Zig Zag Education

English Literature A Level | Edexcel | 9ET0

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2015 specification
first exams in 2017 (2016 for AS)

Poems of the Decade

Comprehensive Guide for AS and A Level Edexcel English Literature

Update v2.1, 4th October 2017

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Contents

Teacher's Introduction

The *Poems of the Decade* anthology was created by the Forward Arts Foundation with new and diverse poetry texts. The inclusion of these poems in A Level Englis 2015 reflects a desire to promote independent interpretations of literary texts an preparing for further study at undergraduate level and beyond, where a key skill judgments about a range of literary texts.

This guide has been designed as a resource to support independent learning with provided Teacher Guide. In particular, it includes a stanza-by-stanza analysis of e support students in meeting the assessment objectives required for the study of Edexcel AS and A Level Literature specifications. These objectives have been indi relevant unit codes:

AO1 Articulate informed personal and creative responses to literary texts, usi and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.
AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.
AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.
AO3 and AO5 are **not** assessed in the contemporary poetry section.

Assessment Overview
This contemporary poetry resource can support candidates in the preparation for Section A of Edexcel A Level Literature Component 3: 9ET01/03.

The full unit carries 30% of the total GCE marks and is externally assessed.

For 9ET01/03 candidates will study:
- poetic form, language and meaning, through a set selection of post-2000 po from a literary period or movement

The A Level unit is assessed by means of a written examination paper which lasts
- It is an 'open book' examination which means that clean copies of *Poems of* the examination.
- Total of 60 marks available: 30 marks for section A, and 30 marks for Sectio resource.
- Section A will require candidates to select one question from a choice of tw poem with a named poem from the post-2000 poetry anthology.
- AO1, AO2 and AO4 are assessed in Section A.

The AS Level unit is assessed by means of a written examination paper which las
- It is an 'open book' examination which means that clean copies of *Poems of* the examination.
- Total of 72 marks available: 24 marks for section A and 48 marks for Section resource.
- Section A will require candidates to select one question from a choice of tw from the post-2000 poetry anthology.
- AO1, AO2 and AO4 are assessed in Section A.

In the *Textual Analysis* section, detailed notes are provided for each poem, conside
- Contextual Background
- Language and Form
- Structure
- Themes, Attitudes and Values

Activities have been included at the end of each poem to encourage active readi
features and aspects of form which may prove useful are presented in bold type,

Examination responses for post-2000 poetry will **not** be assessed on contextual c
poems or poets. AO5 is not assessed in this exam. However, given the relative sc
receptions beyond poetry reviews, this guide outlines different literary perspecti
be used to support candidates in developing sophisticated critical responses.

This resource is intended to supplement your teaching only. As with all **coursew**
it is the teacher's responsibility to decide what level of support is appropriate fo
with the rules from the exam board.

The resources here are provided as one experienced teacher's interpretation of t
author, although an experienced teacher, does not have any special knowledge o
particular assessment.

All references in this reading guide refer to the following edition of the set text
Poems of the Decade: An Anthology of the Forward Books of Poetry
ISBN-13: 978-0571325405

A webpage containing all the links listed in this resource is conve
*Education's website at **zzed.uk/6572***

You may find this helpful for accessing the websites rather than t

2nd Edition (Endorsed), 29th March 2017

- One sentence removed from 'Assessment Overview' section on p. 1
- 'imagery of the metaphysical poets, specifically Andrew Marvell' technically corrected to
  specifically John Donne' on p. 6
- 'Persona' added to 'Key Terms Glossary' on p. 79
- 'narrator' technically corrected to 'persona' in the analysis of the following poems: 'Mate
  (pp. 32–33)
- A small number of minor changes to wording to increase clarity of expression throughou

Update v2.1, 4th October 2017

- The following poems have been removed from the guide, as these are no longer prescrib
  A Level English Literature:
  - 'Inheritance' by Eavan Boland
  - 'A Leisure Centre is also a Temple of Learning' by Sue Boyle
  - 'The War Correspondent' by Ciaran Carson
  - 'The Map Woman' by Carol Ann Duffy
  - 'The Fox in the National Museum of Wales' by Robert Minhinnick
  - 'Fantasia on a Theme of James Wright' by Sean O'Brien
  - 'You, Shiva, and my Mum' by Ruth Padel
  - 'Song' by George Szirte
- In addition, some of the activities in the resource have been replaced. This includes many of the comparison activities, which compared poems that have now been removed from the specification. Answers have also been updated. New activities include:
  - Comparing Texts: 'Giuseppe' and 'History' p.16
  - Comparing Texts: 'Effects' and 'Material' p.38
  - Feminist Reading Activity: 'The Furthest Distances I've Travelled' p. 59

Background Information on

Poems of the Decade: An Anthology of the Forward

The set text for the contemporary poetry component of *A Level Literature* is *Poems of the Forward Books of Poetry*. The anthology brings together poems that have been Forward Prizes for Poetry between 2001 and 2010. The emphasis of the Forward Prizes is to share new poetry. The 21 poems which are on the set text list for Edexcel are all from represent a range of writers, from well-established poets presenting new work, to work on a number of themes.

Given the range of writers represented, more detailed information on contexts or backgrounds of each text will be provided within the ***Textual Analysis*** section.

Textual Analysis

'Eat Me' Patience Agbabi

Contextual Background

In addition to her academic work on creative writing courses and publishing her
1965) is an established performance poet. She has been resident poet at a numb
has been a university lecturer, and has had her work broadcast on television and
the liminal spaces between racial and sexual categorisation, as well as the ways i
these categories.

London-born in 1965, Agbabi is of Nigerian heritage. She was fostered to a family
educated, she has toured the UK and beyond. Her debut collection *R.A.W.* was p
a contemporary retelling of Chaucer, *Telling Tales,* and has recently adapted som
highlighting the plight of refugees in British detention centres.

Agbabi combines experimental forms with an interest in traditional forms and th
explore themes. *Eat Me* is a dramatic monologue which explores a highly dysfun
comic style.

Context for understanding: 'Feeder

The poem 'Eat Me' centres on the dysfunctional relationship between a *feeder*

Feeders, also referred to on social media and in popular psychology as 'fat adm
extreme body weight and will actively encourage a romantic partner to 'feed' t
area of human behaviour which divides experts, with some arguing it should no
behaviour as that serves to categorise those of high body mass as abnormal, w
exercise of power and control in such relationships is a form of abuse, as it can
relating to morbid obesity.

If you have not encountered the term before, there is a short clip from the *Nat*
an opinion piece produced by a psychologist specialising in obsessive behaviou

http://natgeotv.com/za/taboo-usa/videos/feederism
https://drmarkgriffiths.wordpress.com/2012/03/15/turn-the-eater-on-fat-fe

Language and Form

The poem is a dramatic monologue, with the persona recollecting events that ha
number of years. Although written in what appears to be ordinary, colloquial lan
choices made foreshadow the surprising violence that underpins the poem.

Stanza 1:

The opening line utilises a popular **idiom**, yet the idea that she *'hit thirty'* suggest
the memory marks a turning point in the early stages of this unusual relationship

There is an element of **fairy tale** and myth in the unnamed suitor's presentation
brought' the birthday cake to her.

It is worth noting the level of detail in Agbabi's **post-modification** when describi
suggest excess, while the level of care and affection can be inferred by the fact it
informs the reader that the cake was topped with '*a candle for each stone in wei*
information at the conclusion of the stanza highlights the potential importance o
will relate.

Stanza 2:

The white and pink decoration suggests a typically feminine and even child-like c
imperative '*Eat Me*' inscribed on the cake recalls the story of *Alice in Wonderlan*
and 'Drink Me' alter Alice's physical shape as she explores a fantasy dreamland. O
also a suggestive element in this command, given the context of the speaker des
The use of **allusion** to a well-known story and **connotations** of an unequal relatio
the reader that the lover is trying to alter the speaker's shape, potentially for the

The persona recalls '*And I ate*'. The biblical **syntax** of the sentence suggests the p
anonymous *'he*' has over her, while also suggesting she is passive and submissive
she '*didn't even taste it*'. There was no pleasure in receiving this birthday gift and
physical fullness and emotional emptiness.

Stanza 3:

This verse opens with '*Then*', the **sound** recalling the '*When'* of line 1 and the lan
testimony. There is a sense that the speaker is cataloguing an escalation in poten
man disturbs her equilibrium, requesting that she '*get up*'. The **imperative** verbs
The **simple language** used recalls a parent scolding or disciplining a child, not an
She highlights the pleasure he takes from this, revealing that he made her move
example of what is known in film as the 'male gaze'. This man is objectifying the
long-term relationship, he is behaving like a voyeur, making her perform for him
object.

It becomes clear that his excitement relates to her size and body shape. The **enja**
employed when describing her '*broad / belly wobble*' emphasises the fact that al
this point in the poem the words are essentially those of the male partner. The v
with jelly and has the impact of both objectifying her and infantilising her as jelly
childhood. She may be implying that his behaviour is immature or a result of a la
There is a hint of her power in the simile '*hips judder like a juggernaut*'. The origi
'juggernaut', now used to describe an implacable moving force or vehicle, was to
machine which conveyed the god Krishna. This image foreshadows the persona's
in the final stanza.

Stanza 4:

The stanza contains the **italicised** speech of the lover. He uses a trite phrase as a
He refers to '*girls*' – there is no sense of his lover's individuality. For him, she is a
'*burrow inside*', again conflating romantic and maternal love, as the image sugge
than a body he desires.

Sound patterns are repeated here in '*multiple chins, masses of cellulite*'. The sou

Stanza 5:

The stanza opens with another water **image**; '*I was his Jacuzzi*'. This can be seen
Again there is a sense she is yet another possession. She does concede '*But he w*
an attempt to justify the relationship. Her awareness of her unhappiness is revea
pleasure the rush of fast food'. The alliteration used and the **connotations** of add
'*rush*' suggest the damage this relationship has wreaked.

It can be noted that the reference to 'his pleasure' is on a separate line. This is n
either not noticed her unhappiness and use of food as emotional support, or sim
recurs as she notes he liked '*to watch me swell*'. The image suggests a wave build
collocation for describing a pregnant woman's belly. The sense of the lover's des
a form of fetish is evoked in the phrase '*forbidden fruit*'. This term alludes to para
conquest or dominion over her.

Stanza 6:

Agbabi is darkly humorous yet there is also a sense of **political** commentary as in She is his '*breadfruit*', the '*desert island after shipwreck*'. The conflation of the w recalls the imagery of the metaphysical poets, specifically John Donne's 'To His M excitedly addresses his mistress as 'my America, my Newfoundland'. In both poe exploration.

The **visual imagery** soon shifts from idyllic to destructive, as she transforms to a that he feels he holds the power. Just as the whale is '*craving a wave*', so the spe desire. There is an interesting shift in power when the speaker becomes the **subj** *tidal wave of flesh*'. While some readers may see this as an image of self-loathing body as a natural and unstoppable force. This prefigures the persona's eventual

Stanza 7:

This verse is built on **anaphora** with an emphasis on what she is 'too fat' to do or perhaps also targets those who use euphemisms, denying that she is '*chubby, cu*

Stanza 8:

There is an echo of the first verse. This time, she has '*hit*' the age of thirty-nine. T the shift in subject – no longer centred on 'he', the speaker now concedes access that she '*allowed him*' to do. The focus is firmly on 'I'. She describes '*my globe of* exploration imagery from earlier in the poem. The normally **fricative** alliteration here suggests a suffocating physicality, as they are no longer individuals. This coi control, as he urges her to '*open wide*' and '*poured olive oil*' down her throat. Th choice of verbs reinforces this.

Stanza 9:

Time marches on as the unnamed partner observes '*Soon you'll be forty*'. Recalli possibility that this refers to both age and weight. His anticipation and obsession '*whispered*'. It may be an attempt to be romantic but also suggests a secret.

There is a shift in **tone** as the main persona addresses the reader

'*... how /*
Could I not roll over on top'.

There is a momentary pause before the statement '*I rolled and he drowned*'. This speaker has used water imagery to suggest their passionate moments. This is qu – '*I drowned his dying sentence out*'. The hard 'd' **alliteration** alerts the reader to

Stanza 10:

The final stanza works as an **epilogue**. She sits over his body (this can be compar 'Porphyria's Lover', where the man ensures eternal love with a woman by strang the recurrent **water imagery** used to describe his desire, he is now a 'fish out of *mouth slightly open... his eyes bulging with greed*'. She reveals her true revulsion suggestion of cannibalism in the closing line as she realises there is *'nothing else* clearly reveals the poet's sense of humour as the 'feeder' or 'fat admirer' gets th becomes the dish of the day!

Structure

The brevity of the verses enables the speaker to present a series of vignettes, 'sn relationship. Agbabi's use of rhyme heightens the sense of entrapment – langua lover will be enclosed by her body at the end of the poem. The language serves t contours of the subject's body. In the ***Literary Approaches*** section, you will cons shapes reality.

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The poem examines both intrapersonal and wider politics. On one level, the poe
shifting power relations within an unhealthy relationship.

There is also a clear postcolonial reading emerging – there is an exoticism in the
perception of his lover as 'forbidden fruit'. However, the speaker subverts this, b
engulfs and subsumes him. If the relationship is writ large as a political allegory, t
risen up and silenced the occupier. Postcolonial critics interpret the dynamic as t
with the male protagonist – being essentially inundated by the power of the for
reading of the text. Postcolonial readings will be re-examined in ***Literary Approa***

Language is used to reflect surfeit in the poem. Both alliteration and assonance a
description of the woman's body. The reader is made to be a voyeur along with t
woman in her macabre reflection on consumption. An alternative reading could
cheek critique of Western consumerism and excess.

Close Reading Activity: 'Eat Me'

Reread 'Eat Me' and select information from the text to complete the table
provided). Prepare a short 100–150-word response to the following questi

**In what way does Agbabi use language to reveal the shift in power betwe
the poem?**

Evidence from poem	What this reveals about po
'… *And I ate. Did* *What I was told/ Didn't even taste it.*'	Biblical register of the syntax 'a omnipotent power over her. The infantilises her – he is the domin deliberate ambiguity in the ima but there are also connotations it a darker, disturbing image of

Contextual Background

Simon Armitage was born in Huddersfield in 1963. After publication of his first co established himself as a 'New Generation' poet. For a number of years, Armitage as a probation officer. His work experience may well have influenced the creatio personas. His work is characterised by effective use of local idiom and dialect, alo syntax to deliver 'punchlines'. Armitage is a popular poet whose work features re festivals and on television and radio. Armitage has also produced works of drama shortlisted for a host of literary prizes.

Armitage often utilises the dramatic monologue, with many of his personas bein performs his most popular texts, with his accent and deadpan delivery boosting t Much of the enjoyment in listening and reading comes from the effective use of his style.

Language and Form

Stanza 1:

The opening line hints at the later technique of **anthropomorphism** when the pe *unlikely match*'. The chainsaw is '*unplugged*' – literally and metaphorically powe the persona suggests it has been '*grinding its teeth*'. The chainsaw is portrayed a power is nullified by the '*plastic sleeve*', suggesting it is ineffectual despite the la menacing presence '*nose-down*' in the darkroom.

The use of **metaphor** links the potential of violence in the chainsaw to macho 'la '*knocked back*' a '*quarter-pint*' of oil. It seems to come to life with '*juices*', which There is a sense of the horrific and unnerving here.

Stanza 2:

The '*summerhouse*' seems fetid, fostering the '*one last gulp*' of heat. It seems a p The destructive imagery continues with '*weightless wreckage*'. **Ellipsis** ('...') here

He is a reluctant gardener, who has '*trailed*' to the garden. The voice observes th *orange power line*'. The **simile** '*like powder from a keg*' suggests that the confron and the pampas grass will be explosive and destructive. The writer employs wha build tension. **Military imagery** continues as the persona '*gunned the trigger*'. Bo preparing for battle.

Stanza 3:

The stanza opens with the chainsaw preparing for the challenge – he is '*gearing* sense of competition is soon displaced by anger and aggression as the chainsaw Verb phrases such as '*lashing out*' reinforce the impression of the saw as a brute characteristics of a sociopath or psychopath, with '*perfect disregard*' for the dam an interest in the psychotic mindset before, in the poem 'Hitcher'.

The persona goes on to indicate '*its need / to tangle with cloth, or jeweller, or ha* destruction. It is an object yet has terrifying urges, a '*bloody desire*' to cut down '*sweet tooth*' symbolising an appetite for destruction. The **alliteration** of '*flesh o* of human skin for the bloodthirsty saw. It is an arresting image of the potential v

The persona in the poem is a persona in peril, as he recognises the saw's potenti *the brain*'. The man is passive and succumbs to the object's power as he '*let it flo* lifts it to the sun. His chainsaw has a heartbeat and a '*gargle in its throat*'.

Stanza 4:

This shorter verse introduces:
'*The pampas grass with its ludicrous feathers / and plumes*'

The resentful **tone** is barely contained. The bird-like **imagery** may suggest misogy displayed by the saw previously (a sexist and disparaging term for women can be '*taking the warmth and light*' from the other flowers. The grass is criticised for '*s* apparent vanity, there is the underlying threat of '*its twelve-foot spears*'.

Stanza 5:

The persona acknowledges the ridiculous lack of proportionality of his chainsaw, *the nut*'. There is a lack of strength on his part and he seems to transfer his '*over* power of the tool is evident in the **verbs** used. The chainsaw merely '*touched*' an it '*swooned'.* Aside from the unequal distribution of power, these words also sug game'. There is a sense of intrusion as he '*lifted the fringe*'. The description reflec the persona. The saw '*ripped into pockets of dark, secret warmth*' at the base of

Stanza 6:

The persona adopts a methodical approach with the chainsaw, recognising the n repeatedly cutting and raking. The **verb choices** emphasise mutilation – the plan and this area of the garden becomes the '*dead zone*'. The repetition of actions su required to clear the pampas grass and still the '*flat stump remains*'.

The **language** used when the persona employs the saw to '*finish things off*' by dr suggests that the violent tendencies reside in man, not machine. The pampas gra '*choked*' and '*fouled'* suggests that a poisoning is underway, yet the persona is pu *was sliced or split somehow closed and mended / behind*'.

As in 'Eat Me', there is the presence of **water imagery** in relation to the feminine ineffective against the plant, '*cutting at water or air with a knife*'. His efforts to a he concedes '*I left it at that*'.

Stanza 7:

There is another short verse initially suggesting that the pampas grass has less po **images** of regrowth. The new shoots '*sprang up*' and the image of the pampas gr *crown*' suggests that the man and the chainsaw have been subjugated. The **allusi** the grass is plentiful. His place as the '*midday moon*' is one that is out of place an

The opposition between the aggressive machinery and the cultured plant is symb implied by the shift in tone in the closing stanzas of the poem, as a lyrical and ep are introduced with the *'twilight moon'* and the references to '*corn in Egypt'* as t

Stanza 8:

An aggressive **tone** returns in the **plosive** sounds of '*back below*'. **Personification** '*seethed*' and tried to forget. The suggestion of a perennial battle is made in the *persist*'. The use of **personification** and **extended metaphor** creates a vivid impr nature and the mechanical. Another reading can be that the persona uses the ch up aggression and the pampas grass as the substitute victim for those who have

Structure

The freedom of the verse creates a colloquial and conversational tone. Given the takes the form of a confessional. As with other works by Armitage, the persona s While there is an informality in the language, stylistically there is careful use of so assonance and rhyme, to highlight both the physicality and the emotional impac

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The poem relies on the arresting personification of the grass and the chainsaw. The adjectives used suggest the chainsaw is a boorish male while the grass is the decorative victim.

However, the conventional gendered tropes are subverted. By the end of the po pampas grass continues to thrive; the chainsaw – and the narrator at its helm – i powerless. The poem would seem to provide a commentary on masculinity in cri

Close-reading Activity: 'Chainsaw versus the Pampas Grass'

The poem contrasts the chainsaw and the pampas grass. Use the table belo literary and linguistic devices are used to present both the chainsaw and the

	Chainsaw	
Personification		
Verbs denoting actions or states		
Sound devices, e.g. alliteration		
Lyrical/literary language		
Colloquial language		
Persona's relationship with...		

What is the persona's attitude towards the chainsaw and the pampas gr

Contextual Background

The poem 'Material' has been taken from a collection dealing with the unexpect
2002, following a freak accident while she was on holiday in Thailand.

These poems are about memory and her mother. Material losses are symbolic of
Barber. Small losses – such as the handkerchief in 'Material' – become symbolic
her parents divorcing Barber became estranged from her father and she lost her
the age of 17. The poem Material deals with the acceptance of loss and suggests
sense of experience.

Language and Form

Stanza 1:

There is a clear focus on '*my mother*'. The poetic voice adopts an affectionate **to**
queen'. The persona considers the '*thing of cloth'.* This description of the fabric h
item from history. This is immediately **contrasted** with the transience and insubs
'*packs / from late-night garages and shops*'.

The piece of material not only recalls her mother, but also a bygone era which se
lovers and family '*waving out of trains*') and more stoical, her mother '*mopping t*
publicly displaying emotions.

The whole poem becomes an **extended metaphor** centred on the handkerchief,
also a substantial or material piece of evidence of the past which triggers memor

Stanza 2:

Despite the fondness in some of the recollections, there is a distance between th
mum's embarrassment'. A childhood memory of the handkerchief '*spittled and s*
and **onomatopoeia** to recall the agitated cleaning movement.

The verse continues with a sense of her childhood wonderment, imagining '*a far*
mother's production of multiple handkerchiefs as evidence that tissues '*fell in lo*
squares' up her sleeve.

Stanza 3:

The speaker creates an **antithesis** between the mother and daughter which is m
to tissues, using the **semi-colon** to mark this difference. This persona is frank in h
attitudes towards the cloth, '*the naffest Christmas gift*'. The lexical choice of '*por*
derogatory and offensive, reflecting perhaps the rebellion of her teenage self rea
generation. There is humour rather than bitterness in the **tone** as she muses on t
bigger '*like they had more snot*'.

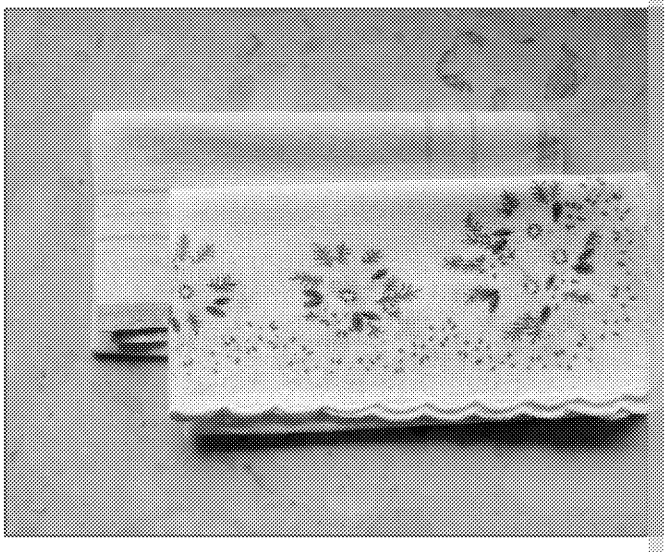
Stanza 4:

Throughout the poem the handkerchief not only serves as a memory but also as
The poetic voice lists others – '*headscarves, girdles, knitting wool / and trouser p*
supplanted domestic community, '*homely props'* are abandoned for '*malls*'. The
handkerchief that needs to be 'purified' reflects the obsolescence of the family s
their products no longer seeming useful or desired.

Stanzas 5 and 6:

These verses consider other traditions that have died out, such as the grocer's va
fishmonger. The use of **listing** emphasises the extent of change. The poetic voice
the past, although some readers may have seen a resurgence of these types of sh
areas seeking to rekindle tradition.

This then links to a personal reminiscence of what '*Mrs White... taught us*'. There
hankies and rouge.



Stanza 7:

In this stanza, a more cynical tone returns:
'*Nostalgia only makes me old*'.

She then thinks about her own children. The lexical choice is dripping with **irony**
and makes reference to a '*ten-bob note*'. There is a degree of **exaggeration** here,
just as distant to her experiences as she felt towards her own mother.

She reflects on the worries of modern parents and the negative impact of televis
The speaker recognises '*it was me that turned it on*'. She implies that she has fail
'*bought biscuits*'. The **alliteration** highlights her lack of domestic prowess.

Stanza 8:

Her mother is clearly on her mind as she confesses she rarely has tissues and has
suggests she has failed as a mother in comparison to her own mother's dedicatio
admits that she refuses to buy paper tissue packs due to 'awkwardness' and fear
verse breaks across the page, with a potential suggestion of a moment of epipha

She states that she will '*miss*' the material handkerchief and its reminder of '*soft*
is the **symbol** of her mother and memories of the past. These lines clarify the use
symbol of grief and remembrance.

Stanza 9:

The poetic voice qualifies her position. It is not sentimentality – she is clear that
Her own mother's death was surrounded by paper '*tissues and uncertainty*'. The
scratchy and disposable'. Her mother suggested she needed to find her own way
allusion to her poetic work as the mother observed that it would be:

'... your material/
to do with, daughter, what you will.'

Structure

The regularity of the rhyme scheme of the poem (*abcbdefe*) is evocative of the fo
poet is presenting. The strict adherence to it may suggest the speaker's unconsci
mother, despite her protestations. There is also a suggestion that the past still ha
writer, particularly given the semi-autobiographical nature of the content.

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The speaker seems nostalgic for a simpler, more graceful time, yet there are seve
refusal to conform to such ideals. Even as a young girl she found the handkerchie
rebel from the quiet conformity of her mother.

Unfortunately, this is a problem not consigned to history. While her rebellious si
carry packets of throwaway tissues, she still intimates that in pursuing her writin
unable to produce homemade delights and using the television as a babysitter.

The speaker presents a poem purporting to be about her mother and history, ye
own identity.

Activity: Comparing Poems

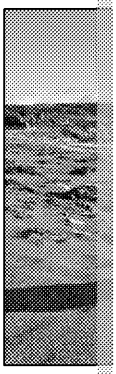
How does Barber's speaker's attitude to the material handkerchief in 'Mate
persona's attitude to the objects presented in 'The Chainsaw versus the Pam

You should consider:

- Content
- Language use
- Tone
- Structure

Contextual Background

John Burnside was born in Scotland in 1955, moved away in 1965, and returned in 1995. In this time he worked as a labourer, a gardener and, for 10 years, a computer programme designer. He lives in Fife with his family, teaching creative writing and literature at St Andrews.



Burnside has written numerous collections of poetry, as well as novels, short stories and a memoir, and has received wide critical acclaim. His poetry has won a number of poetry prizes, including the Whitbread Poetry Award in 2000 for *The Asylum Dance,* also shortlisted for the Forward and T S Eliot prizes, and the 2011 T S Eliot Prize for *Black Cat Bone*. He was again shortlisted for the T S Eliot Prize in 2014 for his *All One Breath*.

Burnside's central concerns can be traced across his work, though his approach h lyrical in style, his poems reflect upon questions of identity and our relationship w the boundaries between the self 'other' – be it the spirit, the animal world or the how sorrow and world events can link us, as well as presenting his more persona

St. Andrews: West Sands: September 2001.

The date and location presented at the start of the poem provide a significant cont month when Al Qaeda carried out a large-scale coordinated terrorist attack upon t 11th, at least three planes were hijacked, leading to the death of passengers, perso significant loss of life at the iconic Twin Towers in the New York business district, w when planes were deliberately crashed into both skyscrapers, which collapsed into

The horrific footage of the planes bursting into fireballs and people jumping from than remain trapped by fire and collapsing debris was played and replayed across poem is a father's reaction to this event, as he contemplates the way the world h Andrews in Scotland is physically distant from these events, yet it has had an imp relationship with his young child.

Language and Form

Stanza 1:

The poem opens with an emphasis on '*Today*'. The poetic voice is in the present. relating to the writer's surroundings. There is close observation of the sand below alliteration of '*sand spinning*' evokes the sweeping gusts close to the coastline.

The poem is redolent with sensory imagery. He recalls the '*gasoline smell from L* references aspects of nature; the sea is '*quail-grey*'. The speaker does not retrea focus on the people '*jogging*'.

The first sense of the wider political perspective comes in the detail that this take *cambered and turned / in the morning light-'.* The position of the dash and the b world has been disrupted.

Stanza 2:

The persona mulls '*the news in my mind*' and acknowledges the '*muffled dread*' h He seeks to stabilise existence for the sake of '*Lucas*'. His priority is keeping his s

The writer turns his attention back to the shore, where the shells and driftwood p '*tideworn shore*'. The erosion and attrition here is slow and natural, in juxtaposit the September 11th attack.

Stanza 3:

The voice soon returns to reflection upon wider ideas. He considers the ways pe
the wake of the attack he recognises that '*what binds us is what is lost*' in the wo
sentiments have been voiced in international reactions to terror attacks in recen
solidarity with victims of events.

The poet utilises the kite and its lines as a metaphor for human relations with th
kite and bind them to the world.

Stanza 4:

This then links to the problems created – '*confined by property*' humans organise
ownership, territory and ideology. There is ambiguity in the kite image – it '*tethe*
entrapment, yet this father figure seems fearful that he will drift away. He return
his son and observes the *'silt*' and '*jellyfish'.* He cannot calm himself and recalls t
son as a baby with a child's '*first nakedness*'.

Stanza 5:

The choice of lexis is revealing. The poet's use of the word '*Sometimes'* reveals h
the fear' and this becomes primeval as he lists everything around him as a poten
to '*know the virtual'.* Water imagery is evoked as he feels the pull of the 'drift an

His appreciation of the things around just serves to highlight the potential terror
Everything is changing, even in '*the quiet, local forms / of history*'.

The poem then returns to water and fish imagery. The carp are seen as treasure.
appearance of '*slow-burning / transitive gold'.* The allusion to goldfish won at a f
practice – now banned due to danger of suffocation and cruelty to fish – which t
problem of:

'*... how to be alive*
... and do no harm'.

The reference to things '*gazed upon'* may refer to the international exposure to t
and Internet news coverage. This brings the speaker's thoughts to a personal co
attention to the '*toddler on the beach'.* The child is oblivious, puzzled by shells, w
afraid'. The reader is left with an enigma to puzzle – what will be the nature of th
must be '*attentive'* to?

Structure

Burnside's themes are somewhat reflected in the poem's structure. In the begin
fractured and impressionistic. This helps the reader share the moment with the s
are bombarded and complex thoughts are beginning to emerge. The poem pivot
persona 'knelt'. From this moment, the stanzas move towards regularity as his th
a recognisable structure as an attempt is made to make sense of the events of Se
meandering structure suggests the movements of the tide.

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The poem explores various dichotomies as the speaker attempts to address conf
perceptions. The beach itself is a liminal setting, a shifting boundary between the
considers the human activity in the natural world. He contrasts the innocence of
knowledge the adults have of the evil in the world. The speaker is poised betwee
joy of his son, yet cannot reconcile this with his fears for the future. The poem pr
speaker struggles to make sense of the world.

Activity: comparing texts (AO4)

When you have read the poem 'Giuseppe', return to 'History' and re-read b

What methods does each poet use to present their response to conflict?

You should refer to:

- content
- language used
- form, structure and style

	'History'	
Content		
Language		
Form/Structure		

Contextual Background

Julia Copus was born in London in 1969. She originally took to writing to escape t
family and find an interest of her own.

Copus has been on the shortlist for the Forward Prize for Best First Collection an
2002 National Poetry Competition. She also writes radio drama. In 2008 she was
University of Exeter.

Her poems often focus on the intricacies of family relationships and on potential
realised. Her poems have a high degree of formality. She is credited with a novel
poem in which the second stanza repeats exactly the lines of the first, only in rev
the alternative possibilities for young women; the freedom of the girls attemptin
stark contrast to the secretary entombed in her 'career job' at the factory across

Language and Form

The poem is written in **continuous verse**.

The poem opens '*halfway up there*', in the midst of the action. The second line p
girl in her bikini is attempting to sneak back into her house. She is trying to impre
half in love' (l.2). This is the time when friends mean everything. The girl who is t
motivate her.

Metaphor is employed subtly within normal conversational language. The young
latch, looking at the '*hope-punched, aluminium lever*' (l. 10). She hugs the wall, w
the house' (l. 13). This metaphor suggests an alive and comforting presence, with

The young girl soon returns to her immediate fears and feelings. The asphalt roo
feet, '*a square of petrified beach*' (l. 16). The voice has been observing the girl bu
other girl, questioning '*What can she know?*' (l. 17).

The reader senses that the speaker may be older and potentially wiser than the g
sense of admiration and pleasure in the tone, as '*both girls seem / lit, as if from w*

The detailed description of the attempt to enter the house suggests that their wo
quest has developed because a mother '*does not trust her daughter with a key*' (

There is a sense that the girls' world is an **antithesis** to the mundane life of work
Despite being closest in age, the secretary is the '*most far*' from their world. She
holiday yet the voice suggests this will never happen. This is the life which lies ah

The use of **water imagery** suggests that the young girl is like a tropical fish. As sh
gap in the window her '*silver anklet and the five neat shimmering / oyster painte*
metaphorical language presents her youthful beauty alongside her rebellious str
a '*flash of armaments*' as she challenges her mother's rules with her daring climb

Structure

The poem is in free verse, recalling the features of natural speech. As a form whi
patterns of rhyme or metre it more closely emulates the modulations of the spo

However, there is a sense that tense creates a sense of structure. Written in the
potential future, based on the restricted lives of the mother, factory works and s
midway through the text provides an intrusive comment from the narrator. This
the wider issues presented in the poem.

Themes, Attitudes and Values

While the young girls are the subject matter of the poem, the reader shares the
and is guided by the narrator's selection of observation. Imagery linked to the gi
and beauty. There is a sense the moment is transient and fragile – soon they will
expectations to conform and take a functional role in society. The narrator is rue
youth, while pitying the girls for being oblivious to their fates.

There is a close-reading activity comparing 'An Easy Passage' to 'The Deliverer'

Contextual Background

Poet, writer and dancer Doshi was born in India to Welsh and Gujarati parents. A
she worked in fashion journalism in London before returning to India, where she
She is now a global performer. Alongside her dancing, she has published as a free
produced poetry, fiction and non-fiction.

The set poem is from the perspective of someone who has travelled and seen bo
Doshi conveys a political message about the treatment of women and how the p
inequalities will maintain the cycle of abuse.

Language and Form

The poem charts a unique delivery from a convent in Kerala to an airport in Milw
speaker's mother, is responsible for the care of the infant who is being brought f

Our Lady of the Light convent, Kerala

Stanza 1:

The **connotations** of 'deliverer' suggests one who can bring salvation or hope. Th
the nun from the holy order who works in the orphanage. The use of alliteration
problem, as she '*came to collect children*' (l. 2).

The girls are objectified and some of the reasons for this are revealed as the deli
have been abandoned due to their gender, potential disabilities or even their ski
suitable for future prospects.

This verse reveals the context of abandoned babies due to a combination of extr
pressures which privilege male babies, with a rigid caste system which may keep
within lower socio-economic groups in the society. The poet addresses both the
and the wider issues facing females across the world.

Stanza 2:

The deliverer continues to discover the horror these young girls and babies face.
the streets' (l. 4). The ways in which they are abandoned show they are literally t

Stanza 3:

The horror is further compounded by the discovery of the child '*dug up by a dog*
emphasis and makes the readers retain the shocking image in their minds.

This section ends with a stand-alone line '*This is the one my mother will bring*' (1
poem, with an asterisk marking both a structural shift and change in setting.

Milwaukee Airport, USA

Stanza 1:

The verse begins with '*the parents*' awaiting the baby with anticipation. There is
tone, as she remarks:
'*They are American so they know...*
... about doing things right' (ll. 12–13)
It is as though the **speaker**, who is the daughter of the deliverer, knows that the
also wishes to ape the language of the bureaucratic adoption process.

Stanza 2:

The stanza reveals the difficulty and strangeness of the situation:

'*They haven't seen or touched her yet*' (l. 14).

The following two lines reveal that the speaker's mother, the deliverer, has come pulls hair off hands and is aware of the child's dramatic survival of '*the mother w*

Stanza 3:

The speaker observes the parents' emotions – '*But they are crying*' (l. 17). It is cle her mother, who travels to meet these children and bring them to new lives. She mother's own response. The use of '*we'* is telling – the speaker's mother is feelin the child to the adopted parents. There is a final suggestion that the mother stru choices are telling: her mother feels the '***strangeness** of her **empty** arm*' (l. 19). S child to someone else.

Stanza 4:

The critical **tone** returns here. In America the girl '*grows up on video tapes*' (l. 20 evidence of the parents caring and wanting to document every moment, the spe has been '*passed from woman to woman*' *(*l. 21). The '*twilight corners*' (l. 22) sug to trace have been kept secret.

Stanza 5:

The events surrounding her birth are used to illustrate a wider social problem. Sy mothers, who feel they have had to abandon their babies, who have been ostraci

Stanza 6:

The **verb choices** here suggest the lack of maternal bonds. The mothers '*squeeze* seen to '*slither*' (l. 27) out. The poetic voice attempts to convey the disgust felt b situations.

Stanza 7:

These lines convey how the fate of the child is starkly decided – '*penis or no peni* expendable and disposable is reinforced as this mother will '*Toss the baby to the*

Stanza 8:

The reluctant mother is not escaping. She will merely '*trudge home*'. This is a ger *down for their men*' (l. 30). The poem closes with an ominous recognition of the females, be they wives or babies.

Structure

Within the text, Doshi makes use of poetic sequences in a condensed form. This a of the various perspectives relating to the subject. There are significant shifts in t simultaneously suggesting the dissolution of family and the development of the ' are adopted across continents.

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The language is stark and simple. This simplicity contrasts to the complex reactio the narrator. She is unsure about her mother's actions, yet also catalogues her m handing the baby to its adoptive parents. The speaker also considers why the mo Family is fluid – the speaker considers the adoption a loss, despite the fact that t

Returning to the starkness of the language, the lack of expressive vocabulary hig situation.

Close-reading Activity: Representation of Female Experien

Compare and contrast the ways in which Copus and Doshi present the lives o
Passage' and 'The Deliverer'.

	'An Easy Passage'	
Narrative perspective		
Tone		
Use of language		
Structural features		

Contextual Background

Ian Duhig was born into a large London Irish family in 1954. He worked with hom
and has also held university fellowships at Lancaster, Leeds, Durham and Newcas

In 1987, his poem 'Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen' won the National Poetry Co
again with 'The Lammas Hireling' in 2000. In 1994 Duhig was named as a 'New G
six collections of poetry since 1991. His collections of poetry have been shortliste
including the Forward Best Collection Prize and T S Eliot Prize, which he has beer

Duhig is known for his ingenious use of language and his comprehensive knowled
and history. His poems have incredible diversity and range. He uses traditional fo
feature of his work. We see elements of this in 'The Lammas Hireling'. We are dr
who conjures up warlocks and hares, and sadly spare little sympathy for the Lam

The set poem 'The Lammas Hireling' is now considered a contemporary classic. A
fourth collection, it won the National Poetry Competition in 2000. The poem has
words which require glossing (which has been done in the Analysis section), but
reading by listening to the sound of the poem and responding to the atmosphere

The poem provides a basic narrative before moving on to think about what exact
be interpreted. Ambiguity is one of the key features of the poem, so it's a good e
multiple interpretations.

Context for understanding: The Lamma

The Lammas Fair, held on the 1st August, was traditionally an agricultural show
would gather for entertainment. It was customary on this day to recruit employ
such as cattle or sheep for the coming year.

Language and Form

Stanza 1:

This **first-person narrative** begins in the lyric tradition, '*I'd still a light heart...*'. Th
as '*he*' in the second line. This worker, hired at a bargain price, seems sweet and
to have '*doted on him*'. This man was good company and seems intuitive, as he '*k*
colloquial language used conveys the impression of the persona as a straightfor

Stanza 2:

However, the reader soon begins to question the rationality of the persona. His dreams of his dead wife merge with the cries of the hired hand. The hireling has become caught in a trap. When the persona investigates he imagines he has encountered a '*warlock'*. The surreal **image** of the '*cow with leather-horns*' (a hare in an Irish riddle) suggests the Elizabethan concept of the cuckold, the horned man as symbol of married man whose wife commits adultery. This may go some way to explaining his later actions, as he somehow links his deceased wife with the appearance of the hireling, merging past and present and imagining an extramarital affair. He may also in his delusions think he has merely shot a hare, not a human.

Stanza 3:

The persona makes repeated use of the **archaic** word '*muckle*' (meaning 'much'), mythic or traditional tale. The reader is then stunned when the persona almost r *the small hour through his heart*'. The use of simile is arresting – he sees the bod The reader attempts to puzzle whether this is a hallucination or the blood coagul eyes '*rose like bread*'. Images of fermentation and decay create a Gothic landsca body.

Stanza 4:

The persona shows a psychopathic lack of empathy as he feels '*lighter at every s* the body. He claims the corpse made 'no *splash*' but the reader struggles to trus quickly returns to the business of tending the farm, although the reference to '*el* idea that he was bewitched or hallucinating when he murdered the hireling with diminishing sanity is also evident in his '*casting ball from half-crowns*' – is he so c make ammunition from money, or has he lost rational judgment? The final line c tells the priest it has only been '*an hour since my last Confession'.* This could be a guilt. Conversely, he may have been indulging in violence once again and therefo

Structure

While there is no strict or discernible pattern in the four stanzas, the poem is stru meaning. Light is used in a range of ways and can be seen as tracing the narrator

There is some sense of the use of line breaks to create tension, as the narrator re

The end of the poem sets a narrative frame, as it seems the persona is seeking a confession.

Themes, Attitudes and Values

In the *Literary Approaches* section, there will be the opportunity to explore the g There has been a suggestion that the persona harboured unconscious desire for leads him to murder. Or is it possible that the poem is simply an attempt to retell supernatural belief in the hare as a magical manifestation is central to the story o

The poem does concern itself with boundaries – powerful and powerless, animal and female, moral and immoral. The narrator would seem to be on the borderlin Is he asking the reader to judge him or is he hoping for forgiveness at the end of

Wider Reading Activity: 'The Lammas Hireling' and Links t

Search online or in the library for a copy of Coleridge's *The Rime of the Anc*

Read the poem and note any similarities and differences between the no

What do you think happened on that moonlit night in Duhig's poem?

‘To My Nine-Year-Old Self’ Helen

Contextual Background

Helen Dunmore has taught in York and Finland. She was born in 1952 and recalls a childhood steeped in fairy tales and fantastic narratives, which have shaped her later work. She writes both fiction and poetry.

Dunmore has won a number of literary prizes, including the Orange Prize for Fiction and the Signal Poetry Award for children’s poetry. Her poetry collection *Bestiary* (1997) was shortlisted for the T S Eliot Prize and the title poem of ‘The Malarkey’ (2012) won the National Poetry Competition.

Her writing is characterised by its lyrical intensity which encourages comparisons and contrast to poets in the anthology such as Burnside. Her language recreates scenes for the reader. Many of her poems have the compressed quality of a short story and that is the case with the set poem, as the reader wonders what has prompted the adult to address her childhood self across the years.

Language and Form

Stanza 1:

The poem begins with **direct address**: ‘*you must forgive me*’. The speaker recogn reaction to being addressed by an unfamiliar adult, as the child seems ‘*eager to l* this stranger is in fact her adult self looking back and imagining an interaction wi recalls how ‘*you would run rather than walk*’ and fondly recalls the joyous, boun

Stanza 2:

There is a remorseful **tone** as the speaker confesses to her childhood self ‘*I have* that she tells herself it is a body that they ‘*once shared*’. The speaker is detached careworn tone suggests she has had challenges in her life. She urges her younger *straight out*’ to play. The return to the word ‘*we*’ suggests there is hope for the s

Stanza 3:

This verse addresses the dreams and plans of the child in ‘*that summer of ambiti* and dens suggest an imaginative and creative individual. Even then, there is a se things through, as ‘*something else came up*’.

Stanza 4:

The **tone** in this verse is dismissive. She warns her younger self that they have ‘*n* recognise herself. Initially she sends her nine-year-old self on her way to particip memories are not simply naive or rose-tinted. She ends with a reference to ‘*men*

Stanza 5:

The **list** of activities resumes with a memory of a rope swing. Not only her adult development have left these memories ‘*long buried in housing*’. There is fear an sends herself to play, reflecting that ‘*God knows*’ the degree to which she worrie

Stanza 6:

In the closing lines, the scale of her envy of lost childhood is clear as she recognis
given to picking a scab. This level of focus symbolises both the sense of purpose a
These are characteristics she now feels are lacking from her adult life.

Structure

The poem takes the form of a dialogue with the speaker's younger self. It provide
younger girl. The text is structured around a range of sensory images which serve
old self as vital; active verbs highlight the energy of the girl. There is the use of ju
emphasise the weakness which is the speaker's current state.

The shifting pronouns in the poem emphasise the division and distance between
becomes. 'We' keeps dissolving into 'I' and 'you', a separation finally achieved in
'I leave you.' The poem's ending suggests it is impossible for the two selves to co
our younger selves, even when, as in Dunmore's poem, we can reimagine the pa

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The poem is at times wistful, jealous and resigned. The adult does not seem to w
her younger self, so ultimately cannot see a way of improving her current situati
and her childhood self symbolise the change in attitude the speaker has experien
she will contaminate her imagined youth.

Activity: thematic approaches

Compare and contrast how the theme of childhood is presented in 'An Easy Pass
Old Self'.

Contextual Background

U A Fanthorpe (1929–2009) was raised in Kent. She studied at Oxford, before wo
English at Cheltenham College.

Fanthorpe started writing relatively late in life, after moving to work in a psychia
Effects drew on her observations there. She published nine full collections in her
CBE in 2001. She received the Queen's Gold poetry medal in 2003.

Her poems are noted for encapsulating models of 'Englishness' and are seen to h
English values. The notions of stoicism and the traditional 'stiff upper lip' form a
Role'. The poem sets up these characteristics to deflate them. Note how the spea
end of the poem.

Language and Form

Stanza 1:

The poem features an **extended metaphor** in which the loved one of the person
situation to an actor with a minor role in a drama. The poetic voice has a general
insignificant part in the wider life of the community, seeing life as '*endless / Exits*
is to this speaker a '*monstrous fabric*' which then reveals itself to be an audience
The speaker feels they have been a target for ridicule.

Stanza 2:

The speaker prefers the world of '*the unobtrusive*' and considers the 'supporting
which loved ones help patients as the tragedy of chronic or terminal illness unfol
'normal' as possible. The speaker sees her purpose as '*sustaining the backgroun*

Stanza 3:

The persona looks in from the outside. She is unable to process her own feelings
unwanted questions and '*well-meant intrusiveness*'. She hints at her own depres
revealing that '*Bed solves a lot*'. The candid tone conveys the sincerity of the spe

The frank use of the shocking **metaphor** '*hunger-striker*' accurately conveys the s
a loved one fail to eat. There is a sense of foreboding in the realisation that she v
voice reflects upon the concerns of the carer.

Stanza 4:

The choice of the verb '*conjugate*', usually used to present a verb in all its forms,
myriad forms. The use of listing emphasises the unrelenting nature of emotional
from '*torpor*' to '*tears*'.

The formality surrounding the labyrinthine processes of medical consultations is
delays'. A bitterness emerges in the tone when the speaker attributes one delay
reminds the reader that the general public is unaffected by the tragedy.

The persona tires of thanking all, '*for anything to everyone*'. She recognises that
honest about her feelings; she would not resign herself to misery. There is a dete
insists '*No, it wouldn't!*'

No longer just a supporting role, she addresses her loved one and affirms '*I am h*

Structure

The poem pivots from one emotion to another, reflecting the ambivalence of the they find themselves in. The final line is set apart to highlight that this is the mes from the poem. It is direct and creates a sense of urgency.

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The language conveys the speaker's attitude, and the attitude of society to term tone which dominates the earlier part of the poem works alongside the various e portray the dilemma faced by the carer, who needs to support and stay positive. the failure to communicate.

The recurrent use of imperatives reflects the speaker's unsuccessful attempts to is an effort to remain busy with mundane chores. As the poem continues, the us verb) indicates the implacable force of the illness, as the time for reflection has p towards a conclusion. The speaker finally rejects the conventional stoicism to rag power of the poem that it conveys the rawness of grief alongside the social vene

Close-reading Activity: Language Analysis of 'A Minor Ro

Record your first impressions of poetic elements and their effects in the t

Example	Evidence	
Tone		
Metaphor		
Adjectives (describing words)		
Direct address		
Verbs		

Contextual Background

Vicki Feaver was born in 1943 and grew up in a home of dominant women which
studied music at Durham, then English in London and has since worked as a lectu

All three of her poetry collections have been popular with readers. She has won t
Single Poem for 'Judith', which is used in the activity accompanying this poem. H
Book of Blood (2006) was shortlisted for the 2006 Costa Poetry Award.

Her poems are often dark and sensual reworkings of myth and fairy tale, earning
gothic'. She takes seemingly mundane objects and activities and invests them wi
tale. As in fairy tale, a recurrent theme is the repression of female expression an
leads to violence.

All of these elements can be traced in 'The Gun', with the weapon becoming a br
which rouses the reticent inhabitants to violence.

Language and Form

Stanza 1:

The poem opens with a statement that having a gun in a house '*changes it*'.

Stanza 2:

The description of the gun suggests the eventual violent outcome. It lies on the t
something dead'. The stock is '*jutting*' while the barrel casts a shadow, an omino

Stanza 3:

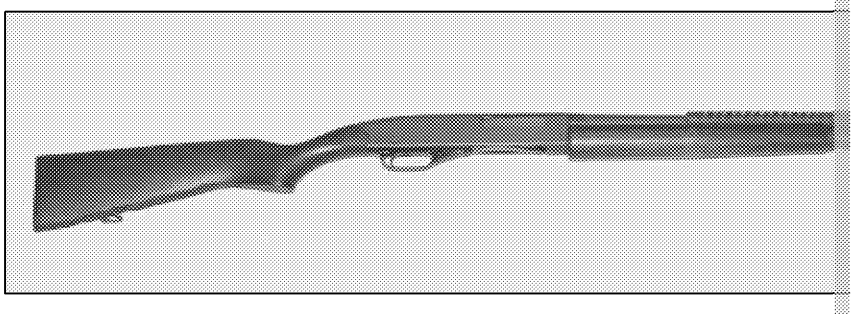
The gun training moves from '*tins'* to 'a *rabbit shot / clean through the head*'.

Stanza 4:

The speaker suggests bloodlust as the purpose of the gun moves from a tool to s
male or female shooter seeking to shoot a wide range of creatures that '*have ru*

The lines dwell on the stench of decay. Hands '*reek'.* The gun owner develops a c
'*trample / fur and feathers*'. The **alliteration** of '*spring in your step*' underlines th
feeling. The feeling is explicitly linked to the excitement and passion of sex, agai
the gun.

A line stands alone – '*a gun brings a house alive*'. This is ominous given the links



The final stanza illustrates the impact the gun has had on other activities in the h
cannibalistic orgy. Juxtaposed with previous images the verbs listing preparation
suggest ultra-violence and overkill. The pagan **imagery** of the '*King of Death*' wit
his mouth completes the poem as the reader senses that the gun will bring huma

Structure

In the second verse, short and disruptive line breaks combine with hard sounds t
description of the gun. The gun's volatile potential is embedded in the sounds.

Enjambment and line breaks enact the violent encounter between the human ar
the poem.

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The poem challenges taboos relating to both hunting and female attitudes to vio
conforms to an extent, transforming the kills into meals. There is still an ambigui
she is the one who experiences the thrill of the hunt. This eschewing of social no
world where death is valued and venerated with 'golden crocuses'.

Wider-reading Activity: Violence in Feaver's Poems

Read the poem 'Judith' by Vicki Feaver, which is available at the link below

http://www.poetryarchive.org/poem/judith

In the Apocryphal books of the Bible, Judith was a Jewish woman driven ma
herself as a prostitute and saved the Jews by assassinating Holofernes, the

How does the poet present violence in 'Judith' and 'The Gun'?

'The Furthest Distances I've Travelled'

Contextual Background

Flynn is a Northern Irish poet, born in 1974. A number of her works reference the
of humour can be traced through most of her poems. Having said that, in perfor
silence between words with her controlled and measured delivery.

In 'The Furthest Distances...' she combines autobiographical elements in evoking
backpacking with a frank analysis of the emotional journeys she has undertaken

Language and Form

Stanza 1:

The poem begins by employing a **colloquial**, friendly tone ('*like many folk*'), creat
and reader as she does not consider her travels extraordinary.

The use of **dashes** suggest that the speaker decides to pause and reflect. The observation that the rucksack curves her spine '*like a meridian*' suggests the speaker is curious about the impact of one thing on another.

Stanza 2:

The speaker provides herself with a measured response ('*Yes*'). Her memory of walking '*the beaten track'* plays on the idiom 'off the beaten track'. The reference of the '*sherpa pass*' suggests adventures in challenging mountainous regions – later the speaker will suggest that everyday life throws up equal challenges. The **comparison** of the airports to cells not only suggests a biological model of links between places, but also the imprisonment and seclusion of a prison or monastic cell.

Stanza 3:

There is a mixture of seemingly mundane observations and spiritual or personal
provides her with an epiphany. The word '*anony / mity*' is split across lines to cre
rhyme, while perhaps also suggesting life can be fractured and lonely. The speak
faceless. This echoes Flynn's wider concerns with the modern world and one of t
become virtually connected but physically isolated.

Stanza 4:

The use of **proper nouns** to refer to anti-malaria drug '*Larium*' and later referenc
transfer service establish her credentials as a traveller. The scare she speaks of is
Larium and later psychosis. There is a sense of adventure in having to rely on We
fashioned practice of 'wiring' money, ironically in a time when parts of the world

Stanza 5:

There is sharp **contrast** between the experiences in the previous verse and the fa
in a '*post office with a handful of bills / or a giro*'. The holdall is no longer a trave

Stanza 6:

The speaker reveals her bags now carry '*some overdue laundry*'. The voice seems perplexed by her current situation and finds her current situation '*really beyond*'

The image of '*routine evictions*' transforms from one of tyrannical landlords to a relationships. The speaker is the one who 'evicts' others from her life.

Stanza 7:

Looking at the '*alien pants*' and '*cinema stubs*' which surround her she realises th belongings form '*souvenirs'* of her 'travels' in the world of relationships.

Stanza 8:

The '*crushed valentines*' jostles with a '*sock*' and the speaker suddenly realises th between different types of romantic partners is much further than any journey s

She cannot help but be changed by each experience and person, and sees these d items as:

'*... what survives /*
of holidaying briefly in their lives'.

Structure

The speaker's search for freedom is evident in the manipulation of the rhyming c rhyme is employed to suggest a break from conformity.

Line lengths vary greatly, with an unconventional split of a single word to demons break convention. All of these features create an energy and pace within the poe

There is a change of tone in the final stanza. Rhyme and line length are regulated in a more mundane existence.

Themes, Attitudes and Values

On a personal level the poem provides a commentary on potential dissatisfactio of how experiences can change you. The social message that she seems to be exp most exploration is done psychologically and socially as we develop and mature

The poem is laced with **irony** in that the speaker regards herself as a free thinker attitude has limited her in her personal life. She still feels unfulfilled, despite her

Reader Reflection: 'The Furthest Distances I've Travelled'

How successful is the extended metaphor linking the hardships of travel with romantic relationships?

Contextual Background

Born in Swansea, Roderick Ford has been well travelled in his lifetime. His family moving to England. He travelled with his parents in the 1960s, living and working West Africa and the Persian Gulf. He returned to England in the 1980s to Bristol,

It was after this move that he turned his attention as a writer from prose to poet spent lengthy periods in a range of European cities. He has now settled in Ireland of a wide range of cultures has had an influence on his poetry, in terms of conten

The sense of cultural exchange is evident in 'Giuseppe'. The speaker recounts his occurred on Sicily during the war. The symbolic function of the mermaid gives th references atrocities which take place across the globe.

Language and Form

Stanza 1:

As in Flynn's poem, the speaker adopts a conversational **tone**. He begins by stating:

'*My Uncle Giuseppe told me...*'

What begins as a factual recount swiftly becomes fantastic as it is revealed that Giuseppe witnessed '*the only captive mermaid in the world / was butchered.*

There is an element of the rational in the call for 'the doctor and the fishmonger'. The reader looks for the **symbolic** as the contrast between the mermaid and the '*dry and dusty ground*' may suggest the slaughter of innocence and imagination.

Stanza 2:

The correction of '*she, it*' would seem to add veracity to the tale that is being told. **Context** is important – was this tale told to the persona as a boy and so used to generate wonder and surprise? The idea of folk tale is evident in the degree of framing – not only do we have a speaker retelling his uncle Giuseppe's tale, but within the tale other voices emerge, as it is recalled that '*they'd said*'.

The authority of the Church is conveyed in the religious representative's pronoun There is horror in the slaughter as Uncle Giuseppe recalls a scream of fear. The m twist in the narrative in *Life of Pi*, and may ask themselves if the uncle's tale is a s representation of an atrocity witnessed during a time of war.

Stanza 3:

The reader's attempt to construct an **allegorical** reading is further encouraged b is carrying '*ripe golden roe*', which the witnesses proceed to harvest and eat. Ma caviar given their provenance as fertilised fish eggs. The doctor also refuses to sh teased out, the reader becomes disturbed in imagining the potential assault whi pregnant woman. There is no direct or explicit evidence for this, but the reader c Uncle Giuseppe's story has a **didactic** purpose in mind.

Stanza 4:

In this verse, the **fable** seems to merge with real atrocity as '*her head and her ha* burial. Images of the mermaid fade away as Giuseppe recalls having to prevent a ring. There is a relative morality at work – an atrocity has taken place but there is the thief is apprehended '*and the ring stayed put*'.

Stanza 5:

The poem ends with an unpleasant **image** of the mermaid being fed to the troop '*Starvation forgives men many things*'. The reader is left to ponder what may hav conflict in times of hunger and deprivation. The reader may also question his rol events which meant he '*could not look*' his nephew in the eye.

The poem uses **allegory** and **metaphor** not to illuminate but to initially shield a y conflict, while beginning to introduce the ideas of regret and horror. It seems all left to imagine the events which changed Uncle Giuseppe.

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The poem heightens the reader's sense of foreboding about the actual events en Giuseppe through the contrast between the seemingly neutral tone and the horr

Language remains factual and objective. When an intense word is utilised – as w becomes neutered through context, as it is merely the action of a butcher. Figura absence. Simile and description are used to make the situation seem fantastic, w the atrocities of conflict.

Activity: Interpretation of Symbolism

Prepare two 50–100-word paragraphs. In one, argue that the speaker pre fabulous event.

In the other, consider the symbolic or allegorical function of the mermaid.

What is the effect of the poet using this technique?

Remember to support your interpretations with evidence from the text.

Contextual Background

Seamus Heaney (1939–2013) spent his childhood and early adulthood in Norther
Derry provided material for a significant proportion of his work. He studied at Qu
taught for a while. The universal appeal of his poetry and his scholarship eventua
and Oxford, where he worked as Professor of Poetry.

Heaney produced many works of poetry and criticism. His early collections *Death
the Dark* (1969) and *North* (1975) explore his roots against the backdrop of Nortl
the complexities of the Irish Troubles, he never allowed himself to become a pro
did prompt his move to the south of Ireland, away from criticisms.

A number of Heaney's poems and collections have been shortlisted and have wo
Human Chain won Best Collection with Forward. His poetry is supported by his k
never overwhelmed by it. He works in the specific, addressing the miraculous in

Heaney's style is always literary, and often filled with allusions. However, there i
influenced by the cadences of Hiberno-English dialect. Many fans of his work co
sounds of the words and phrases as his poems are read aloud. This has made hi
style to work against. Duffy has stated her desire to move away from the '*plashi
her at school. However, she eulogised him as '*irreplacable*' and the poet to be m

Wider Reading: Carole Ann Duffy on Seamus Heaney

Her own reaction against his poetic style in her writing:

http://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/aug/31/featuresreviews.guar

Her praise of him in an obituary following his death:

http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/carol-ann-duffy-seamus-heane

Language and Form

In this sequence of poems, Heaney combines personal memories with his knowle
to question origin myths.

The poem becomes the medical bag of the title, its contents slowly revealed by t
in the poem, from the immediate setting of Heaney's home to Lourdes – a Catho
archaeological site at Epidaurus in Greece, and then back to the room where his
sense of the wide expanse of the world yet also the claustrophobic confines of fa

These wide-ranging settings lay bare both how far the poet has travelled from hi
that childhood remains in both psychological make-up and poetic style. The sequ
registers of language and imagery, exploring dominant constructs of gender, soci

Doctor Kerlin serves to unify subject and theme. He becomes part of Heaney's fa
speaker believed that each new baby was brought by the doctor in his bag. The a
interpretation and the children of the house readily believe it.

This transforms the doctor, already superior in terms of education and social sta
figure. He is treated with reverence; each visit is ritualised.

The first poem ends with Heaney's childhood self picturing the world in which th
imagination, this is a petrifying landscape where Doctor Kerlin brandishes power

In the 'middle' poems of the sequence, Heaney's adult perspective as an educate
presents his own classical learning by discussing the origins of medicine and the c
Asklepios. This is recalled during a visit to Epidaurus, a Greek archaeological site w
healing.

However, despite his acquired knowledge, Heaney still presents himself as powe
time he served as a priest's helper at a Catholic service in Lourdes, nearly fainting
suffers from again as he bends to pick some grass at the Greek temple. All he car
friends is send them tokens from the gods' site, and lie down hoping the goddess
reliance on belief and superstition links the adult speaker back to Heaney's child
magical power of medicine.

Doctor Kerlin then reappears, full of energy and divine power. The phrase '*Poeta
ambivalence which undercuts each sequence in the poem. Heaney may have ach
poet who is also versed in classical learning, yet the reader calls into question the
suffering. Can poetry ever provide any manner of cure, or is it just another super

In the final poem, Heaney returns to the role of passive observer, entering the 'shr
mystery Heaney reveals at the heart of the mystery of giving life is not a mythical g

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The speaker of the poem retrospectively acknowledges his mother's power but t
the fact that she doesn't feel capable of claiming the accomplishment of giving b
is key. The social constraints of the time – deep-seated taboos surrounding discu
the automatic deference of the working-class community to the erudite class of t
mother doesn't claim any credit for her own part in childbirth. Her colloquial voic
gentle tenor, contrasts with Heaney's poetic sophistication, and operates as a fir
which run through the poem, and ultimately, the poet himself.

Activity: Reading Poetic Sequences in 'Out of the Bag'

How do the descriptions of Doctor Kerlin's actions in the first sequence contr
the narrator in the second?

What does this reveal about the themes of the work?

Compare the language used in the first and last poems with the other poem
of the concerns identified above?

Why do you think Heaney uses a sequence rather than a short poem to exp

Are ritual and belief forces for good or evil in the poems?

Does the sequence suggest that poetry can be useful at key points in life?

Contextual Background

Alan Jenkins (1955–) has spent a large part of his life working in London, underta
Times Literary Supplement.

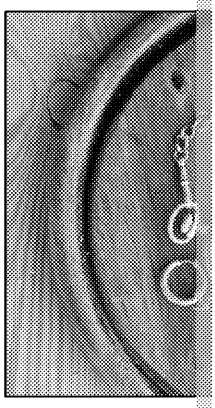
He has won a number of awards, including the Forward Poetry Prize for Best Coll
fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Despite a successful foray into translatio
symbolist poems, he has returned to the subject a friend has told him he has ma

While earlier works deal with the loss of romantic love, more recent works have
friends and parents. He adopts strict formal structures which only serve to throw
relief. The set poem is a prime example of this style.

Language and Form

This poem considers the impact of illness and death within a family, like a numbe
set poem list.

The opening line immediately employs visual **imagery** to indicate the battle scars
hands are '*scarred / From chipping, slicing...*' (l. 2). Her hands are '*raw*' and rough
washbowl symbolise the hidden violence and conflicts under the surface. The im
impression of a mother who worked hard and suffered in order to keep life enjoy
domestic work and cooking are expressions of affection; she is *'giving love the or*
poetic voice's reference to '*old-fashioned food*' (l. 8) suggests a potential distanc



As he watches his elderly mother now, her rings remind him of her keepsakes and '*long-forgotten things*' (l. 11). Her rings have become more important to her after her husband's death. The style of her watch is carefully catalogued and the brevity of '*it was gone*' (l. 17) suggests that the staff have removed it.

The speaker travels back in his memory and recalls shunning what his parents like, the '*game shows I'd disdain*' (l. 20). This is also reflected in taste in food, with his mother preferring that which is '*English, bland*' (l. 22) while he had more international tastes.

His mother is mistrustful of his generation. There is alienation between family m
as she recounts what '*she'd heard*' about what '*young people*' did.

As an adult he now feels guilty that the watch has gone missing, particularly as h
off, not even in absence, '*Not in all the weeks I didn't come*' (l. 27).

He thinks of his mother pretending to watch television while reflecting on '*her in*
now become a chore, with the **listing** of verbs, as she '*blinked... poured... gulped*
surprises him by beginning to drink after her husband's death but the adult son c
that this was 'her way to be with him again' (l. 33).

The reader learns that this may be a psychiatric ward and in this context, 'effects' belongings and also suggest the impact of her illness on her son. As with the tele *the wall*' (l. 35). He imagines that she retreats to her memories, a time before the *contempt*' (l. 38). She does have empathy with a '*poor soul*' on the ward (l. 40).

There is **listing** used once again. He notes her stillness while others '*shuffled rou* 42). He turns his attention back to the detail of the name band and the hand '*wh anymore*' (l. 46). Her last words to him include the pleading imperative '*Please d* himself and states '*But of course I left*' (l. 49). When he returns to the ward she h line sums up the insignificance of life as he is left with a '*little bag of her effects*'

Structure

The poem is made up of only two sentences, an outpouring of the son's emotion a continuous block of text, while the memories are recalled through a range of c

There is evidence of irregular rhyme, with some couplets used and rhymes scatte 'effects' he has been forced to collect.

The tension between distance and closeness made apparent through the rhyme mother–son relationship.

As the poem progresses towards its conclusion, the use of rhyme increases, with may indicate the speaker's final acceptance of his mother's death.

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The title 'effects' has the dual meaning of objects relating to his mother and the The two meanings are intertwined in his recollections of his mother. Memories a objects. In the focus on objects and her hand, he is able to avoid articulating his his feelings. Finally, he is left with her things and has to come to terms with the r

Activity: comparing texts (AO4)

Compare and contrast the use and effects of rhyme and form in *Effects* by A
Ros Barber.

Feature	*Effects*	
Use of rhyme		
Other formal elements		

Contextual Background

Sinéad Morrissey was born in Belfast in 1972 and became the city's first Poet Lau successes as Queen's University writer-in-residence in 2002. Morrissey is current reader in the newly created Seamus Heaney Centre, also at Queen's Belfast. Alth close link with her home city, she has also travelled extensively since her twentie

Morrissey has been on the shortlist for the T S Eliot Poetry Prize on a number of her collection, *Parallax*. Her poems provide a delicate balance of literary sophisti with tender and emotional engagement. The texts range from epic historical vist settings. Her work has universal appeal, even though her poems most firmly asse Ireland.

'Genetics' demonstrates aspects of this balance, with the subject being deeply p general theme of heritage and legacy.

Language and Form

Stanza 1:

As with the Minhinnick poem the speaker adopts a playful **tone**. The poetic voice sees evidence of both her parents in her fingers and palms. She appreciates the t pleasure from the fact that she can prove her lineage through her hands.

Stanza 2:

The speaker reveals that the parents may have separated. The use of the verb '*repelled*' suggests the split was acrimonious, highlighted by the repetition of the word '*separate*'. The daughter attempts to make casual reference to '*other lovers*'. The image of the hand as a combination of mother and father is **metaphysical**. It recalls the central **conceit** of John Donne's 'The Flea', where the speaker attempts to seduce a woman by arguing their blood is already 'married' by mingling within the flea which has bitten them, so to have sex would be no less natural or wrong.

The speaker in this poem tries to make her parents '*touch*' once again by pressing her hands together. Again there is a literary allusion, as this may remind readers of the first meeting of Romeo and Juliet, where their hands meet in 'holy palmers' kiss' before he attempts to kiss her. There is a degree of **irony** in that although the poem is arguing for the supremacy of a scientific construct, the speaker's argument makes **intertextual** references to historic literary texts.

Stanza 3:

This verse presents further ruminations on her parents' failed relationship. They friends '*quarry for their image by a river*'. It feels like they are seeking the past as daughter holds the proof. She states '*I know their marriage by my hands*'.

Stanza 4:

This stanza evokes a childish game played with the hands ('*I shape a chapel*'). The as she moves her fingers. The **collocations** of chapel link back to the marriage she

Stanza 5:

Here the speaker presents an image of '*hands demure*', perhaps being held out t
hands become a literal 'body of proof'. This links in with the Christian doctrine th
directly relating to procreation. This is a key part in the Catholic ceremony of ma
become their '*marriage register'.* In joining her own hands together she feels she

Stanza 6:

The verse presents the strange request of a lover. The proposed seduction is cou
donation. In seeking to conceive, she hopes for the '*bodies of the future*' and con
legacy, reflected in the **legal lexis** of '*bequeath*'. In this context it seems the spea
fears about having her own children and seeks reassurance from genetics once a
make us by our hands'.

Structure and Themes

Despite choosing a modern theme, Morrissey consciously selects a strict form – t
tension between separation and union throughout the poem.

Villanelles are structured with two repeated lines alternating as the final line of e
poem revolves around two forms of rhyme.

This serves to unite content and form, as the speaker explores her relationship to
only enduring evidence of their union in the wake of their separation.

There is some irony in that the cyclical structure of the villanelle reminds the rea
marriage. One positive which does emerge is the possibility of the speaker creati
does not employ exact rhyme in her villanelle – the half-rhyme of 'palm' and 'ha
break the negative cycle and begin her own future.

Close-reading Activity: Form and Meaning in 'Genetics'

Look at the rhyme words. What is the significance of the poet's use of half r
villanelle? Think about the points she is making about genetic inheritance.

How does the poet use this form to explore her subject matter?

How does the language use relate to the subject matter?

How does the final stanza relate to the rest of the poem?

Contextual Background

Andrew Motion was born in London in 1952 and brought up in Essex. He began writing poetry at a young age. He studied English at Oxford and then taught the subject at Hull University. During this time, he was tutored by Auden and worked alongside Larkin. Influences of both these writers can be seen in his work. A personal influence on his work and poetic voice was the tragic accidental death of his mother in his youth.

Motion has had a prolific career in poetry and academia, and has also edited and published the work of others. He has been awarded a wide range of prizes for his poetry collections and served as Poet Laureate from 1999 to 2009.

Motion's work is reflective and often narrative in style. His poems employ dramatic monologues using a range of fictional speakers to explore ideas.

His poems often use clear and simple language. The strength of the work comes from the silences or 'gaps' in the text. Often the reader gets the sense that the narrator is almost overwhelmed with emotions that they are unwilling to admit or are naively unaware of their own motives. You will have the opportunity to deconstruct the poem further in the 'Literary Approaches' section of the guide.

Language and Form

Stanza 1:

Motion makes use of **found poetry** in this text. Here, he uses an extract from a n
same name, incorporating some phrases and sentences and developing ideas fur

The poem is a first-person dramatic monologue, although it may be argued that t
the centre is an onlooker observing a group of workmen attempting to repair a p

The sense that this is an adventure for the speaker is conveyed in the choice of v
discovered' the men at work on the pier. The use of the word '*paraphernalia*' sug
plan from the outset. Colloquial language supports the recount as the speaker de
massive affair'.

Stanza 2:

The **adjective** '*massive'* is repeated to refer to things being done in an exaggerat
apt physical description of the men. They have brute strength and the onlooker s
comparison. He is fully aware they are '*ignoring*' him.

Stanza 3:

Both the poet and the original diarist who provided the recount deal in language
speech did not '*interest them*'. He does overhear and record the monosyllabic im
whether to '*Let go*' or '*Hold Tight*'.

Stanza 4:

The speaker observes the '*obscure movements*' of the men by the water. As an o
'*great difficulty*' they seemed to be having.

Stanza 5:

The speaker here concedes his own lack of knowledge. He sees they have a prob
men become '*monsters...silent on the subject*'. This reveals the brute reality of lif
recognises they are '*tired, so tired of the whole business'.*

Stanza 6:

The body language of the men reflects their frustration. Their arms are crossed a
'*swinging until the crack of Doom*'. The disappointment is inevitable as a solution

Stanza 7:

The speaker has observed for an hour as work has '*slackened*' then '*ceased*'. Wo
the lack of progress.

Stanza 8:

These lines contrast the might of the '*massive man'* with the lack of will to contin
The **alliteration** of the letter 'm' underlines the sense of bulk and strength before
silent treaty as '*no-one spoke*'.

Stanza 9:

The **image** of the tobacco spit making a '*trajectory*' suggests a weapon before it d
to suggest these workmen could turn angry in response to the failed labours.

Stanza 10:

The speaker as onlooker is still desperate to invest the scene with gravitas. He re
thinker'. When it becomes clear that the men have given up work for the day, he
movements with a '*heavy kind of majesty*'.

Stanza 11:

The final **metaphor** of the '*eclipse of interest'* suggests both the nature and powe
scene has been frozen in time, with the '*piles still in mid-air, and me of course*'. T
this is the source of the disappointment.

Structure

The poet uses juxtaposition of observer and observed to present two types of m
of the workers is undermined by the resigned defeat observed as they abandon t
also become observers. The poem ends with the pile in mid-air and as such also l

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The repair of the pier does have a symbolic function. The pier is an emblem of Br
age, a time of industrial wealth and pursuit of leisure. A pier is supposed to be in
its demise. Its stationary aspect also serves to highlight the lack of progress of wo
disappointment is twofold: the workmen regret abandoning a task, the observer

An activity deconstructing the gaps and silences in this poem is included in the
the guide on page 54.

'Look We Have Coming to Dover!'

Contextual Background

Nagra was born in 1966 and has lived in London and Sheffield. He currently works in a secondary school in Harrow. Nagra's work has been noted for its irreverent exploration of the experience of British-born Indians. His poetry often employs '*Punglish*' – an English dialect fusing English and Punjabi idioms. He has won the Forward Prize for both poetry collection and the poem 'Look We Have Coming to Dover'.

In this poem, Nagra explores notions of Britishness as well as the immigrant and second-generation experience. While dealing with serious issues, the poem is upbeat, with a formal deftness to match his creativity with language.

Language and Form

Stanza 1:

The speaker is '*stowed in the sea*', an original **metaphor** to describe the arrival o stormy. Rather than relying on worn-out clichés, the speaker 'translates' the con into an 'alfresco *lash*'. The sea is **personified** as an aggressive and foul combatan *surf phlegmed*'. Ironically, this 'phlegm' is created by the ferry boats making wak are '*lording the ministered waves'*. There is a **sardonic** humour in the verb 'lordin arriving in England for the first time, and the immigrants are treated as anything

Stanza 2:

As in Minhinnick's poem, Nagra takes pleasure in reinventing language to make t puzzle out the ways in which the seagulls and fish are '*vexing their blarnies*'. The flotsam and jetsam are concisely conveyed in the image of the '*crumble of scum* used as an **archetypal** image of England as it is the first sight on an eastern appro as decaying and dirty rather than a symbol of might.

There is a degree of coarseness in the **language** which suggests the harsh conditi *yobbish rain*'. The English rain attacks like the ill-informed yobs who turn on imm alongside this, the new arrivals gather in a '*Bedford van*', a quintessential **image**

The third stanza refers to the passing of time as the group 'reap'. The **condensed** of employing migrants in the agricultural industry as well as suggesting the amou

The **colloquial** adjective '*unclocked*' is more arresting than the word '*unseen'* and to catch the workers out. This is deemed to be true in the alternative outcome o metaphor – although sadly in some contexts a literal outcome – for the jealousie who feel migrants to a country are accessing resources which could support thei

Stanza 4:

The speaker challenges prejudice by adopting the language of racist groups. He r '*swarms',* at the same time using the **colloquial** term '*grafting*' to highlight that t shifts with the moon as '*spotlight*'. The inventive use of language continues with verb, as he describes how the sun will '*passport us to life*'. Another colloquial ter how they will present themselves in public.

Stanza 5:

The verse opens with **syntax** which recalls romantic Victorian verse. The speaker love and I'. Conversion is used to make verbs from proper nouns – in this instanc *the cash'.* This is a political and social *allusion* to Britain governed by Tony Blair's time when people were encouraged to spend on credit and buy aspirational hom

The speaker reveals how he and his wife adopted British materialism and '*beesw* while wearing '*crash clothes*', an **allusion** to the financial crash in 2008 when ban huge debts were recalled.

The speaker feels torn between his new life and his familial ties. When they toas
East. Again he uses the words of the racist or uninformed to present himself and
as '*babbling our lingoes*'. The Dover cliffs are recalled as he imagines the party '*fi*
image suggests the tensions between maintaining the traditions of the home cul
any migrant assimilates elements of the host or adopted culture.

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The title itself reflects a common first-language interference when learning the i
second language – it conflates a confusion between '*have*' and 'are' and the long
coming...'. The poem uses the language of the migrants and those less hospitable
poetic voice is comfortable with elements of both languages and cultures, and is
tensions experienced by those who wish to become part of a new society withou
cultural identity.

Activity – Intertextuality: Daljit Nagra's 'Look We Have C
Matthew Arnold's 'Dover Beach'

Compare and contrast the experiences on Dover Beach presented in the tw

The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast the ligh
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stan
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanched lan
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fl
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's sh
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drea
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and fli
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Contextual Background

Ciaran O'Driscoll (1943–) is an Irish poet whose poetic style mixes humour and ly
numerous books of poetry and a memoir. His work has won awards and he has b
Council for his contribution to literature.

O'Driscoll's early influences include the modernist poets such as T S Eliot. As he d
moved away from this style in order to express his feelings about political ineptit
began to use satire, which is the approach for which he is now well known. He n
entertaining blog on poetry and other things that attract his attention.

Language and Form

The persona is depressed by the future. The frustration in his **tone** is barely disgu
'*I am talking to a robot on the phone*'. He sardonically notes that there are optio
answer to my needs'.

There is a comic battle created through the **'dialogue**' between man and machin
automated prompts with **monosyllabic phatic terms** such as '*Great*' and the sarc
humour is heightened by the machine's inability to evaluate tone and the failed
speaker.

He remains disgruntled and the reader becomes aware of the additional **audienc**
a number of **asides**:
'*I'm paying a robot for doing nothing*'.
The robotic voice seems to achieve sentience when it fortuitously chimes in '*This*
serves to enrage the speaker further.

It is clear this persona's cynicism is directed at the wider target of customer supp
Agent' and be put through to '*someone real, who is just as robotic*'.

He is frank in his presentation of his growing anger as he recalls '*I scream Agent!*'
placate him sound just as robotic and devoid of emotion.

The speaker does not trust the increasing use of multi-modal communication an
the array of low-quality broadcasts available at the touch of a remote control, th

'... is giving me no options
in the guise of countless alternatives'.

The poem uses anaphora and repetition with the phrases '*Eine Kleine Nachtmusi*
less familiar with the development of automated phone menus, the first referen
Eine Kleine Nachtmusik (A Little Night Music), a popular piece which has often be
the background track when placing a customer on hold to speak to an advisor. In
of relaxing the customer, this serves only to prompt an **expletive** from the speak

He seems to take the lack of human attention personally and delivers a **diatribe**
the automated statements, stressing '*your call is not important to them*'.

The poem shifts in **tone** to a more serious reflection. As we come to rely upon m
human interactions, not only do we '*Grow old*', we also '*Grow cold*'. The speaker
replaced many human interactions with machines. We are starting to see the im
high number of local bank closures due to an increase in online banking.

Structure

The poet presents ideas through opposing voices. The poem is structured as ove
the speaker and the automated telephone response, and also between the spea
patiently fielding his frustrations. There is an additional narrative frame in the sp
'translate' the automated message. These lines are presented in a bitter and sarc
contrast to the veneer of civility he tries to maintain as the telephone interactio

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The poem is comical, as the reader chuckles at the speaker's exasperation. Howe
a darker message, underlined by the repeated claim that 'this is the future'. The
doom is ambiguous – it may refer to the increasing reliance on automatic service
wider warning about the failure of language to communicate. It may be a specifi
generation fearing technology will silence their voices. The narrator fears these p
be more wary of progress with the minatory tone that he employs.

Reading Activity: Humour in the poetic form of 'Please Ho

Essentially, the poet was inspired to write this after one too many frustrating
the other end of a telephone. In the examination, you will be required to co
contribute to this humour. Look through the poem again and try to identify e
elements. Copy them into the table below:

Poetic element	Examples from 'Please Hol
Satire/parody	
Irony	
Repetition	
Dramatic dialogue	
Rhythm/pace	
Feelings expressed by speaker	

Think about the 'voices' in the poem. These include the speaker, the robotic
'translation' of the prompts, the music and the choral element as he imagin

Contextual Background

Thorpe was born in Paris in 1956 and has lived in India, Cameroon and England. H
dual perspective, both as outsider and also as someone with a strong sense of ‘E
identity. He currently lives in France.

Thorpe began work in his own touring theatre company before teaching Drama a
written both poetry and prose. His work reflects a desire to experiment with nar
a number of works in different historical settings.

As a poet, Thorpe is sympathetic in his observation of human lives as well as the
change and the natural world. He has produced works based on his own family’s
deals with a personal loss.

Language and Form

The poem provides a series of contrasts between his mother’s stoicism and cour
blindness and deteriorating health and his own feelings of inadequacy as a son. T
examples of her being heroic while he lacks the right response.

The poem is a ‘writing back’ to Milton’s ‘On His Blindness’ (1655). In that poem, t
continue work due to loss of sight but is resolved through his acceptance of his fa
is a poem firmly based in the Christian tradition.

Where Milton is the sufferer addressed in the title, here Thorpe is the observer o
Observation becomes the theme of the poem. Sight and insight are key concepts
a central **irony** that while the mother’s blindness is a physical impairment, the sp
only now recognises his stance as the anti-hero. There is a sense that he regrets
simply a redemptive poem with a neat resolution as in Milton’s original text.

The poem is also structured around the idea of journey; the mother is encounter
Paris, home and ultimately the hospital. Some readers would argue that there is
poem carries meaning through enjambment across lines and verses, meaning th
meaning and occasionally stumbles, much as the mother who collides like a ‘*dod*

Like Milton, Thorpe employs Christian **allusions** but rather than focus on God’s w
hell. In this context, all journeys in life take us towards the coffin, yet there is a s
towards heaven.

The poet uses **dialogue** to convey the inadequate attempts of the family membe
decline. The speaker’s opening ‘*to be honest*’ sets up the confessional tone whic
inadequacies. His mother’s frank admission that her life is a ‘*living hell*’ is not ad
who struggles to find emotional honesty.

At the start of the poem, the short simple sentences and lack of positive adjectiv
There are few similes used to suggest her world view is ‘*as blank as stone*’. The s
articulate his difficulties as he compares those who have suffered and ‘*bear it lik*
honesty presented by his mother.

Imagery relates to pain and the poem would seem to travel in a downwards trajectory, yet it may be argued that the **pathetic fallacy** of the autumnal scene beyond the mother's deathbed suggests she welcomes death ('*it's lovely*'), even though the speaker is looking out and reminded of the 'golden' hues which blaze the richness of colour his mother has lost. He is the one who needs reassurance of redemption and salvation when he hopes '*she was watching somewhere, in the end*'.

Structure

The mother's difficulties are reflected in the repeated use of enjambment, acros
sense are broken across the white spaces on the page. This has a disorientating e
the reader to establish potential meaning. The reader loses their bearings, just a
navigate familiar spaces.

Themes, Attitudes and Values

The poet states 'One shouldn't say it'. Aside from the irony, this represents the d
can and can't be said in this situation and the silences and gaps dominate the wh

When the mother is brutally honest about her situation, the narrator is unable to
pretends she can see. Even when close to death she asserts: 'it's lovely out there
her death the relatives rely on the comforting fiction which suggests the dead ar
poem's power lies in the narrator's acknowledgement of the lack of honesty in th

Close-reading Activity: 'On Her Blindness'

'To be honest' is a key phrase spoken in the first stanza. How does the poet
pretence throughout the poem?

Who is lying or pretending in the poem? How does this relate to the idea o

Explore the use of colour in the poem.

Eighteen stanzas use enjambment to break across units of sense. To what ex
subject matter?

'Ode on a Grayson Perry Urn' Tim

Contextual Background

Tim Turnbull was born in North Yorkshire in 1960. He worked in forestry for a nu to write poetry in the early 90s. Turnbull completed an MA in Creative Writing in Council bursary in 2004 and was appointed writer in residence at Werrington, a y more recently at Saughton Prison in Edinburgh.

Turnbull's poetry is both witty and funny. His work can be seen to embrace postr mocking human behaviour in its many manifestations.

Language and Form

Turnbull's poem is a modern response to Keats' 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', both in i elements. Keats' 'Ode' – printed at the end of this analysis – is a reflection on his Greek vase in a museum. The vase, which can still be seen in Athens today, depic ceremonies, music and dancing, and lovers entwined. Keats explores the contras captured in the images and the fact that the people portrayed are frozen, suspen distance created by time as Keats the tourist examines the vase and attempts to

Turnbull's ode has as its focus a vase or urn designed by modern artist Grayson P response to the classical vase. Perry chose to show 'culture clash' visually by mar pictures of working-class or 'underclass' culture, such as customised cars and rep 'Power', 'God', 'Sex', 'Status' and 'Death'. Perry's ceramic work often highlights t considered 'art' and what appeals as popular culture. Turnbull takes Perry's urn a distance between the lifestyles and forms of education of those depicted on the of those who claim an appreciation of the formal elements of the ceramic urn an

Just as Keats attempted to identify with the depictions on the Grecian urn, so Tu appreciation of both Perry's vase and the people chosen as his subject.

This is not evident in the opening stanza, as Turnbull adopts the language of the fearmonger the general population when describing the young men who would urn. These *'louts*' are said to hail from '*crap estates*'. The poetic voice turns his d the vase as '*kitschy'* and rather than naming Perry, refers to a '*Shirley Temple ma* Grayson Perry's public personas, which is a flamboyant girl in a wig.

In Stanza 2, there is a sense that the poetic voice empathises with the disaffecte the word '*children*', which emphasises the fact that they are victims of circumsta which are seen as irresponsible by the adult world may be their ineffectual react the '*dead suburban streets*'. Turnbull continues to use colloquial and on occasion imagined youth, but by the third stanza there is real appreciation of '*each geeze*

In the fourth stanza, Turnbull has used his imagination to inhabit their world – whi come and help he observes that '*tranquility, though, is for the rich*'. He is beginnin the seemingly nihilistic and antisocial behaviour as a form of strength and control o

The final stanza reflects the concerns of Keats' original poem. Looking at the urn whether a traditional poet such as Keats, or one in future times, will be able to fi There is a significant shift in the register of the language here, as Turnbull deals i on a variation of Keats' final thought. While Keats argues '*Beauty is truth, truth b* '*beauty is in the gift of the beholder*'. We all have the power to find beauty in a n can damage others when we abuse that power. Perry has used his 'gift' to immo

Structure and Themes

This poem is inspired by John Keats' 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', as seen in its verse f
an earlier model creates many ironic resonances for the reader. Keats' 'Ode' was
from classical times, showing scenes from ancient life of lovers, gods, celebration
poem grows out of the tension between the life conveyed by these scenes and th
the artist in a suspended moment.

Turnbull builds on this idea in the final stanza, which imagines a future poet cont
language at this point is formal and could be deemed 'Keatsian' – the scene port
dust', the observer imagines a '*free and bountiful*' youth, and the urn is subject t
visitor imagines '*How happy were those creatures then*'. Turnbull's closing line ec
Keats' ode ('*Beauty is truth, truth* beauty').

Close-reading Activity: Approaching a Postmodern Poem

The youths described in the poem produce different responses in different p
attitudes towards them presented in the poem.

Can you find examples of specific words/phrases that convey these attitudes?
table below.

Evidence from text	*Response*
'... girls, too young to quite appreciate The peril they are in...'	

Look more closely at the narrator's attitude towards the people he describ
course of the poem?

What do you understand by the idea that beauty is 'in the gift of the beh

Do you think the young people described in the poem are 'beautiful' and

Wider Reading: 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy sha
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens lo
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not lea
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal – yet, do not grie
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy blis
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of though
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'- that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Literary Approaches to *Poems of*

The use of literary theory with *Poems of the Decade*

The *Poems of the Decade* anthology was created by the Forward Arts Foundation with new and diverse poetry texts. The inclusion of these poems in A Level asses to promote independent interpretations of literary texts and support candidates undergraduate level and beyond, where a key skill will be the ability to form criti literary texts.

The poems in this anthology have relatively few specific critical reception texts fo this reason, examination responses will **not** be assessed on contextual or biograp poets. Given that contextual information is not the key focus, this part of the cou literary approaches to support candidates in their critical responses.

This section of the guide will provide an overview of a range of literary theories a necessary for students to analyse each poem from every type of approach, nor is in an examination response, methodically suggesting '*A Marxist reading would su response to this line would argue...*'. It is more useful to think of the theories des analysis, and when reading, students may wish to consider whether a particular t develop an interpretation. Examples of ways in which theories may be linked to p throughout the section, along with activities to promote use of theory when read

Theories and approaches are presented in this section in a loose chronological or emerged. It is important to note that the popularity of one type of theory did no disappearance of another, and that all of these approaches to literature can be f English today.

Literary criticism before 'theory': Liberal Humanism

Liberal Humanism is the label applied to the approach taken in early literary criti an academic subject did not appear until the 1890s, with Cambridge only offerin sense that it is not political and humanist in the suggestion that human nature is construct expressed in literature.

Liberal humanism provides a focus on evident conflict of values between 'art' an texts driven by moral convictions. There is no sustained focus on form, structure readings can solely reference content.

Liberal humanism covers a range of early practitioners but what all have in comm text intensively rather than reading extensively. Rather than investigating contex I A Richards and F R Leavis, who taught at Cambridge in the 1920s, suggested iso context. They termed their approach 'Practical Criticism'.

In his close reading, Leavis saw text as moral. For him, the purpose of the text wa and to transmit humane values. There are a number of the set texts that would s the challenges that we may face. A number of the texts concern themselves with *Material, Effects* and *On Her Blindness*.

While liberal humanist or practical criticism approaches do not present an explici reading texts, there are a number of features which these types of approaches sh

Liberal humanist readings:

- Evaluate a text based on the idea that good literature is timeless
- Feel a text holds its own meaning within itself – a text can be understood pu page
- Isolate texts from biography or contexts of production – they are not interes situation
- Believe that the individual transcends society, experience and language
- Argue that literature supports value systems
- Believe that form and content must work together
- Suggest that language should clearly reflect what it depicts
- Say that texts show rather than tell
- Argue that criticism should interpret text and mediate between text and rea

Reception Theories: Reader Res
Reader-oriented Approac

In contrast to liberal humanism, reception theories stress the importance of cont
have histories, but the meanings do as well. For example, in 'The Knight's Tale' C
reader has an understanding of codes of chivalry. Riffaterre suggests that we mu
historically and culturally variable.

Reception theories centre on the implied reader. These theories look for ambigu
itself. A correlation is suggested – an ambiguous text suggests a complex reader.

Reader-response Activity

**As this is a reader-oriented approach, any text in the anthology can be use
response.**

Choose your favourite poem and try to summarise why it appeals to you in

You should comment on:
aspects of language use;
form and structure;
meanings conveyed;
**your understanding as a reader – this includes what you bring to the poem i
reading and general knowledge, e.g. someone who has experienced a ber
a very personal and emotional response to a poem dealing with death.**

Structuralism

Structuralism suggests that elements of texts do need to be seen in the context o
believe literature reflects our way of structuring and organising the world.

If we think about poetry, when we read a poem we approach it with a clear expe
be. This might be seen as formal structuralism. We then come to the poem with s
towards the themes discussed, such as love and loss. This is known as cultural str
consider the poem's place in the larger genre of poetry.

Structuralists believe that **narrative** is a means of making sense of a series of rea
attributing causal connections to them. For a structuralist, language constructs re

Propp developed a theory in an attempt to codify narrative. He considered event
functions, important not so much for **what** happens but by **how** it relates to oth
step or a goal for particular characters.

Some dismiss this model as highly linear. If we modify the theory to use as a guid
Greimas (1973) developed Propp's ideas and considered the role of characters w
whether a particular character is a sender, object, receiver, helper or subject in a

Barthes (1966) had already suggested an alternative non-linear model. He felt an
discourse (whole text). Each narrative strand would begin with a catalyst, a chron
may have a logical link. Actions are then introduced by characters or agents. Fina
narration of the story.

Levi-Strauss applied structuralist approach to myth. He looked for motifs and co
for dyadic pairs and archetypes, such as male and female, life and death. Langua
carrying cultural meanings.

The structuralist approach

1. Structuralists relate texts to a larger containing structure, through examinat
    - conventions of a genre
    - intertextual connections
    - models of narrative
    - patterns and motifs
2. Structuralists see text as containing a range of underlying parallels to linguis suggests the use of mytheme to suggest the smallest unit of narrative sense, smallest unit of grammatical sense.
3. Structuralists identify patterns and structures in wider cultures, seeing all as these as follows:
    - parallels – plot
    - reflections – characters and their motives
    - contrasts – situations
    - patterns – language and imagery
    - echoes – structure

Structuralism Activity: 'Chainsaw versus the Pampas Grass'

Use the checklist above and the work undertaken as close reading to prepa Armitage's poem. Write 200 words commenting on contrasts and patterns o representation of the chainsaw and the pampas grass in the poem.

Post-structuralism

Being termed 'post' theory, does post-structuralism develop elements of structu be argued it does both, in effect. The rebellion is in post-structuralists saying tha enough in its analysis of texts. Where structuralists say texts reflect patterns and post-structuralists argue that language shapes reality. For them, the consequenc universe of uncertainty.

Structuralism and post-structuralism would be seen at odds – structuralism seek structuralism presents a text at war with itself.

If language can shape things there is no fixed point of reference for different rea structuralists term the **decentred universe**. Before, man could determine the me universe. In the twentieth century and beyond, there is a decentred word with n

Post-structuralism differs from structuralism in a number of ways:

1. Post-structuralism comes from a philosophical rather than a linguistic backg which mirrors the questioning of philosophy.
2. Theories often use a warm tone. Theorists are engaged and emotional in the
3. There is an anxiety about language and history reflected in the liquid imager can 'flow' and change course over time.
4. The aim of post-structuralist theory is to present a dissolved reality. The tex than using the theory to support text.

Post-structuralism claims to be a state of mind rather than a particular analytical work engages in deconstruction of texts.

Deconstruction

For many, deconstruction is regarded as an applied version of post-structuralism 'reading against the grain'. Deconstruction looks at the unconscious dimensions ambiguity and dual aspect of words and connotations. It is important to note tha as destruction. It is closer to the original meaning of the word 'analysis', meaning to tease out the multiple meanings in any conflicting signification or ambiguous e oppositional reading.

While structuralists looked for a unity of purpose within a text, deconstruction sh Deconstruction looks for gaps, breaks and discontinuity within the texts. The rea shifts or breaks in tone, perspective and person, absences within the text and ap which is self-contradictory and cannot be resolved by a reader. It often appears a which undermine the clarity of meaning, as when pronouns or tenses change.

Deconstructive readings have the following features:

1. The reader looks for meanings contrary to surface meaning.
2. They consider the surface features of words. This is the **linguistic deconstru**
3. Focus on elements of disunity.
4. Conducts intensive readings of passages and verses. The focus is on multipli about a little'. This can be seen as **verbal deconstruction**.
5. Examines shifts and breaks – the silences in the text – as evidence of what is 'fault lines' in the text. As in geology, the textual break is evidence of previo **textual deconstruction**.

Critical analysis that employs a deconstructive approach demonstrates a tenden common binary oppositions; for example, linking births and beginnings to darkne seem like a parallel universe.

Textual examples look for instabilities in the writer's attitudes in shifts and break omissions – what is the reader not told?

In linguistic analysis, language is seen as inadequate. The post-structuralist or de writer saying that something cannot be said, or arguing that something is misrep represent through language. This is most evident in poetry, where a poet may id not escape the difficulty, seen when a writer states 'I cannot find the words...' (y reader this).

There is a problem with both the close reading of practical criticism and the unpi that they can render poems on very different topics with different purposes simi

A more useful way of looking at deconstruction is to think about feelings that are claims – and how this differs from what is expressed, as even mentioning an idea that it does hold importance for the writer.

Deconstruction Activity: 'From the Journal of a Disappoin

Examine the gaps in this poem. What is the observer lacking as he looks at

(Think about this in terms of representations of masculinity and work).

Modernism and Postmodernist Approaches

As with post-structuralism, postmodernism develops earlier theoretical positions

Modernism was the term applied to arts and cultural movements in the first half
modernists challenged the most fundamental elements of literary practice. Varic
challenged and rejected. Texts demonstrated a leaning towards experimental for

Modernism emphasised impressionism and the subjective experience. There was
rather than WHAT we experience. There was a move away from the omniscient n
Modernism also sought to blur generic distinctions – poems began to resemble d
about how this relates to the poem Andrew Motion's 'From the Journal of a Disa

It is important to note that modernism and postmodernism are not chronologica
are often presented as fragmented forms. There is reflexivity on the poem as a p
eclectic references. There is a nostalgia for an earlier age (think about Ros Barbe

Postmodernist texts, in contrast, are liberated by the fragmentation of ideas and
escape from fixed systems of belief.

The poems in the collection contain elements of both modernist and postmoder
texts differ from modernist in tone and attitude. Where the modernist ascetic fo
valuing sparse and pared-down observation, the postmodern text is quite gleefu
excessive imagery, while still rejecting distinctions between high and low culture
be 'surface'.

Postmodern theorist **Baudrillard** presents the idea of the 'loss of the real'. As ou
film and social media, there is a loss of distinction between the real and imagina
whereby initially the sign represents reality. Then, as reality is distorted, the sign
the sign bears no relation to any reality.

The postmodern approach

When examining a text from a postmodern perspective, the reader does the follo

1. Looks for postmodern themes and attitudes within the text
2. Foregrounds a mixture of genres within a text
3. Foregrounds intertextual elements, such as parody, pastiche and allusion
4. Foregrounds irony
5. Examines narrative techniques and denaturalises aspects of the text
6. Challenges distinction between high and low cultural elements

Postmodern Reading Activity: 'Ode on a Grayson Perry U

The poem's subject matter and verse form are based on John Keats' 'Ode o
the effects of using this form to treat this subject matter?

Do you think you need a good knowledge of the Keats poem (and of the w
appreciate Turnbull's poem?

If so, do you think this undermines the argument of Turnbull's poem?

Psychoanalytical approaches

Since the middle of the twentieth century there has been a clear development o other fields of study when analysing texts. What these approaches have in comm the text represents the world and look at how the language used reinforces or ch will begin by looking at psychoanalytical approaches, before considering later the how experience is presented in texts.

Psychoanalytical approaches apply concepts developed in psychology to examine desire, as presented within the text. Psychoanalytical approaches can be identifi features:

1. Literary interpretations employing psychoanalytical theory give central impo between conscious and unconscious desires. The 'covert' or hidden content really about.
2. Attention is paid to the unconscious motives of either the characters within
3. They look for phases recognised by psychoanalysis – for example, if a charac stages of emotional and sexual development.
4. Such approaches are concerned with the struggle for identity through litera
5. Psychoanalytical readings provide a psychological context of the work. This i unconscious motives and feelings, consideration of broad themes such as la text as enactment of relationship between language and unconscious.

Psychoanalytical Reading Activity: 'The Lammas Hireling'

This type of reading imposes desires upon the narrator. In this case, we explor sexual feelings for the hireling. This would also overlap with a reading looking as outlined in LGBT approaches in the next section.

Was he sexually attracted to the hireling? Consider how he hears his wife's in the moonlight.

Does the narrator's desire for the hireling surface in the word 'lovely'?

What do you think happened to his wife? Was she really 'dear' to the narr

Is the speaker rational or has his subconscious, disturbed by his feelings, con the hireling?

Why does he kill the hireling?

Feminist readings and LGBT criticisms

These approaches have been grouped together as they share a focus on gender a range of identities are presented in texts.

In the 1960s, feminist criticism grew out of women's movements and a bid for so examined the dominance of the 'dead white males' in the literary canon and also representations of women in texts, even those written by women.

Feminist critics often drew on other schools and approaches; for example, using marginalisation of women in texts. Feminist critics demanded that readers rethin women's experience. There was a political drive behind this approach to challeng as 'Other'. Readings look at the power relations in texts and the role of language Some adopted a more positive approach and looked to develop a female langua challenged was the ideological base of 'natural' interpretation of language as tra

Later readings built on the work of the feminist critics to examine the portrayal o
1980s and 1990s, these critics challenged derogatory and prejudiced representat
established readings by developing what was named 'Queer Theory', which soug
and present readings which foregrounded issues of sexuality; for example, argue
homosexuality and that this struggle drives the narrative of the play. Like feminis
employ elements of other theoretical models, such as deconstruction and struct
the text to support their arguments. More recently, attention has turned to repr
transgender experiences in texts.

Feminist Reading Activity: 'The Furthest Distances I've Tra

*The overarching theme here is the social expectations of women made by socie
poems autobiographical in nature. When you respond to the questions below,
has influenced her experience and the voice presented in the poem.*

Look at images of travel in the poem. What do these suggest about the wo
towards it?
How does Flynn's use of form reflect a desire for freedom?
What does the poem have to say about female identity and how it is constr

Marxist Readings

In parallel to approaches drawing on psychology and social sciences, other readi
historical contexts. A significant analytical approach developed which considered
politics influenced texts, in particular the social structures which were reinforced
readings are known as Marxist readings of texts.

Marxist readings can be identified through the following features:

1. A clear division is made between overt and covert content. The covert or hi
to Marxist themes, such as class struggle and the progression of society. In t
recognition of the transition from feudalism to industrial capitalism. The rea
between the rising working and middle classes against the dwindling power
2. Analysis is related to the social status of the author. There is an assumption
what is being revealed about their political beliefs.
3. Marxist readings consider the nature of a whole genre; for example, there is
the text of the rising middle classes, seen through early texts such as Daniel
is very much concerned with material goods.
4. A Marxist approach relates the text to the social assumptions of the time of
The text is also considered very much as a manufactured product. Some of t
present in cultural materialism, discussed later in this section.
5. Marxist readings are very much concerned with the politicisation of literary
that literary realism implicitly supports conservative social structures.

Marxist Reading Activity: Power in Texts – 'Out of the Ba

*Remind yourself of your responses to Heaney's 'Out of the Bag' in terms of th
the narrator's feelings about the events in the poem. For a Marxist reading, tr
reference to wider social structures.*

How does the figure of Dr Kerlin contrast with that of Heaney / the narrato

What does this contrast reveal about the speaker's central concerns?

New Historicism and Cultural Materialism

New Historicism, an approach pioneered in American universities, developed alo
school of Cultural Materialism. These approaches share a number of features an
together. Like Marxist readings, these approaches consider the text firmly within

New historicists:

- Try to make canonical or traditional texts seem 'strange' and seek to approa
- They examine literary and non-literary texts in parallel.
- Like Marxist readings, attention is focused on how power is achieved and m
  structures relating to power such as patriarchy and colonisation/imperialism
- They use elements of post-structural approaches.

Cultural materialists share the approaches above and also:

- Foreground the ways in which modern contexts have either disguised some
  original production or make assumptions about particular writers or text, e.g.
  Shakespeare's political leanings.
- Make use of close textual analysis alongside post-structural approaches to c
  assumptions.
- Often work within the traditional 'canon' in an attempt to make a political s

Postcolonial Readings

Postcolonial critics reject the universal claims made about texts we consider to b
their ability to represent communities across boundaries of cultural and ethnic d

Postcolonial readings foreground questions of difference and diversity and devel
examines states of marginality and perceived 'Otherness'. These states are seen a

Activity: Postcolonial Reading of 'Eat Me'

The narrator in 'Eat Me' already inhabits a marginal position in society due
affects others' perceptions of her. Initially, the male speaker 'empowers' he
finds her size attractive. There is still a sense of ownership. The speaker eve
asserts her authority over him.

Some readers have seen the poem as an allegory for the assumed power o
societies (here represented by the male) over repressed colonised nations (h
female).

**Using evidence from the text to support your reading, produce a 200–25
argues that the poem 'Eat Me' enacts a postcolonial struggle for emancip**

Key Terms Glossary

Term	Definition
Allegory	A literary technique which presents abstract ide recognisable characters, figures and events.
Alliteration	The repetition of the same or similar sounds at stressed syllables of a phrase. This is often indic pattern, but this is not always the case.
Allusion	An indirect reference to a person, place or even
Anaphora	The repetition of a word or phrase at the beginn verse.
Anthropomorphism	The linking of human characteristics or behavio
Antithesis	The presentation of a person or object as the di something else.
Apostrophe	A rhetorical device. An exclamatory passage (so speech or poem addressed to a person or thing
Archaic	Old-fashioned language, no longer in everyday u
Archetype/archetypal	Typical of a type of person or thing.
Cliché	A predictable or unoriginal phrase or idea.
Collocation	A pair or group of words that are regularly used
Colloquial	Informal language used in normal or everyday c literary.
Connotation	An idea or feeling which a word suggests to a re meaning.
Declarative	A sentence taking the form of a simple stateme
Ellipsis	The exclusion from speech or writing of a word understood from the context of the remaining t
Enjambment	In poetry, this is a sentence which continues wi a line, stanza or couplet.
Epilogue	A section that serves as a comment or conclusio
Fairy tale / fable	A fable is a short story, often with animals as ch message. A fairy tale is a magical or idealised st
Foreshadowing	An element serving as a warning or caution for
Fricative	A consonant sound made by the friction of brea *fo, fum*.
Idiom	An expression where meaning cannot be deduc *it's raining cats and dogs*.
Imagery	Visually descriptive language.
Imperative	An authoritative command.
Juxtaposition	A device where two elements are placed close t
Lexis	Words in a language. In analysis, this refers to v
Listing	The use of a list for emphasis or effect.
Metaphor / extended metaphor	A device whereby one thing is used to represen An extended metaphor is one which is develope the whole text.
Metaphysical conceit	An original comparison or metaphor.
Microcosm	A place or situation which reflects the character

Term	Definition
	A word that is formed from the sound associated with what it names, e.g. tick-tock.
	Something altered or recycled but that still retains visible remnants of its earlier form.
	A character in a literary work, such as the speaker in a poem.
	Giving a non-human animal or object a personal nature or human characteristics, or representing abstract qualities in human form, e.g. Faith and Hope as female forms.
	Consonant sound made by stopping then suddenly releasing air, e.g. the 'p' sound in *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers*.
	Additional information provided after the noun.
	Name used for an individual place, person or organisation.
	Repeating words or sounds for deliberate effect.
	Comparing one thing to another, using like or as, to create a vivid image.
	Something used to represent a larger idea or concept.
	A condition where a response linked to one of the senses triggers a feeling in another, so someone may 'taste' something we would normally hear. Impressionist poets in the early 20th Century used this to suggest an overwhelming emotional response and this is the device being used here.
	Arrangement of words or phrases within a sentence.
	A deliberate organisation of words to create specific sound effects.
	The general attitude of a piece of writing; the sense of mood or feeling.
	A word describing an action or state.

Critical Receptions and Furthe

The resources on each poet are listed in alphabetical order by each poet's surn
criterion, these resources are readily available online. Links are given below.

Agbabi:

http://literature.britishcouncil.org/patience-agbabi
Brief biography and overview of style. There are links to other sites with clips of A

http://www.youtube.com has a range of clips of Agbabi reading and performing
typing her full name in the website's search facility.

Armitage:

www.simonarmitage.com
Official site containing a useful biography and extracts from his poetry, fiction an

The Poetry Archive features a filmed interview with Armitage, as well as perform
www.poetryarchive.org/interview/simon-armitage-interview

Barber:

http://rosbarber.com
Barber's official site which has comments from the writer and links to other publ

Burnside:

Burnside's work and his importance as a writer is outlined on this British Council
http://literature.britishcouncil.org/john-burnside

Copus:

There is a short analysis of a Copus poem in the *TLS*: **www.the-tls.co.uk/tls/publ**

The Poetry Archive has a recording of Copus reading her poem:
(**www.poetryarchive.org/poet/julia-copus**)

Doshi:

Doshi's own website includes videos, biography and links to critical articles: **www**

The 2007 Poetry Society interview charts the importance of dance to Doshi's wo
www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/publications/poetrynews/pn07/tdprofile

Duhig:

Duhig's introduces his poem and reads it on *The Poetry Archive*: **www.poetryarc**
poems?f[0]=field_poet:192396

The British Council's literature website has a useful overview: **http://literature.b**

Dunmore:

Dunmore's author page gives some critical responses to her poetry, and a video
poems: **http://www.bloodaxebooks.com/ecs/category/helen-dunmore**

Dunmore's own website has an extended autobiographical section, plus extracts
www.helendunmore.com/index.asp

Many of the online articles on Dunmore focus on her fiction. The article below lo
fiction and poetry: **www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/feature**
need-of-her-space-776576.html

Fanthorpe:

The Poetry Archive has recordings of Fanthorpe reading some of her poems:
www.poetryarchive.org/interview/u-fanthorpe-interview

This 2009 obituary discusses Fanthorpe's life and gives a summary of her poetic s
www.theguardian.com/books/2009/may/02/obituary-u-a-ua-fanthorpe

Feaver:

Feaver's overview of 'The Gun' and her reading on *The Poetry Archive*: **http://ww**

Flynn:

Flynn reads the set poem on the Poetry Archive: **http://www.poetryarchive.org/**
travelled

Flynn's own website has a range of other articles and resources: **http://leontiafl**

Flynn charts the shift in her work from reluctance to address individual identity t
http://edinburgh-review.com/extracts/article-leontia-flynn/

Heaney:

The Poetry Foundation provides a comprehensive overview of Heaney's career:
www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/seamus-heaney

There are a number of detailed obituaries charting Heaney's progress as a writer
www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/culture-obituaries/books-obituaries/10

There are also a number of academics who write extensively about Heaney, such

RTE (Irish national broadcaster) has an archive of Heaney broadcasts made throu
www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/1982-seamus-heaney/

Jenkins:

The British Council's literature website has an overview of Jenkins which mention
http://literature.britishcouncil.org/alan-jenkins

Morrissey:

Morrissey reads 'Genetics' on the Poetry Archive: **http://www.poetryarchive.org**

The Belfast Telegraph has an article about Morrissey and her life: **www.belfastte**
sinead-morrissey-poetry-in-motion-29523952.html

The interview below details Morrissey's development as a poet: **www.stingingfly**
morrissey-interview

O'Driscoll:

O'Driscoll's blog is an accessible introduction to the writer and his works:
http://blog.ciaranodriscoll.ie/

The article below discusses the combination of anger and humour in 'Please Hold'
www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/13165/30/Ciaran-ODrisco

Motion:

This interview from *The Guardian* provides information on Motion's childhood an
www.theguardian.com/education/2005/dec/13/highereducationprofile.higher

Thorpe:

Adam Thorpe's website has links to reviews of his poetry: **www.adamthorpe.net/**

This review from *The Guardian* contains thoughts about his themes and style:
www.theguardian.com/books/2012/may/11/voluntary-adam-thorpe-review

Turnbull:

The poet's website is: **www.timturnbull.co.uk**

Turnbull has been featured in contemporary poetry magazine, *Magma:*
www.poetrymagazines.org.uk/magazine/record.asp?id=18643

For background context on Grayson Perry's thoughts on class and his approach t
www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-features/10117264/Grayson-Perry-Taste-system.html#disqus_thread

General response:

This article considers Jeremy Paxman's criticism of contemporary poetry's 'obscu
www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jun/02/jeremy-paxman-poetry-r

Assessment: Indicative Cont
Active Reading Tasks

Close-reading Activity: 'Eat Me'
A worked example of close reading has been provided in the table. The evidence
the inequalities in the relationship and the power that the man holds over the w
her to parade around the bedroom 'so he could watch' her body. The notes outli
gaze. Your examples might also include the exoticism of the language as he deem
Responses should note the shift in power and the increased use of 'I' in the closi
drowned'). She asserts herself and he is silenced.

Close-reading Activity: 'Chainsaw versus the Pampas Grass'
What is the speaker's attitude towards the chainsaw and the pampas grass?
An extended response to this question should outline the contrasts between the
using masculine language and aggressive verbs, and the pampas grass, which is r
proud. The final attempts of the speaker to destroy the root of the plant has dist
physical attack. While the chainsaw is personified and there is some humour in t
is a darker perspective if it is seen to enact the desires and frustrations of the spe

Activity: Comparing Poems
How does Barber's speaker's attitude to the material handkerchief in 'Material'
attitude to the objects presented in 'The Chainsaw versus the Pampas Grass'?
It is possible to use some of your commentary from the previous response in this
the speakers share a sense of disdain for the objects they describe. They also sha
the Armitage poem, the speaker questions his own masculinity, in Barber's poem
mother. The poems differ in tone – Armitage is darkly humorous and, while Barbe
sense of regret and nostalgia for an earlier time. Features of structure should be
relevant.

Comparing Texts: 'History' and 'Giuseppe'
This close-reading task involved completing a table as a revision task, but also pr
comparative element of assessment in the examination. The task is open-ended i
which aspects of form, structure and language to discuss in your response. What
observation of the surroundings and explicit focus on sensory description. Both d
ambiguous way. Both involve a personal memory. Separated by time, the poems
juxtaposed with horror. It may be worth commenting on each writer's style – you
fantastic elements, while Burnside prefers an impressionistic style based on his o

Close-reading Activity: Representation of Female Experience
Compare and contrast the ways in which Copus and Doshi present the lives of g
Passage' and 'The Deliverer'.
In terms of content, both poems focus on the female experience and in particula
share the perspective of an onlooker – in Doshi's poem, the daughter is respondi
adoption; in Copus, an older female watches the two young girls, envying their fr
While Copus would seem to be less serious in tone, it may be argued that both p
women's lives are shaped by the societies they live in. Structurally, there is a con
musings of the speaker in 'An Easy Passage' and the abrupt and blunt statements
treatment of baby girls in Kerala. It is worth considering why Doshi employs a mi
response should be supported by close textual analysis. You could discuss the ty
to present the girl in 'An Easy Passage' as having a fluid identity as she squeezes h
contrast, there is a lack of descriptive language in 'The Deliverer'.

Reader Response Activity: 'The Lammas Hireling'
The nature of the task requires you to develop your own personal response to th
of the text, supported by the analytical commentary provided in the guide.

Activity: Thematic Approaches
**Compare and contrast how the theme of childhood is presented in 'An Easy Pas
Nine-Year-Old Self'.**
Both poems present childhood as an idyllic and liberating time. Responses shoul
each poem. Both poems feature an older female narrator, with Dunmore imagin
her younger self. In the end, both speakers choose not to fully interact with the y
rebellious and linked to natural beauty – even when the younger Dunmore picks
are trapped both in their place in society and their inability to share the joy they

Reader-response Activity: 'A Minor Role'
The nature of the task requires you to develop your own personal response to th
of the text, supported by the analytical commentary provided in the guide.

Reader-response Activity: 'The Gun'
The nature of the task requires you to develop your own personal response to th
of the text, supported by the analytical commentary provided in the guide.

Activity: Reading Poetic Sequences in 'Out of the Bag'
Here, you are asked to take a wider perspective as you are looking at a poetic seq
textual support but the focus will be on shifts in tone and language within the te
between the language used to describe the doctor and his actions in the first sec
his power and control, and the language used when Heaney reflects on healing a
is an interesting contrast in verbs which highlight Heaney's inaction or lack of po
consideration of the third character of the mother within the sequence. An answ
differentiate between the voices of the younger Heaney and the adult Heaney.

Reader-reflection Activity: 'Giuseppe'
The nature of the task requires you to develop your own personal response to th
of the text, supported by the analytical commentary provided in the guide.

Comparison Activity: Rhyme, Form and Structure in 'Effects' and 'Material'
When responding to 'Material', you should note the regular rhyme scheme (*abcb
the formality of the narrator's strict upbringing. The voice insists she has a greate
intelligence than her mother, but the rigid form suggests otherwise. On first rea
loosely structured in free verse form. This would seem to convey the sense of a s
of disparate memories. However, it should be noted that there are discernible pa
the closing section of the poem. It is worth commenting on the effects of this tra

Close-reading Activity: Form and Meaning in 'Genetics'
The key to this task is realising that the strict formal demands of the villanelle se
Morrissey present the idea of genetic union. A response should consider which v
rhymes and the potential significance of this. In a question on form, meaning it is
in which meaning is created – the poem also uses a complex metaphor (recalling
suggesting the parents' broken marriage is in fact intact and long-lasting, as it is
specifically, her hands.

Reader-reflection Activity: 'Look We Have Coming to Dover'
The nature of the task requires you to develop your own personal response to th
of the text, supported by the analytical commentary provided in the guide.

Reading Activity: Humour in the poetic form of 'Please Hold'
This task requires a consideration of humour within the poem. Much of this com
between the 'voices' of the poem – the robotic telephone voice, the volcanic ang
platitudes of his wife. Expletives are used to convey his exasperation and serve t
the poet's website as he discusses the poem and what inspired him to write it. Th
http://www.ciaranodriscoll.com/#!a-level-english-literature-/cf8t

Close-reading Activity: 'On Her Blindness'
The task asks you to analyse the extent to which the speaker is 'honest' with him
response should consider use of idiom and imagery. Colour is referenced ironical
vision. The form links to the idea of a reflection or memory – the use of enjambm
nature. It is well worth conducting a comparison with Jonson's 'On His Blindness'
acceptance of the blindness as a fate determined by God.

Close-reading Activity: Approaching a Postmodern Poem
The final activity in the analysis section required you to identify the attitudes tow
in the poem. The key to this task was to recognise that the language used does n
of the speaker. He seems to have a level of curious admiration for the carefree w
lexis (vocabulary) reflects some of the paranoid responses in the tabloid press an
affluent section of society who look down upon those who would travel in these
address the shift into a more 'literary' register in the final lines – the speaker wo
there is something edifying, although doubts that it will be recognised by future a

Reader-response Activity
Given the nature of reader-oriented approaches, there are no strict guidelines al
important for the response to analyse the ways in which the reader's own conte
interpretation of the text. This would include factors such as age, education, exp
experience of the emotions or scenarios presented in the poem.

Structuralism Activity: 'Chainsaw versus the Pampas Grass'
The poem lends itself to a structuralist reading as the chainsaw is presented in di
pampas grass. The response should tease out some of these oppositions: *male ve
active*, etc. It is important to consider why these oppositions have been made.

Deconstruction Activity: 'The Journal of a Disappointed Man'
This poem provides a useful exercise in deconstruction. In observing others doing
attention to his lack of activity. His obsessive focus on the men at work suggest h

Postmodern Reading Activity: 'Ode on a Grayson Perry Urn'
You are able to use work from the earlier activity on this poem to answer this qu
familiar with both the original ode and Perry's urn in order to explore the nature
what you feel Turnbull's message is in combining these elements.

Psychoanalytical Reading Activity: 'The Lammas Hireling'
A psychoanalytical reading of the poem aims to provide textual evidence to supp
speaker's actions and motives. This would require an interpretation of certain wo
reading, as when the speaker refers to the hireling's face as *'lovely'*. This would t
killing, as he struggles to come to terms with his sexuality.

Feminist Reading Activity: 'The Furthest Distances I've Travelled'
You can draw on your earlier close-reading work on this poem. To maintain a fem
will need to consider what makes the language use specific to the female experie
how Flynn manipulates and loosens form and rhyme within the poem to suggest
also explore the extended metaphor of travel and evaluate its effectiveness as an
relationships.

Marxist Reading Activity: Power in Texts – 'Out of the Bag'
The poetic sequence lends itself to a Marxist reading, particularly in the poems li
poem illustrates the relationship between status and perceived knowledge and p
on evidence from the text, particularly in relation to language use. You will have
language in the second poem. He has claimed status as an academic, but this do
medical need. The poem articulates power struggles to some extent.

Activity: Postcolonial Reading of 'Eat Me'
A postcolonial reading interprets the male and female as representing the oppre
individual relationship reflects the way a more powerful group or nation has exp
group or nation until they have risen up and rebelled. Evidence would be provide
body as '*forbidden fruit*' and other images of difference.

Skill-building: Developing D
Exploration of Texts

To gain the higher grades it is necessary to demonstrate an informed personal
requires a detailed level of analysis. One way to ensure that responses are deve
scaffolds within the written response.

Meet PETER:
Acronyms are an easy way to help structure ideas in an exam situation. The acr

POINT – Present one idea about the writer's intentions / your interpretation.

EVIDENCE – Select a quotation from the text or textual detail which supports y

TECHNIQUE – Explain the particular technique or language feature the writer is

EVALUATION – What is the effect of the writer's choice of vocabulary or literar

READER RESPONSE – In what ways might the reader (or in the case of a drama

This process is then repeated for each of the key points you wish to make.

The sequence may be shortened slightly if the writer's technique is repeated, bu
ideas and enables candidates to show understanding of both the linguistic choice
plot, characters and themes, and the anticipated response of readers or audienc