



2015 specification
first exams in 2017

Conflict

Anthology Resource Pack for GCSE
Edexcel

zigzageducation.co.uk

POD
7537

Publish your own work... Write to a brief...
Register at publishmenow.co.uk

Follow us on Twitter [@ZigZagEng](https://twitter.com/ZigZagEng)

Contents

Thank You for Choosing ZigZag Education.....	i
Teacher Feedback Opportunity	ii
Terms and Conditions of Use.....	iii
Teacher's Introduction	1
How to Use this Guide	2
Introducing the Anthology.....	4
'A Poison Tree' by William Blake (1794).....	8
Overview.....	8
Analysis of 'A Poison Tree'.....	9
Questions for 'A Poison Tree'.....	10
Answers for 'A Poison Tree'.....	11
'The Destruction of Sennacherib' by Lord Byron (George Gordon) (1815)	12
Overview.....	12
Analysis of 'The Destruction of Sennacherib'	13
Questions for 'The Destruction of Sennacherib'	14
Answers for 'The Destruction of Sennacherib'	15
Extract from 'The Prelude' by William Wordsworth (1850).....	16
Overview.....	16
Analysis of Extract from 'The Prelude'.....	17
Questions for Extract from 'The Prelude'	18
Answers for Extract from 'The Prelude'	19
'The Man He Killed' by Thomas Hardy (1902)	20
Overview.....	20
Analysis of 'The Man He Killed'	21
Questions for 'The Man He Killed'	22
Answers for 'The Man He Killed'	23
'Cousin Kate' Christina Rossetti (1860).....	24
Overview.....	24
Analysis of 'Cousin Kate'	25
Questions for 'Cousin Kate'	26
Answers for 'Cousin Kate'	27
'Half-caste' by John Agard (1996)	28
Overview.....	28
Analysis of 'Half-caste'	29
Questions for 'Half-caste'	30
Answers for 'Half-caste'	31
'Exposure' by Wilfred Owen (1917).....	32
Overview.....	32
Analysis of 'Exposure'	33
Questions for 'Exposure'	34
Answers for 'Exposure'	35
'The Charge of the Light Brigade' by Alfred Lord Tennyson (1854).....	36
Overview.....	36
Analysis of 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'	37
Questions for 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'.....	38
Answers for 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'	39
'Catrin' by Gillian Clarke (1978)	40
Overview.....	40
Analysis of 'Catrin'	41
Questions for 'Catrin'	42
Answers for 'Catrin'	43
'War Photographer' by Carole Satyamurti (1987)	44
Overview.....	44
Analysis of 'War Photographer'	45
Questions for 'War Photographer'	46
Answers for 'War Photographer'	47

'Belfast Confetti' by C	Overview.....
	Analysis of 'Belfast
	Questions for 'Belf
	Answers for 'Belfa
'The Class Game' by	Overview.....
	Analysis of 'The Clas
	Questions for 'The C
	Answers for 'The Cl
'Poppies' by Jane W	Overview.....
	Analysis of 'Poppie
	Questions for 'Pop
	Answers for 'Poppie
'No Problem' by Ben	Overview.....
	Analysis of 'No Prob
	Questions for 'No P
	Answers for 'No Pro
'What Were They Lik	Overview.....
	Analysis of 'What W
	Questions for 'What
	Answers for 'What
Key Theme: The Hor	Comparison Mind
	Analysis of the The
	Questions on the T
	Answers for The H
Key Theme: The Imp	Comparison Mind
	Analysis of the The
	Questions on the T
	Individuals.....
	Answers for The Im
Key Theme: Conflict	Comparison Mind
	Analysis of the The
	Questions on the T
	Relationships
	Answers for Confli
Key Theme: Powerle	Comparison Mind
	Analysis of the The
	Questions on the T
	Answers for Power
Key Theme: Prejudice	Comparison Mind
	Analysis of the The
	Questions on the T
	Answers for Prejud
Exam Preparation...	Exam Advice.....
	Practice Exam Que
	Hints for Exam Que
	Sample Answers...
	Self- or Peer-mark
Glossary of Terms...	
Templates for Studer	

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Teacher's Introduction

How to Use this Guide

This pack is designed to support students and teachers working with the **Conflict** **Edexcel GCSE (9–1) English Literature Poetry Anthology**. There are three clusters (*Relationships, Conflict, Time and Place*), each consisting of 15, thematically linked poems for working with the second collection, **Conflict**.

These materials are divided into four main sections that you can use in a variety of ways:

- Introducing the Anthology
- Poems
- Key Themes
- Exam Preparation

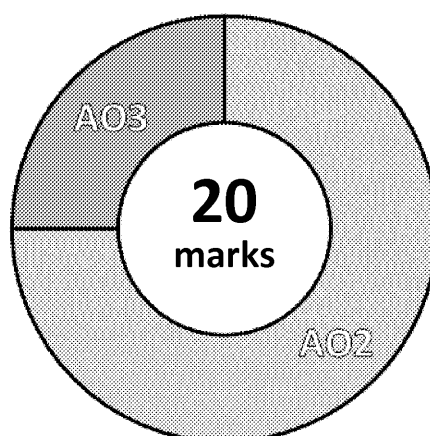
Specification Information

Edexcel GCSE (9–1) English Literature

Pearson Poetry Anthology Collections: *Relationships* **or** *Conflict* **or** *Time and Place*

Component 2, Section B, Part 1: Poetry Since 1789 (Poetry Anthologies)

- Closed-book, written exam
- Choice of three questions (one each for *Relationships, Conflict* and *Time and Place*), or one question on a poem to another poem from the anthology
- Edexcel recommend spending 35 minutes
- 20 marks in total
- AO2: 15 marks
- AO3: 5 marks



Free Updates!

Register your email address to receive any future free updates made to this resource or other English resources you have purchased, and details of any promotions for you.

* resulting from minor specification changes, suggestions from teachers and peer reviews, or occasional errors reported by customers

Go to zzed.uk/freeupdates

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



How to Use this Guide

Introducing the Anthology

This section is written with students as the target audience. It offers a general introduction to the anthology as a whole, plus a list of activities to help them engage with and revise it. Teachers could use this at the start of your poetry study to prepare students for engagement with the poems. They might also use this as a source of **independent learning tasks**.

Poems

For each of the 15 poems you will find the following:

- Summary Sheet
- Analysis of the Poem
- Comprehension and Deeper-thinking Questions and suggested answers

The following is an overview of these sections along with a suggestion for using each in the classroom.

Summary Sheets

These sheets offer bullet point notes under the following headings:

- Brief overview of the poem
- About the poet
- Contextual information
- Language close-up
- Key words
- Key themes

Suggestion for using the Summary Sheets

After an initial reading, give students a blank copy of the **Summary Sheet**. Divide the class so each student has a different aspect of the poem to research. Offer access to the internet so students can work together to complete the summary sheet. At the end, offer the opportunity for them to compare, consolidate and enhance their own findings.

Analysis of the Poem

This offers **one** analysis of the poem. It is **not intended to be comprehensive**, but it provides a starting point for students' own explorations of the poem. Aspects of interpretation will inevitably be different and students will find their own meanings and responses to the poems they encounter.

Suggestion for using the Analysis of the Poem

Ask students to explore in detail the suggestions in the 'Make the link' boxes and to respond to the points raised there.

Comprehension and Deeper-thinking Questions and suggested answers

Here you will find 8–10 comprehension questions based on a reading of the poem. As always, these are open to **challenge** and **exploration**.

There are also 3–5 deeper thinking questions that encourage students to consider the issues presented by the poets in more depth. The answers for these are **suggested** but not definitive. They are a range of answers that go beyond the bullet points.

Suggestion for using the Questions and suggested answers

Use the comprehension questions as homework or as a quick fire group quiz. Some questions lend themselves to group discussions. Alternatively, invite students to write their own answers after reading each poem and use these instead.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Key Themes

Following a similar structure to the poem sections, the themes are divided as follows:

- Comparison Mind Maps
- Analysis of the Theme
- Comprehension and Deeper-thinking Questions and suggested answers

Comparison Mind Maps

These maps show how **some** of the poems in the cluster are connected by **themes**. Students should explore how each poem relates to each theme and students should be encouraged to look beyond the poem's own connections.

Analysis of the Theme

As with the poem analysis, this look at theme is intended as a **starting point**. Dividing the poems into themes explores some aspects of the poems and shows how they are connected. These maps are a starting point and further exploration is encouraged.

Comprehension and Deeper-thinking Questions and suggested answers

These sections include 8–10 comprehension questions based on the theme. Answers are provided, but always, these are open to **challenge** and **exploration**.

There are also 3–5 deeper thinking questions that encourage students to contextualise the poems in light of the theme. The answers for these are intended as suggestions only.

Exam Preparation

This section of the pack offers:

- Exam advice
- Practice exam questions with hints for answers
- Two sample answers at medium and higher levels

The *Pearson Poetry Anthology's* **Conflict** collection provides a good springboard for poetry either around the same topic or by the poets on the list. Reading a poem and analysing it (poem analysis!) can be a helpful way to prepare students for the 'unseen' section of the exam.

Both AO2 and AO3 are addressed throughout the resource.

Useful resources to support the Conflict collection

Poetry By Heart

Poetry By Heart's website includes **poet biographies**, poem analyses and videos of poets reading the work in the Edexcel Conflict collection. There is also an excellent First World War collection from the UK and abroad, male and female, with their responses to the war. These are all excellent material for the Conflict collection.

🔗 www.poetrybyheart.org.uk

The Poetry Archive

Claims to be the world's largest collection of poets reading their own work. Each poem has a comprehensive biography, which is useful for the context section of this assessment. It includes many of the poets from this anthology collection from the Poetry Archive's online collection.

🔗 www.poetryarchive.org.uk

The Poetry Foundation

An American site that features a huge range of poems and poets, with some detailed analyses.

🔗 www.poetryfoundation.org

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Introducing the Anthology

What is an anthology?

An anthology is a collection; in this case, of poems.

What is this anthology about?

There are three collections in the Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9–1) Literature Poetry Anthology: Time and Place, Love and Relationships, and Time and Place. Each collection contains 15 poems all connected to the theme. You will study one of the three collections for your **GCSE (9–1) English Literature** exam and answer a question on this collection. This study pack offers support for the 15 poems in the collection.

What do these poems have in common?

The poems that you will examine in this collection all deal, in different ways, with the theme of the collection.

What is poetry?

Poetry is an art form, much like painting, music, film-making or sculpture. In poetry, a poet gathers words into lines, stanzas and complete poems choosing them for their meaning and rhythm. A poem can convey a feeling, tell a story or remind us of an experience. Poetry is often written in times of heightened emotion: it has the power to succinctly encapsulate the way we feel.

Here are some definitions of poetry that you might like to discuss, or bear in mind when you study the collection:

- 'Poetry is the bomb and the safe exploding of the bomb.' *Jeanette Winterson*
- 'Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found its words.' *Robert Frost*
- 'A poem is a little moment of belief.' *Jackie Kay (poet)*
- 'Poetry is language at its most distilled and most powerful.' *Rita Dove (poet)*
- 'Poetry is the voice of spirit and imagination and all that is potential, as well as the voice of the past that used to be the privilege of the gods.' *Ted Hughes (poet)*

How do I analyse a poem?

There are lots of ways to find your way into a poem. Your teacher might start by asking you to look at the poem, or the title, or images suggested by the poem. At some point though you will need to make notes about your initial response to the poem using the following questions:

- What feeling does the poem convey? Is it cheerful? Uplifting? Sad?
- Which lines or words stand out for you in this first reading? Why are they important?
- If you were to describe the poem to someone who hadn't yet read it, what would you say?

The next stage is to familiarise yourself with the poem. Spend some time with it, reading particular lines and phrases. It is useful to read poetry aloud and you could try to do this. (Listening to this later could form part of your exam preparation!)

Then start zooming in.

Imagine you are looking at the poem from a distance.

- What shape does it have?
- How are the lines laid out?
- How does this relate to the main message or theme of the poem?

Read the poem aloud and listen for the rhythm. One way to do this is to 'hum' the words aloud and notice where the stresses fall.

- Is there a clear regular pattern or rhythm?

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Come closer and look at the words.

- Has the poet used complicated language? Or is it straightforward?
- Does it sound as though someone is talking?
- Is the voice in the poem telling a story? Or is the poem more abstract?
- Is a first person voice being used? Who do you think is speaking?
- Does the poet use rhyme? Half-rhyme? Where?
- Does the poet use alliteration or assonance? How?

Zoom in again and pick out two or three key images or ideas.

- Which ideas seem most important in this poem? How are they conveyed?
- Is the poet using imagery to make comparisons to other things?
- What else is implied by the images?

In your response to a poem you might combine your answers to all or some of the questions above. You could also think about how the poet uses language to create a sense of power. Be creative with your thinking. Poets might think long and hard about a poem on a page. However, it is possible (probable) that you can see something in their poems that they themselves.

How can I analyse poems in this anthology?

The 15 poems here are all linked in some way to **Conflict**. As you read each poem, think about which of the following themes are relevant (this is not a definitive list – please add your own!) and add them to the Maps in the Key Themes section of this guide as a starting point, and add to them as you read.

Power of nature	Power of the individual	The wide-reaching impact of conflict
Sexual power and conflict	Effects of conflict on individuals	The horrors of war

Make connections between the poems. Notice which ones use the following types of experiences of the following groups (again, add extras of your own):

Soldiers	Observers	
Victims	Immigrants	Indigenous people

You can also make links between the poems in terms of style. Look at the **form** of the poem, the **language** and the **main images** in the poems and notice similarities and differences.

In the exam you will write about two poems, so get into the habit of finding the connections between them to make this process easier under exam conditions.

How can I talk about the context of the poems in this anthology?

Context refers to several different things. It is, on the one hand, the setting of the poem. The poem 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' by Tennyson is set in the context of the Crimean War. It is useful to know that war, and in particular the Battle of Balaclava when writing about the poem. It has a deeper significance when you learn that it is about a real battle in which real men died.

Another sort of context for a poem is to do with when it was written. Tennyson was writing about the Battle of Balaclava in the newspaper. He was a contemporary of the war.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



If you know something of the world in 1854 when the battle happened, you can take more into account what the soldiers might have been receiving. The readers might have had relatives or friends fighting in the trenches. The men encourage a sense of pride and respect for the soldiers.

It can also be useful to know something about the poet's own life. This context can help you understand the poem better. For example, when you know that Wilfred Owen fought in the trenches of the First World War, his poem 'Exposure' comes from first-hand experience. Consider what this adds to the poem.

There is also the literary context that a poem is written in. You might notice how poetry has become less formulaic in terms of rhyme schemes and structure as they become more modern. Notice trends in poetry and each poet's response to literary traditions. Notice whether they are using traditional forms. How does this connect to the themes in their work?

You can also talk about context in terms of your experience as a reader. You are experiencing the poem in the context of preparing for a GCSE exam in the twenty-first century. How is your world different from the world of the poem? What values or themes you can relate to? How have things changed? Are there differences in language or words?

It can be interesting to read a poem as it stands and take a note of your response to it. Then notice the social and historical context in which it was written. Then notice whether your response changes when you know more about the background to the poem and the poet.

How can I revise poetry?

Revising poetry can be really enjoyable if you're willing to be creative. The key is to make it fun and get to know them. Each time you read a poem, it's likely that you'll notice something new about it in a different way. The more familiar you are with these poems, the easier it will be to write about them in the exam. Here are some suggestions for making the most of your revision:

1. Play Snap!

Write out the first lines of each of the poems on cards and put these in a pile. Then write the last lines of the poems on separate cards. Use these to play a game of Snap! with a friend, matching the last line of one poem with the first line of another.

2. Learn your favourite lines from each poem by heart.

If you really want to get inside a poem, learn it by heart and speak it aloud. Notice the rhythm and sounds in the poem. Notice where you have to pause. Which words are important? What is significant about these places in the poem? This will help you in the exam. Use a quotation.

3. Play Spot-the-Difference

Play Spot-the-Difference by writing (or printing) two poems side by side and drawing lines between at least five similarities and differences between them.

Use this as the basis for making connection maps like the ones in this pack. You can use this in the exam, so make sure you know the main themes of each poem. It will make it much easier to write an essay if you know the poems well and you will save time looking for the best points to use. Remember you only have around 45 minutes for this section of the paper, so make the most of it.

4. Learn about the background to each of the poems.

Make a poster showing when the poet lived, what they were interested in and what was happening in the world when the poet was writing. What was the literary tradition of the time? Was the country at war? Were there any particular poets or writers who have influenced the poet? Did/has the poet expressed publicly their opinions? How can you use this to address AO2 and refer to the context of the poem in your response.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



5. **Make a short film of the poem**

Choose a suitable soundtrack that will match the mood and make a film using it.

6. **Draw it out**

Writing a poem out by hand can be a useful experience. Imagine that you are writing it for the first time. How do you know that these are the right words to express what you've written the poem, spend time decorating the text with images suggested by the poem.

7. **Record and listen**

Record yourself reading each of the poems in the cluster and listen to them. The more familiar you are with each poem, the easier you'll find it to write about.

8. **Find a revision buddy**





Work together to discuss the poems and test each other as you go. Here are some questions to ask each other:

- a) What is this poem about?
- b) What is this poem *really* about?
- c) Which images do you find particularly interesting/disturbing/pleasing?
- d) How is the poem relevant to today's society?




**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



About the Poet

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

Contextual Information

-  'A Poison Tree' comes from Blake's collection *Songs of Experience* and many of these poems had a moral tone.
-  In the Bible, Adam and Eve are banished from the Garden of Eden after eating the Forbidden Fruit.
-  Wrath is one of the seven deadly sins.

Language Close-up

-  **Repetition:** 'my wrath'
Repeated three times in opening stanza, emphasises all-encompassing nature of anger
-  **Rhyme:** 'friend/end', 'fears/tears'
Simple rhyme scheme lends an innocence to the poem
-  **Monosyllables:** 'wrath', 'tree', 'shine'
Words of one syllable lend a simplicity to the poem, implying that unresolved anger can destroy innocence
-  **Binary opposites:** 'friend/foe', 'day/night'
Opposites highlight the difference between anger that is resolved and anger that is left to grow

'A Poison Tree'

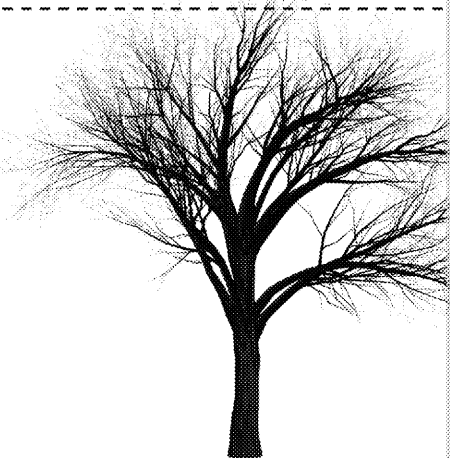
by William Blake

(1794)

Brief Overview of Poem

The speaker tells of two examples of when he has been angry. The first story lasts two lines: when he was angry with his friend, he told his friend of his anger and his anger passed. In the second story he was angry with his foe (or enemy). This time he did not speak of his anger, but instead allowed it to grow. Over time the anger bore poisoned fruit that his enemy stole and ate. The next day the speaker found his foe dead beneath the tree.

Blake uses the metaphor of an apple tree to represent the growth of unexpressed and unresolved anger.



**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Analysis of 'A Poison Tree'

The tree

The 'poison tree' of the title is a metaphor used throughout the poem to represent the way the speaker's anger or 'wrath' towards his enemy grows.

In the first stanza the speaker explains how the anger he felt towards a friend dissipated as soon as he confronted his feelings and shared them. However, he keeps the anger he feels for his 'foe' to himself and this causes it to 'grow'.

The speaker 'water'd' the seed of his anger, in the same way a gardener might love a plant, though, instead of healthy nourishment, the plant is fed 'fears', 'tears' and 'sins'. The plant bears fruit – 'an apple bright'. This might remind readers of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, in which Adam and Eve are deceived by the serpent and persuaded to eat it. Similarly the foe thinks the apple on the poison tree is safe for him to steal. Like Adam, the foe is tempted by the fruit and sneaks into the speaker's garden to eat it. Here there is no support for the actions of the foe – after all, he is committing an act of theft. However, the speaker's wrath, is poisonous and kills the thief, so neither can we support the speaker's actions.

Make the Link

Compare Blake's use of rhyme and metre with Hardy's in 'The Man He Killed'. Both poems use an apparently simple structure to deal with complex subject matter. Notice how this might affect the reader in each case.

Metre and rhyme

Blake uses a consistent AABB rhyme scheme in this poem. The rhyming words are mostly monosyllabic and all form perfect rhymes. This straightforward structure implies that the speaker is immature and his anger so tightly it becomes poisonous. A more sophisticated approach would be one that offers a more complex view of the speaker's emotions.

The rhyme scheme also supports the poem's message that there are hidden, simple actions.

The rhyme scheme might also represent the opposites we find throughout the poem. Two A rhymes are followed by two B rhymes, echoing the opposing: 'friend'/'foe', 'tears'/'smiles', 'day'/'night', 'morning'/'night'.

This is also reflected in the metre of the poem, which alternates between **trochaic*** and **iambic*** lines. Every line ends with a stressed syllable, indicating that the speaker is insistently holding onto his wrath.

Internal and external conflict

This poem deals with the external conflict between a speaker and his 'foe'. However, for his 'wrath' and so, as readers, we are invited to some internal conflict: we are asked to consider whether the speaker's behaviour to his foe is in anyway justified. Could the best position be to confront the foe immediately and prevent it from festering? Or is the death of the foe at the end of the poem an example of justice? The internal conflict that the reader faces – should we forgive the speaker – is reflected in the conflict in the alternating metre, rhyme and use of opposites.

Make the Link
Compare the use of anger in 'A Poison Tree' with 'The Man He Killed'. What does this tell us about the speaker in the poem?

Make the Link
Another poem by Blake is 'John the Baptist'. Compare each poem and their point of view on conflict.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



* See glossary

Questions for 'A Poison Tree'

Comprehension Questions

1. Which feeling does the speaker feel at different times towards both his friend and foe?
2. How does he deal with this feeling in each case?
3. Which word starts each line of the first stanza?
4. Describe the rhyme scheme used in this poem.
5. Which of Blake's collections does this poem come from?
6. What sort of fruit grows on the tree?
7. What illegal act does the foe commit?
8. What happens to the foe in the final line?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. The poem refers to a number of binary opposites. Do you think there is a similarity between a friend and foe?
2. Should we always speak openly about our feelings towards others?
3. What do you think the moral message of this poem is?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for 'A Poison Tree'

Comprehension Questions

1. In the first stanza he tells us that he was 'angry' with both his friend and his foe.
2. He tells his friend about his anger and it ends. He doesn't tell his foe and the anger grows.
3. Each line of the first stanza starts with the personal pronoun 'I', suggesting the speaker's personal actions.
4. The poet uses a regular AABB rhyme scheme that mirrors the opposing sides of the argument.
5. The poem comes from Blake's *Songs of Experience* collection.
6. An 'apple bright' grows on the tree.
7. The foe commits the act of theft when he sneaks into the speaker's garden and eats the apple.
8. In the final line we learn that the foe has died as a result of eating the poison apple.

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers might include:
 - Yes – your friends support you and enemies don't.
 - No – friends can sometimes be enemies – for example, a friend might be a rival in a sport or a hockey game.
 - Neither. It is the responsibility of the individual to be forgiving and kind rather than labelling people as one thing or another – we all have capacity for both.
2. Answers might include:
 - Yes – speaking openly about feelings allows us to deal with them and to move on.
 - No – speaking openly about feelings makes us vulnerable.
 - It depends. If there is someone you trust, then you might speak openly and be helped. If there is someone there is a risk that you will exacerbate the problem by speaking to them.
3. Answers might include:
 - Bottling up emotions is dangerous.
 - Each of us should take responsibility for our own actions.
 - We can be our own worst enemy.
 - Unchecked anger has the potential to grow out of hand.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



About the Poet

- ✎ He was born in London and died in Greece.
- ✎ One of the major Romantic poets.
- ✎ Known for his dynamism and his passion.
- ✎ Believed in liberty and planned to fight in the Greek war of independence.



'The Destruction of Sennacherib'

by Lord Byron

(George Gordon) (1819)

Contextual Information

- ✎ Poem comes from *Hebrew Melodies* collection and was published in 1815.
- ✎ Based on a Bible story (2 Kings, chapter 19).
- ✎ In the story King Sennacherib's army attacks the city, Jerusalem – God steps in and destroys the Assyrian army.
- ✎ Napoleon Wars in France had been going on for 16 years at time when poem was published.

Brief Overview of Poem

The poem relates a Bible story in which the Assyrian army, led by King Sennacherib, descends upon the holy city of Jerusalem. The army is 'like a wolf' and approaches the city with spears 'gleaming' and banners held high.

However, those same banners are blown and 'wither'd' by the next day. This, we learn, is because the 'Angel of Death' is sent by God to defend the city. He destroys the soldiers and their horses.

The poem ends with the soldier's widows waiting for their husbands. The idols in the temples of Baal being destroyed further emphasises the power of God.

Language Close-up

- ✎ **Anapaestic metre:** two unstressed syllables followed by one stressed syllable
Deceptively innocent metre contrasts with destruction conveyed
- ✎ **End-stopped:** lines that end at the end of a phrase
Each line is end-stopped, adding to the sense of rolling advancement
- ✎ **Sibilance:** repetition of 's', 'sh', 'ch' sounds
Sibilance runs through the poem, reflecting the sounds of the sea, the leaves and the breath of the Angel of Death

Key Words

- ✎ 'The Assyrian' – King Sennacherib, ruler of Assyrians
- ✎ 'Galilee' - the Sea of Galilee
- ✎ 'Ashur' – the Assyrian's capital city
- ✎ 'Baal' – a name sometimes used to refer to false idols, or icons of worship other than the Christian god
- ✎ 'Gentile' – in the Old Testament, where the word comes from, Gentiles were people who did not belong to the nation of Israel

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Analysis of 'The Destruction of Sennacherib'

Context

At the time when the poem was written, the Napoleonic Wars had lasted more than 16 years and the empire being carved out by the French was vast. The Assyrians were a similarly mighty force, apparently unstoppable except, perhaps, by a miracle.

Bible story

In 2 Kings, Chapters 18 and 19 of the Bible, Hezekiah is King of Jerusalem and Sennacherib is King of Assyria.

In these chapters Sennacherib threatens to take Jerusalem by force, but Hezekiah calms his people by telling them that the Lord, the God of Israel, will protect them. Sennacherib challenges this claim and leads his army onwards.

At night, the Lord God sends his angel to put to death 185,000 people in the Assyrian camp. In the morning, the sight of these dead bodies, Sennacherib retreats.

Power

At the start of the poem 'the Assyrian' has the power. He is 'like the wolf on the fold' and his 'attackers are wily and tactical'. The people of Jerusalem, on the other hand, are 'like sheep'. The army are dressed in kingly colours 'purple and gold', their armour is 'gleaming' and 'their spears were like stars on the sea'. The sibilance here emphasises the way the army is glittering. In appearance, at least, they are bright and powerful. However, this power quickly proves to be superficial. The power of God is greater and instantly puts the army to death.

In stanza two Byron uses parallelism – the structure of the first two lines is parallel to that of the third and fourth lines. The first and third lines both begin 'Like the leaves of the forest...' while the second and fourth lines each begin 'That host...' Mid-stanza we shift from summer to autumn. The change in season is unnaturally fast, reflecting the way the army is extinguished. The 'host', or the army, have their banners raised and then almost 'all at once' 'and strown'.

The next stanzas depict how the army is transformed by the Angel of Death. We see images, such as 'the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill' and 'the rider discomfited in the night', sympathy is evoked for the 'widows of Ashur' whose grief is heard 'loud in the night'.

Make the Link

Compare the way Byron and Hardy both use metre in their poems. Both 'The Man He Killed' and 'The Destruction of Sennacherib' deal with serious messages, yet they use metre more usually reserved for light-hearted pieces. What effect does this have?

Meter and rhyme

Byron uses an anapaestic metre – two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable. This is often used in light-hearted poetry, but with the death and destruction of the poem, the metre could be interpreted as a march, like the hoofs of the men begin their destruction. The poem forward and, combined with the open lines, creates an almost brutal rhythm.

Make the Link
Compare the way Byron and Hardy both use metre in their poems. Both 'The Man He Killed' and 'The Destruction of Sennacherib' deal with serious messages, yet they use metre more usually reserved for light-hearted pieces. What effect does this have?

Make the Link
Compare the way Byron and Hardy both use metre in their poems. Both 'The Man He Killed' and 'The Destruction of Sennacherib' deal with serious messages, yet they use metre more usually reserved for light-hearted pieces. What effect does this have?

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Questions for 'The Destruction of Sennacherib'

Comprehension Questions

1. Who is Sennacherib?
2. Which animal are the attackers compared to?
3. Which seasons are mentioned in the second stanza?
4. Who 'spread his wings on the blast'?
5. What metre does Byron use in this poem?
6. Which elements of nature are mentioned?
7. What happens to the lances and the trumpet?
8. Who wails in the final stanza?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. How does Byron use imagery in this poem?
2. Who do you feel most sympathy for in the poem?
3. How was the poem relevant to Byron's contemporaries? How is it relevant to you?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for 'The Destruction of Se

Comprehension Questions

1. He is king of the Assyrians.
2. They are compared to a wolf attacking a 'fold' of sheep.
3. 'Summer' and 'Autumn' are mentioned in the second stanza. It seems the second and third line.
4. The 'Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast'.
5. Byron used anapaestic tetrameter throughout the poem.
6. Elements of nature mentioned in the poem include: stars, waves, forest, leaves.
7. The lances are 'unlifted' and the trumpet is 'unblown'. The repeated use of 'un' emphasises the lifelessness of the scene.
8. The 'widows of Ashur' wail in the final stanza.

Deeper-thinking Questions






1. Answers might include:
 - He uses imagery to shock the reader. The images of death are ghastly and violent.
 - He uses imagery to show the power of God and to intimidate the reader.
 - He uses natural imagery to contrast with the unnatural events of the poem.
2. Answers might include:
 - I feel sympathy with the Assyrians. They are killed in one swoop without warning.
 - I feel sympathy with the people of Jerusalem who were being attacked.
 - I feel sympathy with the widows who are left to deal with their loss.
3. Answers might include:
 - The Napoleonic Wars had been going on for 16 years. People must have been tired of war to bring them to an end.
 - More people held Christian beliefs then, so this story would be familiar to them.
 - It is relevant today because huge-scale wars are still happening.
 - The way that war destroys lives without discrimination is relevant across all time. The victims are not presented as individuals worthy of distinction. They are all treated as a mass.

INSPECTION COPY






COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED







About the Poet

-  Born in Lake District, 1770
-  One of 'The Romantics'
-  Studied at Cambridge
-  Close friends with the poet Coleridge
-  Became Poet Laureate in 1843

Contextual Information

-  Extract from long poem with 14 sections
-  Deals with Wordsworth's own spiritual growth
-  He described it as 'a poem on the growth of my own mind'
-  Autobiographical and published three months after his death
-  During his lifetime Wordsworth called the poem his 'poem to Coleridge'

Language Close-up

-  **Blank verse**
Written in unrhymed iambic pentameter
-  **Alliteration**
'And measured motion like a living thing'
Repetition of initial sounds emphasises slow and steady (though imagined) movement
-  **Imagery**
'Small circles glittering idly in the moon'
Safe image; gives the lake a magical feel
-  **Personification**
'A huge peak ... /Upreared its head'
Mountain is personified, or given human characteristics – makes it seem more terrifying






Extract from 'The Prelude' by William Wordsworth (1850)

Brief Overview of Poem

'The Prelude' is a long piece of work that deals with the poet's spiritual journey in relation to 'Man, Nature and Society'. In this extract the speaker takes a boat out on a lake at night and is overwhelmed by a mountain peak that looms over him.

The speaker is filled with fear when he comes to the 'craggy ridge' and rows away from it in a 'grave/and serious mood'. The mountain affects him deeply and he sinks into 'a darkness' or depression, during which he is unable to see the beauty of the trees and 'green fields' but instead is haunted by the vast power of nature that the mountain has inspired.

Key Words

-  'Cove' – small sheltered bay
-  'Stealth' – cautious, secretive or undercovert
-  'Craggy' – rough and uneven – refers to mountains or rocks
-  'Covert' – a thicket where animals might hide
-  'Spectacle' – a sight, usually dramatic

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Analysis of Extract from 'The Prelude'

Changing nature

In this extract from 'The Prelude' the speaker takes a boat out on a lake. He finds the 'little boat tied to a willow tree'. This image, along with the opening phrase 'One summer evening' leads the reader to expect a poem of innocence.

However, his 'act of stealth' leads the speaker not into deeper joy, but into a 'darkness'. At first he enjoys the 'small circles glittering idly in the moon' that his oars leave in the lake, but soon he sees 'the summit of a crag' and everything.

The mountain is 'a huge peak, black and huge'. The repetition of the word 'huge' of discomfort in the face of it. This quickly turns to fear as the mountain 'uprears' personifies the mountain, describing how the 'grim shape' 'towered up' and 'like

Make the Link

Compare the power of nature as presented in this poem by Wordsworth with the power of nature as presented by Wilfred Owen in the poem 'Exposure'.

Notice how the speakers in each poem are rendered helpless in the face of nature.

The encounter with the 'craggy' and fills him with terror. He returns and makes his way back to the

However the light tone of the poem returns. Instead the speaker is 'o'er my thoughts / There hung' been awestruck by the vastness suddenly struck with a sense of insignificance.

The Romantics and nature

The Romantic poets revered nature. They saw nature as the embodiment of God and in their poetry often presented nature as powerful, beautiful and awe-inspiring. They moved away from traditional religion, worshipping nature instead.

The Romantics generally believed that humans were basically good, but corrupted by society. For the Romantics, Nature is a place of refuge, solace and awe, whereas society is corrupt, threatening and full of false ideals.

Make the Link
Compare the power of nature as presented in this poem by Wordsworth with the power of nature as presented by Wilfred Owen in the poem 'Exposure'.

Make the Link
Compare the power of nature as presented in this poem by Wordsworth with the power of nature as presented by Wilfred Owen in the poem 'Exposure'.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Questions for Extract from 'The

Comprehension Questions

1. Where is the poem set?
2. What does the speaker find 'tied to a willow tree'?
3. How does the night appear initially?
4. What is it that inspires fear in the speaker?
5. What mood is the speaker in when he leaves the boat?
6. What hangs over him following this experience?
7. What 'were a trouble to [his] dreams'?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Which conflicts are highlighted in this poem?
2. In what ways is this poem relevant today?
3. How would you compare the power of nature in this poem to the power of war in this collection?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for Extract from 'The Force of Nature'

Comprehension Questions

1. The poem is set on a lake near a mountain, possibly in the Lake District where the speaker lived.
2. A boat
3. Initially, the speaker finds beauty in the night and describes how the moon glimmers on the water.
4. The mountain on the horizon inspires fear in the speaker.
5. He is 'in grave / And serious mood'.
6. A depression, 'darkness' or 'blank desertion' hangs over his thoughts following the war.
7. 'huge and mighty forms, that do not live / Like living men'

Deeper-thinking Questions





1. Answers might include:
 - Conflict between man and nature
 - Conflict of scale
 - Conflict between joy in nature and fear of its power and scale
 - Conflict between beauty and overwhelming terror
 - Internal conflict of human soul
2. Answers might include:
 - Nature still has the power to overwhelm.
 - Society, like nature, is more powerful than the individual.
 - The poem describes depression, which is part of human experience in the aftermath of war, as in Wordsworth's.
3. Answers might include:
 - The individual is helpless in the face of both war and nature.
 - The power of the mountain is immense, much like the power of armies.
 - There is a difference between the power of nature and the power of war, as nature is unconscious whereas nature is unconscious

INSPECTION COPY




**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**







About the Poet

-  English novelist and poet.
-  Grew up in Dorset and the people of this rural county influenced his work.
-  Known for his realist style.
-  His work is often described as pessimistic or bleak.

Contextual Information

-  Britain fought in Boer War (1899–1902).
-  Troops in the Boer War fought with modern weapons such as quick-firing rifles and explosives.
-  Poem originally had this note: SCENE: The settle of the Fox Inn, Stagfoot Lane. CHARACTERS: the speaker (a returned soldier) and his friends, natives of the hamlet.

Language Close-up

-  **Dramatic monologue:** one person talks directly to the reader or audience
The soldier's plain telling of this story draws us close to him
-  **lamb:** a foot of one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed syllable
Could reflect the steady firing of guns
-  **Direct speech:** using the precise words someone has said – usually indicated with quotation/speech marks
-  **Dialect:** variation of English peculiar to a particular place
Use of dialect makes the speaker seem ordinary and working class






'The Man He Killed' Thomas Hardy (1902)

Brief Overview of Poem

This is a dramatic monologue from the point of view of a soldier. He muses on how strange it is that in the context of war men become enemies. He struggles to explain why he killed a man and repeats that the man was his 'foe' as if to convince himself. Nonetheless, the speaker knows that in another situation he would have sat down with the same man and bought him a drink in a bar.

He concludes that war is 'quaint' and 'curious'. These words appear to trivialise the horror of war. However, it is clear that the speaker is perplexed by the business of killing and the soldier's conclusion is a way of distancing himself.

Key Words

-  'Infantry' – foot soldiers, often required to do battle face to face
-  'Nipperkin' – a container that holds less than half a pint – in this case a glass at the bar
-  'Foe' – enemy
-  'Traps' – possessions
-  'Half-a-crown' – an old British coin worth two shillings and sixpence

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Analysis of 'The Man He Killed'

Narrative voice

In the original version of this poem, Hardy included the directions: 'SCENE: The settle of the Fox Inn, Stagfoot Lane. CHARACTERS: the speaker (a returned soldier) and his friends, natives of the hamlet.'

Make the Link
Hardy's presentation of war in this poem with Denise Levertov's in her poem 'What Were They Like?'.
Notice the similar structure in each poem.

Hardy creates a strong sense of character in this poem – a soldier who has returned from war and is relating the story of a time when he killed a man. The whole poem is within quotation marks, implying that it is an overheard story. This is confirmed by the title where the pronoun 'he' separates the speaker from the poet, making it clear to the reader that the two are not the same person.

The speaker starts by telling us that he would most likely have bought the man a drink at an ancient inn'. In different circumstances they might have happily enjoyed 'right merriment' together.

Hardy's use of dialect words such as 'nipperkin' makes the speaker seem harmless. He struggles to find a reason for killing the man, stumbling and repeating the word 'ordinary man who was acting on orders'. There is no apparent malice in the killing towards the speaker for being so obedient and failing to rebel against the orders in his situation.

Rhyme and metre

Hardy uses a jaunty metre and rhyme that we might associate with more innocent or light-hearted content. A simple ABAB rhyme pattern is followed throughout using mostly monosyllabic rhyming words. This adds to the sense that the speaker is an uncomplicated man.

Make the Link
Christie's use of rhyme in 'Cousin Kate' is similar to Hardy's in each stanza.

The first, second and final line of each stanza is written in **iambic trimeter**,* with a steady rhythm. This steady rhythm lends a natural, conversational tone to the poem, juxtaposing

Make the Link

Examine Hardy's presentation of war in this poem with Denise Levertov's in her poem 'What Were They Like?'.

Injustice

This deceptively simple poem presents the speaker as harmless – someone who is not involved in the conversation and drinks. The speaker's true nature is revealed in his speculations about the

the 'foe' enlisted 'off-hand like – just as I', revealing that his own reasons for joining were not honour or duty and more to do with lack of money. In this way the speaker could be seen as a man who joined up without really considering the consequences and brutal situations they might be faced with.

There are many layers of injustice present here – the injustice of a society in which the only viable way to make a living; the injustice of men fighting for causes they do not believe in; the injustice of a man killing another man against whom he has no real vendetta.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



* See glossary

Questions for 'The Man He Killed'

Comprehension Questions

1. What sort of language does Hardy use in this poem?
2. Which social class do we assume the speaker belongs to?
3. During which war was this poem written?
4. Where does the speaker suggest he might have met the man another time?
5. What role did each man have in the fighting?
6. What does the speaker imagine the other man might have sold?
7. What does he suggest he might have done for the man in another situation?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Why does the speaker kill the other man?
2. Who does war most affect?
3. Has war changed over time?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for 'The Man He Killed'

Comprehension Questions

1. He uses simple, colloquial language. This might make us sympathise with the speaker as he is someone who is affected by the war and the lower classes of society.
2. We assume from his language and role in the war that he is from a lower social class.
3. The poem was written in 1902, towards the end of the Boer War.
4. He says they might have met in an 'ancient inn', another indicator of his lower social class.
5. Both the speaker and the man he killed were infantrymen.
6. He imagines the other man has sold his 'traps' or possessions.
7. He says he might have treated him to a drink or loaned him money.

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers might include:
 - Because he was given orders to kill the enemy.
 - Because he is unthinking and hasn't considered the magnitude of what he is doing.
 - Because the man shot at him first. He killed the man in self-defence.
2. Answers might include:
 - The soldiers on the front line.
 - The working classes as these are often the men and women who make up the majority of the infantry.
 - The people left at home who do not know what is happening to their loved ones.
 - The innocent people who are displaced because of violence and instability.
3. Answers might include:
 - Yes. We have different weapons these days and fewer soldiers are asked to fight.
 - No. Innocent people are still put into dangerous and threatening situations.
 - No. It is still the wealthier members of society that take commanding roles in wars.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Contextual Information

- ✎ 'Cousin Kate' was written around the time that Rossetti worked in the St Mary Magdalene penitentiary.
- ✎ The speaker comes from a farming background and reflects a time when lords were landowners and held power over their workers.

About the Poet

- ✎ Born in London to an exiled Italian father and half-English, half-Italian mother.
- ✎ Considered to be one of the finest Victorian poets – first published aged 17.
- ✎ Devout Christian and volunteered at a hostel for women who had children outside of marriage (considered sinful at that time).

Language Close-up

- ✎ **Ballad**
A traditional poetic form, used to tell a story. The poem tells the story of the cottage-maiden's love affair
- ✎ **Simile**
'He changed me like a glove'
Shows how easily the lord discarded her
- ✎ **Personal pronouns**
'You grow more fair than I'
The speaker addresses her cousin, Kate and makes comparisons between their circumstances
- ✎ **Assonance**
'Woe', 'moan', 'howl', 'bound'
Repetition of the 'o' sound through the poem, echoes the speaker's pain and sorrow

'Cousin Kate' by Christina Rossetti (1860)

Brief Overview of Poem

A cottage maiden, or farm worker, describes how she fell in love with a 'great lord'. After enticing her to his 'palace-home' where she was, for a while, his 'plaything', he later discards her cruelly.

She then addresses her Cousin Kate, the new object of the lord's affections. However, whereas the lord rejected the cottage maiden, he proposed marriage to her cousin. The speaker expresses her despair and heartbreak and then ends the poem with a twist – her cousin might have the finery and 'wedding' but the maiden is mother to the lord's son.

Key Words

- ✎ 'Cottage maiden' – a farm worker
- ✎ 'Flaxen' – yellow
- ✎ 'Rye' – wheat
- ✎ 'Mean estate'
– poor living conditions
- ✎ 'Fret' – worry



**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Analysis of 'Cousin Kate'

Dramatic narrative

Rossetti's 'cottage maiden' is a peasant-class woman who has been used and discarded by a lord. The poem is written in the first-person voice of the betrayed maiden. From the third stanza onwards she addresses her Cousin Kate, who has since been wooed by and married to the same lord.

The speaker is jealous of her cousin and accuses Kate of not loving him in the same way she did. 'Your love was writ in sand' implies that Kate's love is insubstantial and shifting. The maiden also feels betrayed by Kate, who embarks on the relationship despite the fact that he has already been married to another woman.

The tone is full of heartbreak and lament, emphasised by the exclamations in stanzas 1 and 2. The use of assonance continues this pained 'o' sound in 'So now I know'.

The poem ends with a twist where the maiden reveals that she still has some power. She has a child by the lord. She is possessive of the boy, knowing that Kate 'seems to love him'. The lord knows that the lord is hoping for a son and so pleads with the boy to 'cling closer to me'. The maiden ends the poem by warning that Cousin Kate might feel threatened by the existence of the child and ends the poem with 'your sire would give broad lands' for such a son.

Make the Link

Explore the presentation of love and the power of love in this poem and in Jane Weir's poem 'Poppies'. Where Rossetti explores sexual love and jealousy, Weir looks at the love between mother and son. What similarities and differences can you see?

Sexual power

The lord seems to have the ultimate power. He is described as 'great' and lives in 'broad lands' and is associated with wealth that brings him power over a man. When he jilts the maiden, it is a 'great thing' in her society. He, on the other hand, can have another woman without being criticised.

The similes 'wore me like a golden knot' and 'changed me like a glove' imply that the relationship is a possession. The women are possessions or playthings in his eyes, rather than full human beings. This attitude was prevalent in the time when Rossetti was writing and she would have experienced this sexual inequality during her voluntary work at the St Mary Magdalene Penitentiary.

The power of names

The only person named in the poem is the cousin, Kate. The speaker, the lord and the 'fair-haired son' all remain nameless. The maiden seems to blame her cousin directly for what has happened and her anger and sense of injustice is focused from the title and throughout the poem entirely on Kate.

Make the Link

Both this poem and 'The Tree' deal with power. Does each poem explore a different kind of power? What similarities are there in style and language?

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Questions for 'Cousin Kate'

Comprehension Questions

1. Who is the speaker in this poem?
2. What colour is her hair?
3. Where does the lord live?
4. How does he treat her initially?
5. Who is married to the lord now?
6. What do the neighbours call the maiden?
7. What gift does the maiden have?
8. What does she say the lord would give 'broad lands' for?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Is the cottage maiden innocent?
2. Who do you have sympathy for in the poem?
3. In which ways does this poem deal with power?
4. Why does the speaker draw her son 'closer, closer yet'?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for 'Cousin Kate'

Comprehension Questions

1. The speaker is a 'cottage maiden' or a young female farm worker.
2. Her hair is 'flaxen' or yellow.
3. The lord lives in his 'palace-home'.
4. He treats her like 'his plaything and his love'.
5. The speaker's cousin is now married to the lord.
6. The neighbours call the maiden 'an outcast thing'.
7. The maiden has the 'gift' of her son.
8. She says the lord would give 'broad lands' to have a son to inherit all he owns.

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers might include:
 - No, she went along with the lord.
 - Yes, he praised her and she fell in love with him.
 - No, she was seduced by his wealth.
2. Answers might include:
 - The speaker – she was seduced and betrayed and is now rejected from the lord's house.
 - The cousin – she is entrapped by the lord and at risk of being similarly deceived.
 - The child – he is innocent, poor and fatherless.
3. Answers might include:
 - The power between men and women in that society is presented as unequal.
 - The power of wealth is presented – the lord seems to do whatever he wants.
 - The power of love is shown to overwhelm the speaker to the extent that she goes against her own interests.
4. Answers might include:
 - She is afraid that the lord will take the boy away.
 - She is afraid that her cousin might try to harm him in jealousy.
 - She loves him dearly and wants to protect him.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



About the Poet

- ✎ John Agard was born in Guyana.
- ✎ He has lived in the UK since the 1970s.
- ✎ He is married to poet Grace Nichols.
- ✎ His poetry often deals with identity and culture and uses non-standard English.

Contextual Information

- ✎ 'Half-caste' is a term that applies to a person whose parents come from two different races. It was commonly used in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- ✎ Agard's mother was Portuguese and his father was Caribbean.
- ✎ He moved to the UK in 1977.

Language Close-up

- ✎ **Phonetic spelling**
'wha yu mean'
The poet uses spelling that reflects his accent
- ✎ **Free verse**
The poem is written without any fixed pattern of rhyme or metre. Free verse is a form that first became popular after the Second World War, mirroring a destruction of tradition and stability.
- ✎ **Standard English and dialect**
Agard mixes Standard English and Caribbean dialect in this poem. This mixture demonstrates the point he makes with his examples of other artists using apparent opposites in their work: 'red an green', 'a black key wid a white key'. The poem, like the 'canvas' and the 'symphony' is richer for this combination of language.

'Half-caste' by John Agard (1996)

Brief Overview of Poem

This poem has a sarcastic and, at times, angry tone to it. It is a complaint about the use of the term 'half-caste' and challenges 'yu' to explain what you mean by it.

The speaker lists examples of where opposites mix to create wonderful pieces of work. He even refers to 'england weather' making it clear that the 'yu' he is directing his grievances towards are the English people. The poem goes on to ridicule the term 'half-caste', showing how it implies a person is not who they are. The poem is effective in conveying its message using a mix of Standard English and Caribbean dialect to underline the **theme**.

Key Words

- ✎ 'Picasso' – a famous twentieth-century Spanish painter and sculptor
- ✎ 'Tchaikovsky' – a nineteenth-century Russian composer, whose work includes piano concertos, symphonies and ballets
- ✎ 'Ah rass' – a Caribbean expletive
- ✎ 'Some o dem', 'some of them' – Agard uses phonetic spelling to reflect the Caribbean dialect alongside Standard English

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Analysis of 'Half-caste'

Free verse

The speaker in this poem seems to be the poet himself. Agard was born in Guyana to a Portuguese mother and a Caribbean father. When he moved to England in 1977 he soon tired of the racism he was met with. In this poem he uses free verse to underline his point that 'half-caste' is a derogatory and imprecise term.

Make the Link
Like Mary's poem, Agard's uses free verse to challenge prejudice and non-standard identity.

The poem starts and ends with a short three-line stanza, adding a symmetry and balance to the poem; something that Agard complains is lacking with 'half-caste'.

The middle stanza is long and thin, physically representing the idea of the poet 'stretching' the poem. In this section of the poem, the speaker gives examples of mixtures in the world – in pairs – making the point that none of these are referred to as 'half-caste'. He then goes on to say that if he is half a man, then he can only 'offer yu half-a-hand' or 'close half-a-hand'. The poem ends by saying that only when people are prepared to open their minds and see him as a whole man can they tell 'de other half / of [his] story'. Throughout the poem, the lines are short as the poem is about 'half' reflecting this idea that this is only 'half / of [the] story'.

Allusions

To emphasise his point about the inadequacy of the term 'half-caste', the speaker draws on examples from art where apparent opposites are mixed. He demands to know whether Picasso's canvasses are called 'half-caste' because the painter mixed red and green, or whether Tchaikovsky's symphonies should be referred to as 'half-caste' because they 'mix a black key / wid a white key'. These allusions draw attention to the fact that the term 'half-caste' suggests that he is half a man, rather than whole.

Make the Link
Compare Agard's poem with Benjamin Zephaniah's 'Problem' to see how the theme of identity is explored differently.

Standard English and Caribbean dialect

Standard English is a form of English that has come to be the accepted version used in formal contexts. There are benefits to using a standardised English – for example, we are able to understand each other across geographical regions. However, despite the prejudice that some English speakers have against Caribbean versions of English. It is simply the agreed common version. Similarly, the people of Guyana use a mix of Standard English and Caribbean dialect.

Those who label him with the term 'half-caste' are 'better human beings by simple virtue of being white'.

Make the Link

Look at the poem 'The Man He Killed'. This also uses dialect. How is the language of these two poems similar and different? Are there similarities in the themes? You might think about how each poem presents human understanding and acceptance of differences.

In this poem Agard mixes Standard English and Caribbean dialect. He uses phonetic spelling of words such as 'yu', 'mih' and 'den' to represent Caribbean phrases such as 'ah rass'. This mix of Standard English and dialect serves to demonstrate the speaker's experience.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Questions for 'Half-caste'

Comprehension Questions

1. How does the poem begin?
2. What form does the poet use?
3. Which painter does the speaker refer to?
4. What is the opposite of 'shadow' used in line 13?
5. Which country is named in the poem?
6. Which composer is mentioned?
7. What does the speaker say are mixed together on a piano?
8. What kind of dream does he say the 'half-caste human being' dreams?
9. What does he invite the reader to come back with?
10. What does he promise to tell 'tomorrow'?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Why do you think people care about race?
2. Why does the term 'half-caste' exist?
3. Which other mixtures might the poet have referred to?
4. What do you think is the most important message of this poem?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for 'Half-caste'

Comprehension Questions

1. The poem begins with the line 'Excuse me'.
2. The poet uses free verse.
3. The speaker refers to the Spanish painter, Picasso, saying that he mixed red and blue.
4. The opposite of shadow used here is 'light'.
5. 'England' is named in the poem.
6. Tchaikovsky is named in the poem.
7. He says black and white keys are mixed.
8. He mockingly suggests that the 'half-caste human being' must dream 'half-awake'.
9. He invites the reader to come back with a whole and open mind.
10. He promises to tell 'the other half' of his story.

Deeper-thinking Questions





1. Answers might include:
 - Because they have developed a sense of belonging and history that is passed on.
 - Because they think that race has some kind of hierarchy, with some being better than others.
 - Because they have not encountered many people from different cultures.
 - Because they are open-minded / not open-minded.
2. Answers might include:
 - It comes from the time of imperialism and empire when historically pale people were coming into real contact with other races in India, Africa and beyond.
 - It's a racist term that suggests inferiority. It is used by people who are fearful of change.
 - It is a term that makes no sense in today's society. We know from DNA that we are all from different races. Ultimately we all share a single evolutionary lineage.
3. Answers might include:
 - Air – a mixture of oxygen, nitrogen and other gases
 - Cakes – a mixture of eggs, flour, butter and sugar
 - Seawater – a mixture of water, salts and gases
4. Answers might include:
 - The most important message is not to be racist.
 - The most important message is to treat everyone equally.
 - The most important message is to be open-minded and open to beauty.

INSPECTION COPY





COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED





About the Poet

-  Wilfred Owen served as a soldier in the First World War.
-  He was enlisted to the army in 1915.
-  He was hospitalised in 1917 with shell shock though returned to fighting in 1918.
-  He died days before the war ended.

Contextual Information

-  The First World War lasted from 1914 to 1918.
-  Soldiers faced dreadful conditions in the trenches that were dug across France and Belgium.
-  1917 was said to be the coldest winter in living memory.
-  Soldiers in the trenches suffered hypothermia.

Language Close-up

-  **Pronouns**
'Our brains ache'
Use of pronouns 'us' and 'our' creates a choral voice for the soldiers that also includes the poet and the reader
-  **Refrain**
'But nothing happens'
End of each stanza is a shorter line, like a refrain – expresses the desperation of the soldiers

'Exposure'

by Wilfred Owen





(1917)

Brief Overview of Poem

Owen presents the suffering of soldiers in the trenches during winter. He shows how they are exposed to the weather and struggle with the cold and cold that never seems to end. They are tormented by the noise of gunfire, though the noise itself seems less of a threat to the men than the weather.

The men are powerless and are left there to suffer. Many of them even lose their faith in God. At the end, the 'burying-party' arrives to collect those who have frozen to death in the night.

Key Words

-  'Flares' – flare guns were used in the First World War to send signals and identify positions.
-  'Sentries' – soldiers set to keep guard.
-  'Nonchalance' – disinterest or indifference.
-  'Burying-party' – Owen uses this phrase to refer to the group of soldiers who come to collect and bury those who have not survived the night.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Analysis of 'Exposure'

First World War

The First World War began in 1914 and ended in 1918. It was the first truly global conflict, involving countries from around the world. Britain fought with the Allies, or the Entente Powers against the Central Powers.

Battles took place in lots of different countries, but in particular in Belgium and France. Huge trenches were dug in the ground, where soldiers were sent to live and fight. The conditions in the trenches were dreadful. The tunnels often flooded and in the winter the men faced freezing temperatures. The tunnels were often rat-infested and surrounded with the constant sound of artillery. Men who were sent home with 'shell shock' – a nervous breakdown brought on by exposure to the conditions.

When they were called on to attack, the men had to climb out of the trenches and cross the dangerous territory between enemy lines, called No Man's Land, where again they were vulnerable.

War poet

Wilfred Owen is one of the best-known war poets. He was enlisted in 1915 and was severely wounded and hospitalised with an injury and shell shock. In hospital, he met fellow poet Siegfried Sassoon. Owen died in the trenches though died just days before the war ended. He wrote about the horrors of war and the soldiers' suffering.

In his famous poem 'Dulce et Decorum est' he depicts a gas explosion in the trenches. In 'Exposure' he describes the disturbing conditions. Here in 'Exposure' he shows how the weather, as well as the war, affects the men on a physical, emotional and spiritual level.

Language

By using a first person plural voice* in this poem, 'we' and 'our', the reader feels closely identified with the group of soldiers in the trenches, sharing their fears and experiences. Owen opens the poem with the phrase 'Our brains ache', implying that the men are all suffering in the same way. The phrase suggests that they are aching with cold and also implies they can no longer bear the conditions they are in – their brains are overwhelmed with the horrors of their immediate environment.

Owen uses the semantic field* of war throughout 'Exposure', applying words associated with war and the rain. The winds 'knife' the men and the 'pale flakes' of snow come with the rain. The personification* of the weather adds to the feeling that the men are being attacked. They are not safe in any sense. If it isn't enemy fire they are contending with, it is the risk of frost.

The men themselves are described as 'snow-dazed' and 'sun-dozed'. They are exhausted by their experiences. They have become 'ghosts' and many start to lose their faith in God. They are 'half-known faces' – perhaps 'half-known' because the men have changed so much that they are not the same anymore, or because they are all thrown in together, without a chance to be known.

Owen repeats the phrase 'But nothing happens' at the end of four stanzas, including the last, to expose the hopelessness and futility of the war.

Make the Link
Compare the conditions in 'Exposure' with those in 'Dulce et Decorum est'. Charge of men and their lives. difference situations?

Make the Link
Compare the conditions in 'Exposure' and Ciaran Carson's 'The Soldier'. Entrapment in the trenches. How does each poem use language to convey this? What effect does this have?

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



* See glossary

Questions for 'Exposure'

Comprehension Questions

1. Where is this poem set?
2. Who is speaking in the poem?
3. What threatens to 'knife' the men?
4. Which men 'whisper'?
5. Which phrase is repeated at the end of the first, third, fourth and final stanza?
6. What is more dangerous to the men – bullets or the weather?
7. What feels for the men's faces?
8. How do they feel about God?
9. What effect does the frost have on them?
10. Who comes with picks and shovels?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. How do you interpret the title of this poem?
2. How do you feel about the soldiers in 'Exposure'?
3. How would you justify the business of war when it puts individual lives in danger?
4. Is this poem relevant today?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for 'Exposure'

Comprehension Questions

1. In the trenches during the First World War.
2. The soldiers in the trenches are speaking collectively.
3. The wind
4. The sentries whisper.
5. 'But nothing happens'
6. The weather is more immediately dangerous to the men than the bullets.
7. The snow feels for the men's faces.
8. Many of them are questioning their faith and losing their love of God.
9. The frost shrivels their hands and makes their foreheads crisp.
10. The 'burying-party'

Deeper-thinking Questions





1. Answers might include:
 - It refers to the way the men are being exposed to the weather.
 - It describes the way that human lives are exposed to danger in the name of war.
 - It shows how the poet is exposing the dreadful conditions of trench warfare.
2. Answers might include:
 - I feel sorry for them. They are being put in danger in the name of war.
 - I feel their situation is unfair. It is too much to ask individuals to go into a war-torn country.
 - I feel proud of them for putting themselves through such extreme conditions for their country.
 - I wouldn't like the thought of being one of them.
3. Answers might include:
 - It can't be justified. There must be ways that countries can end their disputes without killing each other's men.
 - I think that soldiers know what they're signing up for. Their job is to put their country at risk. It is a noble thing to do.
 - War is not the solution. We encourage children to resolve their differences peacefully. Adults, including leaders, should be expected to do the same.
4. Answers might include:
 - We still have lessons to learn from what happened in the trenches, so we must be careful not to repeat the mistakes.
 - Wars are still going on, even if not in trenches.
 - The need to expose unjust situations is still relevant.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED







About the Poet

-  Tennyson's poetry was read and enjoyed by ordinary people.
-  He was made Poet Laureate in 1850.
-  He wrote other ballads including 'The Lady of Shallot'.
-  Many of his phrases are commonly used.

'The Charge of the Light Brigade' by Alfred Lord Tennyson (1854)

Contextual Information

-  The Light Brigade were famously sent forward into enemy cannons during the Battle of Balaclava during the Crimean War.
-  More than 150 British cavalrymen died and more than 120 were wounded.
-  Tennyson read about the battle in *The Times* newspaper.
-  The poem has played a significant part in preserving the memory of the battle.




Brief Overview of Poem

The poem, a ballad, tells the story of the Light Brigade, or cavalry, who were mistakenly sent into enemy lines during the Battle of Balaclava during the Crimean War.





Six hundred men were sent into a valley, towards Russian cannons. Tennyson shows how the soldiers didn't question orders, but charged in, many of them dying in their deaths.

In the final stanza, Tennyson seems to urge us to remember and celebrate the men and honour those who were in the charge. His poem has served its aim in ensuring the men are remembered long after the event.

Language Close-up

-  **Ballad:** *form of poetry that comes from the oral tradition. Regular rhyme and rhythm make the poem easy to remember.*
-  **Repetition:** 'Half a league, half a league' *Repetition emphasises the desperate position the men found themselves in.*
-  **Exclamations:** 'Noble six hundred!' *Exclamations represent the commands of the officers, and the speaker's insistence that we 'honour the Light Brigade'.*

Key Words

-  'League' – a distance most commonly defined as three miles
-  'Cannon' – large heavy ground based guns that were used to fire huge balls of metal
-  'Sabre' – a sword
-  'Cossack' – the name given during Tennyson's time to people from the Ukraine and Southern Russia

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Analysis of 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'

Inspiration

Tennyson wrote this poem in response to an article he read in *The Times* newspaper. In the 19th century, there were no televisions and the Internet was a long way in the future. Conflicts in other countries from video footage, social media and radio, in Victorian times, relied on for news.

During the Battle of Balaclava an order given to the cavalry, or light brigade, was misunderstood. Six hundred cavalrymen rode down into a valley directly into the enemy lines. They were shot at from all sides by cannon and 150 men lost their lives.

The battle could be seen as a tragic and foolish incident, as a cause for outrage, or for celebration – after all the soldiers were doing their job, and however mistaken, believed they were fighting honourably for their country.

Form and language

The poem is a ballad, using a strong rhyme pattern and rhythm. Traditionally ballads spread word of the Charge of the Light Brigade through news and Tennyson uses the tradition to spread word of the Charge of the Light Brigade through his contemporaries, but down through the years. It is impossible to know whether the battle would have happened if it hadn't been for Tennyson's poem.

At the start, the rhythm of the poem seems to mimic the galloping pattern of the horses: 'Half a league, half a league'. Later the sound of the cannon fire is reflected in short monosyllabic words: 'shot and shell'. Tennyson also uses repetition throughout to reflect the steady firing of the guns. He reminds us how the men are surrounded with 'Cannon to the right of them / Cannon to the left of them.'

At the end of the poem he asks the question 'When can their glory fade?' By ending the poem with 'not yet', Tennyson ensures the answer is: 'not yet'.

Biblical allusion

Tennyson refers to Psalm 23 from the Christian Bible when he mentions the 'valley of death'.

'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thy staff they comfort me.' (King James Bible)

This offers some hope, but then the valley becomes the 'jaws of Death' in stanza 3, and the soldiers' situation is hopeless.

Outrage or honour?

Throughout the poem, Tennyson highlights the dreadful plight of the cavalrymen who were put in. However, in the final stanza he insists that they were noble and invited to fight.

Make the most of the poem
Notice how Tennyson uses the word 'Killed' in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' and other similar experiences. What different perspectives do poets have on war?

Make the most of the poem
Compare the language used in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' with those in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'. Notice how Tennyson creates different perspectives of the Light Brigade's celebration and despairing.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Questions for 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'

Comprehension Questions

1. During which war did the Charge of the Light Brigade occur?
2. How many men were involved in the charge?
3. Who were they fighting against?
4. What surrounded them in the valley?
5. How were the soldiers armed?
6. What does Tennyson urge us to do at the end of the poem?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Do you think the battle would still be remembered if it wasn't for Tennyson's poem?
2. How is this poem relevant today?
3. Do you believe the cavalrymen were heroes?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'

Comprehension Questions

1. The Crimean War
2. Six hundred men were involved.
3. They were fighting against Russians and Cossacks.
4. In the valley, the men were surrounded by cannon.
5. The men were armed with sabres.
6. Tennyson urges us to honour the men.

Deeper-thinking Questions






1. Answers might include:
 - No, it was such a long time ago and there is no archive footage from the time. Other atrocities are forgotten.
 - Yes, we would remember, because we would be taught about it in history lessons.
 - It is difficult to say. The poem is memorable because of its rhyme and rhythm.
2. Answers might include:
 - We might compare the experiences of modern soldiers being sent to Afghanistan with the experiences of the light brigade. Although the circumstances are different, soldiers are expected to obey and go wherever they are sent in the name of their country.
 - There could be a parallel drawn between suicide bombers and the cavalry. Both believe they are acting on behalf of a cause, or country, while accepting death.
 - Today's conflicts make use of different weapons, but the basic nature of war remains the same.
3. Answers might include:
 - Yes, they were fighting on behalf of their country and doing as they were ordered.
 - No, they should have stood up for themselves and refused to follow orders into danger.
 - No, war should never be glorified. As intelligent beings, we should be able to find peaceful solutions to exist.

INSPECTION COPY




COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED





About the Poet

-  Born 1937 in Cardiff, Wales.
-  Welsh speaker.
-  Co-founder of Tŷ Newydd Writing Centre
-  National Poet of Wales in 2008.
-  Has published poetry for adults and children.

Contextual Information

-  The poem is autobiographical and Catrin is Gillian Clarke's daughter.
-  Clarke says she wrote the poem in response to the question 'Why did my beautiful baby have to become a teenager?'.
-  Her daughter was born before scans of babies in the womb were available.

Language Close-up




-  **Alliteration**
In the first stanza, Clarke uses a series of words beginning with 'w' – 'all over the walls with my / Words' and 'We want, we shouted'. This connects to the 'w' of womb and also a baby's first wails.
-  **Metaphor**
*'The tight / Red rope of love'
The image of the rope here represents the umbilical cord that feeds the baby in the womb and is cut at birth. It also stands for the invisible ties that remain between mother and daughter as the girl grows up.*

'Catrin' by Gillian Clarke (1978)**Brief Overview of Poem**

This poem deals with the relationship between a mother and daughter. It starts with the girl's birth and describes the 'struggle' and 'fight' over that initial separation. The second stanza shows the girl as a teenager and explores how the conflict between mother and daughter continues. The 'old rope' of love binds them despite their pulls towards independence.

In the final lines, the teenager has asked to be allowed permission to stay out skating for 'more hour'. Although this is a personal poem, the experience will be recognisable to many parents and children.

Key Words

-  'Confrontation' – a moment of conflict or argument
-  'Environmental' – to do with the immediate or wider environment
-  'Defiant' – rebellious or obstinate



**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Analysis of 'Catrin'

Mothers and daughters

Gillian Clarke uses simple language and familiar scenarios in this poem to present both an autobiographical account of motherhood and also a universal experience of the way love binds mothers and their daughters.

The first stanza is about the birth and the 'first / Fierce confrontation' between mother and daughter as they strive for separation. Clarke uses first person and first-person plural ('we'/'our') to show how connected at this stage of their lives. In stanza two, there is more distinction between mother and teenager. Here Clarke begins to direct her words to 'you', emphasising their increasing distance from each other.

However, 'that old rope' of love is always there, tying the two together and underlining the bond between them when the girl asks to stay out 'in the dark' an hour later.

Make the Link

Compare this poem with 'Cousin Kate'. How are female relationships presented here? What similarities and differences can you see in the presentation of the cousins and that of the mother and daughter? How do the poets make use of language to convey their themes?

Conflict

Clarke uses the language of conflict throughout the poem. She repeats the word 'struggle' and also 'confrontation', the 'fighting' and 'cutting' them. It is a struggle that neither side wants to 'become / Separate' and yet is ultimately impossible and they will remain tied by 'that old rope' even when the physical tie of blood has been cut.

Separation

The theme of separation is presented through the relationship between mother and daughter. It is shown in the literal space between the stanzas and in the line breaks. Each stanza could be seen as a pair in this relationship with the small gap between the stanzas representing the sense of separation.

The line breaks also add to this sense of separation. For example 'I can remember you, our first / Fierce confrontation'. The line break invites us to interpret the phrase 'our first' as 'our first child', referring to the fact that Catrin is the first of Gillian Clarke's children. However, the phrase then continues into the next line to become 'our first / Fierce confrontation' showing a shift in the meaning of 'our' – from the couple together bringing their first child into the world, to the mother and daughter and their struggle to separate.

Make the Link
Compare this poem with 'Cousin Kate'. What is similar about the experience of motherhood and child?

Make the Link
Another poem by Wilfred Owen is 'Anthem for a Doomed Youth'. What similarities can you see in each poem?

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Questions for 'Catrin'

Comprehension Questions

1. Who is Catrin?
2. What does the mother see through the window?
3. What do the mother and child first fight over?
4. What does the mother write on the walls?
5. What are the mother and daughter struggling for?
6. Who wins the struggle?
7. What does Catrin look like as a teenager?
8. What does she ask to do at the end of the poem?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Do you think this is a typical experience of mothers and daughters?
2. Is this conflict only experienced by mothers and daughters? What about fathers and sons?
3. Do you think the mother will allow her daughter to skate?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for 'Catrin'

Comprehension Questions

1. She is Gillian Clarke's daughter.
2. People, cars and traffic lights – everyday life continuing while she is about to experience of childbirth is an ordinary event.
3. They fight over the 'tight / Red rope of love' or the umbilical cord.
4. She writes 'all over the walls' with her 'words'.
5. They are both struggling to be separate, 'to be ourselves'.
6. Neither of them wins or loses.
7. She has 'straight, strong, long / Brown hair' and 'rosy' cheeks.
8. She asks to be allowed to 'skate / In the dark, for one more hour.

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers might include:
 - Yes – it is typical for daughters to rebel against their mothers.
 - No – mothers and daughters are usually closer than this.
 - Sometimes, but it depends on the mother and daughter.
2. Answers might include:
 - Yes – fathers and sons also struggle for independence and separation.
 - No – it's different for fathers as they don't go through the physical experience.
 - Yes – it's the same for mothers and fathers and their children, regardless of gender. The desire to protect will always come into conflict with the desire for independence.
3. Answers might include:
 - No, she won't let her stay out after dark.
 - Yes, she knows her daughter needs to be free.
 - Yes, she doesn't want to get into an argument.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



About the Poet

- ✎ Satyamurti was born in 1939 in Kent, England.
- ✎ She is a poet and sociologist.
- ✎ She has won numerous poetry prizes.
- ✎ She says 'human predicament engages me'.

Contextual Information

- ✎ The job of a war photographer is to document events without becoming involved.
- ✎ The poem deals with the way the media can manipulate the truth of a situation through selective use of images.

Language Close-up✎ **Parallelism**

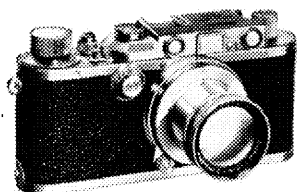
'-As when at Ascot once' '-as last week'
The structure of line 9 is paralleled in line 13, highlighting the contrast between the situations

✎ **Ellipsis**

'Began to run...'
This line is unfinished and the ellipsis leads us to fear the worst for the girl

✎ **Alliteration**

'A pair of peach, sun-gilded girls'
The repetition of the 'p' and 'g' in this line lends a pleasing balance, emphasising the ease of the girls' lives



'War Photographer' by Carole Satyamurti

Brief Overview of Poem

Satyamurti shows how a picture can be deceiving. She writes about framing and how we make assumptions, often wrongly, about what exists beyond the frame.

She writes from the point of view of a photographer who describes two particular photographs, each of girls. The first photo is of a group of girls, giggling and suntanned at Ascot racecourse. The second is a photo of a young girl running from a bomb.

In the final stanza we learn that the image printed in the paper is one taken before the bomb drops. The caption claims that the girl is evidence of the human spirit prevailing.

Key Words

- ✎ 'Frame' – in this context 'frame' refers to the edges of a photograph. The photographer selects what to 'frame' and what to omit.
- ✎ 'Ascot' – a famous annual horse racing event in England, associated with wealth and glamour
- ✎ 'Sun-gilded' – made golden by the sun/tanned
- ✎ 'Prevailing' – lasting
- ✎ 'Arbitrary' – random, indiscriminate

**COPYRIGHT
 PROTECTED**



Analysis of 'War Photograph'

Images of conflict

The speaker in the poem is a photographer. In the first stanza she describes how she seeks out 'the tragic, the absurd, / to make a subject.' She describes two photographs in the poem, one in which girls at Ascot are giggling and high on life, another in which a girl carrying a baby is terrified by a bomb. The juxtaposition of these contrasting images implies that the girls at Ascot and the girl in the bombing are all in their ways tragic and absurd.

Make the Link
Compare the two images between the poem and the photograph.

Satyamurti also explores the trust that we put in images, and says the 'firmness of the frame' 'can convince you / this is how things are'. We don't know what happens before or after the 'sun-gilded girls'. The image seems high-spirited and carefree, and suggests luxury and joy. The tragedy in the lives of these 'sun-gilded girls', but this is an image, as much as the 'smile' at the end. With this snapshot, Satyamurti demonstrates how willing we are to accept the 'reassurance of the frame'.

The photographer remains distant. She acknowledges the arbitrariness of life, but does not let on how she is affected by the images she sees.

Truth and mediation

The poem invites us to consider the reliability of images that are presented by the media. The final stanza in particular demonstrates how easily manipulated an image can be. It is unclear whether the newspaper have chosen this image of hope to publish, or whether this is the image that the photographer sends. We cannot entirely trust the speaker in this poem as, like a photograph, much is left out.

Make the Link
Compare the poem with 'What Were They Like?'. To what extent does the poem itself create a sense of tragedy? What do we learn about the conflict?

Make the Link

Compare this poem with Denise Levertov's 'What Were They Like?'. Which images are similar or different? How does each poet create a sense of tragedy? How is injustice presented in each poem?

Parallels

The parallels between the two poems are highlighted by the parallel structure of stanzas two and three. There is also a parallel between a photograph and the act of firing a gun. The 'small girl' saw the photographer pressing of the finger resembles the act of firing a gun immediately followed by the explosion.

though there is a causal relationship between these two events. Before the bombing, the 'small girl' saw the photographer and, despite what happens next, it is this image of hope that is used by the newspaper to portray a sense of defiance in the face of tragedy.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Questions for 'War Photographer'

Comprehension Questions

1. Who is the speaker in this poem?
2. What does the speaker 'seek out'?
3. What colours does she use to describe the girls at Ascot?
4. What 'shattered the stones'?
5. What does the little girl drop?
6. How does the newspaper use the image of the small girl?
7. What does the photographer conclude about heaven and hell?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. What do you think is the truth behind the image of the 'sun-gilded girls'?
2. How do you feel about the war photographer's role?
3. The camera never lies. Discuss.
4. What responsibilities do you think the media has when it comes to reporting?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for 'War Photograph'

Comprehension Questions

1. A war photographer.
2. She says she seeks out the 'tragic, the absurd'.
3. The Ascot girls are 'peach' and 'sun-gilded'.
4. A bomb 'shattered the stones'.
5. She drops her 'burden' – the baby she was carrying on her hip.
6. The newspaper uses an image of the girl taken before the bomb drops. They see the human spirit prevailing.
7. She concludes that heaven and hell are arbitrary. Each of us could as easily be destroyed by a bomb.

Deeper-thinking Questions





1. Answers might include:
 - They are rich girls, enjoying a day at the races.
 - They live easy lives that contrast with the life of the girl in the war-torn country.
 - They might have their own personal tragedies to deal with. We aren't sure, neither do we know anything about the girls apart from their giggling moment.
2. Answers might include:
 - The war photographer is detached. She sees her responsibility as being objective to the people.
 - The war photographer is doing an important role. She is taking photographs to inform the public.
 - The war photographer is irresponsible. She should not have sent the photograph to the newspaper.
3. Answers might include:
 - The camera doesn't lie. It's what the people do with the images that is the problem.
 - The photographer is selective. He or she leaves things out of the frame.
 - The camera always lies in that it captures moments and life is not a moment.
4. Answers might include:
 - The media has a responsibility to tell the truth.
 - The media has a responsibility to keep its readers happy. Therefore, it is not always truthful.
 - The media should report exactly what happens and avoid any personal opinions.

INSPECTION COPY




COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED





About the Poet

-  Ciaran Carson was born in 1948 in Belfast.
-  His first language was Irish.
-  He is a poet and a novelist and studied at Queen's College in Belfast.
-  His collection *Belfast Confetti* won the Irish Literature Prize for Poetry.

Contextual Information

- The period between 1968 and 1998 saw groups such as the IRA (Irish Republican Army) fighting against British rule in Northern Ireland.
-  'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland saw regular bombings and street warfare.
 -  More than 3,600 people were killed during the conflict.
 -  British soldiers were sent to patrol the streets in this dangerous, unpredictable conflict and soon became targets themselves.

Language Close-up

-  **Enjambment**
'It was raining / exclamation marks'
Phrases are split between lines in this poem, creating a disjointed effect that suggests the sound of the explosion and gunfire
-  **Lists**
'Nuts, bolts, nails, car-keys. A fount of broken type.'
Carson lists the contents of the dirty bomb (a homemade bomb containing all kinds of metal scraps), then moves into metaphor, comparing the explosion to words

'Belfast Confetti' by Ciaran Carson (1998)







Brief Overview of Poem

This poem depicts the explosion of a dirty bomb in Belfast. It shows how the speaker, a journalist or the poet himself, is affected emotionally and mentally by the bomb and runs through the streets, trying to escape.

The streets are all named after battles and generals, so the labyrinth seems thick with echoes of former conflicts. Language breaks down for the speaker until it is reduced to punctuation that reflects the stream of 'rapid fire'.

The unusual structure, with its alternating long and short lines suggests the speaker's confusion and also the dead ends he runs into as he attempts to escape.

Key Words

-  'Riot squad' – police officers who are called out to deal with riots
-  'Labyrinth' – a maze, or a complicated arrangement of buildings and streets
-  'Saracen' – a type of tank
-  'Kremlin-2 mesh' – a wire cage that the British Saracen tanks are fitted with
-  'Makrolon face-shields' – a polycarbonate face shield worn as protection by police
-  'Fusillade' – a series of shots fired in succession

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Analysis of 'Belfast Confetti'

Real-life conflict

Carson sets this poem in Belfast, during the notorious 'Troubles' of the late twentieth century. Belfast witnessed conflict between groups, some of them terrorist organisations, who wanted independence, and British troops, who were initially drafted into the city as peacekeepers.

Make the Link

Compare the experience of the speaker in this poem with the speakers in 'Exposure'. Here an individual describes a sense of entrapment and confusion in the midst of conflict. What similarities and differences are there for the soldiers in Wilfred Owen's poem?

Republican Army – wanted the end of British rule in Ireland. The conflict was all-encompassing, affecting innocent individuals on a daily basis. Bombs were given to home-made bombs that were made of nuts, bolts and washers, which would fly out in the explosion, in much the same way as confetti do when thrown in the air. There were no celebratory connotations of confetti here.

Free verse

Carson uses two stanzas, each comprised of long lines that run over. The lack of steady metre and rhyme reflects the disorder in the aftermath of the bomb. The situation in Belfast was similarly unruly and uncontained. The staggered lines suggest the 'stuttering' of the speaker and also the 'labyrinth' from which he feels unable to escape. He reaches a 'dead end again', implying on one level that he is lost and on another that the bomb itself has reached a dead end – it will make no difference to the situation, apart from causing destruction.

Make the Link

This is a modern conflict. Can you think of a message of peace or a message of charge of notice about the conflict?

Tools of the trade

As a poet, words and punctuation are Carson's tools. He uses these in an unexpected way.

Make the Link

Carson writes from personal experience. How does this compare to the characterisation technique employed by Thomas Hardy in 'The Man He Killed'? How does each poem engage you as a reader? How does each poem make you feel? What similarities and differences do you notice?

Carson is comparing the explosion of the bomb to a 'hyphenated line' is 'a burst of rapid fire'. The sharp, different-sized objects falling from the sky are like bullets moving fast like a line of daisies. The speaker begins to fail him and his sentence 'blocked with stops and colons', in much the same way as him has been reduced to small bits of confetti that make sense of. His distress is clear.

As well as the comparisons between punctuation, bombs and gunfire, Carson makes sounds of the conflict around him: 'Nuts, bolts, nails, car-keys.' The language of the poem is un-poetic. However, the use of this language is vivid. The 'stuttering' of the speaker is reflected in the 'stuttering' of 'rapid fire' and in the dead end assonance* of 'blocked with stops'. The speaker is in a labyrinth of streets that he lists: 'Balaclava, Raglan, Inkerman, / Odessa Street'. The speaker's claustrophobia in the speaker's immediate situation. Also, by invoking the names of the streets, he creates a claustrophobia across time, as though conflict is something inescapable.

* See glossary

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Questions for 'Belfast Confetti'

Comprehension Questions

1. What is confetti?
2. What does the bomb contain?
3. What does he compare a 'hyphenated line' to?
4. What happens to the sentences in the speaker's head?
5. What are the streets blocked with?
6. How many stanzas are in this poem?
7. How does the city seem to the speaker as he tries to escape?
8. What do 'Balaclava, Raglan, Inkerman, / Odessa' refer to?
9. Which aspects of the riot squad are listed?
10. Who is asking the questions at the end of the poem?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. How has the poet created the sense of the speaker's confusion and distress?
2. How do the lists in this poem add to the overall effect?
3. How does Carson use contrast to highlight the speaker's vulnerability?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for 'Belfast Confetti'

Comprehension Questions

1. Confetti usually refers to coloured tissue paper that is thrown in celebration, but here it refers to the dirty bomb that explodes on the city streets.
2. The bomb contains 'Nuts, bolts, nails, car-keys' among other things.
3. The 'hyphenated line' is like a 'burst of rapid fire...'. The speaker's words are fragmented, reflecting the chaos of the conflict.
4. The sentences are 'stuttering' in his head, mirroring the fragmented nature of the poem.
5. The streets are blocked 'with stops and colons', suggesting a halt in movement and communication.
6. The poem contains two stanzas, suggesting the two sides of the conflict – the IRA and the British Army.
7. The city seems like a labyrinth, a complex and confusing maze.
8. These names refer to city streets and also to battles and generals from the poem 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'.
9. The tank and face shields are mentioned: 'A Saracen, Kremlin-2 mesh, Makro'. These are symbols of military power and protection.
10. It could be the police asking the questions of the speaker, or he could be asking questions of himself, reflecting on the events.

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers might include:
 - By using long lines and short lines.
 - By showing how he is stuttering and losing his words.
 - By using unemotional lists that seem to be a way of clinging to words.
 - By showing how he is lost in his own city.
2. Answers might include:
 - The lists offer an unemotional response to the scene – as if the speaker is trying to maintain control by listing details.
 - The speaker is a poet. His nature is to elaborate and use sophisticated language, but here he is reduced to simply listing. This highlights the fear and confusion he experiences.
 - The lists reflect the rain of the bombs and the sound of explosion.
3. Answers might include:
 - He contrasts the tanks and protective gear that the police encase themselves in with the vulnerability of the civilians.
 - He also contrasts the dirty bomb with its 'nuts' and 'bolts' and 'car-keys' with the sophisticated weaponry of the police.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



About the Poet

- ✎ Mary Casey was a housewife from Liverpool.
- ✎ She contributed to a poetry magazine called *Voices* – a collection of poems from ‘ordinary voices’ rather than established or literary poets.

Contextual Information

The class system in Britain was traditionally made up of the upper, middle and working classes.

- ✎ The class system is still evident today.
- ✎ A person’s work, wealth, education, family background, social interests and even accent all contribute to a sense of class.

Language Close-up

- ✎ **Perfect rhyme**
‘Way/day’, ‘toil/oil’, ‘nelly/belly’
The perfect rhymes in this poem are often monosyllabic and simple, reflecting an unsophisticated attitude
- ✎ **Colloquial language**
“Olly”, ‘corpy’, ‘wet nelly’
Words and phrases that are used in spoken language by speakers from a particular region and background (in this case working-class Liverpool)

‘The Class Game’ by Mary Casey (1981)

Brief Overview of Poem

The speaker in this poem contrasts her own experiences of being working class with the experiences of ‘posh’ people who she believes are prejudiced against her.

The tone of the poem is fairly aggressive, despite the suggestion in the title that this is a ‘game’. The speaker defends her working-class roots by using local colloquialisms and referring to her experiences. The poem uses the second-person pronoun ‘you’ and seems to be a fight against the middle classes who ‘wince’ when they hear the speaker talk.

Key Words and Phrases

- ✎ ‘An ‘Olly in me mouth’ – speaking in received pronunciation or talking ‘posh’
- ✎ ‘Corpy’ – corporation housing once offered as affordable homes by the government
- ✎ ‘Wet nelly’ – the name given in Liverpool to a type of fruit cake made using left-over or stale bread and cakes

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



INSPECTION COPY

Questions for 'The Class Gate'

Comprehension Questions

1. Which social class does the speaker belong to?
2. What sort of clothes does the speaker wear?
3. What does the speaker say instead of 'Bye Mummy dear'?
4. Where does the speaker live?
5. Which question is repeated in this poem?
6. What does she suggest might 'stick in your gullet'?
7. What is 'wet nelly'?
8. How does the speaker feel about the social class she comes from?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Who do you think is most concerned with social class in this poem?
2. Some people claim that we live in a classless society. What do you think?
3. Is social class restrictive? Or is it something to be proud of?
4. Have you ever experienced conflict, internal or otherwise, as a result of social class?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for 'The Class Game'

Comprehension Questions

1. The speaker is a working-class Liverpudlian.
2. She wears second-hand clothes.
3. She says 'Tara' to her 'Ma'.
4. She lives in 'a corpy' or a housing corporation home.
5. The question 'How can you tell what class I'm from?' is repeated.
6. The speaker suggests that the question of class might 'stick in your gullet, like
7. 'Wet nelly' is a bread and butter pudding made in Liverpool.
8. At the end of the poem she tells us that she is 'proud of the class that' she co

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers might include:
 - The speaker is most concerned. She fights against class snobbery in this
 - The people she is addressing are most concerned. She tells us that they using colloquialisms. This is evidence of their prejudice.
 - The speaker is concerned, but she is proud of who she is. She isn't jealous. She just wants to be accepted as herself.
2. Answers might include:
 - We don't live in a classless society. There are clear distinctions between of income, education and geography.
 - We do live in a classless society. Television and the Internet have created the same opportunities are available to everyone.
 - It is clear that there are differences between social groups, based on income and opportunity. However, these are not restrictive and there is less snobbery in the past. We are less likely to judge people on the basis of their social class might have been.
3. Answers might include:
 - Social class is completely restrictive. This is evidenced by the fact that many people go to private schools. It is difficult to imagine someone from a council estate becoming prime minister.
 - Social class is not at all restrictive. Whatever you want in life, you can achieve it, no matter where you were born. We can all change and choose the life we want.
 - Social class is something to be proud of, but only if you're working class. The rich are more embarrassed about their wealth.
 - Social class is no more a basis for pride than your name. It is arbitrary and you can't choose the class they are born into. It is not something that is achieved or worked for. We should be proud of class pride as we are all individuals.
4. Answers might include:
 - I have never experienced any conflict about my social class. I don't think it matters.
 - I have experienced prejudice and feel that I have missed out on opportunities.
 - I feel as if there are certain expectations of me that are a direct result of my lower or higher social class, I would behave differently and have different friends.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



About the Poet

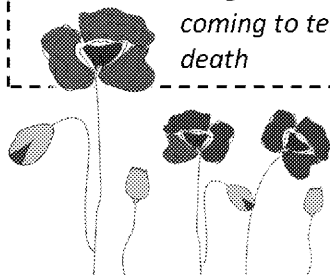
- Jane Weir is of Anglo-Italian heritage.
- She lives and works in Derbyshire in England.
- She also works with textiles and fabric.

Contextual Information

- Poppies are worn in November for Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday.
- They represent the loss of blood and lives during conflict.
- Poppies became a symbol of remembrance after the First World War, when trench warfare took place in the poppy fields.

Language Close-up

- Military semantic field**
'Disrupting a blockade/of yellow bias binding'
Language of warfare applied to everyday actions and items
- Metaphor**
'I went into your bedroom, / released a song bird from its cage.'
Bird represents the way the mother has let her son go free, even if it is into potential danger – could also represent a coming to terms with her son's death



'Poppies' by Jane Weir (2005)

Brief Overview of Poem

This is a poem about a mother remembering her son. Rather than a linear narrative, we are offered snapshots of the son at different times in his life.

The metaphors used by the speaker and the military language imply that her son has died in combat. She remembers small details of his life, which highlights the sense of loss and grief that is conveyed by the poem.

Poppies are traditionally worn as a symbol of remembrance. The title shows that this is a poem about conflict and loss.

Key Words

- 'Armistice Sunday' – the Sunday closest to 11 November, the date when hostilities ended the First World War
- 'Blockade' – a temporary border that closes off a place, usually imposed by troops
- 'Bias binding' – a type of ribbon that is typically used for the edges of school blazers
- 'Blackthorns' – a European shrub with small white flowers and hard thorns

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Analysis of 'Poppies'

Poppies

Poppies have been used as a symbol of remembrance since after the First World War. The small red flower grew particularly in Flanders where trench warfare took place. The flowers themselves represent resilience and determination. They continued to grow despite the earth being churned and disrupted by the battles. The colour of the poppies is also significant and has come to stand for the loss of blood and lives during conflict. Every year people wear poppies on Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday as a sign that they remember wars and conflicts since 1918. Wreaths of poppies are placed on war graves and in her poem.

Make the Link
Compare the language of 'Poppies' to that of 'Belfast Confetti'. How do the differences in language reflect the different relationships between the speaker and the son in each poem?

The title and the references to poppies in the poem suggest that the speaker, a mother, is remembering her son who has died in war.

Language of war

Weir suggests that the son has been injured or died by using language associated with war and everyday objects. The mother remembers when he left and she pinned a poppy to his jacket. The poem is full of military language. The word 'blockade' has connotations of war and guarding borders. This could represent the mother who has now become cut off from her son, partly through the role he takes in the war, perhaps, through death.

Make the Link

The poet uses a military semantic field to let us know that the speaker's child has gone to war. In 'Belfast Confetti', Carson uses the language of punctuation to show the effects of a bombing in Belfast. How does each poet's language choices relate to their subject matter and tone?

The mother walks to the memorial with a scarf, gloves'. Like 'blockade', the poem has military connotations. Here the reinforcements against the cold refer to the emotions that she is trying to hold onto.

Metaphors and symbols

The poet uses a range of metaphors and symbols in this poem, keeping the reader guessing what actually happened. We are not given direct access to the mother's feelings, though the poem does not tell us what has happened to the son, but we understand from the context that he is gone, and most likely dead.

The mother's memories are not chronological. She remembers small details about her son, such as the 'gelled blackthorns' of his hair. This metaphor makes the son seem distant and unapproachable, highlighting a separation between mother and teenage son. She wants to care for him, but knows she must now resist the urge to smother him. She says 'I was brave' showing how difficult it was for her to set her boy free to the 'world overflowing / like a treasure chest'. Weir uses the symbol of the songbird to represent the release of the son. The speaker cannot completely let go and later follows a dove to the war memorial.

Make the Link
Compare the language of 'Poppies' to those of 'Belfast Confetti'. How do the differences in language reflect the different relationships between the speaker and the son in each of the poems?

She uses the metaphor of textiles to suggest the way that mother and child are joined together, 'looking like a stitch'. This refers to fabric but also to stitches that are used to mend. The way she is trying to heal her loss.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Questions for 'Poppies'

Comprehension Questions

1. Who is the speaker in this poem?
2. How many stanzas are in this poem?
3. What does the mother recall playing with her son?
4. What does she compare his gelled hair with?
5. What does she remember pinning to his lapel?
6. What colours are used in the poem?
7. Which words and phrases does Jane Weir use that are associated with war and conflict?
8. What does the speaker release from 'its cage'?
9. What shape does she make when she leans against the war memorial?
10. What does she hope to hear on the wind?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. What is the relevance of the poem's title?
2. What has happened to the speaker's son?
3. How is this poem different to other war poems in this collection?
4. How does the poet use metaphor?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for 'Poppies'

Comprehension Questions

1. The speaker is a mother whose son has left to join the army.
2. Three
3. She recalls playing at 'being Eskimos' and rubbing their nose tips together.
4. She compares his gelled hair to blackthorns.
5. She remembers pinning a poppy to his lapel.
6. Red, yellow, black(thorns), (white implied by dove)
7. 'Armistice Sunday', 'poppies', 'war graves', 'disrupting a blockade', 'steeled' memorial'
8. A song bird
9. She leans 'like a wishbone'.
10. She hopes to hear her son's voice.

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers might include:
 - Poppies are worn to remember those who have lost their lives fighting for their country.
 - Poppies are red which reminds us of blood.
 - Poppies grew in the fields where battles were fought during the First World War.
 - The title suggests that the son is dead – his mother is remembering him.
2. Answers might include:
 - He has gone to war.
 - He has died in a battle. Words such as 'spasms', 'bandaged', 'graze', 'flap' make us feel that something violent happened to him in the end.
 - We don't know exactly what has happened to him, but there is a mournful tone which suggests he has died.
3. Answers might include:
 - This poem is from a female perspective, specifically a mother's.
 - The standpoint is far away from the action of war.
 - The poem shows the far-reaching emotional impact of war rather than the physical impact on a soldier.
4. Answers might include:
 - She uses the poppy as a metaphor for death and remembrance.
 - She also uses the blackthorns to represent the spikey attitude of her teenage son.
 - The songbird is a metaphor for freedom and independence.
 - The dove is a symbol, usually associated with peace.
 - She uses images of textiles to show how her memories seem stitched into her life.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



About the Poet

- ✎ Zephaniah was born in Birmingham, UK.
- ✎ He left full-time education aged 13.
- ✎ His work is influenced by Jamaican music and poetry.
- ✎ His poetry is often political and focused on social justice.

Contextual Information

- ✎ Zephaniah's mother comes from Jamaica and his father from Barbados.
- ✎ He experienced racism as a youth growing up in Birmingham, even though he was born in this country.
- ✎ He moved to London at the age of 22 with the intention of widening his audience beyond his local black community.

Language Close-up

- ✎ **Phonetic spelling**
'I am not de problem'
Zephaniah uses phonetic spelling in this poem to mimic a Jamaican accent
- ✎ **Rhyme**
'Brunt/stunts', 'smile/versatile'
He uses a simple rhyme scheme in which every other line rhymes
- ✎ **First person**
'I am versatile'
The use of the first-person voice creates a strong sense of the speaker. The individual is important in this poem with eight lines in the first stanza beginning 'I'.

'No Problem' by Benjamin Zephaniah (1996)

Brief Overview of Poem

This is a poem that protests against stereotypes and prejudice that the speaker experienced. The speaker is black and says this is 'not de problem'.

The line 'I am not de problem' is repeated times in the first, longer stanza, emphasising the main message of the poem. It is the other people and their limited expectations of black people that are the problem. The speaker explains how he has faced racism in the playground and how he is 'branded athlete' because of his skin colour, instead of being given a chance to excel academically.

Key Words

- ✎ 'Taunts' – unpleasant and insulting comments
- ✎ 'Timbuktu' – a city in West Africa; a metaphor in British English for a place far away as imaginable
- ✎ 'Pigeon hole' – a compartment for storing paper documents in the workplace; also means to categorise (usually in a limited way)
- ✎ 'Chips on me shoulders' – an idiom that means 'to hold a grudge'

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Analysis of 'No Problem'

The title

The phrase 'No Problem' is itself a stereotype attached to Jamaican culture. The stereotype associated with people from the island is used in this poem to highlight the real problems Zephaniah argues that the education system failed him and in the first stanza of the poem of unfair stereotyping that he had to fight against. In this way the poem's title sets out what are real problems the speaker is presenting.

Racism

The speaker in this poem talks about the instances of racism he has experienced and that range from playground taunts to assumptions that he will be an athlete or a dancer. He claims repeatedly that 'I am not de problem', showing that he is neither to blame for the stereotypes nor is he reacting to them. There is a solid sense of the speaker's identity that is maintained and enhanced through the poem. Zephaniah uses phonetic spelling to demonstrate the way the speaker uses English with an accent lifting from the page.

This use of language shows that, despite the racism the speaker is faced with, he maintains his sense of self without needing to protest or feel bitterness towards the world. It shows a quiet acceptance of their ignorance.

Make the Link

Byron's poem 'The Destruction of Sennacherib' is written using traditional poetic form with rhyming couplets and a steady metre. Compare the structure of that poem with the free verse used by Zephaniah in 'No Problem'. How does each form differ? What is the effect of each on the reader?

False expectations

The speaker describes some of the false expectations people have of him as a black person. He knows that he is not a dancer, but actually he knows that he is not a dancer, but he has the chance, he could 'teach you dance'. He is not a 'pigeon hole' on the basis of his race, he is unperturbed by this, knowing that

Form and rhyme

The poem is written in two stanzas. Eight of the lines in the first stanza begin with the personal pronoun 'I', emphasising the importance of the individual over the sweeping generalisations made about his race.

In the second stanza, the speaker seems older. He changes the line from 'I am not de problem' to 'Black is not de problem', broadening the experience of racism. In the final line he emphasises the point that it is other people who are the problem by stating that 'it's white'. As the title of the poem suggests the speaker has 'no problem' with white people, but the limitations of the narrow stereotypes that are often imposed on black people.

Make the Link
Compare the language used in Thomas Hardy's 'The Man of the Mountain' with the language used in 'No Problem'. How does the language help to create a sense of the speaker's identity? How does it help to create a sense of the speaker's identity?

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



* See glossary

Questions for 'No Problem'

Comprehension Questions

1. What does the speaker 'bear de brunt' of?
2. Which phrase is repeated in the first stanza?
3. Which place is mentioned in the first stanza?
4. Which word does the poet rhyme with 'smile'?
5. What is a pigeon hole in the context of this poem?
6. What does the speaker say about some of his best friends?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. The title of the poem is 'No Problem' but do you think, in fact, there is a problem?
2. How might stereotypes hold people back?
3. Do you think there is a solution to racism?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for 'No Problem'

Comprehension Questions

1. He bears 'de brunt / Of silly playground taunts/An racist stunts'. He is bullied.
2. The phrase 'I am not de problem' is repeated three times in the first stanza.
3. 'Timbuktu' is mentioned in the first stanza.
4. The poet rhymes 'versatile' with 'smile', demonstrating his versatility by choosing words that rhyme.
5. In this poem a pigeon hole is a constricting categorisation – the speaker's true self is not in favour of stereotypes.
6. He says some of his 'best friends are white'.

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers might include:
 - Yes, there's a huge problem here. The experience of an individual is being limited by stereotyped ideas about what he should be.
 - Yes, the problem is racism. The speaker isn't given a chance to reach his full potential.
 - No, the speaker is relaxed and accepting – he is not racist himself and through his experiences, he is able to see the humanity in others which they couldn't.
2. Answers might include:
 - If people have certain expectations of an individual they might rise to the occasion and show their strengths and talents.
 - It might lead an individual to behave in ways that are expected of them.
 - Stereotypes are helpful because they shape people's cultural identity.
3. Answers might include:
 - Yes, I'm hopeful that the world we live in is becoming increasingly tolerant.
 - No, race hatred and stereotyping continues today, despite the way they have changed.
 - Yes, I think we will reach a point in the future when we are able to live without stereotypes.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



About the Poet

- ✎ Levertov was born in Essex in 1923 and died in 1997.
- ✎ Her first published poem appeared in *Poetry Quarterly* when she was 19.
- ✎ During WWII she worked as a civilian nurse.
- ✎ She moved to the US in the 1940s.

Contextual Information

- ✎ Levertov lived in America throughout the Vietnam War (1955–75).
- ✎ She opposed the violence and destruction of the war.
- ✎ Many people protested against American involvement in the Vietnam War.
- ✎ The war was brutal and destroyed the lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians and soldiers.

Language Close-up

- ✎ **Past tense**
'What Were They Like?'
The use of past tense 'were' rather than the present tense 'are' in the title of this poem implies that something has happened to change the people
- ✎ **Metaphor**
'There were no more buds'
The budding flowers are a metaphor for new life, beauty and hope
- ✎ **Alliteration**
'Stepped surely along the terraces'
The 's' sound is repeated, lending a careful measured tone to the phrase

'What Were They Like' by Denise Levertov (1965)

Brief Overview of Poem

This poem is structured with a series of six questions in the first stanza that are then answered in the second stanza. The questions refer to the 'people of Viet Nam' and ask about their traditions and culture. The questions are all in the past tense, implying that the people have, perhaps, lost these traditions.

The answers are addressed to 'Sir', suggesting that the speaker is a subordinate, so perhaps a soldier speaking to a superior. The language of the responses is poetic and creates a mood of sadness and loss.



Key Words

- ✎ 'Viet Nam' – a country in South East Asia that borders Cambodia, China and Laos
- ✎ 'Jade' – a green semi-precious stone that is revered in many cultures
- ✎ 'Epic poem' – a long poem, traditionally narrating the quest of a hero
- ✎ 'Charred' – blackened from fire

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Analysis of 'What Were They'

Questions

The structure of this poem, with its series of six questions in the first stanza followed by the responses of the second stanza, is unusual. There is no set rhyme scheme or metre holding the poem together and in this sense it is a modern poem, reflecting the modern warfare employed during the Vietnam War.

The questions all refer to aspects of the culture and traditions of the 'people of Viet Nam'. Both the questioner and addressee are unknown and unnamed, though the responder uses the term 'Sir' which could suggest that the questioner is a superior, or that the responder is for

The questions are answered in language that veers between distant and remote to seems an awkward phrasing. The responder is removed from the culture he is com

Make the Link

Both Levertov and Wilfred Owen create a sense of loss in their poems. Examine the similarities and differences between the mood of this poem and that of 'Exposure'. How does each poet evoke the reader's emotions?

do not remember' or 'I do not some connection to or understand people, the use of 'It is' suggests remembers a thing about these indifference that was evident in experiences of the Vietnamese sense, the poem is a quiet prote

Imagery

The questions in the first stanza and the answers in the second stanza are all rich with imagery. The questions are not straightforward inquiries into the lifestyle of a civilisation. Rather, they allude to specific details of ceremonies, attitudes and song. The question 'Did they hold ceremonies / to reverence the opening of buds?' creates an image of beginnings and of a gentle sort of approach to life that values nature and the seasons. The questioner, though unknown, seems to have an appreciation of beauty.

The response to this question cuts through the romantic image and tells us in stark children were killed / there were no more buds'. The poet uses this technique of juxtaposing them with a harsher reality throughout the poem. The questioner was used 'for ornament' and the response that 'All the bones were charred' highlights ornamental bones destroyed in fires of warfare, but that the bones of the people

These images of delicacy, art and beauty culminate with the final image where we people's 'singing resembled / the flight of moths in moonlight'. This soft, mysterious final line tells us, 'It is silent now'. This line has particular impact at the very end also fall into silence.

Make the Link
Denise Levertov is a widely published poet, with awards, including the Guggenheim. Compare her work to 'What Were They'. Examine the similarities and differences.

Make the Link
Compare the way the destruction is presented in each poem. How does each poet conflict?

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Questions for 'What Were They'

Comprehension Questions

1. Which people does this poem ask questions about?
2. What type of lanterns does the speaker ask about?
3. What does question three imply about the Vietnamese people?
4. Which ornamental materials are mentioned?
5. What type of poem does the speaker ask about?
6. What do we learn has happened to the children of this nation?
7. Which phrase is repeated in the second stanza?
8. Which words and phrases are used in the second stanza that suggest destruction?
9. How did the people make their living, according to the fifth response?
10. How does the poem conclude?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Based on this poem, what do you think the 'people of Viet Nam' were like?
2. What point does this poem make about war and conflict?
3. How do we understand a 'people'? What defines a culture?
4. What questions do you have about the 'people of Viet Nam'?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for 'What Were They

Comprehension Questions

1. This poem asks questions about the 'people of Viet Nam'.
2. She asks about 'lanterns of stone'.
3. Question three asks whether the people were 'inclined to quiet laughter', implying they were, or suggesting that they do not laugh now.
4. 'Bone and ivory, / jade and silver' are mentioned in question four.
5. The speaker asks whether the 'people of Viet Nam' had an 'epic poem'. This suggests a culture's mythical or real heroes.
6. The children of this nation 'were killed'.
7. The phrase 'It is not remembered' is repeated in the second stanza, highlighting the impact of war on this culture.
8. In the second stanza the following words and phrases suggest destruction: 'burned', 'charred', 'smashed', 'silent'.
9. They made their living 'in rice and bamboo'. 'Most were peasants.'
10. The poem concludes with the phrase 'It is silent now' suggesting that everything has been destroyed.

Deeper-thinking Questions

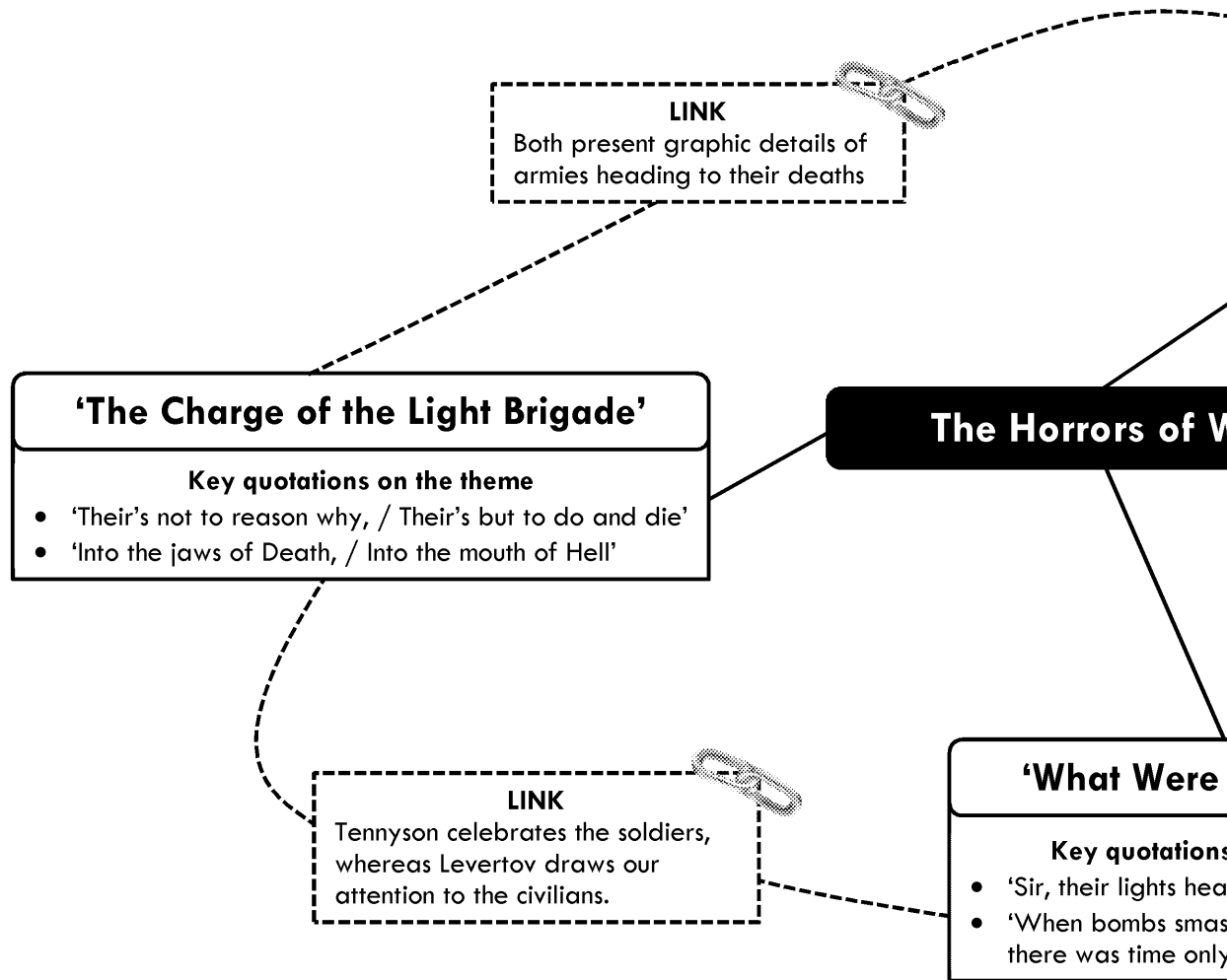
1. Answers might include:
 - They are portrayed in this poem as peaceful people, living simple lives.
 - They were peasants, working the fields.
 - They were creative and musical people.
 - They were quiet and innocent.
2. Answers might include:
 - This poem tells us that war and conflict destroy lives.
 - It shows that war and conflict can affect whole cultures and destroy art.
 - It shows how conflict is indiscriminate and violent.
3. Answers might include:
 - We understand a 'people' by the way they live. They are defined by their traditions, poetry and work.
 - We can't 'understand a people'. Everything changes and we can't hold onto the past.
 - It is irrelevant to talk about a 'people' in the open society we live in today. We can't share the traditions that our ancestors developed.
 - A culture is made up of its history, geography and traditional methods of living. It is defined by itself creatively.
4. Answers might include:
 - What food did they eat?
 - Why were they bombed if they were so peaceful?
 - Were they all destroyed?
 - How did they respond to the bombs?
 - What were their funerals like? How did they honour their dead?
 - Did they have a shared religion?
 - Where are they now? Have their descendants tried to rescue and revive their culture?

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Key Theme: The Horrors Comparison Mind Map



INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Analysis of the Theme: The Horror

Conflict

These three poems each use different conflicts to present, in graphic detail, the horror of war. The first poem is about the Battle of Balaclava during the Crimean War of 1853–56 when a misco cavalry charging directly into enemy fire. Tennyson's poem was published six weeks after the battle and around 300 men were injured or killed. Tennyson's poem highlights the futility of the bravery of the cavalymen involved 'Honour the Light Brigade, Noble six hundred'.

Similarly Byron's 'The Destruction of Sennacherib' tells the story of an army marching in this case the story is taken from the Bible. Whereas the men in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' are surrounded with 'Cannon to the right of them' and 'Cannon to the left of them', the men in Byron's poem are face with 'the Angel of Death'. It is an act of God that leads to their destruction.

In 'What Were They Like?' a nation, with its traditions and rituals, is destroyed. The poem is about civilians rather than soldiers. They are destroyed by 'bombs' that 'smashed' through the air 'to scream'.

Horror

Each poem highlights the horrors of war. In 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' we see the cavalry as they 'Charge for the guns!' The use of exclamations in the poem conveys the orders that might have been shouted at the men and their willingness to obey. The poem uses 'smoke', 'volley'd and thunder'd' and ride through 'the mouth of Hell'. These depictions of war lead Tennyson to conclude that these are brave men, who deserve to be honoured.

In 'The Destruction of Sennacherib' the images of war are graphic and disturbing. The poem 'breathed in the face of the foe', the enemy lie 'distorted and pale' while their horses 'gasping lay white on the turf'. The fast pace of death is conveyed through the rapid lines from the third stanza onwards. Unlike Tennyson, Byron focuses on the devastation of war. This evokes sympathy for the attackers, challenging the reader to consider the horror of war.

Similarly, Levertov examines the effect of a war in which the Americans were involved. The poem looks at the war on the lives of the so-called enemy. She does this with delicacy by depicting the enemy as 'peasants' and the devastation caused 'when bombs smashed those mirrors'. The silence at the end of her poem offers the reader a chance to consider the extent of the war.

Other poems that deal with this theme include:

- 'Exposure' by Wilfred Owen – This poem highlights the dreadful conditions experienced by soldiers involved in trench warfare.
- 'War Photographer' by Carole Satyamurti – The impact of war on civilians is shown as a girl dropping a baby as a bomb drops.
- 'Belfast Confetti' by Ciaran Carson – The speaker in this poem is scared, confused by the face of a bomb that shatters his city.

INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Questions on the Theme: The Horror

Comprehension Questions

1. Which conflicts do the poets focus on?
2. Which images of violence and destruction does each poet present?
3. How are the attackers presented in each poem?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. How does each poem invite you to feel about war?
2. Who and what is usually affected by large-scale conflict?
3. What is the impact of poetry in the face of war?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for The Horrors of War

Comprehension Questions

1. Tennyson focuses on the Battle of Balaclava, during the Crimean War. Levertov focuses on the Vietnam War. Byron uses a battle described in the Bible.
2. Tennyson describes a British cavalry unit attacking Russian lines. He invites us to honour the bravery of the men. Byron describes an enemy army as they approach and intervenes to kill the men. The men are not celebrated, but we are invited to see the horror. Levertov uses a distant standpoint to investigate the effects of the Vietnam War on the Vietnamese nation. She does not explicitly attribute the bombs to the Americans who were responsible for the attacks. However, she does evoke sympathy for the Vietnamese people.
3. The attackers are celebrated by Tennyson; initially shown to be cunning and brave, but also as indiscriminate by Levertov.

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers might include:
 - They all invite us to feel that war is futile.
 - They all invite us to see that war is brutal and destructive.
 - Tennyson seems more supportive of war, whereas the others suggest the horror of war.
2. Answers might include:
 - Soldiers on both sides are affected.
 - Civilians are affected.
 - Culture, art, religion and liberty are all affected.
3. Answers might include:
 - Poetry draws our attention to the realities of war.
 - The poets ask us to consider the individual experiences of soldiers and civilians.
 - They make us question the validity of sending soldiers into dangerous conflicts.

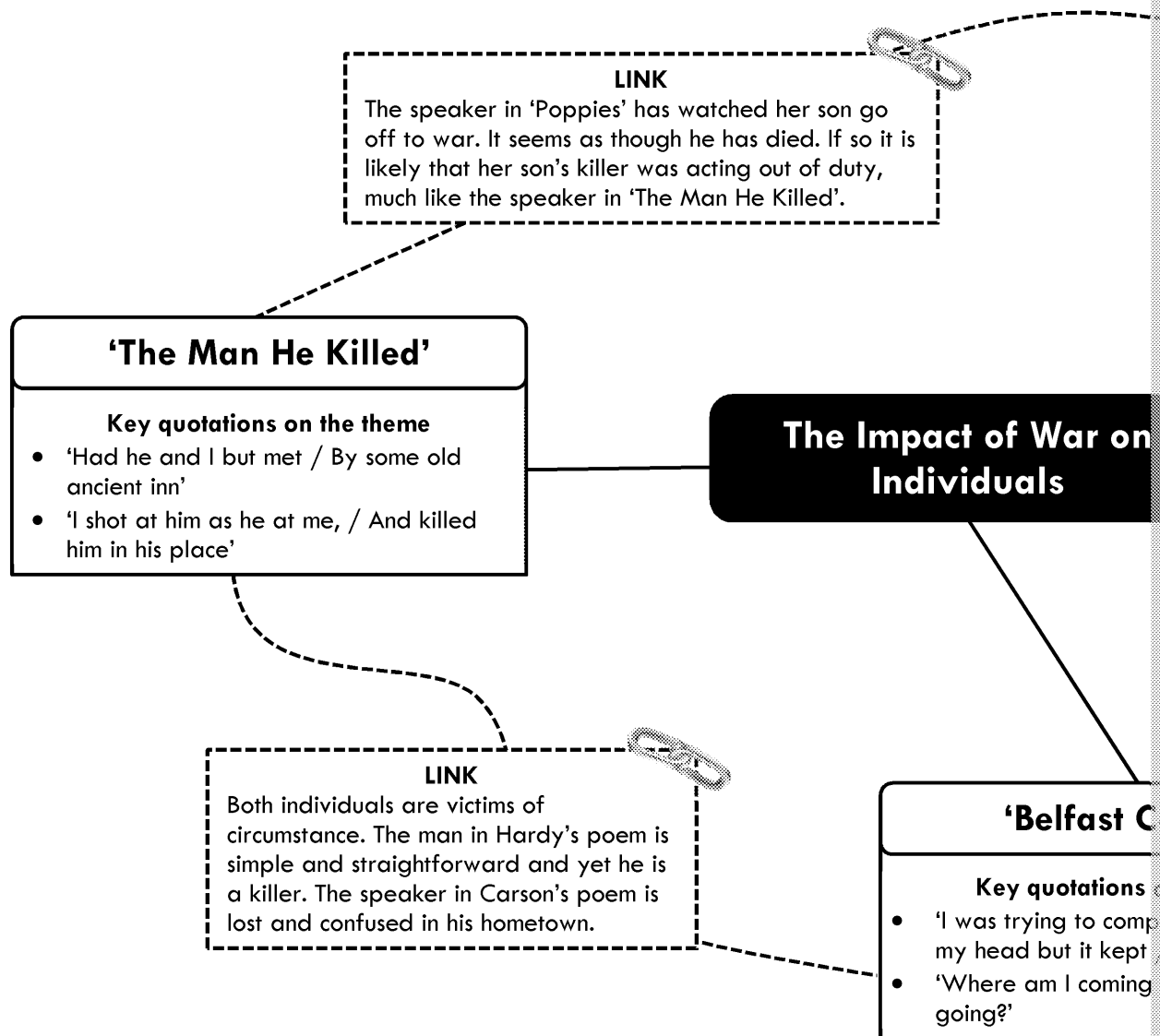
INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Key Theme: The Impact of War

Comparison Mind Map



INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Analysis of the Theme: The Impact of War

Individuals affected by war

These three poems all present the impact of war on individual lives and show how reaching effects.

The speakers in these poems all have different roles: 'Belfast Confetti' seems to be the speaker a writer; 'Poppies' uses the voice of a mother whose son has gone to war; 'The Man He Killed' is written from the point of view of a soldier returning from war. Each of the poems is offering us a close-up and personal experience of the effects of war on their lives.

Civilians and soldiers

We would expect war to have a direct impact on the lives of soldiers. After all, they are directly involved in the hand with fighting. Nonetheless, the speaker in 'The Man He Killed' is presented as being caught up in the war inadvertently or 'off-hand like' ended up fighting in a major conflict. In this way he has been caught up with the machinery of war.

The speaker in 'Belfast Confetti' is trapped in his own city by the conflict that rages around him. He cannot escape from the bombs that rain 'exclamation marks'. He is not involved in the war, but he might consider a soldier to be involved; however, his life is dramatically impacted.

In 'Poppies' the speaker is a civilian – a mother – who has seen her son – a soldier – go to war. The impact on her life as she is left at home. The poem hints that the son has died at war. The poem ends at the cenotaph – a memorial to those who have died at war.

Loss of words

Hardy uses straightforward and sometimes colloquial language to present a simple story. In different circumstances, he would have sat down with his enemy 'to wet / Right man's hand'.

His search for reasons as to why he killed the man leaves him stuck for words and he repeats himself 'because - / Because'. Similarly, the speaker in 'Belfast Confetti' expresses his inability to articulate himself. At the end of the poem he even seems unsure who he is. This disorientation and inability to find expression is echoed in 'Poppies' where the speaker is 'flattened, rolled, turned into felt'. All three speakers are lost for words to describe the impact of war.

Other poems that deal with this theme include:

- 'Exposure' by Wilfred Owen – The men speak collectively in this poem, but all are affected by the war.
- 'War Photographer' by Carole Satyamurti – A young girl's reaction to a bomb.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Questions on the Theme The Impact of War on Individuals

Comprehension Questions

1. What similarities are there between the speakers in these poems?
2. How does each poet use distance to show the effects of war?
3. What differences are there between each situation?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. How do these poems make you feel the impact of war on individuals?
2. Is there anyone that large-scale war does not affect?
3. Who holds the power in the conflicts portrayed by these poets?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for The Impact of War on Poetry

Comprehension Questions

1. The speakers are all ordinary people who are caught up by the wars. Even the speaker in 'Belfast Confetti' is presented as a civilian, rather than a working soldier.
2. Weir uses physical distance by showing that the son has gone far away from home. Even though the distance, the mother is still affected by the war. Carson places the speaker in a situation of war, creating an immediacy and panic. Hardy shows us a man who has returned from war and is struggling with his actions.
3. The situations are different in that one is a mother trying to let go of her son, one is the aftermath of a bombing in Belfast and the third is a man returning from the war. The poems differ in terms of geographical and historical setting and point of view.

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers might include:
 - The poems make me feel that war is far-reaching.
 - The poems show that war affects the emotional well-being of individuals.
 - The poems suggest that war goes beyond the battlegrounds.
2. Answers might include:
 - No, everyone is affected by large-scale conflicts. Even if you have nothing to do with the war, if you are fighting, you still hear about it on the news, or will be affected by people who are affected by the war in your country.
 - These days it is difficult to remain unaffected by war. Before the advent of the internet, it has not been possible to be ignorant of conflict in other countries, but today we have access to news and videos of warfare all around the world.
 - Large-scale war should only affect the fighters.
3. Answers might include:
 - The speakers all hold personal power, though they don't necessarily know how to use it to change their situations. For example, the man in Hardy's poem could have stayed in the war.
 - Terrorists hold the power in 'Belfast Confetti'. In the other poems it is the soldiers who hold the power.
 - Nobody really holds power in any of these situations. Everything is out of control and no person that keeps it all together.

INSPECTION COPY

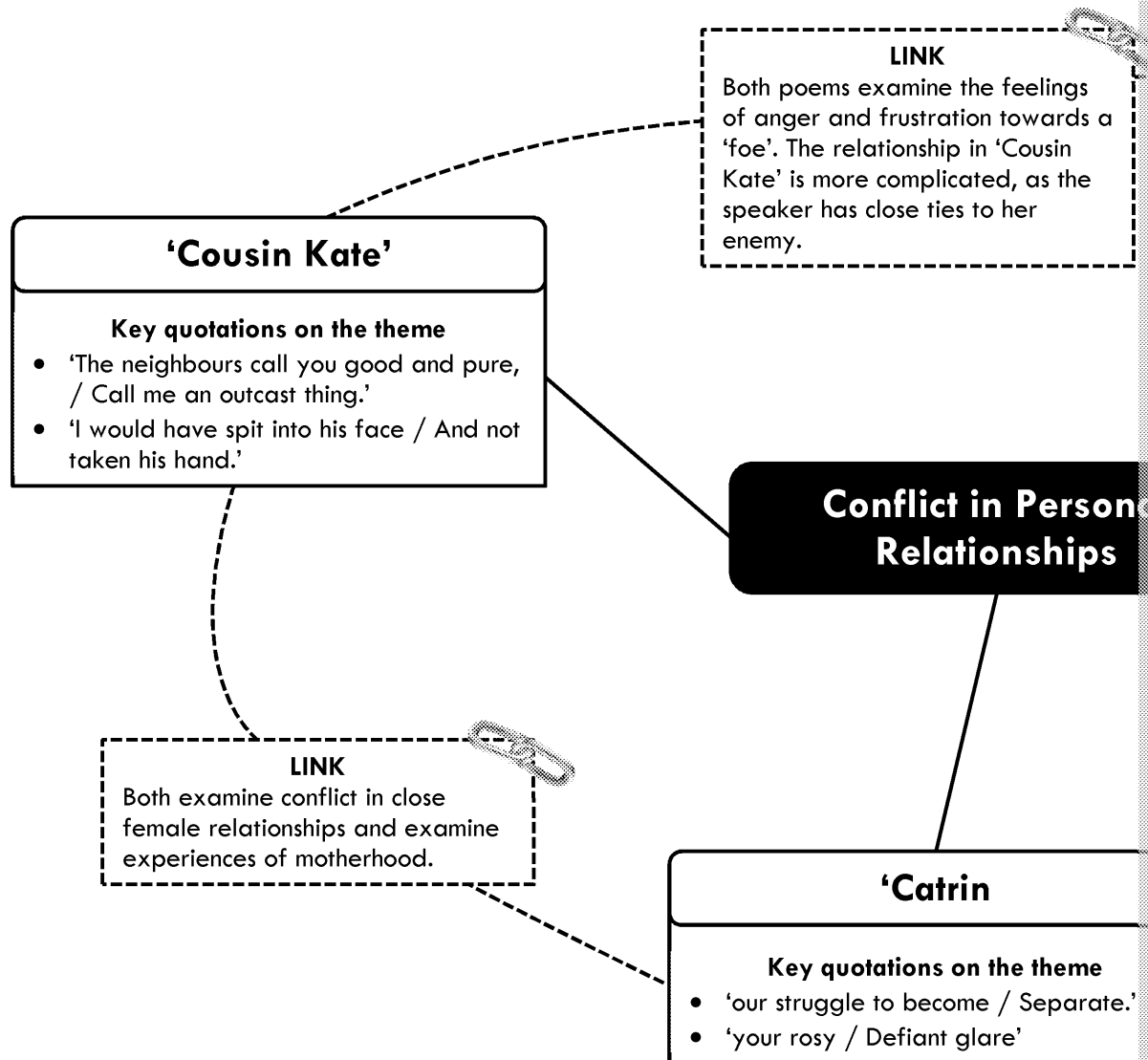
COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Key Theme: Conflict in Personal Relationships

Comparison Mind Map

INSPECTION COPY



COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



INSPECTION COPY

Questions on the Theme Conflict in Personal Relationships

Comprehension Questions

1. Who are the speakers in these poems?
2. How do the poems differ in form?
3. Which century does each poem come from?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Is conflict inevitable in relationships?
2. What alternative approaches might you suggest for each of these speakers?
3. Where does conflict often stem from in personal relationships?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for Conflict in Personal Relations

Comprehension Questions

1. The speaker in 'Catrin' is a mother, talking about her daughter. The speaker in 'A Poison Tree' is someone who feels betrayed by her cousin. The speaker in 'Cousin Kate' is someone who perceives her cousin as a perceived enemy for a long time.
2. 'Catrin' is divided into two stanzas. There is no regular rhyme scheme or metre, but the poet uses repetition to create layers of meaning. 'A Poison Tree' is divided into four stanzas that use a regular rhyme scheme and metre. 'Cousin Kate' is written in six stanzas with an alternating rhyme scheme.
3. 'A Poison Tree' was written in the eighteenth century; 'Cousin Kate' was written in the nineteenth century and 'Catrin' was written in the twentieth century.

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers might include:
 - Yes, conflict is inevitable. Even with people we love we can end up feeling angry or resentful at times. It's part of being human.
 - No, conflict is not inevitable. There are relationships that are always easy and harmonious.
 - When each person treats the other with love and respect, there is no need for conflict.
2. Answers might include:
 - The mother in 'Catrin' seems unaccepting of her position as a mother. She is angry with her daughter. She should be more supportive of her daughter rather than fighting with her.
 - The cottage maiden could stand up for herself. She could go to the lord and tell him what she thinks.
 - The speaker in 'A Poison Tree' could be more forgiving. The death of the tree is a punishment for the betrayal.
3. Answers might include:
 - Conflict often comes about when one person doesn't behave the way the other expects. This can lead to a battle for power in relationships that often leads to conflict.
 - Conflict sometimes comes about because people are unable to express their feelings.
 - Conflict sometimes comes about because people are afraid. Their fear can lead to conflict.

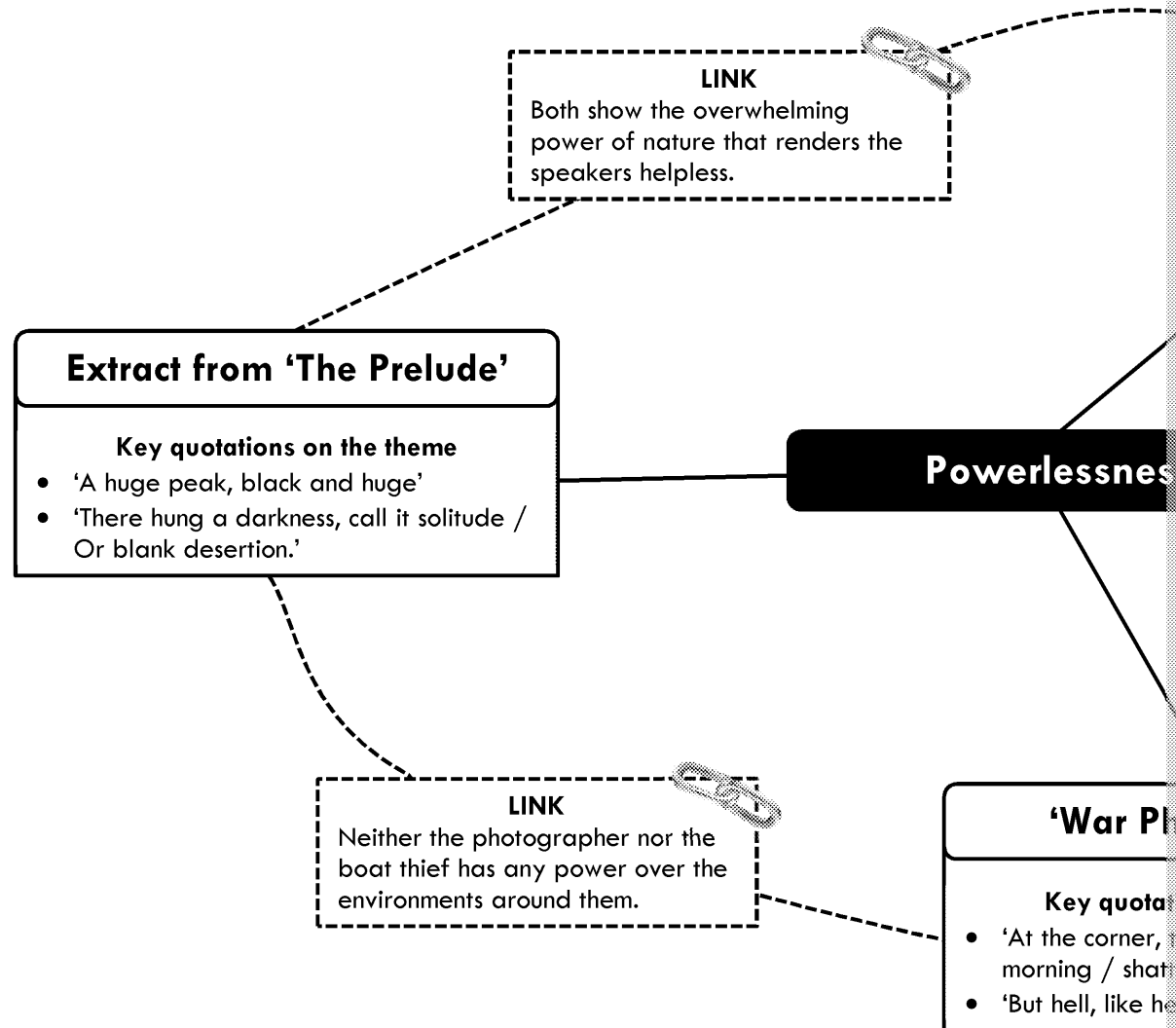
INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Key Theme: Powerless

Comparison Mind Map



INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Analysis of the Theme: Powerlessness

Individuals versus...

Each of these poems creates a sense of powerlessness by presenting an individual in the face of, something significantly larger than them. In 'The Prelude' Wordsworth describes the mighty mountains that he encounters on a night-time paddle on a lake. The boy is in the wake of the vastness of the mountain and the individual himself is cast into insignificance. He is made aware of his own insignificance and this highlights his powerlessness.

Similarly, the collective voice of 'Exposure', the soldiers in the trenches are faced with this case it is a destructive power as 'pales flakes with fingering stealth come feeling for our persons' the indiscriminate movement of the snow is something that the men are incapable of controlling. These conditions highlight the powerless situation that the men find themselves in. As they were utterly under the commands of other people. If they chose to disobey, they would be punished.

A similar lack of power is presented in 'War Photographer' where the young girl whose photograph of is powerless over the 'first bomb of the morning'. The bomb and the death of the girl. She is also powerless over what happens to the image of her. She drops away screaming. However, the newspaper shows a photo of her moments before the bombing, offering an 'almost-smile' to the photographer.

Heaven, Hell, God

There is a sense of something beyond human existence that each of these poems alludes to. In 'Exposure' the men are losing their religious faith – their 'love of God' is abandoned and exposed to pain and death. At the end of 'War Photographer', the speaker says 'the heaven is untidy'. There is no sense of salvation here, and also no emotional attachment to God. This is like the experience of the speaker in 'The Prelude' who, after his encounter with the mountains, he is left with a 'blank desertion' in which 'huge and mighty forms, that do not live / In a single breast / Through the mind'. There is a bleak experience of nothingness in each poem that suggests that man and mankind has no power.

Other poems in the collection that deal with this theme include:

- 'Belfast Confetti' by Ciaran Carson – The speaker in this poem is powerless over the events in his city.
- 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' by Alfred Lord Tennyson – The cavalrymen are powerless over the fate that they ride towards.
- 'No Problem' by Benjamin Zephaniah – The speaker in this poem is powerless over the racism that he faces.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Questions on the Theme: Power

Comprehension Questions

1. Which of the poems refers to the power of nature?
2. Which of the poems was written during the First World War?
3. Which of these poems uses more than one setting?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. In which way do the speakers in these poems have power?
2. Is nature more powerful than war?
3. Is everyone essentially powerless?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for Powerlessness

Comprehension Questions

1. 'The Prelude' depicts the power of nature.
2. 'Exposure' was written during the First World War.
3. 'War Photographer' uses more than one setting – Ascot and a war-torn street.

Deeper-thinking Questions

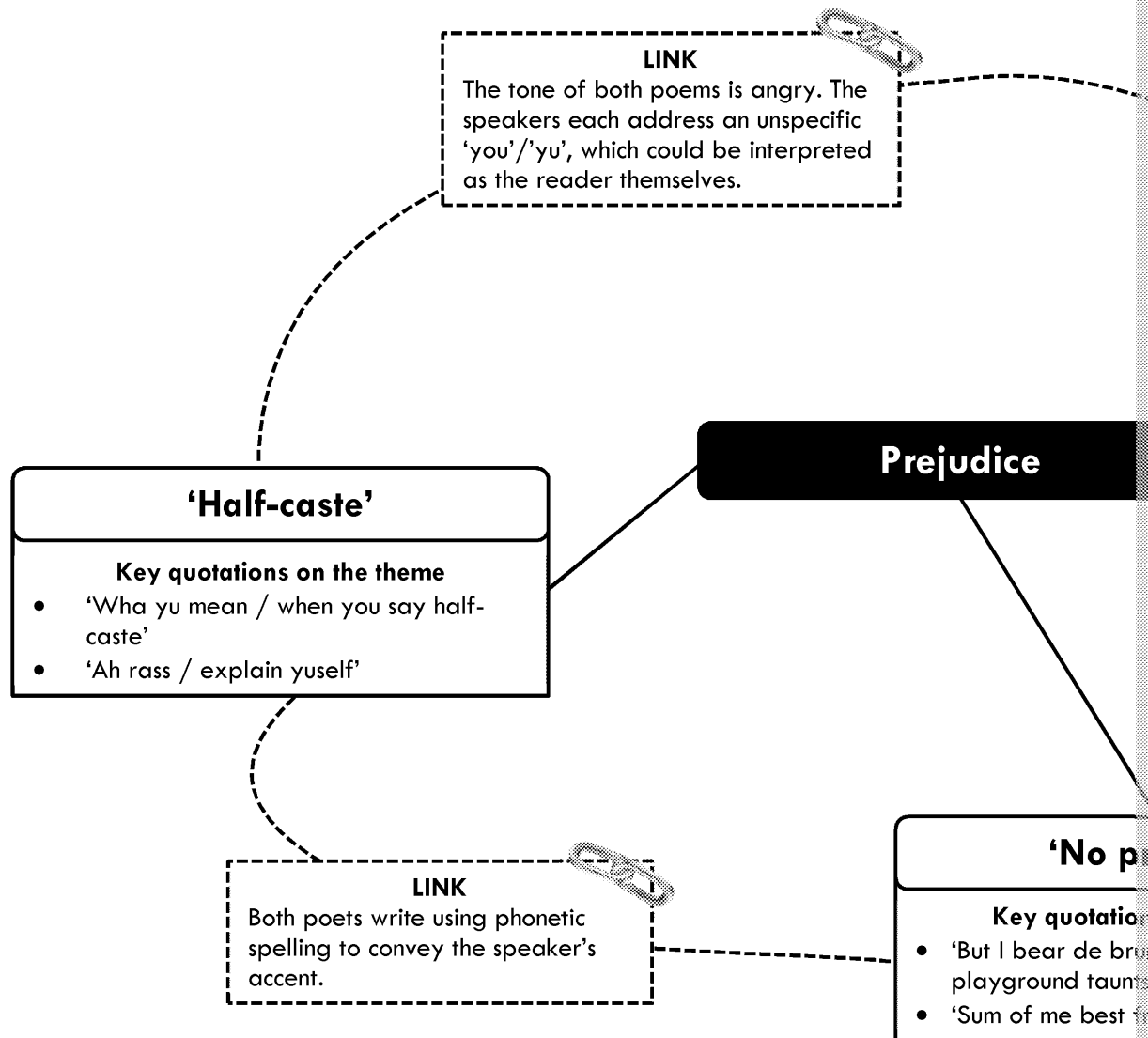
1. Answers might include:
 - The photographer has power over which pictures she sells.
 - The soldiers are armed and as such have the power to kill.
 - The boater has the power to row towards or away from the mountain.
2. Answers might include:
 - Nature is not more powerful than war. Bombs can destroy the natural world.
 - Nature is more powerful than war. It grows over and heals places where war has been; for example, the trenches in France.
 - Nature and war are inseparable. There is no war without nature.
3. Answers might include:
 - Everyone in these poems is essentially powerless – they cannot overcome their situation through strength or intelligence. This suggests that all human beings are also powerless over their own deaths and, in this way, ultimately we are powerless.
 - We do have power over the choices we make. It sometimes appears that we are powerless, but we all have the power of our minds and hearts.
 - We are powerless over many things. We cannot control the weather. We cannot control the circumstances into which we are born. We do not know exactly how we will die. However, we do have power in other ways. We have the power to do things that make a difference to our situation.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Key Theme: Prejudice Comparison Mind Map



INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Analysis of the Theme: Prejudice

Language and identity

Each of these poems deals with prejudice. 'Half-caste' and 'No Problem' look at class. Casey's 'The Class Game' presents a bold argument against class stereotyping. Each poem uses non-standard English to emphasise his or her speaker's strong sense of identity in the face of prejudice.

In 'The Class Game', Casey uses colloquial language, including slang and dialect. She is from Liverpool and the poem seems to reflect personal experience. She ends the poem with 'the class' she comes from. Despite her attacks at the middle class 'you' who 'talk posh', she claims that her own way of speaking, where 'bread pudding is wet nelly / And worth celebrating'. She dismisses the prejudice against her class by saying it is something to be proud of.

This is similar to the tone of John Agard's 'Half-caste'. He also directs his poem at those people being addressed are those who use the term 'half-caste'. Agard originates from Guyana and uses non-standard spelling in this poem to replicate his own accent. He rages against the 'you' who 'explain yusef / what yu mean / when you say half-caste'. The poem goes on to challenge the prejudice it carries by giving examples from art and nature where colours, weather and people are successful without being labelled as half of anything.

Like Casey, Agard concludes the poem with a sense of pride. He tells the reader to 'bring with them 'de whole of yu mind' if they wish to understand the whole of yu.

In 'No Problem', Zephaniah also uses non-standard spelling to indicate an accent. 'You' becomes 'yu', showing, as Agard does in 'Half-caste', that the speaker has a strong sense of identity. Born in Birmingham, Zephaniah's mother is from Jamaica and his father came from Guyana. As with the other two poems, the subject matter of the poem seems to come from personal experience. The speaker has experienced in the playground, not only from other children, but also from adults. He feels that he hasn't been given a 'chance' to show his real talents.

However, this poem seems less angry in tone than the others. In the second stanza, the speaker says 'chips on me shoulders' and takes a positive approach to his situation.

Other poems that deal with this theme include:

- 'Cousin Kate' by Christina Rossetti – The speaker in this poem is treated badly because of her class. The poem explores prejudice and power between social classes.
- 'War Photographer' by Carole Satyamurti – The divide between social classes is explored. The poem contrasts the lives of girls drinking champagne at Ascot with a young girl struggling in a war-torn city.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Questions on the Theme: Prejudice

Comprehension Questions

1. What type of prejudice does each of these poems present?
2. Where does each poet come from?
3. How would you describe the language that each of these poets employs?

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. To what extent do you think these poems are about the poets themselves?
2. Is conflict between individual and society common?
3. Do you think the issues in these poems are of their time?

Make your notes in the box below, and write out your answers in full on lined paper.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Answers for Prejudice

Comprehension Questions

1. 'The Class Game' presents prejudice towards social class. 'Half-caste' and 'No Name' towards race and skin colour.
2. Casey was a housewife in Liverpool; Zephaniah was born in Birmingham, though his father is from Barbados; and Agard is from Guyana.
3. Each poet uses non-standard English.

Deeper-thinking Questions

1. Answers might include:
 - These poems are clearly about the poets' personal experiences. Their personal issues dealt with in the poems are too close to separate.
 - All poems are about a poet's personal experience. Even when they write about social settings, it is inevitable that a poet brings their personal slant to the situation.
 - The poems might be rooted in emotional truth, but the examples they give are not representative of the impact.
2. Answers are likely to be varied. Encourage all responses. They might include:
 - Everyone is in conflict with society in one way or another. People either reject or use society in some way. All of this can create conflict.
 - Conflict is common because human beings naturally like to surround themselves with the similar. So anyone who seems different in some way will be rejected.
 - There is rarely conflict because society is a collection of individuals and conflict was the usual mode of operation.
3. Answers might include:
 - The issues are dated because society's viewpoint changes. For example, 'half-caste' and 'No Name' are less commonplace today. It is unusual to hear the term 'half-caste'.
 - The poems are of their time because we are much more accepting as a society and racism are becoming things of the past.
 - The poems are not dated. The issues of prejudice will always exist in society.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Exam Preparation

Exam Advice

What will happen in the exam?

In **Edexcel English Literature Paper 2: 19th-century Novel and Poetry since 1789**, you will have 10 questions to answer in 2 hours and 15 minutes. Here's the breakdown with the marks for each section.

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Section A – | 19th Century Novel – 40 marks (55 mins) This will be a question about the text you have studied in class. Make sure you only answer the question on the text you have studied. |
| Section B – | Part 1 – Poetry – 20 marks (35 mins) This will be a question about the text you have studied. You will be given two poems to choose from. One will be printed and you will need to choose a second poem to compare it with. You will need to refer to your study guide you need to answer the question about Conflict. |
| Section B – | Part 2 – Unseen Poetry – 20 marks (45 mins) You will be given two poems to choose from. You will need to refer to your study guide you need to answer the question about Conflict. |

This pack will prepare you for **Section B Part 1**. You will also need to prepare for **Section A** and **Section B Part 2**.

Making the most of the time

You should spend **35 minutes** on Section B Part 1.

1. Before you start writing, choose your **second** poem carefully, making sure you have chosen a poem that is different from the first. (NB Only choose **one** poem to compare with the first. You will be looking at more!)
2. Make a **plan**. This could be a mind map, a bullet point list, or a series of main points. Spend **five minutes** on your planning to ensure you cover everything you want to write about.
3. Refer to **structure, form, language and context** in your answer.
4. Select **quotations** to **examine in detail**, looking for layers of meaning.
5. **Make connections** between the poems. These can be similarities and differences.
6. **Refer to the question** in your answers. If you are asked about how a poet presents a theme, look at this theme in both poems.
7. **Write your essay** using quotations to support your answer throughout.
8. Bring your essay to a **conclusion**, summarising how both poems present the theme mentioned in the question.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Practice Exam Questions

Question 1

Compare how the impact of war on individuals is presented in 'Poppies' and one other poem from the *Conflict* anthology.

Your response should consider:

- the language, form and structure used by the poets
- how the poems were influenced by the contexts in which they were written

Question 2

Compare how different attitudes to war are presented in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' and one other poem of your choice from the *Conflict* anthology.

Your response should consider:

- the language, form and structure used by the poets
- how the poems were influenced by the contexts in which they were written

Question 3

Compare how different ideas about prejudice are presented in 'Half-caste' and one other poem from the *Conflict* anthology.

Your response should consider:

- the language, form and structure used by the poets
- how the poems were influenced by the contexts in which they were written

Question 4

Compare how human suffering is presented in 'Exposure' and one other poem of your choice from the *Conflict* anthology.

Your response should consider:

- the language, form and structure used by the poets
- how the poems were influenced by the contexts in which they were written

Question 5

Compare how different ideas about fear are presented in 'Belfast Confetti' and one other poem from the *Conflict* anthology.

Your response should consider:

- the language, form and structure used by the poets
- how the poems were influenced by the contexts in which they were written

Question 6

Compare how conflict in personal relationships is presented in 'Catrin' and one other poem from the *Conflict* anthology.

Your response should consider:

- the language, form and structure used by the poets
- how the poems were influenced by the contexts in which they were written

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Question 7

Compare how different ideas about war are presented in 'The Man He Killed' and from the *Conflict* anthology.

Your response should consider:

- the language, form and structure used by the poets
- how the poems were influenced by the contexts in which they were written

Question 8

Compare how the power of nature is presented in 'The Prelude' and one other poem from the *Conflict* anthology.

Your response should consider:

- the language, form and structure used by the poets
- how the poems were influenced by the contexts in which they were written

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Hints for Exam Questions

INSPECTION COPY

Question 1

- Could compare with 'Belfast Confetti'
- Examine point of view of mother in 'Poppies' and compare with point of view of soldier in 'Belfast Confetti'
- Sympathy created by showing innocent images of childhood
- Poppies associated with war memorials – also symbolic of blood on battlefields
- Trauma that war causes mother as her son leaves for war – trauma experienced by soldier

Question 2

- Compare to 'Exposure' which shows the suffering of soldiers
- 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' is a ballad – serves to keep the memory of the battle alive
- Rhyme and rhythm mirroring the movement of the cavalry and the cannon
- Compare to structure of 'Exposure' – soldiers here are in a hell of suffering
- Final stanza of 'Light Brigade' demands that honour and respect are shown to the soldiers, whereas 'Exposure' ends with 'nothing happens'

Question 3

- Could compare to the experience of the speaker in 'The Class Game'
- 'Half-caste' takes a stand against prejudice that implies people can be half of two things
- Agard takes a stand against class snobbery
- Agard uses examples from art and music to show how the term 'half-caste' is used
- Speaker in 'The Class Game' concludes that she is proud of her identity
- Both use non-standard English to emphasise the importance of speech and language

Question 4

- Could compare to 'What Were They Like?' where the destructive nature of war is explored
- 'Exposure' uses a collective voice – 'What Were They Like?' uses questions and answers
- Both poets expose the violence and injustice of war
- Owen experienced warfare first-hand in the trenches whereas Levertov lived in the US and protested on humanist grounds

Question 5

- Could compare to 'War Photographer' where the small girl also runs from a bomb
- 'Belfast Confetti' shows the indiscriminate destruction caused by warfare
- Both poems show the effect of war on individual lives – though the speaker in 'Belfast Confetti' is directly impacted, whereas the speaker in 'War Photographer' seems emotionally detached
- 'Belfast Confetti' shows the man's confusions through the street names – 'War Photographer' shows an indifference to the fear witnessed

Question 6

- Could compare with 'Cousin Kate'
- The speaker in 'Catrin' is a mother, struggling against her daughter's defiance
- The speaker in 'Cousin Kate' is a woman, though she has been betrayed by her cousin
- The personal conflict in 'Catrin' is to do with a desire for independence. Conflict in 'Cousin Kate' is about how the woman is treated.
- Both situations are unreconciled

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Question 7

- Could compare with 'The Destruction of Sennacherib' – both look at the wast
- Hardy uses a close and personal standpoint, where Byron uses an omniscient
- The speaker in 'The Man...' struggles to find a reason for what he did; there is
- 'Destruction...' for the way the army is destroyed
- Both poems use a steady rhyme and rhythm – in 'The Man...' this creates the
- man. In 'The Destruction...' it creates a sense of pace, as though the horses are

Question 8

- Could compare with 'Exposure' where the cold weather is presented as power
- 'The Prelude' shows the insignificance of individuals in the face of the vastness
- Both poems highlight how small the human is
- The huge cliffs are silent and still, where the snow and wind are active and m
- Compare the structure of each poem – 'The Prelude' is almost epic in scope,
- uses repetition, perhaps to mirror the repetitious movement of the icy wind

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Sample Answers

These sample answers are written with the mark scheme in mind and are based on exam marking. They are intended as examples of the sort of essays that might be produced under conditions, rather than as model answers.

Task

- 1) Start by reading the medium level answer. What do you think this candidate has achieved? they acquired marks? Look at the mark scheme below to consider why they think this answer is a high or low medium level?
- 2) Now think about what you would do to improve the answer. Make a list of suggestions to change or develop.
- 3) Before you look at the high level response, write out a new and improved response.
- 4) Swap your work with a partner and ask them to assess your new version by checking it against the mark scheme.
- 5) Finally read the high level response. How does it compare to your version?
- 6) Repeat the process with the high level response, thinking about how you might improve it.

Medium-level Sample Answer

Compare the poets' presentation of the horrors of war in 'Exposure' and **one** other poem.

Sample Essay

In 'Exposure' the poet shows the horrors of war in the trenches by describing how the awful conditions such as the gunfire and danger. They also have to live through the weather as they are freezing. The snow is as bad for the men as the guns because they cannot escape it.

I am comparing this poem with 'What Were They Like?' which also shows how badly war affects people. The poem Denise Levertov explores the devastating effects of the Vietnamese War on the people.

Wilfred Owen actually fought in the trenches in the First World War, which means he has first-hand experience of the things he is writing about. On the other hand, Denise Levertov writes from a perspective of someone who is not involved in the catastrophe that she describes. Wilfred Owen uses 'we' in his poem and this involves him being part of the fighting. But Denise Levertov uses questions and answers in her poem to show her reaction to the situation she depicts. Whereas Owen writes from the direct experience of war, Levertov writes about the and noise and suffering, Levertov refers to an entire nation and how their culture and traditions are affected.

The horror in 'Exposure' is to do with the way the men are defenceless. Owen uses 'nothing happens' at the end of lots of the stanzas. This shows to the reader that the war is going on and the weather is awful and they can't do anything, they just have to wait for death.

This is similar to Levertov's poem, where the 'peasants' who lived a 'peaceful' life were killed by 'bombs'. Just as the soldiers in 'Exposure' are powerless against the weather, Levertov's people are defenceless in the face of the attacks.

Levertov uses imagery of 'buds' opening to represent the simple beauty of life before the war. She says 'whether the people held / ceremonies / to reverence the opening of buds'. This suggests that life is precious and also suggests that they would celebrate the small things in life. However, in the second poem there are 'no more buds' because all 'their children were killed'. The buds become a metaphor for life that is destroyed by the war.

In Wilfred's poem he also uses images of nature and shows how the men are freezing because the 'air shudders black with snow / with sidelong flowing flakes that flock'. This image shows how the men are enveloped by the snow. There is no way out for them. This is also an example of alliteration because the 's' and 'f' sounds are repeated. They are soft sounds which makes us think of snow falling. This seems like it should be a lovely image, but in reality it is a deathly thing for the men.

In the end, both poems show different horrors of war. 'Exposure' is in the midst of the action but 'What Were They Like?' shows the long-lasting and far-reaching effects of war.

Comments

This has met the requirements of the theme. The comparison is clear and references use appropriate level, more for AO2. The response is required. The response is to be overly included, though might compare (AO2). Candidate contextual for more detail.

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Higher-level Sample Answer

Compare the poet's presentation of the horrors of war in 'Exposure' and one other poem.

Sample Essay

Both Levertov and Owen present the horrors of war in the poems 'What Were They Like?' and 'Exposure'. Both poems are written in response to real wars, though Owen's is set in the trenches of the First World War and Levertov responds to the horrors of the Vietnamese War. Although these conflicts happened at different times, there are similarities between the mood and atmosphere of each.

The titles of both poems carry implications of horror. The poem 'Exposure' suggests the soldiers are exposed to the horrors of fighting, the horrors of the weather and the horrors of death. The poem 'What Were They Like?' suggests an act of exposure, showing the public the truth about war. During the time this was written, the media and the machines encouraged people to believe that going to war was an honourable thing. In 'Exposure', Owen refers to the belief that it was noble to die for one's country as 'the old lie'. In 'What Were They Like?', he refers to the belief that it was noble to die for one's country as 'the old lie'. In 'Bayonet Charge', he refers to the belief that it was noble to die for one's country as 'the old lie'. Like Owen, Levertov's poem in 'Bayonet Charge' in the line 'King, honour, human dignity, etcetera'. Like Owen, Levertov's poem that were promoted to gain public support of the war, were in fact meaningless in the end.

'What Were They Like?' shows that 'they' are no longer in existence. It also implies the need for recognition. The poem goes on to explain that 'they' refers to the 'people of Viet Nam' who were killed in any nation where war has taken place.

A difference between these poets comes in their personal experiences. Owen fought in the First World War and Levertov learned about the Vietnam War from a safe distance. Owen experienced the horrors of the trenches. These were long furrows cut across the land, where soldiers were exposed to the elements, filthy, and, as Owen shows in his poem, completely exposed to the elements. At certain points, the soldiers were ordered to go over the top and directly into armed battle. The soldiers in 'Exposure' are given an order and they are 'worried by silence'. This state of mental anxiety is part of the experience for the soldiers to relax.

Similarly, Levertov presents the mental torment that results from conflict. She says 'the people of Viet Nam' are so damaged mentally, that they have nothing more to laugh about. She uses plosives in this phrase to emulate the sound of gunfire and bombs that have caused the damage.

Owen's poem is like a nightmare. He uses the collective voice of the soldiers to show the loss of their individual identity. They are treated as one animal, and made to endure inhuman conditions, afraid to even move. We know that men who disobeyed orders or tried to run away were considered 'deserters'. So they endure the 'poignant misery of dawn' and the 'attacks' because they are afraid of their deaths in 'shivering ranks of grey'. This suggests their uniforms and also the atmosphere of the war makes the readers feel pity for the men.

Levertov's poem also presents a nightmare that is equally disturbing for the reader. She asks questions to a nation. The questions asked in the first stanza seem naïve compared to the responses. The brutal images of the impact of war are presented. She tells us that 'children were killed' and 'bombs smashed' lives. The final line tells us that everything is 'silent'. The people and their gentle ways has been obliterated. In 'Exposure', 'the night is silent' and the anticipation. The soldiers are worried by the lack of sound, knowing that gunfire or other sounds would mean death.

Both poets use repetition to show the horrors of war. Owen repeats the phrase 'But nothing happens' at the end of several stanzas. This emphasises the despair that the soldiers feel. They are simply awaiting their deaths. Levertov repeats the phrase 'It is not remembered' to show that the people have been erased by the war, but their traditions and rituals have been forgotten.

Both poets use imagery to show the horrors of war. Owen shows the 'twitching agonies of men' and 'the flickering gunnery rumbles'. He uses assonance to appeal to our senses, reflecting the sounds as well as the sights of the trenches. Levertov uses the image of 'the flight of moths in the moonlight'. This simile is a strange one and makes the poem seem surreal. The moths are mysterious and delicate.

Both poems show the war as horrific. They use different points of view and are written in different historical contexts, but the overriding atmosphere of each is similar.

Commentary

For the most part the commentary compares the poems that compares the poems. Appropriate use of terminology is mostly integrated into the commentary. The examination of the candidate shows a good understanding of the poems and offers some thoughtful analysis of their answer (AO3). The use of terminology is appropriate.

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



Edexcel GCSE (9–1) Student Self- or Peer Assessment

This mark scheme combines the ideas given in the AOs and the Edexcel mark scheme. You should use this to work on.

		Level →	0 marks	Level 1	
		Key words →	No rewardable material	Simple	
Skills to demonstrate in your work		I compare and contrast the two poems, considering similarities and differences			
	A02	I refer to the language, form and structure used by the poets			
	A02	I analyse the effects of language, form and structure on the reader	If this is not done, give 0 marks for this		
	A03	I am aware of relevant contexts			
	A03	I understand the relationship between poems and context			
	Key words →		No rewardable material	Little evidence	
	A02	I use appropriate subject terminology			

Best area:

Areas to work on:

Teachers should refer to the mark schemes given on the Edexcel website for marking and to ensure students

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning	
<i>Trochaic metre</i>	This is when a stressed syllable is followed by an unstressed syllable (DUM de)	'I wa 'A Pe
<i>Iambic metre</i>	This is when an unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed one (de DUM)	'I tol end. 'A Pe
<i>Iambic trimeter</i>	Three pairs of unstressed and stressed syllables (de DUM, de DUM, de DUM)	'Had 'The Harc
<i>Iambic tetrameter</i>	Four pairs of unstressed and stressed syllables (de DUM, de DUM, de DUM, de DUM)	'I sh 'The Harc
<i>First-person plural voice</i>	Using 'we' or 'us' to speak collectively	'Our 'Exp
<i>Semantic field</i>	Words and phrases all connected with a particular subject or theme	'Kn from used Owe
<i>Personification</i>	Giving human characteristics to inanimate objects	'Pale com 'Exp
<i>Assonance</i>	Repetition of a particular vowel sound	'Blo the 'Bel
<i>Colloquial language</i>	Ordinary, conversational language	'I am 'No Zeph

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED



INSPECTION COPY

**COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED**



About the Poet

Contextual Information

Language Close-up

Brief Overview of Poem

Key Words

INSPECTION COPY

COPYRIGHT
PROTECTED

