The horror and finality of death is never reconciled with, but in having the individual with ideas about the evolution of the human race and life on Earth and places hope in the new race to come of higher beings, *'I dream a dream of good with thee'* (129. 11–12).

Although the poet suggests the inadequacy of language to express feelings, he has a communal experience and to a common mood, to voice the suffering of those in a state of disillusionment and anxiety brought about by private and public atheism and agnosticism. Through a deeply felt personal experience and meditation upon it to his work in 'In Memoriam', he really addresses the character of the dead person who occasioned it, Arthur Hallam. The poem stages of grief and thoughts that occupy the speaker or poet. To this extent, it speaks to a communal experience of loss and grieving.

**COPYRIGHT  
 PROTECTED**



## From In Memoriam A. H. H.: Activities

---

1. In groups, discuss the ways that the poem achieves unity. What does the un
2. Now share your ideas on the groupings of themes and forms that you can tr the 'In Memoriam' series.
3. In pairs, talk about the recurring motifs to be found. What meanings and fee
4. In groups, compare verses from 'In Memoriam' with other elegies. Discuss th



## From In Memoriam A. H. H.: Activities

---

1. In groups, discuss the ways that the poem achieves unity. What does the un
2. Now share your ideas on the groupings of themes and forms that you can tr the 'In Memoriam' series.
3. In pairs, talk about the recurring motifs to be found. What meanings and fee
4. In groups, compare verses from 'In Memoriam' with other elegies. Discuss th



## From In Memoriam A. H. H.: Activities

---

1. In groups, discuss the ways that the poem achieves unity. What does the un
2. Now share your ideas on the groupings of themes and forms that you can tr the 'In Memoriam' series.
3. In pairs, talk about the recurring motifs to be found. What meanings and fee
4. In groups, compare verses from 'In Memoriam' with other elegies. Discuss th



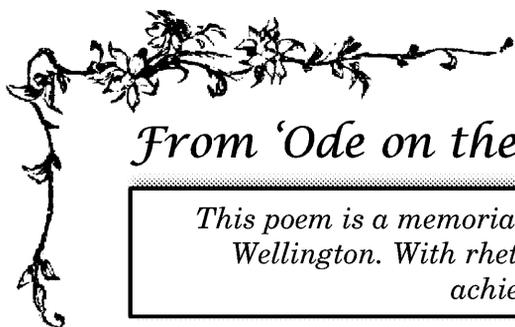
## From In Memoriam A. H. H.: Activities

---

1. In groups, discuss the ways that the poem achieves unity. What does the un
2. Now share your ideas on the groupings of themes and forms that you can tr the 'In Memoriam' series.
3. In pairs, talk about the recurring motifs to be found. What meanings and fee
4. In groups, compare verses from 'In Memoriam' with other elegies. Discuss th

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## From 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington'

*This poem is a memorial ode to the British military figure, Arthur Wellington. With rhetorical address to the British public, the poem commemorates his achievements and praises him in heroic terms.*

This ode was specifically written in his role as Poet Laureate, and thus written intentionally to commemorate an historical occasion. It therefore departs from much of the personal diction that makes an interesting comparison. Arthur Wellesley, first Duke of Wellington, and a Topographical Poet are two leading nineteenth century military and political figures. Hailed as a British military hero, he commanded during the Napoleonic Wars, especially his victory over Napoleon at the culminating battle of Waterloo, which resulted in Napoleon's abdication and exile. The poem was published in November 1812, each, two days before the funeral, and sold out, with a revised second edition being published in 1813.

We can be alert to the poetic diction, language register and forms that are deemed appropriate for the function of recording of historical occasion. The use of full rhyme lends a weightiness to the piece, whilst the pattern of stresses is typically 'masculine', i.e. the last stressed vowel in the line. The rhymes, particularly on monosyllables, can sound a little strained to fit in to the elevated and privileged above meaning: *'Uplifted high in heart and hope are we, / Until we doubt that we must be other nobler work to do, / Than when he fought at Waterloo, / And Victor he was then.'* The poem emphasises the important role of ritual and mourning rites and imagines the speaker as a public pronoun, in a way that is appropriate to a public occasion. Because there is no narrative, the poem has an effect of bestowing befitting dignity and repose to the departed.

The poet's use of universalities instead of particulars makes this a monument to a figure of public grief for a personally known and cherished individual, as in 'In Memoriam'. The poet's elegiac community of 'the people', evoking a shared sorrow so that he is simultaneously a part of that community of sorrow, and the honour that the people bestow upon the values such as 'duty', 'glory', 'honour', 'triumph', and more emotive but universal terms that bespeak the impersonal remove from the dead person.

There is a movement in tone through the poem: in the first three verses he combines the Duke's public role *'Lead out the pageant'* (1, 13) with rhetorical questions, *'Where shall we lay the Duke's streaming London's central roar'* (8, 9), to create a removed and proclamatory tone. The second and third verses create a unity through the tolling, long vowel sounds, which sound like a bell. The poem is more expansive and works through an impersonal portrayal of the Duke that focuses on his humble (199), moral (203–204) dutiful (202), selfless (204–205), hard-working (212), tenacious (213) and his path to leadership. It concludes with a return to the imperative, *'let the land which he has won For many and many an age proclaim'* (225–226), and to a tolling repetition of the word 'glory' elevated through terms of praise such as: *'his great example stand / Colossal'* (220), *'God bless the leader'* (229). Yet the values of the heroism that are applauded are, significantly, less about his identity, and celebrate qualities that could be considered more in terms of their utility to the nation. This is partly emphasised in the repeated line, 'the path of duty was the way to glory'. In particular kind of nationalism or patriotism for the way in which they could be applied to the nation.

In contrast to the depths of doubt and despair that 'In Memoriam' excavates, the poem offers far more easy consolations in the notion of the enduring soul. As with 'In Memoriam', the poet evokes the sense of deep time known to geology, yet offers a much less troubled and troubling belief. Despite the acknowledged vastness of the universe, Wellington's greatness is perceived as surviving in an everlasting immortal form.

“ *For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill  
And break the shore, and evermore  
Make and break, and work their will;  
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll  
Round us, each with different powers  
And other forms of life than ours,  
What know we greater than the soul?* (259–265) ”

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



**'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington': Discussion**

1. In pairs, discuss the language register and diction in this poem.
2. How successful is it in its aim? Explain your opinion to your partner.



**'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington': Discussion**

1. In pairs, discuss the language register and diction in this poem.
2. How successful is it in its aim? Explain your opinion to your partner.



**'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington': Discussion**

1. In pairs, discuss the language register and diction in this poem.
2. How successful is it in its aim? Explain your opinion to your partner.



**'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington': Discussion**

1. In pairs, discuss the language register and diction in this poem.
2. How successful is it in its aim? Explain your opinion to your partner.



**'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington': Discussion**

1. In pairs, discuss the language register and diction in this poem.
2. How successful is it in its aim? Explain your opinion to your partner.



**'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington': Discussion**

1. In pairs, discuss the language register and diction in this poem.
2. How successful is it in its aim? Explain your opinion to your partner.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





### **'The Charge of the Light Brigade': Discussion Activities**

1. With a partner, identify the pattern of the metre, and talk through how this and meaning.
2. Do you both find the last stanza convincing given what has come before it?



### **'The Charge of the Light Brigade': Discussion Activities**

1. With a partner, identify the pattern of the metre, and talk through how this and meaning.
2. Do you both find the last stanza convincing given what has come before it?



### **'The Charge of the Light Brigade': Discussion Activities**

1. With a partner, identify the pattern of the metre, and talk through how this and meaning.
2. Do you both find the last stanza convincing given what has come before it?



### **'The Charge of the Light Brigade': Discussion Activities**

1. With a partner, identify the pattern of the metre, and talk through how this and meaning.
2. Do you both find the last stanza convincing given what has come before it?

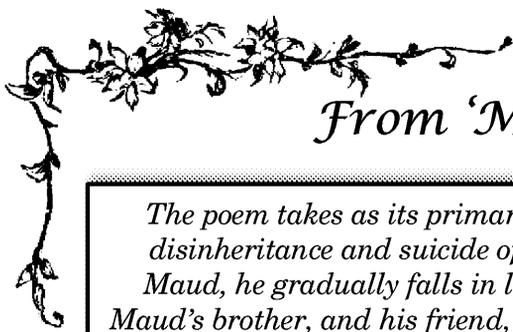


### **'The Charge of the Light Brigade': Discussion Activities**

1. With a partner, identify the pattern of the metre, and talk through how this and meaning.
2. Do you both find the last stanza convincing given what has come before it?

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## From 'Maud': A Monodrama

*The poem takes as its primary focus the psychological states of the speaker, his disinheritance and suicide of his father. Despite initial disinterest in Maud, he gradually falls in love with her and subsequently feelings for Maud's brother, and his friend, heir of a mine-owner, who is a suitor to Maud's brother in a duel, and the ensuing death of the beloved, Maud's own tormented descent into madness. Finally he joins as a soldier*

'Maud' is a lengthy poem that exploits the dramatic monologue to great effect, for the intensity of the language and imagery of an Edgar Allen Poe story, to its abrupt end. Tennyson did enjoy financial success with 'Maud' – the first edition of 10,000 copies received some harsh criticism from the literary establishment and reviewers:

‘Obscurity taken for profundity’, ‘the dead level of prose run mad,’ ‘rampant and soul’, were a few of the descriptions lavished on it by the reviewers. Tennyson included all his poems, perhaps in reactionary defence of it, and especially liked to read the critic commented that one of the two vowels should be omitted from the title, which was chosen for the purpose. Another said, ‘If an author pipe of adultery, suicide, set him down as the practiser of those crimes.’ This time Alfred’s sense of occasion and he replied: ‘Adulterer I may be, fornicator I may be, murderer I may

We are only given extracts in this selection, and these demonstrate the varying methods of its vivid characterisation of the protagonist and his moods, we enter and participate in a strong voice exhibiting great shifts in tone and feeling throughout, from polemical to lyrical tenderness. Yet the narrative has a complexity that can initially be baffling as to the speaker’s background, and the order and nature of events, a chronology of the drama.

A little like the protagonist of Locksley Hall, in his anger and resentment against social conditions, he spews a bitter invective against the state of modern society, finding in it greed and luxury and war’. In his own life, Tennyson had wooed a lover, the wealthy Rosa Baring, and was his marriages hindered by aspirational families forging alliances between upper-class, aristocratic and commercially made wealth, and their opposition to the construction of a middle-class identity as a dramatic expression. The drive for power, position and money is seen to have contributed to the speaker; as he is elsewhere, Tennyson is occupied with the question of nobility, and indeed, a proper masculine identity. The central character bemoans the power that money may breed: the grandson of a pit owner living in a newly built castle, imitating aristocratic manners: ‘*Seeing his gewgaw castle shine / New as his title, built last year [...] pricking a cockney*’ enraged that Maud should marry the young coal baron for financial reasons and social status, and jealousy that motivates his duel, and killing of Maud’s brother. Like the male protagonist, he finds redemption in becoming a soldier, and severing his ties with civic and domestic life.

The topicality of the subject matter is unusual for Tennyson; the poem brushes on the scene of an urban city, industrialism and its social ills but it is not intended as a sustained polemic against the villainy of the age, and catalogues briefly but grimly the wrongs of the time, citing the violence: ‘*the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife*’ (l.1.38), sexual immorality: ‘*are hovell’d and hustled together, each sex, like swine*’, (l.1.34). The poor are both victims of social crimes, ‘*cheat and be cheated, and die*’ (l.1.32). They are vulnerable to adult fraud: ‘*alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread*’ (l.1.39) and dangerous medication: ‘*cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits / To pestle a poison’d poison behind*’ (l.1.39). Social security is gained through claiming insurance on your child’s life or on baby

The relationship with Maud and ensuing love poetry in part one is a significant element of the poem. The gradual and inevitable shift in his fond recollections of memories of Maud as a child to indifference to having seen her to what becomes an obsession with her haunting

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



<sup>13</sup> Charles Tennyson, *Alfred Tennyson* (London: Macmillan, 1949) p. 286. Cited by Norman Page, *Tennyson: An Illustration*

*ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long / Growing and fading and growing, till I come* through gentle romanticism, and then jealous possessiveness. In this trajectory to the romantic interlude in the lyrical love poetry of verse 22. ‘Come into the garden Maud’ is an invitation and meditation upon his love for her, sonorous with its half and full rhyme stanzas of six lines – sestet – *ababcb* with eight lines: *abababab* which contributes to the

The setting of the garden is primarily a domestic one, it is significant that sexual and romantic love is experienced in, the natural world. It is daylight, in contrast with the night and the moon, *‘the brief night goes / In babble and revel and wine’* (I.22.28). Maud is most likely the woman whom the speaker fancifully confides in, but is associated with many flowers and trees: *jessamine, violets, acacia, lake-blossom, pimpernel, passion-flower, lilies, larkspur*. These flowers which signal the lover’s state of mind as one of arousal, open receptiveness, *‘the soul is open’* (I.22.33), and of blossoming love. Their love is a refuge, a natural sanctuary, and separates them from their commercial and social interests. As elsewhere in Tennyson’s love poetry, nature offers a realm that naturalises and makes love and sexual desire part of a wider, elemental

As in the opening verses, the poet attempts to present the speech rhythms of madnes in the speaker’s hysterical outbursts in verse five of part two. In this sustained treatment of the psychological realism: at this period and the latter end of the century, the new scientific discoveries ushered in new understandings and interest in the human mind and states of madness. For the romantic poets before him, they now received fresh interpretation in literary form, with the success and achievement of the novel, the form of the dramatic monologue in poetry offered a new section in which the protagonist imagines himself to be dead and among the dead has

‘  
And my heart is a handful of dust,  
And the wheels go over my head,  
And my bones are shaken with pain,  
For into a shallow grave they are thrust (II.5.3),’

The rambling quality of associations has a nightmarish sense of delusion, combined with the associations about him are spiritually and morally ‘dead’.

The limited totality of his reality is conveyed through sound with Tennyson’s characteristic onomatopoeia: *‘the hoofs of the horses beat, beat / The hoofs of the horses beat’* (II.5.8–10). The trochaic foot of the present participles, combined with the assonance of the crowd: *‘passing feet / Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying, / Clamour and rumble, and*

The development of the main character, at times confusing given that it is related to the trajectory in which his (inner) conflict appears to be resolved, somewhat neatly, in

‘  
*‘And as months ran on and rumour of battle grew,  
It is time, it is time, O passionate heart’, said I  
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),  
‘It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,  
That old hysterical mock-disease should die’.* (III.6.29–33),’

The conclusion in part three details his hope in finding regeneration and redemption in the *‘defence of the right’* (III.6.19) – of the Crimean War. His dream that a just war would regenerate himself, and perhaps paradoxically, find peace in *‘deathful-grinning mouths of the flowers blossom of war with a heart of fire’* (III.6.52). The last lines conclude rather reductively with the platitude that the protagonist can find a new and moral self-hood through a national

‘  
*We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,  
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;  
It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;  
I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,  
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign’d* (III.6.55–59),’

It was a conclusion, which whether Tennyson himself actually endorsed or not, received from his peers, including George Eliot, in the *Westminster Review*.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## 'Maud': Discussion Activities

1. In groups, discuss how the dramatised lyric form offers the opportunity for the speaker's thoughts and experience of the protagonist affect the satire and social critique which is the poem's main purpose.
2. In pairs, analyse the imagery and language of verse 22. Compare the love poem to the rest of the poem.
3. In pairs, choose one section and explain your understanding of how the metaphorical language contributes to the characterisation of the protagonist.
4. Is there a satisfactory and convincing conclusion to this poem? Explain your answer.
5. In your groups, discuss the ending. What future does the speaker envisage for herself?



## 'Maud': Discussion Activities

1. In groups, discuss how the dramatised lyric form offers the opportunity for the speaker's thoughts and experience of the protagonist affect the satire and social critique which is the poem's main purpose.
2. In pairs, analyse the imagery and language of verse 22. Compare the love poem to the rest of the poem.
3. In pairs, choose one section and explain your understanding of how the metaphorical language contributes to the characterisation of the protagonist.
4. Is there a satisfactory and convincing conclusion to this poem? Explain your answer.
5. In your groups, discuss the ending. What future does the speaker envisage for herself?

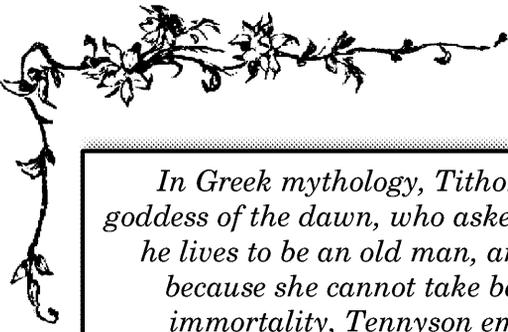


## 'Maud': Discussion Activities

1. In groups, discuss how the dramatised lyric form offers the opportunity for the speaker's thoughts and experience of the protagonist affect the satire and social critique which is the poem's main purpose.
2. In pairs, analyse the imagery and language of verse 22. Compare the love poem to the rest of the poem.
3. In pairs, choose one section and explain your understanding of how the metaphorical language contributes to the characterisation of the protagonist.
4. Is there a satisfactory and convincing conclusion to this poem? Explain your answer.
5. In your groups, discuss the ending. What future does the speaker envisage for herself?

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## 'Tithonus' (1860)

*In Greek mythology, Tithonus was the unfortunate man who was loved by the goddess of the dawn, who asked for and was granted eternal life, in return for which he lives to be an old man, and is then doomed to remain at that state because she cannot take back her gift. By imagining the unnatural immortality, Tennyson emphasises the undesirability of it, and*

Tennyson was only a young man when he wrote this, although it was revised in 1860 about old age and death from one still in youth. The poem draws some emotional force from blank verse: the poem opens with images of the cyclical rhythm of life and death, and metre effectively reinforces the meaning. The rhythm is carried in 10 lines of 10 syllables on the hard consonant of 'decay': *'The woods decay, the woods decay and fall'* (1-2). The repetition of 'decay' and 'fall' slowing the rhythm and making the caesuras. The destructive force of time is in this to be welcomed. By contrast the speaker is an ethereal figure, without a body, disembodied, a *'shadow roaming like a dream'* (8). The use of enjambment follows the first two lines, and then a full stop after 'swan' and a line break, reinforces the meaning of the poem, *'Me only cruel immortality / Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms'*, the speaker was granted immortality, but not eternal youth. The poem is similarly static in mood of recollection, and takes a condition or mood of stasis as its subject, as do other of Tennyson's 'Lotos-eaters', and 'The Lady of Shalott'.

In the second stanza the speaker reflects self-pityingly on his hubris in the third person: *and thy choice, / Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd / To his great heart's desire* (14). In bitterness the speaker recriminates his lover with having *'beat me down with the beauty of immortal youth in Aurora is the cruel obverse which 'left me maim'd'* (20). The prosody creates a more naturalistic rhythm, which though slow in pace overall, is effective. In the third stanza, the coming of the dawn: Aurora, is described as a womanly form: *mysterious glimmer steals / From thy brows, and from thy shoulders pure, / And thy heart renew'd'* (34-36). This is mirrored in the sixth stanza in which the sensual and erotically recalled in terms of heat, colour and bodily sensation: *'felt my blood slowly crimson'd all'* (55). The effect is to convey that sense of self that comes into being and communion with, another. The light of the dawn illuminating her outline: *'dawn' (54)* and his: *'Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm / With kisses balmier April'* (57) is couched in romantic language.

Yet the sense of disillusion is conveyed in Tithonus' lament, who is fundamentally himself, having dwelt so long in his aged body:

*' Ay me! Ay me! with what another heart  
In days far-off, and with what other eyes  
I used to watch – if I be he that watch'd – (50-52)*

The sense of disjuncture between the former and current self is common to any of these experiences, and it thus touches on a universality in the experience of old age for all. The philosophical treatment of Tithonus' dilemma touches on the notion of continuity and the question what constitutes 'I', and the idea of the soul. Tennyson seems most preoccupied with his physical states and *'power to die'* (70).

The final stanza returns to the state in which Tithonus exists, and by contrast to the sixth stanza, emphasises the inability to feel heat or warmth any longer with repetition: *thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold / Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet'* (68-69).

Again the use of repetition, as in the first stanza, *'morn by morn'; / I earth in earth's natural rhythms of the diurnal and the human lifespan, and provides a contrast to the state of his wrinkled feet.*

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## **'Tithonus': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss how this poem could be understood through grouping with
2. With your partner, talk through why blank verse form is effective in the treat and subject.



## **'Tithonus': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss how this poem could be understood through grouping with
2. With your partner, talk through why blank verse form is effective in the treat and subject.



## **'Tithonus': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss how this poem could be understood through grouping with
2. With your partner, talk through why blank verse form is effective in the treat and subject.



## **'Tithonus': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss how this poem could be understood through grouping with
2. With your partner, talk through why blank verse form is effective in the treat and subject.



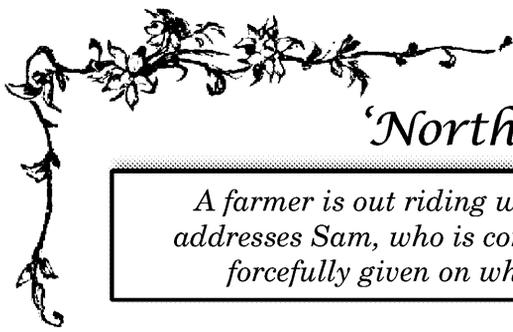
## **'Tithonus': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In pairs, discuss how this poem could be understood through grouping with
2. With your partner, talk through why blank verse form is effective in the treat and subject.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## 'Northern Farmer - New S

*A farmer is out riding with his son, Sam, around the estate o addresses Sam, who is coming of age, on the subject of marriag forcefully given on what an appropriate marriage should a*

This is a dialect poem belonging to a group of such poems in Tennyson's oeuvre ('Village Wife, or, The Entail', 'The Spinster's Sweet-Arts'). The father's perspective there is money and security, and not for beauty: the emphatic materialism of the character and voice of the speaker, given in Tennyson's local home dialect make and content of so much else of the oeuvre.

Tennyson grew up in rural Lincolnshire, where a very distinctive dialect, or rather varied from village to village, was prevalent. Although his family belonged to the exposed to this local accent, and to its own language and syntax, and according to and admirers and to actual early recordings of Tennyson reading his own poetry, For the purposes of his movement into other social and cultural milieu fitting to he would have adapted his accent to fit his sphere and circumstances.

This genre is a well-established literary genre onwards from the eighteenth century popularity as a form in the nineteenth century where it is written by poets also v English, perhaps most notably in those by Tennyson. In the genre of dialect poet rhythms and vocabulary are used often, but not exclusively, for satirical purpose use is thus the heroic couplet, traditionally used for satirical purposes, set in qua tone, not of a scabrous and harsh satire, but of a gentler more affectionate vein,

This poem is clearly not a satire on the subject of marriage in a political sense in be, for example based on equality and fulfilling the woman's needs for autonomy (Elizabeth Barrett Browning explored in *Aurora Leigh*). It has little to say about ho much else, it doesn't examine for the reader what the attraction is between Sam than she is 'a beauty'. Rather it is a satire on marriage, or rather marriage as the structure, as social climbing and financial security. The farmer draws a comparison romantic love and lust, advising from his wiser and sober position of elder that h treat marriage as a well calculated decision: *'taäke time: I knaws what maäkes th the lasses mysen when I wur a lad?' (17-18).*

The farmer reminds his son of how his own father had almost nothing, but at lea poverty, one can be virtuous, and absolute poverty engenders crime: *'Tis'n them 'ouses an' steäls, / Them as 'as coats to their backs ab' taäkes their regular meäl. knaws where a meäl's to be 'ad. / Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loc poor if they work can be virtuous but die with nothing, much as Sam's grandfath*

Dialect as the rendering of living speech may create an immediacy and vitality th other verse styles. The language is of different register than of that in the *Idylls*, as 'or summut' and 'stunt' and colloquial phrases like *'scoors o'gells', 'cuddle and (22), 'An' 'e made the bed as 'e ligs on', 'stook to 'is taäil' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em 'laäzy lot' (48): this is the language of everyday, not the high poetic register of th monologue. The use of rhymes in dialect might be exploited more, but we do ge which are outside of standard English, as in 'id' (his) with 'did' (52), 'bells' with 'g (shire) (28), which should sound as full rhymes if pronounced correctly.*

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



The repetition of *'lass / ass'* with its long, round vowel sounds on lines 11 and 12 central theme and tone of the poem, almost as to become a refrain, which is the of the father as a young person's typical nagging parent. Similarly we get the rep which is the keynote of the poem in the final stanza. And we can envisage the so his courtship of his mother in plain words: *'I went where munny war: an' thy mun munny laäid by, an' a nicetish bit o' land. Maäybe she waren't a beauty: I niver g good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?'* (21–24). Poet draws his vulgarity to a marriage with money: *'Luvv? What's luvv? Thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er mun together as they've good right to do'* (33–34). His father's opinion is based in a p rural life, however, and his wish to rise above the deprivations of his own youth: *leastways 'is munny was 'id' / But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issen dead, and 'e dies a go*

Despite being written in couplets, the sense or meaning of the lines is often extend into the next stanza, a metre that succeeds in conveying the thoughts of the speak natural speech rhythm and syntax. Thinking about the conventions of spoken lang more ellipsis and enjambment, so the effect is not naturalistic by any means. How effects deployed to create the effect of living, natural speech. In the seventh stanza gossipy, rhetorical mode, which uses pauses to render the rhythms of natural spee

‘Parson’s lass ‘ant nowt, an’ she weant ‘a nowt when ‘e’s dead, / Mun be a and addle her bread: / Why? Fur ‘e’s nobbut a curate an’ weant niver git his the bed as ‘e ligs on afoor ‘e coom’d to the shere. / An’ thin ‘e coom’d to the debt / Stook to his taail they did, an’ ‘e ‘ant got shut on ‘em yet’. (25–30)

In capturing and enjoying rendering this tone, the poem seems not wholly unsyn son’s dilemma. It may at the same time historicise the speaker as part of a specif poets of the period. Hardy very knowingly did this, and so did the poet and philo Dorset dialect. Writers chose to capture dialects, for as their communities came were in some cases dying out. An interesting question can be raised as to the aut whether an educated poet who normally speaks and writes standard English can without condescending humour or producing grotesques.

The poem gives us a character portrait, if not a social ‘type’ as the title of the poem with its pair, ‘Northern Farmer, Old Style’. How is the characterisation wrought? dramatic monologue? The farmer hears the word ‘property’ – ‘proputtly’ beaten hooves as he canters, and acquisition is his dominant aim for his son in marrying attacking and chiding his son, arguing that both parents hold Sam to be ‘an Ass’ for pretty face. The final stanza concludes with the farmer drawing attention to the property, and how his oldest son’s inheritance relies upon his capitulation in the of the eldest son inheriting the patrimony is broken with, and indicates the sever

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## **'Northern Farmer – New Style': Discussion Activities**

---

1. With a partner, discuss how writing in dialect enables Tennyson to express s elsewhere in his oeuvre.
2. In groups, discuss which components of the poem make it different from ot marriage such as 'Maud' or 'Mariana'.
3. With a partner, share thoughts on how characterisation in the dialect poem monologue form.
4. In pairs, discuss the repetitions in the poem. What purpose do they serve?



## **'Northern Farmer – New Style': Discussion Activities**

---

1. With a partner, discuss how writing in dialect enables Tennyson to express s elsewhere in his oeuvre.
2. In groups, discuss which components of the poem make it different from ot marriage such as 'Maud' or 'Mariana'.
3. With a partner, share thoughts on how characterisation in the dialect poem monologue form.
4. In pairs, discuss the repetitions in the poem. What purpose do they serve?



## **'Northern Farmer – New Style': Discussion Activities**

---

1. With a partner, discuss how writing in dialect enables Tennyson to express s elsewhere in his oeuvre.
2. In groups, discuss which components of the poem make it different from ot marriage such as 'Maud' or 'Mariana'.
3. With a partner, share thoughts on how characterisation in the dialect poem monologue form.
4. In pairs, discuss the repetitions in the poem. What purpose do they serve?

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## From 'Merlin and Vivien' (*Idylls of the King*)

*This extract tells of the wizard Merlin's seduction by Vivien, who absorbs his magic arts from him. She stalks him with seductive following him to Brittany. She persuades him to entrust in her, a lover. The elderly Merlin is flattered, and appears to be absorbed.*

*Idylls* is a collection of 'epic' poems written and assembled over many years and form strength is not its narrative unity. The series include 'Lady of Shalott' (1832), and later 'Lancelot and Queen Guinevere' and 'Sir Galahad'. An epic by definition should describe degeneration of values, although Tennyson's *Idylls* do not fully realise the world in w discrete episodes. Tennyson had signed some of his poems 'Merlin', apparently ider offers another perspective on his characterisation.

As with others in the series, 'Merlin and Vivien' is written in blank verse with regular, 10 poem exceeds the imputed war between 'spirit and flesh': it both revels in the narrative structure, language and imagery, yet simultaneously, prudently, judges the action to be serious repercussions for the Arthurian community of the Round Table at Camelot and fidelity that they represent. Indeed, Vivien's seduction of Merlin echoes Guinevere's betrayal to the medieval verse tale, *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight*, Brian Stone has noted how often appears as the dual aspect of the Lady of the Lake: as Nimue, she is in a benevolent other she is the malevolent seductress of Merlin, and conspirer against the Round Table aspect of the tri-partite goddess, combining these roles with a third, Morgan le Fay, a

Vivien is one of the most vividly drawn and imagined female characters in the series, and through the use of alliterative language, internal half-rhymes and assonance: '*petulant laugh*', '*slight and sprightly*', '*vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd*', '*glancing here and gaze*' her behaviour as studied tactics to entrap Merlin. She is not only the object of the poet's extensive speech in which to insist, deceptively, upon her innocence. Her language is p words and phrases as to almost be incantatory; '*Must make me fear still more you are still more to prove you mine, / And makes me wish still more to learn this charm*' (325–

The word 'lissom' appears twice, a sibilant adjective which compounds 'lithe' and 'some' describe a sexually attractive woman. Details of how her white gown grips immodestly seduction scene: '*that more exprest / Than hid her, clung about her lissom limbs*' (220) sensual and sexual: '*writhed*', '*slided*', '*twined*', '*curved*', '*clung like a snake*', '*droop*'. The archetypal symbol of sin. She appears more human through her playful metaphors of his beard, becoming a prey to his devouring spider. This image inverts the role play between who is her prey.

To the reader of the post-Freudian era, the image of the onlookers who 'lie upon the shore' '*curl'd white of the coming wave / Glass'd in the slippery sand before it breaks?*' (291), is signalling the anticipation and irresistible power of orgasm breaking. So that Merlin's confession '*tell you truth? / You seem'd that wave about to break upon me / And sweep me from my name and fame*' (299–302). The last line is a refrain, which directly reiterates the effect performed on him. Merlin's sense of foreboding is given credit, even though he has failed himself describes: '*I think, / However wise, ye hardly know me yet*' (353).

In the medieval poem, 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', Morgan le Fay is taught magical use against Arthur's court, '*many of the magical arts of Merlin she acquired, / For she lavish susceptible sage*'.<sup>14</sup> Lechery and malign magic are clearly interlinked, and Tennyson does more explicitly she uses the charm that reduces the victim to passivity '*lay as dead / And in fame*' (211) over Merlin himself, it becomes an act of seduction and a measure of her power '*great / According to his greatness whom she quench'd*' (216–217). Original sin is referred to '*trusted when I told you that, / And stirr'd this vice in you which ruin'd man / Thro woman*' communicates a sense that Merlin will be restored to power, and that Vivien's treachery

<sup>14</sup> Verse 98 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. Brian Stone (London: Penguin, 1974) p. 112

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## 'Merlin and Vivien': Discussion Activities

---

1. In groups, track and discuss how the tone changes through this extract of this.
2. In groups, look at other examples of Tennyson's female characters. Discuss
3. In pairs, talk through the language of the seduction scene: what metaphors
4. With your partner, look at this language in comparison to other love poetry differences you notice.



## 'Merlin and Vivien': Discussion Activities

---

1. In groups, track and discuss how the tone changes through this extract of this.
2. In groups, look at other examples of Tennyson's female characters. Discuss
3. In pairs, talk through the language of the seduction scene: what metaphors
4. With your partner, look at this language in comparison to other love poetry differences you notice.



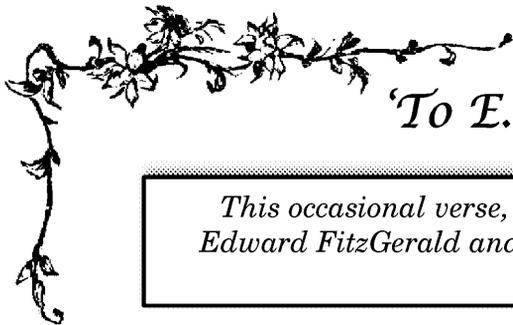
## 'Merlin and Vivien': Discussion Activities

---

1. In groups, track and discuss how the tone changes through this extract of this.
2. In groups, look at other examples of Tennyson's female characters. Discuss
3. In pairs, talk through the language of the seduction scene: what metaphors
4. With your partner, look at this language in comparison to other love poetry differences you notice.

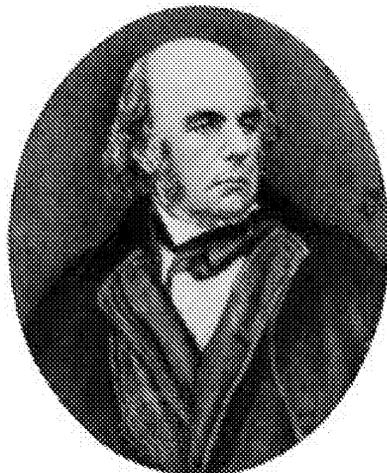
**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## 'To E. FitzGerald' in 'Tires

This occasional verse, in epistolary form (written as a letter to Edward FitzGerald and meditates humorously on their friendship) is in the form of rhyming couplets.



The poem was intended as a gift his friend on the poem 'Tiresias', however Edward FitzGerald wrote it months before his birthday, and never read it. The poem was a contraction used by his friends – and his friends were in couplets in eight syllable lines. FitzGerald had known Alfred, Lord Tennyson, preferring his sparer verse, and his *Idylls*; peers at college, they were friends thro

FitzGerald, otherwise a minor poet, wrote a translation of the 'Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám', published anonymously in 1852. It was a critical success and popularity, in part as a result of the faith and of the moral questions of personal conduct. In the poem 'your golden Eastern lay', the poet praises his friend's 'version' (33), which although not entirely original,

planet equal to the sun / Which cast it' (35–36). Modestly Tennyson recalls their friendship, adding to the sense of recollection given in a natural speech mode. The aside, giving the name of the planet, consciously points up its reference to Shakespeare: 'a thing enskied' / (As Shakespeare's Hamlet rather as one would in speaking, rather than writing. The use of some colloquialisms, such as 'greeting' (45), and 'Has hit on this' (50) also grounds the verse in informality.

The peaceful atmosphere of his Suffolk home is evoked. Surrounded by doves in his 'sheltering garden-tree' (6), a seated figure is happy in his suburban grange.

Their 'younger London days' with 'two, / Old friends outvaluing all the rest, / Two' (40–41), which refers to James Spedding, with whom they had holidayed in the Lake of H Brookfield, also now deceased.

The impression of direct speech is created through various formal and language choices. Tennyson, and he refers to himself in recollecting their time together. There are no line breaks, making this poem simply one meandering sentence. Because the verse is not examining discrete ideas, but rather runs all the thoughts together, it achieves the effect of spoken reminiscence. The diction is very appropriate to the subject of the verse, which belongs to the spoken, and without the archaisms with which the *Idylls*, for example. The effect of the parentheses is to break up the sense of the rhyme scheme, almost immediately with the use of thoughts in parenthesis indicated in bold: 'Old grange, / (Where once I tarried for a while), / Glance at the wheeling Orb of chance'. In Tennyson, there is also an extensive use of enjambment, for example, in: 'height of the Eschol hugeness', 'roll'd / To meet me' (26, 27), 'wrought / To mould the dream' (33, 34), 'sun, / Which cast it'. This contrasts with the endstopped lines used elsewhere. The verse can make for an evenness and regularity alien to direct speech. The verse runs on like direct speech may do, the rhymes lend a jauntiness that would not be available in blank verse. It is used to great effect in poems of reminiscence and meditation such as 'The Prelude'.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED



A friend of Tennyson's from his college days in the early '30s, they grew apart over lifestyles, Fitzgerald coming from an aristocratic and wealthy background, but choosing an aspirational lifestyle than Tennyson.<sup>15</sup> Fitzgerald is described as frugal: *'that full of prayers; / Who live on milk and meal and grass'* (11–13) and that it is *'Lenten fare'* observance of Lent, a time of fasting. Fitzgerald had a vegetarian diet – still a novelty as it would be closer to the end of the century: *'Your table of Pythagoras'* (15) reflects the philosopher adopted. Meat, and the substantial diet that it is considered to be, is mentioned in the poem: as a fortifying food it has cultural significance to the Victorians as a friend is pictured as something of an ascetic, or of adhering to the self-denial and fasting of Lent, aspiring to a spirituality through denial of bodily appetite – in a humorous way, he then proceeds to retract the suggestion, *'but none can say / That Lenten fare makes your Golden lay.'* (30–31).

Some literary historians have suggested that Fitzgerald was homosexual, and perhaps other cultural beliefs, there are inferences that Fitzgerald's lack of nutriment makes him, by contrast to Tennyson, once he has abandoned his vegetarian diet and regains *'That which was lost'* (24), with the resumption of meat eating, he adopts a spirit of masculine adventure *'icy capes'* (25), in contrast to the reclining and passive Fitzgerald.

Despite referring to their friends as deceased, the overall tone is celebratory of age and other poems such as where old age and impending death are examined, as in *'The Message'*. The message of the poem is one of warmth, tender humour and of a very concrete and enduring friendship and longevity.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



<sup>15</sup> *The Letters of Edward Fitzgerald*, ed. Alfred McKinley Terhune and Annabelle Brodick Terhune (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 73. Norman Page, Op. cit. p. 73

## **'To E. Fitzgerald': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss why the reference to Shakespeare is in quotations and parallel to Tennyson's allusions or references to Shakespeare elsewhere in his poetry.
2. With your group, explain your understanding of how the poem's register and syntax, language, stresses and other aspects.



## **'To E. Fitzgerald': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss why the reference to Shakespeare is in quotations and parallel to Tennyson's allusions or references to Shakespeare elsewhere in his poetry.
2. With your group, explain your understanding of how the poem's register and syntax, language, stresses and other aspects.



## **'To E. Fitzgerald': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss why the reference to Shakespeare is in quotations and parallel to Tennyson's allusions or references to Shakespeare elsewhere in his poetry.
2. With your group, explain your understanding of how the poem's register and syntax, language, stresses and other aspects.



## **'To E. Fitzgerald': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss why the reference to Shakespeare is in quotations and parallel to Tennyson's allusions or references to Shakespeare elsewhere in his poetry.
2. With your group, explain your understanding of how the poem's register and syntax, language, stresses and other aspects.



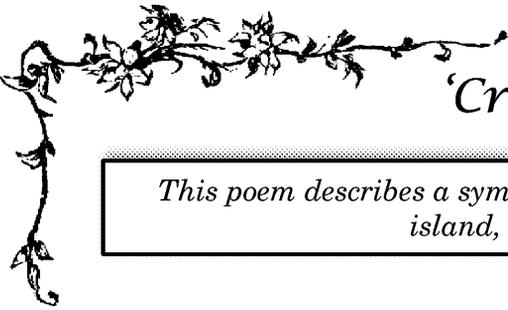
## **'To E. Fitzgerald': Discussion Activities**

---

1. In groups, discuss why the reference to Shakespeare is in quotations and parallel to Tennyson's allusions or references to Shakespeare elsewhere in his poetry.
2. With your group, explain your understanding of how the poem's register and syntax, language, stresses and other aspects.

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## 'Crossing The Bar' (1889)

*This poem describes a symbolic journey of crossing a stretch of sea to an island, to meditate on the poet's fate and faith.*

This short, dense poem was, according to Tennyson, composed on the crossing from Wight, which was to become the location for the Tennyson family home for several years, but after his death by a few years, it was re-published in *Punch*, shortly after his funeral in October 1892. An illustration of an ethereal looking Tennyson sailing in a boat.

Symbolism in the natural world is a recurring feature of Tennyson's poetry, and here the content and form of this lyric. The short passage out to sea – 'crossing the bar', comes to symbolise the 'other side' of the afterlife, the phrase 'when I put out to sea' is an instance of the poet's desire to die. It features the celestial 'Sunset and evening star', the twilight being symbolic of the transition between life and death. The 'boundless deep' of the ocean comes to symbolise a vast unknown, and the poet reinstates his faith in a fate, 'one clear call for me!' determined by God: 'my Pilot will be God, he is united in death with God, 'face to face'. He does not see it as an occasion for mourning, but rather as echoes of King Arthur's words to Bedivere in 'Morte d'Arthur', '*may there be no sadness of farewell*' (11), but rather as a predestined union with the divine.

The second and third stanzas force a slowing down on the metre of the final line of the first stanza, '*When I embark*' (12) to maintain the metrical rhythm, and this gives a portentous quality to the poem without affecting the simplicity. There is much alliteration, which creates a lyrical quality, and the use of longer vowel sounds such as those in '*Too full for sound and foam,*' (6), notice the 'bell' have longer sounding vowels which sound more sonorous. The final stanza is iambic pentameter, and must use a lightly sounded consonant stop on crossing the bar to 'cros', so that there is a mirror of the six syllable line in the first stanza. The line is a tide, a wave rolling out and then in again.

The longing expressed throughout his poetry for personal immortality, his interest in the afterlife, and desire to be reconciled with death is here expressed in a mood of peace and acceptance. Norman Page, biographer, Norman Page, as having written to a correspondent, William Allingham, 'I believe in the chance of another life, and of a great Personality somewhere in the Universe, I believe that all People must have some religion'.<sup>16</sup>

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



<sup>16</sup> Norman Page, *Tennyson: An Illustrated Life* (London: Allison and Busby, 1992) p.150

### **'Crossing the Bar': Discussion Activities**

1. Death and faith are key themes in Tennyson: In pairs, discuss which other poem you prefer and why.
2. With your partner, identify the symbols that Tennyson deploys here. How do they contribute to the poem's meaning?



### **'Crossing the Bar': Discussion Activities**

1. Death and faith are key themes in Tennyson: In pairs, discuss which other poem you prefer and why.
2. With your partner, identify the symbols that Tennyson deploys here. How do they contribute to the poem's meaning?



### **'Crossing the Bar': Discussion Activities**

1. Death and faith are key themes in Tennyson: In pairs, discuss which other poem you prefer and why.
2. With your partner, identify the symbols that Tennyson deploys here. How do they contribute to the poem's meaning?



### **'Crossing the Bar': Discussion Activities**

1. Death and faith are key themes in Tennyson: In pairs, discuss which other poem you prefer and why.
2. With your partner, identify the symbols that Tennyson deploys here. How do they contribute to the poem's meaning?



### **'Crossing the Bar': Discussion Activities**

1. Death and faith are key themes in Tennyson: In pairs, discuss which other poem you prefer and why.
2. With your partner, identify the symbols that Tennyson deploys here. How do they contribute to the poem's meaning?

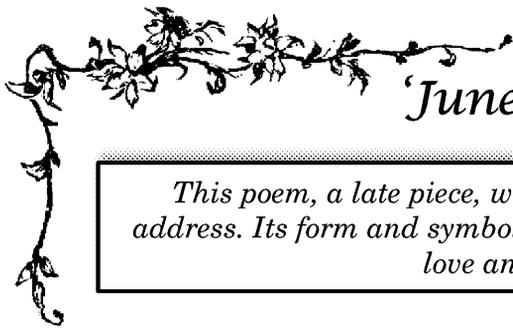


### **'Crossing the Bar': Discussion Activities**

1. Death and faith are key themes in Tennyson: In pairs, discuss which other poem you prefer and why.
2. With your partner, identify the symbols that Tennyson deploys here. How do they contribute to the poem's meaning?

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**





## 'June Bracken and Heath'

*This poem, a late piece, was written for his wife, Emily; a brief address. Its form and symbols harmoniously glow with warmth and love and affection for her and their marriage.*

Tennyson's marriage to Emily was long delayed and the wedding ceremony was waiting on Emily's part, and prevarication on Tennyson's part, ostensibly because of ill health. Yet by many accounts they appeared to have gone on to have a reasonable marriage. Biographers concur that Emily was very active in managing Tennyson's writing on his behalf as well as organising and hosting social functions. They had both died at birth, and one died at sea as a young man.

This short nine-line lyric poem has intimacy, apparent simplicity and an effect of synchrony are created to great effect in a very short verse. The sound and voice between intimates; light stresses and shorter vowel sounds contribute to the

It does not deploy poeticisms, but rather uses an everyday idiom natural to an intimacy between two people who know each other as well as the poet and his wife who have. It has an honesty and frankness that does not shirk the woman's age, but celebrates it: *'are seventy-seven'* (6), which provides a pleasant-sounding internal rhyme. Although the rhymes are not perhaps immediately noticeable because of the natural feel of the poem. Again the poet uses details in nature, here chiefly the visual colour of the landscape: the green of the curling bracken, just unfurling like the newness of love in the early stages of new life in the lifecycle, the two plants existing simultaneously in the ecosystem. The poem made to symbolise the ageing of the couple and their love, it has a subdued 'gloom' in their longer vowel sounds. The sky is described as celestial, the poet conjoins two words: 'June-blue' for the sky /heaven. The sky is boundless, limitless and therefore signifies the quality of the eternal nature of his love.

The keywords alliterate, drawing our attention to their pairing, to indicate the values and qualities of the relationship. These are both the immediacy and vitality of their mutual attraction and the longevity of fidelity – two qualities of an enduring relationship or marriage which are balanced here against each other: *'faith'* (7) against *'fancy'* (8). Other significant words *'green'* (9) and *'gloom'* (9), which also alliterate, symbolise the opposites of youth and age, and provide colour and shade in the highly visual picture that Tennyson's words paint.

Tennyson conjoins two nouns to make an adjective 'summer-new', which leads into an enjambment, carrying the metaphor over to the last line. This technique reinforces the central idea of the poem, because it has an effect of mixing the qualities together, as inseparable parts of the whole of their relationship.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## **'June Bracken and Heather': Discussion Activities**

---

1. As a group, discuss what changes you notice in this later poem, in style and poems.
2. The poem is written for his wife, Emily; in your group, discuss how the tone for its subject.
3. In groups, share your thoughts on how typical/atypical this is as a love poem typical/atypical.
4. With a partner, discuss how the metre is used to inform the meaning.
5. In pairs, talk about the 'voice' of this poem. How and why is it used?



## **'June Bracken and Heather': Discussion Activities**

---

1. As a group, discuss what changes you notice in this later poem, in style and poems.
2. The poem is written for his wife, Emily; in your group, discuss how the tone for its subject.
3. In groups, share your thoughts on how typical/atypical this is as a love poem typical/atypical.
4. With a partner, discuss how the metre is used to inform the meaning.
5. In pairs, talk about the 'voice' of this poem. How and why is it used?



## **'June Bracken and Heather': Discussion Activities**

---

1. As a group, discuss what changes you notice in this later poem, in style and poems.
2. The poem is written for his wife, Emily; in your group, discuss how the tone for its subject.
3. In groups, share your thoughts on how typical/atypical this is as a love poem typical/atypical.
4. With a partner, discuss how the metre is used to inform the meaning.
5. In pairs, talk about the 'voice' of this poem. How and why is it used?

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## Further Prompts for Discussion

1. Which poems consider the role of the artist?
2. What differences in style can you identify between... and...?
3. How effective is Tennyson's love poetry?
4. Which poems might most appeal to the modern reader, why?
5. Discuss whether Tennyson's portrayal of women is either idealistic or misogynistic.
6. How does Tennyson see the role of the poet? How can you argue this?
7. How does Tennyson present empire in... and... ?
8. What spheres does he draw his language from? Why?
9. How does his use of allusions function?
10. What does writing in dialect enable Tennyson to express?
11. Which of the poems do you find most challenging to understand? Why might that be?
12. How can the poems be grouped? What similarities and differences are there?
13. How do the earlier poems compare with the later ones in terms of style or content?
14. Tennyson's poetry has a tendency towards the static, preferring to create pictures rather than a visual image. Discuss.
15. Do these poems offer resolution or movement to the feelings or conflict present? What moments take?
16. How 'proto-decadent' are his poems in their lack of progress or moral?
17. Do the narratives have chronology? How does the narrative progress, i.e. the structure?
18. How does Tennyson depart from his contemporaries on issues of the role of the poet?
19. In what ways may the poem be a reflection on creativity and the role of the poet?
20. Debate: Is this a patriotic poem? Why / Why not?
21. Are you convinced by the poem's conclusions? What ambiguities in its language do you find?
22. Which of the poems seems most modern in either its subject matter or treatment?
23. Stresses and voice – variations of stress in the line determine the speed of the line. Look at the variegation of stress, that is the levels of emphasis on syllables and the use of weak stress. Stresses can contribute to the voice of the verse. Is it a quiet voice or a declamatory or resonant voice?

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



# Sample Assessment Material

INSPECTION COPY

## Individual Oral Commentary

- Start: You will be provided with an extract from the text and guiding questions.
- Preparation time: 20 minutes, during which time you may study the extract and make notes.
- Total delivery time: 10 minutes, made up of 8 minutes of commentary and 2 minutes of further questioning by your teacher.
- Commentary: Up to 8 minutes of analytical commentary, delivered in a logical and clear expression.
- Responses to questions: 2 minutes to respond to probing questions from your teacher.

### Please Note:

If you are taking the Higher Level assessment, your commentary **must** be focused on one part 2 text, with guiding and probing questions provided by your teacher. In addition, you will take part in a further 10-minute, guided literary discussion on a **different** part 2 text (this does not have to be poetry). You will not know which text you will be discussing during your commentary.

## Sample Assessment 1

- **Guiding question 1:** How does Tennyson explore the theme of remembrance in 'In Memoriam A.H.H.'?
- **Guiding question 2:** (optional) How does Tennyson explore the key themes of 'In Memoriam A.H.H.'?

### (In Memoriam A.H.H., Canto 64)

*Dost thou look back on what hath been,  
As some divinely gifted man,  
Whose life in low estate began  
And on a simple village green;*

*Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
And grapples with his evil star;*

*Who makes by force his merit known  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne;*

*And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope*

*The pillar of a people,  
The centre of a world;*

*Yet feels, as in a private hour,  
When all his active powers  
A distant dearness  
A secret sweetness*

*The limit of his narrow life,  
While yet beside its  
He play'd at counsel  
With one that was*

*Who ploughs with patient hands  
And reaps the labour  
Or in the furrow mows  
'Does my old friend*

### Probing questions:

- **For support:** How does Tennyson use natural imagery to evoke nostalgia?
- **For extension:** What evidence can you find to support the notion that Tennyson is exploring the theme of loss?

COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED



## Sample Assessment 2

- **Guiding question 1:** How does Tennyson use imagery and symbolism to evoke a sense of awe and wonder?
- **Guiding question 2:** (optional) How does this poem engage with Victorian attitudes towards gender and class?

### (The Lady of Shalott, Part 3)

*A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,  
He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
And flam'd upon the brazen greaves  
Of bold Sir Lancelot.*

*A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field,  
Beside remote Shalott.*

*The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.*

*The bridle bells rang merrily  
As he rode down to Camelot:  
And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armour rung,  
Beside remote Shalott.*

*All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
As he rode down to Camelot.*

*As often thro' the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over still Shalott.*

*His broad clear brow  
On burnish'd hooves  
From underneath his  
His coal-black curls  
As he rode  
From the bank and  
He flash'd into the  
'Tirra lira,' by the  
Sang Sir La*

*She left the web, she  
She made three  
She saw the water-  
She saw the helmet  
She look'd  
Out flew the web and  
The mirror crack'd  
'The curse is come  
The Lady of*

### Probing questions:

- **For support:** How does Tennyson use Lancelot's appearance to build a sense of awe and wonder?
- **For extension:** How does Tennyson use rhyme and metre to emphasise the poem's structure?

### Sample Discussion Questions for Higher Level

1. What contextual factors do you think come in to the work?
2. What major preoccupations do you think the writer has, based on the text?
3. How is setting used to support the meaning of the text?
4. How do you feel about the decisions that are made, or you feel should have been made, by the characters?
5. Do you feel sympathy for any of the characters, and does this affect your interpretation of the text?
6. How does the opening of the text compare to the conclusion of the text?
7. Were there any subplots that particularly interested you, or significantly affected your interpretation of the text?
8. What overarching morals do you think the text has, and how are they taught?
9. What aspects of the text do you feel would still be relevant today, and what does this suggest about human nature?
10. What does the text suggest about human nature?

**COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED**



## Select Glossary

As an exercise to use the glossary, students could write out an example of a number from selected poems.

<b>Alliteration</b>	repetition of consonants in related words in verse
<b>Assonance</b>	repetition of vowels in related words in verse
<b>Ballad</b>	a narrative poem of traditional origin, often in quatrains
<b>Blank verse</b>	unrhymed five-stress lines
<b>Couplet</b>	a unit of two lines, usually rhyming
<b>Dactyl</b>	metrical foot of one stressed syllable followed by two stressed syllables
<b>Dramatic monologue</b>	a dramatic narrative related by a first person narrator
<b>Enjambment</b>	with the sense, and/or syntax carrying into the next line
<b>Epic</b>	a long narrative poem about personal or national heroic deeds
<b>Foot</b>	a unit of stressed and/or unstressed beats, part of a line
<b>Half-rhyme</b>	when either the last stressed vowel or all following sounds are identical
<b>Heroic couplet</b>	form invented by Chaucer (1340–1400), rhymes in pairs
<b>Lyric</b>	a classical form, originally set to music; short, non-dramatic
<b>Metre</b>	the rhythmic pattern of beats in a piece of verse
<b>Stanza</b>	a unit of form; a group of lines with a specified rhyme scheme
<b>In Memoriam stanza</b>	four four-stress lines rhyming <i>abba</i> , used by Tennyson in <i>In Memoriam</i>
<b>Internal rhyme</b>	rhyme occurring in mid-line
<b>Pararhyme</b>	imperfect rhyme, which gives an echo of the vowel or consonant of a preceding paired word
<b>Stressed</b>	a beat, on which the emphasis in natural speech falls
<b>Trochaic</b>	a metre produced by a foot of two beats, a heavily stressed syllable followed by a lighter
<b>Unstressed</b>	a beat, spoken un-emphatically

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT  
PROTECTED

