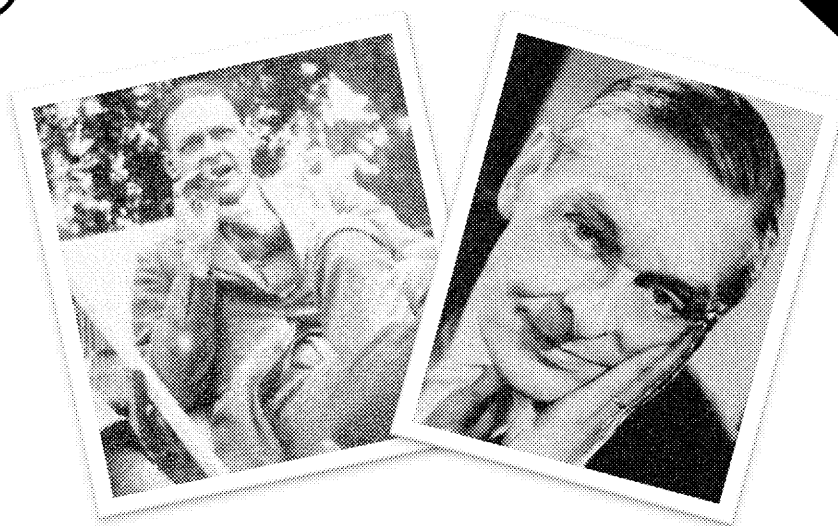


**2015 specification**  
first exams in 2017



# **T. S. Eliot's Selected Poems**

Comprehensive Guide for A Level  
Eduqas English Literature

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# Teacher's Introduction

This guide can be used in a number of ways. It has been designed to provide a structured learning pathway for study of the **Selected Poems** of T. S. Eliot, in preparation for the Eduqas English Literature A Level examination.

## Exam board information

The resources and activities should enable students to meet the assessment objectives of this A Level unit, as listed below:

AO1	Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.
AO2	Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.
AO3	Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.
AO4	Explore connections across literary texts.
AO5	Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

A question on Eliot's poetry will form part of Component 1 of the examination. In both sections of the exam, candidates will need to demonstrate their ability to:

- analyse how Eliot creates meaning in his poetry through his use of structure, form and language
- show understanding of how the culture and context of Eliot's era influenced readers in the early twentieth century, and how they continue to do so in the present day
- use a range of literary concepts and terminology to support their interpretations of the poems
- reflect on how different critical interpretations lead to different readings of the poems, and show an understanding of how a text can be read in multiple ways
- identify the attitudes and values expressed within the poems and consider how they relate to their meaning
- use clear, coherent and academic language when forming written responses to the poems

## How to use this resource

This comprehensive guide is based on close analysis of the poems prescribed for study, as well as thematic and structural analysis of the **Selected Poems** collection as a whole. Detailed notes are provided for each poem, considering aspects of form, structure and language (AO2). These notes are intended for the teacher but can be copied and given to students as revision aids once activities have been completed. Poetic and literary terms which may prove useful to the student are presented in bold type, with definitions provided in the glossary (Appendix 2).

The teacher may choose to follow the structure provided by this guide or instead use individual pages or sections from the resources for use alongside existing schemes of work. The language used in the resources aims to encourage *appropriate* use of terminology and *accurate written expression* (AO1).

The esoteric nature of Eliot's intertextual and cultural references can be intimidating for the A Level student. Allusions and references are traced in the individual poem analyses as well as the whole collection analysis. While a degree of *knowledge* of the key sources of Eliot's allusions (AO3, AO4) is desirable in order to illuminate the poet's intentions, most of the activities in the guide are designed to demonstrate that some *understanding* can be reached through active interpretation of the images and language presented (AO1, AO2). Such activities have a dual purpose – to increase the student's confidence in presenting personal interpretations, and to discourage written responses where the student's disproportionate or indiscriminate focus on intertextual references fails to address the task set by the examiners. At the end of the analysis for each individual poem there are practice essay questions designed to help students compare Eliot's poetry with that of Thomas Hardy, in order to help students prepare for the element of the exam which requires them to evaluate the poetry of Eliot and Hardy together.

Students will learn to appreciate that the struggle for comprehension in reading the poems serves to enhance the experience of the texts. Just as Prufrock, Tiresias and the various unnamed men and women face uncertainty and doubt, so the reader finds their understanding is limited to the deductions made from the fragments of language and images the poet presents (AO1).

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

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There is much in Eliot's work to engage the modern reader: the psychological discourse of public versus private self; the use of fragments and experimental forms to suggest the disintegration of society; the biting satire that charts the corruption of the modern world; the sensory images that convey the disorder of a world in crisis. The context of writing was a time of great social and political upheaval; the context of reception is a world that continues to lack stability or certainty for many (AO3). Students can decide for themselves if Eliot can still be claimed to be 'the voice of the modern consciousness'.

November 2017

## T. S. Eliot - A Brief Biography

- 1888 Thomas Stearns Eliot was born in Missouri on September 26, 1888, at the age of 18.
- 1906 Began study at Harvard University. Here he completed undergraduate and contributed several poems to the *Harvard Advocate*.
- 1910 Travelled to Paris to attend the Sorbonne for further study.
- 1911 Eliot briefly returned to Harvard to pursue a doctorate in philosophy.
- 1914 He emigrated to London, where he had previously spent some time in England.
- 1915 Eliot married his first wife, Vivienne Haigh-Wood. He began working for Lloyd's Bank.
- 1915 Ezra Pound assists Eliot in publishing a number of works in magazines. *Song of J Alfred Prufrock* in *Poetry*.
- 1917 His first book of poems, *Prufrock and Other Observations*, was published.
- 1920 Publishes literary and social criticism *The Sacred Wood*.
- 1922 'The Waste Land', now considered by many to be the one of the most important poems of the twentieth century, was published.
- 1925 Eliot made a director of publishing company, Faber and Faber.
- 1927 Eliot became a British subject and member of the Anglican Church.
- 1930 Publication of *Ash Wednesday*.
- 1933 Publication of literary criticism *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*.
- 1933 Eliot separated from his first wife after a troubled marriage.
- 1935 Eliot's verse drama, *Murder in the Cathedral*, performed. The use of Classical theatre.
- 1940 His social and historical work *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*.
- 1942 *The Four Quartets*, an extended meditation on time, God and existence.
- 1948 Eliot received the Nobel Prize for Literature.
- 1956 Eliot began his second marriage, to Valerie Fletcher.
- 1965 He died in London.

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# Critical Responses

## Eliot's Theories on Poetry

### Eliot on Poetry

*'Poetry may make us a little more aware of the deeper, unnamed feelings which form the substratum of our being, to which we rarely penetrate; for our lives are mostly a constant evasion of ourselves'* – in his acceptance speech for Nobel Prize.

### Eliot's 'Impersonal' Theory of Poetry

*'The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together.'*

### Eliot on 'The Waste Land'

*'Various critics have done me the honour to interpret the poem in terms of criticism considered it, indeed, as an important bit of social criticism. To me it was only the insignificant grouse against life. It is just a piece of rhythmic grumbling.'*

Eliot's opinions of his own poetry reflect many of the central themes which that 'our lives are mostly a constant evasion of ourselves' is reflected in the 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', while his theory of the mind as a 'receptacle for feelings, phrases, images' is illustrated through the heavy use of allusion at the heart of his work. Even his view of 'The Waste Land' as a 'piece of rhythmic grumbling' reflects a man who constantly battled with the notion that the writing of poetry was the face of onrushing modern progress.

## Critical Responses to Eliot's Poetry

Eliot regarded himself as a neoclassicist who 'subordinates personality to demureness'.  
Audio Guide to English Literature.

*'Intriguing fragments of images float about like flotsam and jetsam on the sea'* – P Sloane, specialising in Eliot's allusions and wordplay.

*'A private, impenetrable secret', 'the interest in image and symbol now an obsession freed from grammar and syntax'* – Stone, academic review of Eliot's modernist poetry.

*'the insistence on the externality of the object may limit the creative possibilities of the aspects of human nature which require more consideration before being discussed'* – P Sloane.

Poems characterised by 'overwhelming disillusionment at man's finity and resignation'.  
Ian Johnston, Liberal Studies lecturer.

These critical responses all respond to the boldly experimental language and imagery throughout his writing career. Both P Sloane and Stone, an academic review, argue that imagery and symbolism are key to the interpretation of the poems. They argue that Eliot clung to certain images and symbols as a means of staying afloat in the modern world. Two other critics, H Plutzie and Ian Johnston, consider instead man's limitations and 'imperfectability', contending that Eliot's poems were a way for readers could come to accept these aspects of man's existence. It is important to note the 'floating' nature of Eliot's poetry that these critics identify; interpretations of the poem thematically explores humankind's limitations through linguistic and structural experimentation.

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# 'Preludes' – The Dismembered Depiction

The 'Preludes' form part of Eliot's early work, written between 1909 and 1911, during his life between Boston, Paris and London. In this period he completed his undergraduate studies at Harvard and attended the Sorbonne, before emigrating to England on the recommendation of an admirer of his poetry.

## Title

A prelude is a musical composition. Traditionally, this piece would have served as an introduction to a larger work, containing musical motifs of a larger work. Chopin later developed preludes as individual pieces, each evoking particular emotions or sentiments. Works with a common theme were often referred to as 'preludes'. The meanings of the term can be seen in these poems, as each text evokes a time and place with a specific character in a style similar to Chopin's, but can also be seen as a precursor to the fragmented and fragmentary nature of modern urban life, such as 'Portrait of a Lady', 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' and 'The Waste Land'.

## Content and Themes

'Prelude' I presents a street at night. It is six o'clock, between light and dark, and an unknown observer notes 'the burnt-out end of smoky days'. The cosy image of a steak cooking is **juxtaposed** with the 'grimy scraps' and 'withered leaves' that are scattered on the rain. Despite being surrounded by people, the observer can only see the darkness before being drawn to the 'lonely cab-horse'.

'Prelude' II would seem to be the same street on the following morning. The speaker, being roused by 'faint stale smells of beer' subverts the traditional association of morning with light and beauty. Here, the detritus of the previous night is still in evidence, in the form of 'muddy feet'. The actions of the people in the street are seen as part of that daily routine creates socially acceptable behaviour which masks true feelings of anonymity and degradation of personality. People are merely thought of as 'shades/In a thousand furnished rooms'.

'Prelude' III is a second person address to an anonymous woman, recalling a 'thousand sordid images' which she imagined as she lay upon her back suggesting a prostitute. The speaker projects the belief that such images constitute the woman's life, as her soul is linked to the night. Morning seems to suggest some respite with 'the first light', but however, the woman's experience of life has tarnished her belief in society.

*'... had such a vision of the street  
As the street hardly understands;'*

Loss of hope is universal as 'Prelude' IV presents us with an anonymous man. His soul is seen as 'stretched tight across the skies'. The sunset, normally seen as a beautiful transition, here symbolises torture, as the man aches to be free. Nature is dominated by modernity as the alternative for his soul is to be 'trampled by insistent feet' by the commuters leaving work. The people hold no interest for the speaker, who instead considers 'the conscience of a blackened street'.

There is a shift in tone as the speaker, now representing the poet, seems to seek meaning in these images, hoping to reveal 'some infinitely gentle/Infinite aspects of the world'. The speaker is cynical about the response of the reader to the images presented, and instructs the reader to 'be patient'.



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hands across your mouth, and laugh'. The final image suggests a dystopian 'ancient women' scavenging in 'vacant lots'.

Collectively, the poems reduce humanity to a series of sensations and body parts that have been erased. Characters seem disconnected and isolated. People continue to feel that their souls are in decline. The street is personified, suggesting it is more than just an inhabitant. The filth and decline in the physical environment reflects the decline in consciousness.

## Writer's Techniques

Eliot presents a series of disparate images drawn from the urban landscape. The effect is almost 'cinematic', as they are presented with a **montage** of sights and sounds (to urge caution with comparisons to cinema, which was a form and technology at the time of composition).

'Preludes' I and II are objective presentations of images from a particular viewpoint. 'Preludes' III and IV are subjective as we are allowed access to particular characters' form of perspectivism.

The **rhyme scheme** is irregular but there is some use of end-rhyme, particularly in 'wraps'/'scraps'; 'stamps'/'lamps'). The style is *vers libre*, or free verse. Without a strict rhyme, it is often a device to convey the nature of perception, with some thoughts more vivid than others. He adapts his metre and rhythm in a similar way.

The evening 'settles down' while the morning 'comes to consciousness'. This contrast suggests that time is still vital and dynamic, even if the people are not. The poem is full of the 'muddy feet' and a flawed consciousness. That the urban environment is a source of vision is evident when 'Prelude' III claims the street 'hardly understands'. The external reality of the street reflects the damaged inner consciousness of society.

The woman in 'Prelude' III provides an example of Eliot's 'objective correlative'. The reader should interpret her as an externalised, objective representation of a feeling or emotion. Her experience and actions serve to represent the sterility of modern consciousness. She has the sensibility to understand the futility of her existence, but lacks the psychological strength to act upon her thoughts.

**Semantic fields** of dirt and damage predominate; the 'burnt-out' days, the 'grimy' scraps, and 'withered leaves', the woman's 'soiled hands', 'the blackened street'...The physical death and decay echoes the psychological and spiritual decay of the street's inhabitants.

**Sibilance, assonance and alliteration** are used repeatedly in the poem to create a sense of rhythm. The showers 'beat/On broken blinds'; the harsh plosive 'b' serving to highlight the harshness of being observed. Likewise, as the horse 'steams and stamps' so too we imagine the frustration builds. Softer combinations suggest some resignation to the routine of life. 'lamps' and the soulless eyes of the workers 'Assured of certain certainties'.

**Objective correlative**  
representing a feeling or emotion by associated symbol

**Semantic fields**  
related to a particular subject

**Sibilance**  
repetition of sibilant sounds or passages

**Assonance**  
repetition of vowel sounds in a line or passage

**Alliteration**  
repetition of the same letter at the beginning of each other

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## Links with Other Poems

A number of critics have noted how the personification of the street and the air describe the weather presage the sordid streets frequented by Prufrock in 'The Prufrock'. Another poem with a 'musical' title, 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night', is a parallel and can be seen as an expansion of the key themes linking social and 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night' and 'Preludes', the semantic fields of dirt and of 'Prelude' IV is unusual in that the male voice implies the voice of the poet to see Eliot strives to distance himself from the speakers to create an objective artefact. 'Preludes' do not have the references to the past that characterise much of Eliot contribute to the sense of an idealised past, it could be argued that the subjects and therefore, no hope.

## Active Learning Task: 'Preludes' – Sensory Imagery and 'Disment

### Task:

Re-read the 'Preludes' and select textual references which demonstrate Eliot Copy quotations into the grid below.

	I	II	III
Sight			
Sound			
Smell			
Taste			
Touch			

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### Discussion points:

- 1) The woman and the street can be seen as examples of Eliot's device of the 'In what ways can both be seen to symbolise the disintegration of social cons
- 2) In 'Preludes' I and II, how does Eliot use sensory images to present a view of In 'Preludes' III and IV, how does the experience of men and women compare

### Eliot and Hardy comparison: Practice Essay Question

'Compare and contrast how Eliot and Thomas Hardy make use of personification in their poetry'



# 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night' – Human Limitations of the Knife'

This work was completed in Paris in 1911.

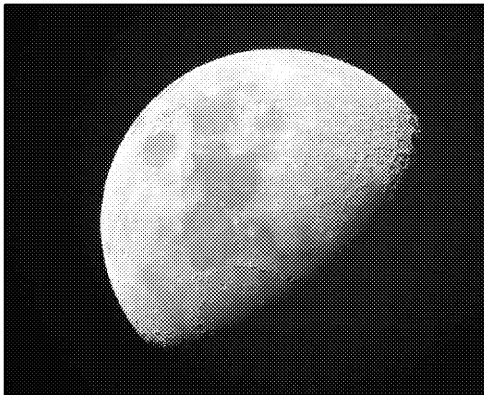
## Title

As with 'Preludes', Eliot suggests a musical composition in the title of the poem. With 'Preludes', a relationship between the texts is implied. A rhapsody is a piece of music of its exuberance and energy. This sets up an expectation in the reader's mind. The irony in the title prepares the reader for the disappointment and cynicism.

## Content and Themes

The speaker of the poem walks through an urban landscape late at night. The rain which triggers a parallel mental journey and serves to 'dissolve the floors of thought to a structure suggests the speaker had previously assumed he had a firm consciousness. His retreat into memory is involuntary and without motivation.

*'Midnight shakes the memory  
As a madman shakes a dead geranium'.*



He looks to the moon to illuminate his nocturnal journeys. There is irony in his choice as the speaker is controlled by memory and the moon reflects light from another source and is held in place through gravitational forces.

His only other 'companions', the stars, are distant sources of light. He likens each lamp to a companion that drives him onward, directing him towards the city's inhabitants. He is directed towards a woman who is hesitant and keen to move towards him.

The woman's features evoke sympathy, along with the observation that her dress is 'torn and stained' and her flaws are seen to reflect inner corruption, as she twists her eye towards him.

This leads the speaker to recall a pair of unrelated images – a twisted branch and a child. The branch is brittle and decayed, and perhaps these are qualities he sees in the woman.

The walk continues, and a cat is seen scavenging in the gutter, while a child is seen. Both images seem somewhat sinister – the cat eats 'rancid butter' and the child's actions are 'automatic'. Both acts suggest the agents suffer deprivation. Yet the child's face is evoked when the speaker remarks 'I could see nothing behind that child's face'.

The speaker seems to be a spectator rather than a participant in life. His only companion is not with a human but with a crab, who 'gripped the end of a stick'.

When the speaker reconsiders his use of the moon as a guide he reveals a woman, albeit one attributed to the streetlamp who 'muttered in the dark'. The inconstant woman who dissembles, winking and smiling and smoothing 'her face' merges with the description of the ageing prostitute, her 'smallpox' scar a mark of disease. There is an air of loss about the woman. She has a romantic soul but no 'paper rose' and 'eau de cologne'. Love has abandoned her. The following 'nocturnal smells'. Images that should be vibrant here convey a sense of loss.

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she imagines are 'sunless dry geraniums'; the roast chestnuts are overwhelmed in 'shuttered rooms'. Everything is covered in dust.

The speaker returns to his hotel at four o'clock. He is released from his memory number on the door. He appears to thank his memory for guiding him back. His memory holds the key to the prison that is his joyless life. It seems to be both trapped in a cycle or secure in a futile routine. This is the realistic limitation of memory. The poem ends with the bitter recognition that the mundanity of life is 'the

### Writer's Techniques

Eliot successfully weaves the fragmented images together through the use of **stream-of-consciousness**. What we have is a **pastiche** of the dramatic monologue, where the poet creates a persona who conveys their subjective experience to the reader. Eliot experiments with the form by weaving multiple voices through the text. We share in the memory of the prostitute as her thoughts emerge from the personification of the moon provided by the 'lamp'.

**Stream of consciousness:** a form of writing in which the thoughts and feelings of a character are revealed in a continuous, unbroken flow.

**Pastiche:** a style of writing that imitates the style of another writer or period.

Inanimate objects are **personified** and also given a voice, claiming human qualities. The speaker becomes dehumanised. **Symbolism** is present, in combination with sensory imagery, to re-present the process of human retrieval of memories.

The passage of time and connections between present events and past memories are central to the poem.

The form is mostly **vers libre**, with some informal use of rhyme (e.g. 'Colours' and 'caused' in the last stanza reflect how memory distorts). The position of the final line and its use of rhyme provide 'the last twist of fate'.

### Links with Other Poems

As in 'Preludes', people are dehumanised and seem to lead a semi-conscious existence. The particular are seen as functional and debased – the urban landscape of both 'Preludes' and 'A Windy Night' presents women who, in commodifying the body, have sacrificed their humanity. This return to the theme of the male's inability to act in the 'Prufrock' poems and

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## Active Learning Task: 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night' – Images of Memory

### Task 1: Discussion Record

You should make notes on ideas discussed in class and keep them alongside the poem.

To get started, record your ideas about the 'crowd of twisted things' the speaker

In what ways could the branch and the spring be seen to represent modern

### Task 2: Semantic fields

Make notes on patterns you notice in the 'lamp's' description of the moon in the following lines;

*'Regard the moon,  
La lune ne garde aucune rancune,  
She winks a feeble eye,  
She smiles into corners.  
She smooths the hair of the grass.  
The moon has lost her memory.  
A washed-out smallpox cracks her face,  
Her hand twists a paper rose,  
That smells of dust and eau de Cologne,  
She is alone  
With all the old nocturnal smells  
That cross and cross across her brain.'  
The reminiscence comes  
Of sunless dry geraniums  
And dust in crevices,  
Smells of chestnuts in the streets,  
And female smells in shuttered rooms,  
And cigarettes in corridors  
And cocktail smells in bars.*

### Task 3: Annotation

What does the poem reveal about the nature of memory? Annotate the poem to show how memories are fluid and blend together in the text.

#### Discussion Points:

How does this relate to the presentation of women in the poem? Discuss as a class how we remember things differently to men in 'Preludes'

#### Eliot and Hardy comparison: Practice Essay Question

'Discuss the differences and similarities between Eliot and Hardy's presentation of memory in their poetry'

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# 'Portrait of a Lady' – Dynamics of

## Title

The title recalls Henry James's novel of the same name. In the opening line the protagonist makes a wry observation about 'the ceremony of afternoon tea' from the perspective of a young male. In contrast to the novel, the lady of 17 years and it is the man who feels trapped by etiquette to continue his after-romantic feelings for her.

Eliot may also be painting a modernist 'portrait' – in traditional works of art the subject's attention; this artefact uses perspectivism to reveal her from the male's view. What have in common with other 'portraits' is the lady's attempt to 'pose' for her portrait.

## Content and Themes

Part I takes place 'among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon'. The speaker's confusion or blurred consciousness. December ends the year's cycle, an 'ending', perhaps to a relationship.

The speaker is scathing about the woman's attempt to 'arrange' her apartment. Her pretence undermines the emotional integrity of her later claims. The light is 'left unsaid' in the tomb'. The lack of vitality and unnatural silence caused by things 'left unsaid' in the burial vault; while the **allusion** to Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers of the relationship under scrutiny.

The woman's words are recorded as direct speech as she shares her views. Her words 'intimate' and 'friends' are carefully selected by her in the hope that they will affirm their friendship. The man is dismissive of such attempts and notes how 'the conversation slips' into idle chat. There is no real communication as each relies on **phatic talk** to mask their true feelings. The woman is more actively seeking harmony and resolution, carefully selecting her words like the 'attenuated tones of violins'.

**Allusion:** to Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet from the previous lesson.

**Phatic talk:** conversation that serves to maintain a relationship, such as with a friend.

She reveals her loneliness in the second stanza. Her life has lacked purpose and she feels 'composed so much, so much of odds and ends'. She struggles to iterate her parenthetical reaction from the man seems to taunt but attributes her with 'blind!').

The speaker continues to make the link between their social orchestrations. His apathy turns to distaste, the coronets are 'cracked', causing disharmony. In the headache that beats like a drum, an ominous warning of the 'false note' in the routine they have created through his visits has become simultaneously more 'capricious monotone' that reminds him of his emotional impotence.

The man's only solution is to urge her towards intellectual debate. He feels disconnected from current affairs, engaging his intellect rather than his emotions. Even in divorce he divorces himself from her through a stimulant, the 'tobacco trance' that serves to numb his feelings.

Part II alerts the reader that the lilacs are blooming and that it is now April. This is an alternate perspective as the reader observes the scene;

*'She has a bowl of lilacs in her room  
And twists one in his fingers while she talks'.*

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The woman attempts to shape and control his behaviour as she has reshaped her own. Her comments on the lilacs are thinly veiled references to her own feelings about the lilacs and her self-esteem in his hands. She is more direct and critical as she reveals her 'cruel and has no remorse'. It is significant that the lilac is seen to symbolise her own feelings. Unwittingly, she is damaging their relationship, as she 'twists' and manipulates his feelings.

The man resumes his address to the reader and reveals his reaction, confirming the lady's beliefs about cruelty by smiling and continuing to drink his tea. The tea is central to the charade – it forms part of a social ceremony enacted between host and visitor and enables both characters to maintain a respectable veneer. From the Victorian period, the 'afternoon tea' served as an acceptable way for potential lovers to meet and engage in conversation in polite society. Here, the man is trapped by social convention and resents the implications of being her 'young visitor'.

The visits continue into August. The woman seems to desire youth as an absolute. The man serves to remind her of her 'buried life' and she assuages her fear of the culture of a younger generation. She seems oblivious to the incompetence of the man, who is becoming increasingly repulsed by her. Her voice to him is as 'broken violin'. His tumultuous emotions cause him to see the inside as he continues to observe her.

The woman then attempts to appeal through flattery – first through gratitude for her 'gulf' of age, then through self-deprecation as she meekly ponders 'What can I do for you?'. The reader questions her apparent powerlessness when her response to her own feelings out the parameters of the relationship she desires, 'friendship and sympathy' as she reminds him that she is 'one about to reach her journey's end'. The man's demise as she swiftly asserts that she will continue 'serving tea to friends'.

While the lady is manipulative, the young man lacks nobility in his response. He does not respond appropriately and so takes his hat to leave. He recognises that he is 'cowardly' in his behaviour by revealing his tendency to live life vicariously, preferring to observe rather than participate. His immediate goal is to escape the situation while showing restraint. He does not remain 'self-possessed'. His true frustration threatens to erupt when he hears her worn love song. This symbolises for him the 'mechanical and tired' nature of conventional romance and the scent of flowers 'recalling things that other people have forgotten'.

Part III tells us that it is now October and the sterile relationship has continued. The man visits her a visit, though he is now 'ill at ease'. He seems inextricably bound to this woman, subjugated to her as his ascent of the stairs feels like it has been made 'on his knees'.

The woman has turned interrogator. She knows he is going abroad and does not return?'. She quickly regains her composure and brightly reasons that he will find so much to learn'. The man's smile is more forced now and 'falls heavily' as he thinks of the life that makes up her disordered life. This is a small but telling detail – she has once prepared for his visits.

The man is impersonal and clinical, now treating her like a specimen. He does not write because it confirms his predictions. The woman shows increasing circumspection for a direct approach, questioning why they are not friends. She panics when faced with true emotion. They are now 'really in the dark' as they enter a threatening territory of the truth.

The woman compounds his discomfort by revealing that she has confided in him. 'Our feelings would relate'. The woman's faith in fate and new beginnings is evident.

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world has been disrupted while she will continue 'serving tea to friends'. The society expects of him and 'dance like a dancing bear'. He longs to return to the appointments of the previous year and implores her to join him in his 'tobacco'. He abruptly signals the breakdown in communication.

The speaker's **bombastic** tone and apparent lack of concern belies his guilt and indifference when he thinks 'what if she should die' seems forced. There is a reference to her hypothetical death with 'grey' and 'smoky' afternoons, after which an 'evening' 'rose'. He is confused about his feelings towards her, 'not knowing' how to respond. His inaction that he would admire her death as a dynamic event. He even argues that it is an 'advantage' in death, comparing such an event to the 'dying fall' in a piece of music. It is a combination of notes and harmonies that stirs the emotion. After this harsh ending, he 'have the right to smile'. This is an ambiguous ending, which can either be seen as a sign of nature or evidence of his guilt and remorse.

### Writer's Techniques

Eliot's choices of language and form highlight the lack of communication between the characters – the silent male communicates with the reader through internal monologue, while the woman's speech is recorded but ironically is not as direct as she would claim.

Time is used to structure the cyclical and routine nature of their meetings. The intrusions of the outside world have a **symbolic** function – the winter fog links with the lack of clarity which occurs in these social situations, the mechanical piano serves to remind the male persona of the artificial and repetitive nature of love in the modern world.

Direct speech gives the woman power and suggests objectivity. It may be ironic that her words seem particularly noteworthy. This device could serve to indicate his emotional distance from her words as a scientist would record observations, in order to form a 'theory'.

There is use of **informal rhyme** to stress certain elements. In the lady's final line, the **triple rhyme** of 'fate/rate/late' emphasise her assertion of will as well as sorrow. As she reverts to her refraining of 'serving tea to friends'.

**Allusions** are made to musical harmony throughout the poem. They work to suggest that readers will appreciate his distaste for a woman whose voice he compares to a musical instrument. With a musical background, his clinical evaluation of their relationship is a contrast. The suggestion that her death will be like a 'dying fall', a resolution of chords in a harmonic progression, evokes sadness but lacking strength.

The 'dying fall' is also an intertextual reference as the phrase is used by Oscar Wilde. He makes a similar link between musical and romantic harmonies. The title of the poem references a novel by Henry James. Eliot frequently employs intertextuality to suggest that the present situation lacks a vital element present in the events of the past. These references also serve to illuminate his themes but have often been criticised for their difficulty for the reader. We will return to this criticism when looking at 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'.

**Symbolism**  
means of symbolising  
symbolic meaning  
to objects, events

**Informal rhyme**  
which nearly  
rhymes but not  
exactly

**Triple rhyme**  
rhyming lines  
with three words

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## Links with Other Poems

Like the other 'early' poems studied so far, this poem relies on a certain amount of social context. The woman may be a 'lady' of social standing, but she lacks the sensibility to read the man's cues. Eliot uses literary and cultural allusions to create thematic links for his reader. The frequency of these references increases in the later poems, most noticeably in 'The Waste Land' and 'Four Quartets'. Eliot's implied criticism of the superficiality of 'high-class' society is evident in 'Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'. This poem is one of a number of poems that have

## Active Learning Task: 'Portrait of a Lady' – Showing 'Independent Opinions and Judgements'

### Task 1: Initial Impressions

While annotating the poem, record your initial impressions of the man and the woman. You should comment on their use of language and intentions.

As a challenge, you could find an appropriate quotation to support each of your impressions.

	Male	
I		
II		
III		

### Task 2: Creative Response

Imagine you are the male character and you have moved abroad. Write a letter to the woman in which you try to explain how you felt about any relationship you may have had. What feelings are

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#### Discussion Points:

- 1) What is the significance of the man's silence and the woman's direct speech?

#### Eliot and Hardy comparison: Practice Essay Question

'How do Eliot and Hardy present central male personas in their poetry?'

# 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' – Romantic 'Mock-Heroic'

The poem was written in 1910 and published by Ezra Pound in *Poetry* magazine contemporaneous with 'Preludes' and 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night'.

## Title

Like 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night', the poem's title is laced with irony. The label 'love song' with the pedantic use of both initial and surname by 'J. Alfred' suggests a self-conscious character who is unaccustomed to wooing. He is our 'hero' yet the love song will not be conventional.

## Content and Themes

The speaker invites 'you' to accompany him through the city. It is unclear if this is a direct address to the reader, an appeal to an unknown woman or an internal monologue reflecting the consciousness of Prufrock guiding his public self.

The reading of the poem as a discourse of the self can be supported by the structure of Dante's *inferno* which relates a character's response to a question of identity. The poem equally support the notion of an address to the reader, as a character is alone in the city as they feel no-one will hear them in their private purgatory. An ability to address the reader an insight into the potential angst and suffering of Prufrock.

The conventionally romantic image of the sunset is disrupted as Prufrock describes the city as 'etherized upon a table'. The environment lacks consciousness, just as Prufrock lacks the beauty that surrounds him.

The journey begins in squalid environments where love is absent and sex is a debased and mechanical act in 'cheap hotels' following contrived seductions in 'sawdust restaurants'. The streets are claustrophobic and make him weary, 'like a tedious argument/of insidious intent'. Prufrock does not want to respond to the question 'What is it?'. **Ambiguity** and **polysemy** here form part of the **mock-heroic** style of the poem, as the 'it' of the question could be related to the nature of existence, or may simply be a query about an unidentified object.

Prufrock and his companion now make their 'visit'. There is a contrast between the streets he has abandoned and the social niceties of the 'visiting' classes as the speaker seems equally critical of the behaviour on display before him, as;

*'In the room women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo'.*

The vacuous impermanence of the ladies and their habit of discussing rather than creating Michelangelo, the creative and dynamic artist. This juxtaposition seems to mock the social conventions of the time.

As Prufrock turns to observe the weather, it seems even the fog and smoke are 'yellow' by the filthy city. The weather is described in animalistic terms – the fog 'curled once about the house and fell asleep'. The smoke 'curled once about the house and fell asleep'.

**Ambiguity**  
of clarity

**Polysemy**  
available to  
audience

**Mock-heroic**  
with mundane

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vivid, it is telling that Prufrock's comparisons conjure docile pets. The act of his own lethargy and inaction as he procrastinates about declaring his love.

He reassures himself that 'there will be time' to make amends and construct a life that will prove acceptable in upper middle class society, 'a face to meet the faces of the world'. His thoughts now turn to considering a world where people both 'murder' and 'are murdered' on the morality of such matters but moves to consider the mutability of life. He feels paralysed by the 'hundred indecisions', 'visions' and 'revisions' which prevent him from 'toast and tea'. The **bathos** and banality of a mind that equates questioning the meaning of an ordinary day is laid bare here. The image of the women discussing Michelangelo returns like a refrain, making his song a song of the 'chattering classes'.

**Bathos:** striving to achieve or attain

There is a shift in tone and Prufrock seems galvanised to act when he reiterates 'And indeed there will be time', yet he immediately weakens. He asks 'Do I dare?' Prufrock envisages a rejection of his proposal and frets about coming out of his shell. The hyperbolic question 'Do I dare disturb the universe?' comes from a sense of Prufrock's life, as his small social circle is compared to the cosmos.

Prufrock turns from self-doubt to the vilification of women. He wearily explains 'I have known them all already'. He seems to hold these women responsible for his mundane existence and social inertia, declaring;

*'I have measured out my life in coffee spoons'.*

There is a disparity between the self-deprecation of the man who wonders 'should I presume?' and the cynical confirmation that 'I have known the eyes already'. In conventional love poetry the eyes are 'the windows of the soul' but Prufrock considers 'the eyes that fix you with a formulated phrase' as soulless and insincere. He implies that these women have prostituted both their bodies and their spirits by giving themselves to him. The revulsion he expresses towards these women masks his fear that they analyse him like a scientific specimen 'when I am formulated sprawling on a pin'. In going to them, he has revealed that he is a romantic failure.

This is not to say that Prufrock does not yearn for romance. He notices perhaps that his lack of fulfilment may be linked to his struggle to view women holistically, reducing them to dismembered body parts. He feels unconnected to humanity, trapped in a crab, free from awareness of his own limitations.

The image of a drowsy evening 'smoothed by long fingers' is debunked by 'malingerers', once again conveying a sense of lethargy and apathy. Prufrock, who has prayed, wept and fasted for the love of a woman. He conflates the image of Salome, who demanded the head of John the Baptist as payment, with his own desires. He envisages his 'bald head' upon the platter. Prufrock soon realises the **romantic irony** in this image and realises 'I am no prophet'.

**Irony:** a statement or action that states the opposite of what is meant or a reality that is the opposite of what is expected

The poem reaches a nadir as Prufrock imagines that death, the 'eternal Footman', will 'snicker' when his time arrives.

Prufrock's greatest fear is to be declared as a non-entity and so he chooses to remain in a state of embarrassment. That he is resigned to inaction is conveyed in the use of the word 'perhaps' which suggests the opportunity for doing has passed. He rationalises his decision

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would have failed to understand the woman (who would insist 'that is not how to communicate would lead to separation).

Prufrock's life has been a disjointed jumble of unconnected events and objects 'teacups'...He struggles to explain his existence, which he tentatively hopes may be **irony** in his elevation of the trivial events in a lifetime, where a word is a complex message in 'the settling of a pillow'.



The climax of the poem is Prufrock's declaration 'No. I am not a fool'. A moment of energy is expended in confirming that he is not a fool with the 'fool' and 'attendant lord' Polonius. As in Shakespeare, he remains a minor character, a support for those who will act.

He bemoans the approach of old age and aims to follow the fashion of the times, trousers and wearing his hair parted at the back. He has many questions. His confidence falters even with these trivial matters 'to eat a peach?'.

His romantic soul strains to be released as he fantasises about mythical creatures, known to lure men to their death. This is a corporeal alternative. Even in his dreams, he predicts failure – 'I do not think I am a dreamer'. It is a sad reflection on his life that this unfulfilled fantasy is still a source of comfort. There is stark despair in the final line;

*'The human voices wake us and we drown'.*

### Writer's techniques

The poem mocks heroic conventions and Prufrock's limitations are frequently of Romantic **irony**. Romantic irony builds an image of value and solidity, only to reveal that the image is based on nothing. This technique creates a sardonic tone that permeates the text with a sense of irony.

Romantic irony relies heavily on **bathos** created by the prosaic nature of Prufrock's language. **Bathetic** when it strives to be serious or elevated but achieves only a comic effect. An example of this would be the 'coffee spoons' that Prufrock uses. While bathetic, the overall effect of Prufrock's anti-heroic sentiments almost always with caution prevents him from truly experiencing love and happiness.

Rhetorical questions are used throughout the poem to convey his uncertainty and doubt.

The allusion to Hamlet is apt as Hamlet spends much of the play deliberating. The irony of the comparison is that Prufrock does not commit to action as Hamlet does, remaining in the background.

Eliot also makes effective use of conditional tenses to convey Prufrock's resignation. 'If' and 'would' make all his plans to act hypothetical. Hope is cancelled out, revealing the improbability of such action taking place.

### Links with Other Poems

The poem links to 'Portrait of a Lady' and 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night' through the speaker. Like these poems and the 'Preludes', action is located within an urban society that lacks warmth and genuine feeling. Some see Prufrock as a precursor to the perspectives presented in 'The Waste Land'. His cynicism and resignation are shared by the unnamed man who confronts the commuter on the bridge.

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## Active Learning Task: 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' – Bathos, Banality and the 'Mock-Heroic'

### Task:

Using your knowledge of the poem's central themes, complete the following

Metaphor/Simile	Explanation of Effect
'...streets that follow like a tedious argument'	
'I have measured out my life in coffee spoons'	
'...when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin'	
'...all the butt-ends of my days and ways'	
'The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window panes'	
'No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be; Am an attendant lord, one that will do, To swell a progress, start a scene or two.'	

### Discussion Points:

- 1) Find the moment in the poem in which you think it becomes mock-heroic.
- 2) Explore the mock-heroic nature of the poem. What does it say about the po heroism in modern life?
- 3) What is the irony in the title of the poem?

### Eliot and Hardy comparison: Practice Essay Question

'Consider the importance of the themes of resignation and failure to the poetry of

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# 'The Waste Land' – 'Modern Life is'

## Title

The 'wasteland' referred to in the title can be read literally as the modern world where governments have been laid to waste in the aftermath of the Great War and are on the brink of collapse. The title has symbolic significance, as the wasteland is a metaphor for a population who have lost their faith.

Due to the complexity of the poem, the content of each section will be discussed separately.

## 1. 'The Burial of the Dead'

Taken from the title for the Anglican funeral rite, the title foreshadows the physical and spiritual death and decay prevalent in the 'wasteland'.

The speaker boldly asserts 'April is the cruellest month'. This recalls the opening of Chaucer's General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. It serves as an ironic reminder that spring is usually seen as a time for rebirth and spiritual pilgrimage. In Chaucer's poem, the 'pilgrims' were a mix of deeply religious figures and earthy characters with robust attitudes to sex and love. Eliot may be suggesting that attitudes to both spirituality and sexuality have atrophied in the urban desert.

The conventional image of spring being a time of growth and rebirth is subverted in the lines that follow. Here, spring tortures the 'dead land' by forcing it to 'breed' lilacs, the rain is not a vital force but a cruel reminder of the 'dead roots' that will not grow. The speaker sees this as a time where memory should be acted upon. The speaker prefers winter, when the 'forgetful' snow covers all.

The scene now shifts from the symbolic to the concrete. A female speaker recalls the conversations of her summer coffee mornings. The use of 'and' mimics the structure of a conversation. There is a fragment of conversation in German, which translates 'I'm not really a real German'. Her memory of 'staying at the archduke's' reveals her to be an exile. This alludes to the archduke Franz Ferdinand, whose assassination triggered the start of the 1914–1918 war. There is romantic irony, as she relates a tale about sledding down snowy mountains make her 'feel free'. The reader anticipates an epiphany but the speaker's revelation that she reads at night and travels south in winter.

Line 18 sees a return of the prophetic voice as a philosophical question is posed:

*'What are the roots that clutch...  
...rubbish?'*

The reader is addressed as 'Son of Man' and the quasi-biblical syntax suggests a divine voice. Although 'Son of Man' was God's address to Ezekiel in the book of Isaiah, it also alludes to Jesus, who sacrificed himself for a humanity that has now turned its back on faith.

The landscape seems part of an apocalyptic vision – a desert with the 'dead' sun provides no shade or water. The 'heap of broken images' recalls God's destruction of the golden calf in the Old Testament. The poem itself could be the fragments remaining after the destruction.

The shadow of the rock is offered as a relief but seems to come at a price. The speaker's words seem ambiguous and the tone becomes ominous as the voice offers a vision of the future: 'show you fear in a handful of dust'.

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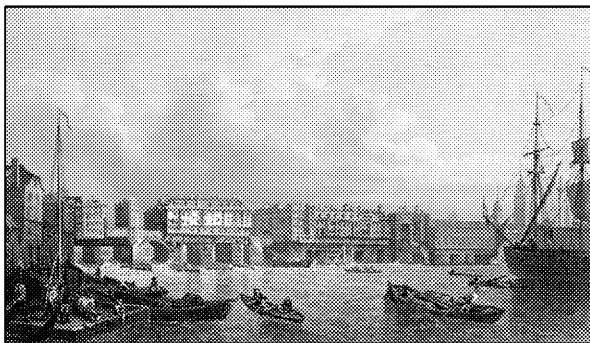


A fragment intrudes on the vision – it has been taken from Wagner's opera *Tristan and Isolde*, the lovers' song of hope as they call out across the sea. This provides a thematic link to the poem, indicating another consciousness has entered the poem, the 'hyacinth girl'. She recalls a meeting with a lover. Her tale should indicate that there is still some hope, but this is undermined when her eyes, often symbolic of faith, seem to fail and she is left with a fragment of another language intrudes – we may relate it to Marie, who feels the same way in fact from the same opera as before, and is spoken at a moment of hopelessness.

Another shift in tone in line 43 heralds the arrival of Madame Sosostris. She is a fortune teller, a character in Aldous Huxley's novel, *Crome Yellow*. In Huxley's narrative, a man who has disguised himself as a fortune teller at a fair to swindle the gullible, makes an error with her reading of the Tarot cards which could suggest she is a fortune teller. The reference to Huxley's story would have been recognised by Eliot's contemporary readers, reflecting his telling criticism of the modern age, where faith in traditional religion has been replaced by occult and extraordinary divinations.

Madame Sosostris can also be seen as an alternative version of the prophetess, the Sybil of ancient times, her prophecies are not designed to be taken literally. In the poem, her prediction of drowning. Water, once associated with baptism and purification, here signifies a fall. The cards she draws, the reference to 'belladonna' recalls the fatally poisonous flower, linked to the image of the 'wheel of Fortune' and fate.

Like others in 'The Waste Land', Madame Sosostris is deficient – she lacks the moral compass of a merchant's burden. This is perhaps an ominous warning about the effects of modern capitalism. She cannot find the Hanged Man, the card whose figure is suspended like the crucified Christ. Christianity is absent in this world, a detail which symbolises Eliot's search for faith and spirituality at this time.



The reader is then transported to a dystopic vision is given a concrete form when the observer remarks 'London Bridge'. The movement from the city to the water itself and may be seen as a critique of the mechanical and reductionist nature of modern life provides a slow death for modernity. The routine is all that is left for the individual in a world created by the war. The observer notes 'thought death had undone so many'.

Both of these lines are clear allusions to the poem. The speaker notes the 'trimmers', those souls in 'limbo' who seem destined to be caught in eternal and meaningless labour. Hell is the 'death-in-life' of a London community.

The speaker then meets a fellow soldier who fails to recognise him. It is one of the many echoes of Peter's denial of Christ. Here, it presents a general disappointment in the modern community in a large city. A macabre allusion is made to a buried corpse – made in Webster's *The White Devil* about the unburied corpses lacking friends, suggesting the futility of belief in a resurrection in a world filled with so much death.

The final line of the section references a line of Baudelaire's poetry in which he criticises the hypocrisy in their failure to act.

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## Active Learning Task: 'The Burial of the Dead' – Independent Analysis

### Task:

Note the language used to compare spring with winter in the opening lines

	Verbs	Adjectives
Spring	<i>'breeding'</i>	<i>'cruellest'</i>
Winter		

### 11. A Game of Chess

The title of this part of the poem refers to a central plot device in Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, where the game of chess is an analogy for a sexual seduction. In this section the poet presents two contrasting 'seductions' which convey the contrived and debased versions of love practised in the 'wasteland'.

The opening lines remind the reader of Shakespeare's description of Cleopatra on her 'burnished throne'. In the play 'Antony and Cleopatra', Cleopatra is depicted as a once-powerful ruler who is ultimately compelled to take her own life when love fails. The reader anticipates an equally doomed relationship in this poem.



The unnamed lady is materially rich but lacks happiness. Her room is bathed in light, and the woman is surrounded by products designed to enhance her beauty. There are 'strange synthetic perfumes' which induce false emotions, having 'drowned the senses'.

The story of Philomel is invoked. The comparison of the lady to a woman who was raped and then transformed into a nightingale reinforces her role as a victim of her situation.

When her suitor does arrive, he remains silent whilst her barrage of questions reveals a lack of both the world outside her rooms and the thoughts inside his head. Like the 'Lady', she fails to possess emotional integrity, moving from heartfelt concealment to a popular jazz tune. She lacks the stoicism to be a modern-day Cleopatra. So, in the 'game of chess' their relationship has become.

The register and tone dramatically shift as the reader eavesdrops on two people at their closing time. The speaker recounts the advice that she gave to Lil, whose husband is in military service. Her speech is plain and direct, with the rhythm of the line shifting from a simple language to a profound revelation on the nature of love.

The frailty of working class relationships disrupted by men being called for military service is revealed, as Lil has received a warning that other women will give her husband a similar warning.

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to improve her physical appearance. Love is not discussed and the role of the man as lover and provider of sexual gratification.

The Barman's frequent interruption, 'HURRY UP PLEASE...' adds a sense of urgency. Action needs to be taken now. The woman's drunk final words as she descends into madness and commits suicide.

The section opens and closes with lovelorn women who use their remaining lives. There is an ominous suggestion that the women in 'A Game of Chess' are destined for unhappy fates.

### **Active Learning Task: 'A Game of Chess' – 'Knowledge and Understanding'**

#### **Task:**

Reread **lines 77–110** in the section entitled 'A Game of Chess'. Highlight any details about the woman's *room or her belongings*. Consider these details in your response to the questions below.

- What do we learn about the woman's social background?
- In lines 86–90 her perfume and cosmetics are described. How may they reflect her altered consciousness?
- The allusion to Philomel in lines 98–103 recalls the violation of a woman transformed into a nightingale, a bird often associated with beauty and song, suggesting about the woman's understanding or experience of love?

### **111. 'The Fire Sermon'**

The title of the third section refers to a sermon from the Buddhist tradition. The temptation of fire is a warning against earthly temptations and lust (lines 111–112).

There seems to be no hope for the urban population. 'The nymphs have departed'. The extent of the devastation is such that the speaker mourns the absence of 'sandwich papers' and 'cigarette ends' would testify to some social interaction.

There is a disconcerting clash of past and present, as a mythic figure sits in a setting surrounded by hidden decay, in the rats and the bones hidden away in the line. His brother and father were kings, and may be Eliot's wry allusion to the figure who was left to oversee the barren lands of the spiritually bereft.

While the speaker ruminates on such dark thoughts, life continues as normal for the poor and middle classes. The clash of sensibilities and disintegration of society is shown in line lengths and rapidly changing voices of consciousness.

In lines 217–252, the prophetic Tiresias observes the loveless tryst between a man and a woman. Tiresias, as a hermaphrodite, does not judge either the male or female. The man is a clerk and does not desire his caresses, which she receives with 'indifference'. This is an example of a female frustrated in their search for a love that will transcend the physical.

We are taken on a short tour of the streets, which recalls Prufrock's world of the past filled with music. The glories of ancient civilisations are recalled by the decay of the present with its 'inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold'.

From line 266, the lines are dramatically shortened as 'the river sweats/oil and sweat' and the lines convey the fluctuating movement of the boats and tides. Informal lines suggesting the underlying structures of nature, but the location of the poem is the anticlimax.

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A chant begins and takes the reader through time to Elizabeth and Leicester and gold'. The chant returns and an ambiguous voice enters the poem. We present or the past as a confession of events at Richmond blend with a trou becomes Margate as the abandoned women across the decades 'connect no spiritual chant cannot be sustained in the squalor and is reduced to 'la la', e

The poem then references Augustine's epiphany of Carthage burning. All and a spiritual conversion in the face of hellish 'burning' sin. The lines frag to end with damnation by the fire of temptation.

## **Active Learning Task: 'The Fire Sermon' – Personal Interpretation**

### **Task:**

Make notes on the effects of personification in the opening lines of 'The Fire

Comment on Eliot's choice of items, such as 'cigarette ends', missing from t

## **IV. Death by Water**

The fourth section is the shortest in the poem. Written as a ten line stanza eight, the speaker seems to be a choric figure, relating the details of 'death t sea reflects the wheel of fortune, 'the profit and the loss' as Phlebas the Pho minor character provides another link to the past as the speaker warns aga the fate of Phlebas 'who was once as handsome and tall as you'.

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## V. What the Thunder Said

The opening lines of the fifth and final section recall the events of the garden of Gethsemane, the 'silence in the gardens' and 'the agony in stony places'. The Christian story by which the speaker lives his beliefs as the regenerative power of the thunder is evoked. Both combine but

*'He who was living is now dead  
We who were living are now dying'.*

The reader is transported back to the arid landscape of the opening lines of 'The Waste Land' but only rock'. The speaker still hopes for change and considers how things were water. The wasteland seems inhospitable, in the 'dead mountain', the inhabitants are 'sullen'. Still, hope remains and the vision of a pool with running water, the song of the hermit-thrush, a bird whose call imitates a dripping tap.

The speaker imagines a third member of the party. Influenced by records of the past, journals which describe a hallucination of an extra member of the party, the spiritual epiphany on the road to Emmaus, the third figure representing the

This vision and testament of faith triggers new energies in the wasteland, a new shape of a city forming in the mountains. The destruction of the old, corrupted as the 'falling towers' are seen in 'Jerusalem Athens Alexandria Vienna London' 'bats with baby faces' and inverted towers signals the end of a decaying world.

There is a place for worship but it stands empty, with the dried bones of the dead. The speaker again recalls Peter's denial and the universal lack of faith in the 'unreal' cities. The final sections of the poem draw their structure from a Hindu fable from the Mahabharata. To ask their father god, the thunder, for advice and he replies 'Da'. Each group of people is named as 'Datta', to give alms; as Dayadhvam, to be compassionate and as Damyata, to be obedient.

The poet expands on how these 'instructions' have been ignored in the modern world. The reader as 'friend' is advised that life is 'not to be found in our obituaries' or with the 'beneficent spider' who will make a web in our shrouds. If society seeks to be compassionate interaction must occur – the door must be unlocked between the private soul and public self. The reflection on self-control returns to concrete experience, a sailing trip. This blends with the mythic Fisher King who intends to set his land in order. A surprising shift of register introduces the childhood nursery rhyme 'London Bridge is falling down'. Despite seeming playful, rhymes are often based on harsh social truths such as conquests or plagues. Once again, the speaker returns to the downfall of the cities of Europe. Swallows, princes and ruined towers are mentioned in other languages, no longer available in the desolate land of the speaker. The poem is a form of salvage of past glories. The speaker explains the 'modern world' as a 'ruined city'.



*'These fragments I have shored against my ruins  
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.'*

Even in an admission of truth, there is no original or creative drive – the speaker is using words from Kyd's Spanish Tragedy.

The speaker's voice asserts 'Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata. 'Give. Sympathy. The fading repetition of 'shantih shantih shantih' looks to eastern faiths for peace that passeth all understanding'.

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## Writer's Techniques

Structurally, the five sections of the poem mimic the five-act structure of tragic drama. Scenes are set in rooms and by riverbanks. The use of direct speech and **colloquial speech** rhythms also reinforce the sense of dramatic presentation. Genres are blurred just as consciousness and moral absolutes have been blurred.

Colloquial  
commonplace

The fragmented voices babble at the reader and evoke the Biblical tower of Babel to help us understand Eliot's fragments and allusions. The use of various languages and the universality of experience whilst making the reader directly experience it. There is a lack of both personal and public integration.

A wide range of tones, rhythms and registers are used to create the range of form in this dislocated world and the poem grasps to recall styles – from the prophets to the drunken ladies and snippets of jazz lyrics.

References to the past combine direct quotations, clear references to historical events and allusions to previous texts. Fragments like these suggest that those in the present have to rely on remnants of the past. Love and civilisations now crumble, and the loss of glory serves to heighten the pathos of the speakers and situation.

## Links with Other Poems

The fragmentary nature of the imagery presented recalls earlier experiments in 'Preludes', 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night' and 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'. 'Gerontion' share age and resignation, while *the hollow men* are inhabitants of the poem. 'The Waste Land' can be seen as a work which revisits and expands on earlier works. An interesting contrast is provided through study of his Quakerism. In the early 1940s, 'Burnt Norton' seems to continue the theme of spiritual death and the hope provided in 'Little Gidding'.



Tiresias

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## Active Learning Task: 'What the Thunder Said' – 'These Fragments I Have Shored Against My Ruins'

### Independent Learning Task:

Annotate the final section of the poem. Revise your notes by completing a table of voices and styles.

Line References	Nature of Speaker(s)	

### Discussion Points:

- 1) The characters presented in 'A Game of Chess' provide contrasting perspectives. What is being suggested about the nature of love and personal relationships?
- 2) What does the reduced line length between lines 185 and 195 reflect about the poem?
- 3) How does the 10-line stanza of 'Death By Water' link to the themes of the last section of the poem?

### Eliot and Hardy comparison: Practice Essay Question

'Compare and contrast Eliot and Hardy's use of allusion and intertextuality in their poetry.'

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# 'The Hollow Men' – Enacting 'The Culmination'

## Title

'The Hollow Men' has been regarded as 'the culmination of despair in Eliot's work'. 'Hollow' can refer to an absence of spirituality as well as to a lack of emotion. The epigraph refers to Kurtz, a character from Joseph Conrad's novel, *Heart of Darkness*, a character whose geographical isolation from society fosters an abandonment of moral values/amoral/no sense of right or wrong.

## Content and Themes

The setting is the desolate and arid landscape of 'death's dream kingdom'. The poem explores man's inability to interact with others. In the modern world, people prefer isolation and it is in this respect that they are merely scarecrows, 'hollow' and 'stuffed' who cannot experience emotion.

There is some attempt at solidarity as they lean together, but their lack of vision is conveyed in their archaic exclamation of 'Alas!'. The voices are 'dried'. They speak against wrongdoing, preferring to 'whisper'. They realise the limitations of their existence and of themselves as 'quiet and meaningless'.

The symbolic use of wind and aridity that permeates much of Eliot's work. Both rural and urban decay are evoked – the 'dry grass' and the 'rats' feet. In Eliot's poems such as 'Gerontion', there is a comparison between rotting structures and themselves.

The men are characterised by what they lack. The rhythms of the descriptive Christian creed yet lack dynamism. The men's lives are encapsulated as;

*'shape without form, shadow without colour,  
Paralysed force, gesture without motion...'*

The men lack vision and the reader assumes that the men are sightless as they 'have crossed/with direct eyes' to peace in death. The hollow men ask to be left alone that they are in spiritual limbo not through violence but through inaction. The 'hollow men' and 'the stuffed men' serves as a plaintive incantation, underlining the theme of the poem.

Section 2 of the poem considers the sensations presented in the opening stanza.

The 'direct eyes' of the previous stanza are the guides to 'death's dream kingdom'. The individual who feels unworthy and afraid. The speaker 'dare not meet' the guide. A confusion of images is created as in the next instance the eyes 'do not see' but transform into 'sunlight on a broken column'. Here the speaker recalls a night of voices carried in the wind. Rather than providing solace these sensations of the plight of the hollow men, as the voices seem to sing a solemn song recalling the past, they become 'more distant...than a fading star'. The speaker's wish to become invisible in the world is linked to fear and decay. They wish to disguise themselves as a rat. This perhaps links to the self-loathing shared by the spiritually bereft.

In section 3, we revisit the 'wasteland' of Eliot's earlier eponymous work. The poem moves to the cactus and raised stone images. It is an earlier time than the wasteland of the previous section, but the broken and worship is still misplaced through 'the supplication of a dead man'. As they strain to exist 'under the twinkle of a fading star'. Stars, frequently associated with the divine world, are diminished in power in this land. There is a suggestion of hell as

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other kingdom' but the presence of 'tenderness' and 'prayers' suggests some are trapped in a purgatory due to inability to act as a force of change.

Section 4 returns to the lament for eyes to guide them from 'this valley of darkness' to beauty in the surroundings, violently described as the 'broken jaw of our Lord' in meeting other souls. There is a resignation to fate as the group 'grope together'. This action parallels the mechanical relationships in the modern world. So they 'stop to discuss problems, preferring the mechanical, unquestioning routine'. The 'salvation' will occur. The language is ethereal as the speaker envisages the 'multifoliate rose' that guide the faithful to eternal life. The polysyllabic adjectives have with an energy that is soon extinguished in the collective description of the 'hollow men'.

The final section begins with an altered nursery rhyme – in the cold morning the hollow men encircle the 'prickly pear', unwilling to face the harsh reality of their predicament.

Their purgatory is to remain trapped between 'the idea and the reality'. The 'Shadow' of death. Attempts at prayer are futile, as half-remembered lines of liturgy combine with a horrified realisation that they have created their own 'hell'. The failure to exist – they have not created or responded and life has seemed 'vain' – a sentence rather than a celebration. The Shadow of death without resurrection throughout their lives and they have failed to react. They are merely 'essential' – a 'descent' to unknown terrors.

The repetition of 'the shadow' is a death knell for the hollow men, who grasp at 'prayers'. The childlike repetition of 'This is the way the world ends', combined with the climax 'Not with a bang but a whimper' is a visceral attack on the reader's sense of self, as they fade from existence.

### Writer's Techniques

The verse is *vers libre* with some rhyme. In many of the poems this creates a sense of the process of thought and memory. Here it emphasises the lack of structure of the 'hollow men'. Where rhyme does occur, it serves to underline the horror of their situation. The terseness of the verse reflects their collective despair.

The rasping, coarse sounds of the consonance and near rhyme ('as'/'ass') highlight the bleakness of the land. Partial and half-rhymes frustrate satisfaction, reflecting the lack of fulfilment of the 'stuffed' men.

Carefully selected vocabulary and diction place stress on words such as 'dry', 'sterile', 'stuffed' – a sense of sterility. Where alliteration occurs, it creates an ironic contrast between the ideal and what people and what they have actually achieved, as when they are 'trembling with fear'.

Much use is made of repetition and irregular line length, to simultaneously convey their final desperate thoughts and the static and resigned physical state that they are in.

Fragments of recognisable registers are used to achieve particular effects. The final stanza suggests a regression to childhood in the face of fear, while the liturgical language achieves a balance which recreates the measured language of the liturgy. It is an antithetical creed which is a summation of the lack of action of those who are 'hollow'. The vocabulary used to express these ideas is associated with 'creation' and 'life', yet the hollow men are sterile because their lives fall between such affirmative actions.

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## Active Learning Task: 'The Hollow Men' – Dramatic Exploration

### Task:

In groups, devise a dramatic representation based on one section of the poem. Record your approach to the task; techniques used (mime/choral speaking etc); text and language or text selected to guide performance.

Dramatic approach to text	
Images presented	
Language selected	
Other considerations	

### Discussion Points:

- 1) Consider the relevance of the title – can you link it to the titles of some of Eliot's other poems?
- 2) What is the potential symbolic significance of eyes/night/desert in the poem?

### Eliot and Hardy comparison: Practice Essay Question

'Examine how Eliot and Hardy explore the twin themes of suffering and death in their poetry.'

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# 'Journey of the Magi' – 'I should be glad of

## Title

'Journey of the Magi' is based on the Nativity story of the wise men of the birthplace of the infant Christ. It was first published in August 1927, shortly after Eliot's confirmation into the Anglican Church. The poet had expressed a desire for a new faith, an escape from the void of society and a life of 'disorder, meaninglessness'. The poem is often read as an expression of the personal and spiritual challenges faced by Eliot after his conversion. Eliot was experiencing marital difficulties with his first wife, Vivienne, after his conversion. He also struggled to reconcile his new faith with his previous literary writing style. Like the Magi, he was troubled by 'the old dispensation'. 'Journey of the Magi' is included in the collection of poems published as *Ariel Poems* in 1930.

## Content and Themes

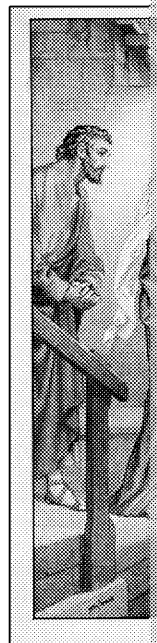
The poem presents the struggles and uncertainty of the Magi as they witness the dawn of Christianity and experience discomfort in 'the old dispensation' of their previous belief system.

The opening five lines present a first person recollection of the adverse conditions encountered by the Magi on their journey to see the newborn Christ. Eliot has taken these lines from the 1622 Nativity Sermon of the preacher Lancelot Andrewes, whose sermons he admired. The lines establish a clear dramatic voice for the persona adopted. The tone set is one of a remembrance laced with bitterness, in stark contrast to the 'exceeding great joy' of the traditional gospel text. The use of a direct reference from another source also reminds the reader of the polysemic nature of religious stories, as they are re-presented over the centuries.

The speaker is one of the Magi, who seems to be recounting his tale to both reader and scribe. The harsh alliteration of the 'cold coming' suggests the harsh conditions. The speaker emphasises that the journey was made at 'just the season' of the camels, often a key part of the iconography of the Nativity, are somewhat distant recollections of the speaker. They were not the strong and majestic creatures of the cards, but were

'...galled, sore-footed, refractory,  
Lying down in the melted snow.'

The reader begins to realise that the conversion of the Magi is not the 'epiphany' or transformation of traditional theology. The speaker acknowledges his flaws, confessing **ambivalence** in his 'regret' of previous experience. The regret may be that he indulged in luxuries, but the sibilance provided in his memory of 'the summer's day / The silken girls bringing sherbet' creates a sensuous image that implies a wistful longing for his homeland. In stark contrast are the fractious camel men who accompany him, 'and grumbling' the lack of 'liquor and women'. The unwelcome surprise of the 'prices' adds to the impression of squalid materialism at odds with his spiritual journey.



Ambivalence  
feeling  
some

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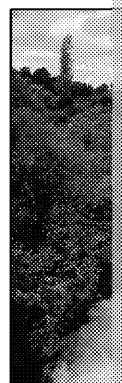


The night is symbolic of secrecy, and the decision to *'travel all night'* suggests. The detail of the men *'sleeping in snatches'* adds to the sense that they feel the and religious codes. In a startling contradiction to the traditional tale of the angels to affirm Christ's birth. The speaker instead recalls unease brought

*'...the voices singing in our ears, saying  
That this was all folly.'*

The second stanza presents a shift in tone, an awakening consciousness to a new day. There is respite in *'a temperate valley'*. As the stanza continues, the on Christian symbolism, creating a dramatic irony as the reader interprets the seen while the Magi remains unaware of the prophetic nature of his words. the position of the new convert – they believe, but lack the knowledge of deep understanding of their faith.

There is a concentration of natural imagery which suggests growth and rebirth – the valley is *'wet'* and *'smelling of vegetation'*. The *'running stream'* evokes a sense of progress and beauty. The water-mill *'beating the darkness'* can suggest both man's harmony with nature and Christ himself, who will beat spiritual darkness. The *'three trees on the low sky'* are observed in a neutral way by the speaker, but allude to the Crucifixion (Christ and the two thieves on Golgotha) and the turmoil to come. It may be read that the *'low sky'* alludes to the Christ of the book of Revelation when judgement will be made.



At a time when the Magi journey to celebrate the birth of an infant, the real salvation of the faith is brought about by the death of this child, as the *'old'* as a symbol of paganism and older beliefs, moves away.

The journey then takes the speaker to *'a tavern with vine leaves'*, recalling the at Canaan when Christ transformed water to wine, while at the door men are conflating allusions to the soldiers casting lots for Christ's garments as he is silver which paid Judas for his betrayal. The Magi cannot make meaning from receiving *'no information'* to support the quest for the infant.

Even on completion of the journey, there is a lack of spiritual resolution. The *'not a moment too soon'*. In place of a moment of epiphany and joyous revelation of Christ child, there is bathos, as the speaker recalls:

*'Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory...'*

The equivocation and archness of *'(you may say)'* provides an anticlimax to the seem to express a muted, understated acceptance of the humble surrounding the requirements of the prophecy have been satisfied in the discovery of the the infant symbolises the dawn of a new faith, but there is no elation or emotion

The final stanza returns to the dramatic frame of the speaker relating his memory to a written record. There is a weary resignation in the memory that events too affirmative tone is in evidence when he asserts *'And I would do it again'*, but the urgent repeated imperative that the scribe

*'...but set down  
This set down  
This...'*

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The source of the speaker's ambivalence is then revealed, as he ponders,

'...were we led all that way for  
Birth or Death...'

The speaker shows conviction in his belief that the infant's birth provided a new faith was emerging, yet there is anguish caused by the 'hard and bitter' confusion such a belief creates. The speaker seeks faith but is caught between the new faith, he must reject his old ways – the birth has signalled a death. He is no longer comfortable 'in the old dispensation' and material concerns of the East. His countrymen now seem 'an alien people clutching their gods' yet fulfilment in a faith he was not born to. His final revelation, 'I should be glad' resignation to a life of spiritual exhaustion. He hopes for his own death with the death of Christ, an event that would consolidate the faith that was to become

### Writer's Techniques

The poet makes effective use of form in his choice of **dramatic monologue** (a form successfully employed by Robert Browning, whose poetry he admired). By giving the Magi a voice, he creates immediacy and a sense of authenticity as the true hardship of the journey is revealed.

**Dramatic**  
that takes  
extended

**Symbolism** is used in a subtle way. Eliot alludes to Christian symbols which in their context they would have no significance for the speaker as he lives in suffering and death. The comment may be that symbols are arbitrary and

The use of **colloquial language** highlights the lack of fulfilment for the Magi of the infant Christ 'satisfactory'. The modernity of the Magi's musings creates an emphasis on the timeless nature of the quest for faith.

### Links with Other Poems

The persona presented in 'Journey of the Magi' faces uncertainty and spiritual a world experiencing change provides echoes of Prufrock's unease in 'The Prufrock'. Although the speaker faces spiritual confusion, there is an affirmation present in the natural imagery, which provides an interesting contrast to the encountered in 'The Waste Land' and 'The Hollow Men'. The poem presents faith in the remaining *Ariel Poems*, *Ash Wednesday* and the *Four Quartets*.

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## Active Learning Task: 'Journey of the Magi' – 'I should be glad of'

### Task 1

Re-read lines 6–20. Highlight or mark any words with negative connotations for lines 1–5:

*'A **cold** coming we had of it  
Just the **worst** time of year  
for a journey, and such a **long** journey  
The ways **deep** and the weather **sharp**,  
The very **dead** of winter.'*

**Task 2:** How does Eliot's use of language convey the hardships suffered by

### Discussion Points:

- 1) How does the tone of the speaker compare with what you know about the biblical Three Wise Men story?
- 2) The poem was published shortly after Eliot's conversion to the Anglican faith. What religious and faith present in the poem?

### Eliot and Hardy comparison: Practice Essay Question

'Discuss the presentation of the theme of religion in the poetry of Eliot and Hardy'

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## 'A Song for Simeon' – 'Grant me thy peace' – 'P

### Title

The poem 'A Song for Simeon' is based on the story of Simeon, who appears in the Bible. In these verses, Mary and Joseph present the infant Christ to Simeon, who declares that sorrow and pain will be part of Christ's life but the story is nevertheless a declaration of faith. Simeon declares that he is content to die now that he has seen the future salvation.

### Content and Themes

As in 'Journey of the Magi', Eliot uses first person address and a persona based on a biblical character to present an alternative perspective on conversion of faith. Simeon's direct address is not to the reader but to the 'Lord' himself. He clearly presents his petition in an invocation resembling a prayer.

A song is usually joyous and celebratory but here the tone is weary and resigned. The plosive alliteration of the hyacinths '*blooming in bowls*' suggests some bitterness at the proliferation of the flower that some associate with death. The hyacinths are specifically '*Roman*', an allusion to the occupying rulers whose power flourishes through maintenance of fear.

It is a time of encroaching death, as '*the winter sun creeps by the snow hills*'. The speaker feels the time is imminent, as '*the stubborn season has made stand*'. The hard strident 's' sound is used in the alliteration in the speaker's reflection that '*my life is light*'. He feels his life is a brush of the feather, '*dust in sunlight and memory in corners*'. The images are suggesting that he sees himself as a man with no future.

In line 8, he beseeches the lord to '*Grant us thy peace*'. This wish for all human peace is a personal recollection of his life's service to his faith. Simeon has '*walked many years*' in advanced years and his perennial pilgrimage, a believer in search of a sign.

He recounts that he has led his life according to the scriptures, having '*kept the law*'. In the alliteration and rhythms of the line, the reader finds echoes of prayer. The hard 'f' and 'p' sounds contribute to the bitter tone. The dissonance is again employed as he envisages an uncertain future for '*my children's children*' created through the violence of '*foreign swords*'. The emphasis on '*the time of peace*' seems surprising in the context of the dramatic frame (Mary and Joseph present the child to the temple).

The third stanza presents the incongruous juxtaposition of pleas for peace and the prophecies of pain and sorrow. Simeon foresees Christ's future pain and death, '*desolation*'. Any peace will be temporary, symbolised in the child. The bird is a harbinger of '*this birth season of decease*'.

Like the Magi, Simeon is aware of the significance of the child but knows he will not live long enough to see the establishment of a new faith, as Christ is yet an '*unspoken word*'. Simeon's '*consolation*' is death.



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There is ambiguity in Simeon's affirmation to the Lord that future events will come 'in thy word'. While suggesting Simeon's acceptance of divine power, the subsequent lines suggest the hardships endured by the faithful, who

*'Shall praise Thee and suffer in every generation  
With glory and derision...'*

Those with faith will become 'light upon light'. Although recalling Simeon's vision, he separates himself from those with complete faith:

*'Not for me the martyrdom, the ecstasy of thought and prayer,  
Not for me the ultimate vision.'*

This vision, like the use of Christian symbolism in 'Journey of the Magi', enhances the practice of fervent believers. There is some foreshadowing of the lives of the faithful. This is a reference drawn from the works of Dante, highlighting the layered perspective of the faithful.

Having presented an honest acknowledgement of the limitations of his faith, Simeon makes a personal plea to the Lord, imploring '*Grant me thy peace*'.

The parenthetical aside is delivered to Mary, Christ's mother. The violence of the intensity of hardship the faithful must endure.

The weary resignation of a man 'tired' with life while 'dying in my own death' suggests Simeon maintaining faith. This is at odds with the traditional representation of Simeon dying to die, secure in the knowledge a saviour has arrived.

There is ambivalence in the final lines as he desires the Lord to

*'Let thy servant departments  
Having seen thy salvation...'*

In these lines, Eliot closely paraphrases Luke's verses. In the gospel, Simeon dies, whilst here the possibility remains that salvation is rejected by a man who

## Writer's Techniques

The choice of **discourse** is significant, as Simeon's words take the form of a prayer and provide echoes of prayers and public testaments of faith. There is irony in Simeon expressing a difficulty in having faith and a desire to be freed from a life of faith.

Eliot's **allusions** to Dante's vision of purgatory enhance the idea of Simeon's faith with no salvation. Like the magi, he is caught between the worlds of the living and those in purgatory are trapped and cannot make their way to Heaven.

## Links with Other Poems

Along with 'Journey of the Magi' and 'Animula', this poem explores an examination of faith and an examination of the doctrine that prescribes the paradoxical nature of faith. As part of the Ariel collection, this poem was published at a time of radical changes in his life, as he converted to a new faith and faced personal challenges.

Eliot tried to explain his motivation for writing these poems in the published introduction (August, 1930). He writes how '*between the usual subject of poetry and 'devotion' an important field still very much unexplored by modern poets – the experience of man trying to explain to himself his more intense human feelings, in terms of the divine goal...*'

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## Active Learning Task: 'A Song for Simeon' – Purgatorial Poems

In pairs, try to compare and contrast the speakers in 'A Song for Simeon' and 'Journey of the Magi'. You should consider the nature of their faith, their attitudes to life, and how they express their feelings.

Point of comparison/contrast	'Journey of the Magi'	
Nature of speaker's faith		
Attitude to life		
Use of language		
Tone		

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### Discussion Point:

- 1) Does Simeon look forward to death with a greater faith or is this an expression of despair?

### Eliot and Hardy comparison: Practice Essay Question

'Explore how Eliot and Hardy use poetic devices such as alliteration, assonance or onomatopoeia to create meaning in, or develop the themes of, their poems'

# 'Animula' – The Nature of the Simple Soul

## Title

The title may have been suggested by a pagan prayer of Hadrian, addressed to the goddess Minerva. 'anima' was regarded as the conscious driving force which formed the essence of the human soul. T. S. Eliot begins the poem with an adaptation of a line from Dante's *Divine Comedy*: *'his hand, like a wayfarer...the simple soul.'* Dante's 'anima' seeks God but is denied. Eliot's 'animula' is more earthly.

## Content and Themes

There is **bathos** in the descent from the opening adaptation of Dante's verse which declares the soul to be *'issued from the hand of God'*, to the grounding of the human soul in a *'flat world.'* It is an uncertain future that faces the fresh soul as it is released into *'changing lights and noise'*, to an environment which may be *'damp, chilly or warm'*.

The infant soul is not explicitly referred to but is implied as a subject in lines 1-10 which describe the actions of an infant as it develops and interacts with its surroundings. The lack of a concrete subject reflects the intangible nature of the soul, which searches for emotional and material gratification as the child begins *'grasping at kisses and toys'* suggests biological impulses that belong to the 'animal', the 'animula'. The philosophical reflections are juxtaposed with simple sensory pleasures that the child derives from the world around it – *'the Christmas tree'* and *'the wind, the sunlight and the sea'*.

From line 11, the poet seems to observe the growing consciousness of the soul, who now *'studies'* all things encountered. The creative imagination develops, *'actual and the fanciful'*.

As in the other Ariel poems, the reader may be somewhat surprised by the sudden shift to hardship. In the midst of the simple and joyous pleasures of the child's life, the soul is confronted with the *'heavy burden of the growing soul'*.

*'The heavy burden of the growing soul  
Perplexes and offends more, day by day...'*

Life now seems to be a struggle which increases *'week by week'*. The syntactical complexity and inverts *'perplexes'* and *'offends'* heightens the sense of frustration and conflict, reflecting a mature evaluation of moral uncertainty by the unknown speaker. The *'simple soul'* can reside in the *'newborn'* convert as well as the developing soul. *'may or may not'*, the language of the rules of childhood which illustrates the tension between *'freedom and control'* in the individual.

In gaining experience, the soul is no longer joyous but diminished, now *'the simple soul'* is in search of solitude and escape from *'the pain of living and the drug of dreams'*. The numbness of experience projecting resignation on to the actions observed. That dream of escape numbs the pain of daily experience suggests a death of imaginative freedom for the young or newly converted.

The speaker believes that it is not God but *'the hand of time'* that shapes the soul, which seems bleak. Experience of life causes the soul to become

*'Irresolute and selfish, misshapen, lame.'*

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There is acknowledgement of the existence of *'warm reality, the offered good'* rejected through fear and the soul remains in isolation. The soul is no longer 'light' of Christ but has become a dark and ominous presence,

*'...shadow of its own shadows, spectre in its own gloom.'*

The speaker suggests that the quest for knowledge stunts the soul. The interior *'disordered papers in a dusty room'* is uncomfortable in their faith and subsumes

The final stanza returns to the *'animula'*. The reader seems to be privy to the intentions. He dedicates his thoughts and intentions to the rebels and adventures. His faith in these figures seems more steadfast than his soul's dedication to a

The final line subverts the common invocation for God to be with us at our time

*'Pray for us now and at the hour of our birth.'*

The reader is included in the prayer as the poem supports the view that the by human existence. This would seem a bleak interpretation, which suggests experience prevent the adult from embracing faith. Humans are fallible but contrition will bring redemption – the convert must accept the diminished hope appears to be in the inclusion of the prayer – if faith and devotion remain redemption. The substitution of 'birth' for 'death' also reminds the reader of Christian doctrine – a death is required to be born in faith, yet through birth absolute faith of the innocent may be destroyed.

### Writer's Techniques

There is a disparity between subject and style, as the development of the 'soul' increasingly sophisticated terms. This serves to foreground the discord between

'Animula' is the *'simple soul'* which combines the **neo-Platonic** concept of the 'anima' with the human 'animal'.

**Neo-Platonic**  
ancient Greek

There is some irony in that we are reminded of our biological state yet the soul is said to set humanity apart.

The *'animula'* is referenced in the title but becomes an implied presence through omission of the soul as subject of the actions reflects the belief that the soul

The majority of the poem is in free verse. Where rhyme is employed or suggests the poet trying to capture the essence of the soul. In lines 9 and 10, the full that the soul is closer to perfection in the innocent child responding to nature

### Links to Other Poems

Like 'Journey of the Magi' and 'A Song for Simeon', this poem provides a convert's difficulty in establishing faith. The dramatic voice is not the central perspective of an experienced adult who struggles to rationalise the conversion, so, suffers a lack of faith. The speaker whose soul is *'unable to fare forward'* a paralysis of 'The Hollow Men'.

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## Active Learning Task: 'Animula' – The Nature of the Simple Soul

The poem considers the nature of the soul and how it is affected by experience. The 'simple soul' by examining changes in the speaker's tone and argument. Consider the contrasting perspectives on the soul. You should use these quotations in your discussion.

<i>'Issues from the hand of God, the simple soul':</i> Images of innocence	<i>'Issues from the hand of the world':</i> Images of experience

### Discussion Points:

- 1) Discuss as a pair how the term 'soul' can be used in religious and secular contexts of the term apply to 'Animula'?
- 2) Considering the presence of these two contexts in the poem, discuss how the speaker's thinking about the nature of the soul.

### Eliot and Hardy comparison: Practice Essay Question

'How do Eliot and Hardy present the themes of the soul and the afterlife in their poetry?'

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# 'Marina' – 'What Seas What Shores'

## Title

The poem takes its title from a character in Shakespeare's *Pericles*. Marina is the daughter of King Cleon of Tyre. Pericles, believing his wife and Marina's mother to have perished in the care of King Cleon and his wife and returns to Tyre to quell various uprisings. He seeks to claim his daughter, only to be told she has been murdered at Cleon's command. Marina has escaped death through a series of fantastic events and is reunited with her mother, who is revealed to be alive and serving as a nun in a temple. Marina is saved by her father who has assisted her in escaping from a bawdy house.

Marina is essentially a figure of hope and redemption. She endures threats and persecution from the queen, bawds and pirates, a reflection of the corruption which pervades the world. Pericles and Marina are just and moral figures in the play and as such, are symbols of hope and the promise of future happiness.

## Content and Themes

The opening line is striking in the rhythmic urgency of the fragments of question and answer. 'What' suggests confusion and frustration, with the lack of geographical knowledge and the extent of the search for the long-lost daughter. The lack of specific detail in the opening is as fantastic as the ship approaches the unknown shores. The 'scent of pine and sea' suggests the positive power of nature to endure and there is hope that father and daughter will be found. The speaker's lament – 'O my daughter' – captures the sense of anguish and loss. The opening suggests dramatic monologue as the previous lines are now set into context.

The second stanza starts on a new subject, as a series of metaphors and figurative descriptions reveal those who face both physical and spiritual death. The reader wonders how the aggressors 'who sharpen the tooth of the dog' and the vainglorious 'who glitter with the glory of the hummingbird' relate to the eponymous heroine. If seen as a social commentary, Christian allusions can be detected, with some links to the seven 'Deadly' sins, as 'those who sit in the sty of contentment' can serve to conjure a vivid picture of slothful beings whose lifestyle resembles that of pigs. A reader with knowledge of the play may link these groups with the various characters who seek to harm Marina and her father's retribution.

If considering how the 'fragments' of the poem are organised, the juxtaposition of the sinners' fates with the tentative hope of the opening lines may serve to provide a sense of balance. Although more allusive, the distant shores provide a future where the sinners become 'insubstantial'. They are 'reduced by a wind', in Eliot a frequent motif of cleansing.

The third stanza appeals to the senses. As in 'Journey of the Magi', the sense of heightened awareness, a spiritual enlightenment triggered by 'a breath of perfume' suggests there are still aspects of faith which allude and confuse, but the tone is more hopeful. The poem presents the full rhyme of 'grace' and 'place'. The reader senses salvation is possible.



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The following lines return to the lack of certainty and confusion as the speaker questions their own memory of the long-lost daughter, whose familial resemblance proves '*more than the eye*'. The paradox ensues that she is all the more real and present despite the physical distance between them.

The '*whispers and small laughter*' are metonymic in that they now represent the speaker trapped in time. The fantastic setting equally suggests magical creatures who aid him on his quest. The fragmentary nature of the poem causes the meaning to allude.

The speaker's '*sleep, where all the waters meet*' has resonances with the Styx, the river of souls. It also emphasises the scale of his quest. He is so long at sea, that we can see him. Read in conjunction with the earlier Ariel poems, the water can be seen to be a place where he seeks redemption.

The speaker then turns his thoughts to the boat which carries them forward from the natural, and possibly spiritual, extremes, with the '*Bowsprit cracked with the heat*'. His memory is selective, as he explains '*I have forgotten/and remembered*'. The child seem to merge as he asserts '*I made this*' with an emotive force that suggests a desire for certainty. This reading is supported by the fluidity of his description of experience, with the speaker '*unknowing, half conscious, unknown, my own...*'

Much as he tries to philosophise on the nature of existence, he is drawn back to the present.

There are echoes of Simeon as he voices his past desire to be '*Living to live in the great ruler's quest for immortality* one expression of hope and faith. He envisages '*the new ships that will continue to search when he is gone*'.

The poem is somewhat cyclical as he returns to wonder '*what seas what shores*'. The final line '*My daughter*' has a ring of certainty. There is optimism that they will find what they seek, even if it is uncertain, hope remains.

### Writer's Techniques

A number of interesting parallels can be made with 'The Waste Land', which also uses a fragmentary style. A wide range of tones, rhythms and registers are used. The allusion in the poem supports the universality of experience whilst making the speaker's experience incomprehension and confusion of the speaker.

References to the past combine references to historical or literary figures and events. Unlike 'The Waste Land', which used fragments to suggest that those in the past, here the past is used to spur the searchers on. It suggests that we can understand something to have faith in it.

### Links to Other Poems

Although part of the collection of *Ariel Poems*, 'Marina' does not appear to be a direct response. It does share the sense of a persona searching for something just out of reach. Reflection on actions which result in moral death which can support the reader's understanding. Like 'The Waste Land', it is a poem crafted from fragments of history and a search for a conclusion.

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## Active Learning Task: 'Marina' – What Seas What Shores...

### Task:

In the second stanza, Eliot presents a series of images of those groups whose death. To show your understanding, try to briefly explain the nature of the from modern society, where possible.

Textual reference	Explanation	
<i>'Those who sharpen the tooth of the dog.'</i>		
<i>'Those who glitter with the glory of the hummingbird.'</i>		
<i>'Those who sit in the sty of contentment.'</i>		
<i>'Those who suffer the ecstasy of animals.'</i>		

### Discussion Points:

- 1) What is the aural effect (the effect of the lines' sound) in the opening passage?
- 2) Can the poem be read as a contrast between the corruption of society and nature?

### Eliot and Hardy comparison: Practice Essay Question

'Examine how Eliot and Hardy explore the relationship between society and nature'

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This overview raises key points about how the modernist approach to art serves as an outline of points to be raised and charts the history of certain techniques that were to become crucial to Eliot's style.

## A reaction against Romanticism

At the turn of the twentieth century, writers were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the range of expression available to them. This frustration was keenly felt by aspiring poets who were aware of the Romantic influence which continued to pervade Victorian poetry. **Didacticism** was a major problem: that the solitary speaker or omnipresent 'I' (both of these invariably the poet) forced the reader to accept a narrow interpretation of the text. The emphasis on personal feeling and language and the acceptance of conventional imagery were said to create a barrier between the poet and the reader.

## Imagism

1910 is often cited as a key date or turning point. At this time, a literary movement was emerging from London. Led by the American poet Ezra Pound, the Imagist movement sought to break away from conventional expectations and make style work to create meaning. Pound claimed 'The image is itself the speech'.

The central tenets of Imagism were the removal of the omnipresent 'I', the **objective** presentation of images to capture feeling and the refusal to interpret images for the reader. The Imagist sought to put the reader into direct contact with the image, without authorial intervention. The reader was to feel the feeling by examining the evidence of the images presented. The aim was to create a direct, unmediated experience. Pound described poetry as 'inspired mathematics'.

**Didactic:** having a moral message or purpose

**Lyrical:** song-like

**Objective:** presenting facts without personal bias

**Juxtaposition:** placing two things side by side, positioning it close to another

Imagist poetry eschewed traditional poetic form. The iambic pentameter was replaced by free verse in favour of free verse forms that allowed shifts in rhythm in an attempt to capture the complexity of modern experience more effectively. **Juxtaposition** of contrasting images was used to create a third, linking image. A criticism of the Imagist style was the overall effect of disjointed, discontinuous images devoid of content.

## Symbolism

The Symbolist movement went some way to assuaging this concern. The Symbolists' strength of feeling about the emotional dishonesty of conventional poetry led them to see the image as a keystone in rejuvenating literary style. The Symbolists diverged from the Imagists in that Symbolism could blend traditional and experimental forms, as its project was to create a new poetic language, rather than seeking the complete objectivity of the Imagists.

As a friend and colleague of Pound's, Eliot supported the Imagist manifesto, but also embraced Symbolism and alternative presentations of the speaker, such as the use of 'persona' and dramatic monologues, to create a poetic style that was more accessible than the Imagist style.

Post 1918, writers struggled to express the disillusionment and shock of a world that had just experienced a bitter war. It was even more evident that a new approach was needed to capture the complexity of modern experience. If 1910 was seen as a literary turning point, 1922 is often seen as the climatic moment in modernist poetry, seeing the publication of both Joyce's *Ulysses* and Eliot's 'The Waste Land'.

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## Modernism

Modernists sought to restructure literature and the experience of reality it represents. Modernist texts abandon the sequential 'cause-and-effect' presentation of the realist fiction, favouring a presentation of experience as allusive and discontinuous. Though experimental in form, Modernist texts were not informal – an emphasis was placed on cohesion, interrelations within the text and depth of structure of both the artefact and of the experience it sought to present.

Language is part of our construction of what is real and so should reflect the complex nature of life. Metaphor and symbolism support psychological realities faced. '**Stream of consciousness**' is employed as a means that effectively conveys the process of perception.

Recurring themes include the questioning of the reality of experience itself; the loss of faith in a world without faith; the loss of meaning and hope; the disintegration of social order; and the loss of consciousness at an individual and societal level.

Modernist literature borrows from the artistic approaches of **Perspectivism** in its presentation of reality; the **Impressionistic** emphasis on the perceptual process of language and form, while the location of meaning from an individual viewpoint can be seen as analogous to Perspectivism. Both language and form are fragmented to construct meaning in a world where communication has broken down.

### Active Learning Task - Eliot's Impressionistic Style

Find one formal feature and one language feature of 'The Waste Land' that exemplify Eliot's impressionistic style.

#### Discussion Points:

- 1) Discuss as a class whether you think that Eliot's intention is to present reality in a fragmented way.
- 2) Working in pairs, come up with your own definition of 'modernism'.

**Stream of consciousness** is a technique of writing in which the narrative is written in the form of a continuous flow of thoughts and feelings, often without a clear linear structure.

**Perspectivism** is a literary technique in which the narrative is presented from multiple perspectives, often from the point of view of a single character, to create a more complex and subjective understanding of events.

**Impressionism** is a literary technique in which the narrative is presented in a fragmented and subjective manner, often focusing on the sensory experience of the characters and the emotional impact of events.

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## Themes

Eliot's poetry is often centred on dark and gloomy themes, illustrating his modern twentieth-century life.

### Relationship between the present and the past:

Eliot frequently blurs the distinction between the past and the present to his history. This is especially evident in 'The Waste Land', which uses an array of distant past such as references to 'the Fisher King', Phlebas the Phoenician and Tiresias. These figures, often associated with violence and foreboding, are used in modernity in the poem as a way of suggesting that an apocalyptic future awaits its inhabitants. However, other poems such as 'Preludes' and 'Prufrock' are concerned with recovering the past in the present moment, leading to a sense of disconnect for each of the poem's speakers.

### Loss of faith:

Eliot frequently employs Christian imagery and motifs to illustrate the disintegration of religious faith in an increasingly **secularised** modern world. 'Journey of the Magi', a retelling of the story of the Three Wise Men, is a prime example of this; rather than following the star with conviction and hope, the magi-speaker is homesick and haunted by an inner voice telling him that his journey towards the new-born Christ is 'all folly'. This sense of religious scepticism also appears in 'A Song for Simeon' in which the speaker professes 'Not for me the ultimate vision'. The ruined chapel in 'The Waste Land' with its 'grass singing over the tumbled graves' represents visually the eventual result of these doubting inner voices.

### Breakdown in communication:

The efforts of humans to communicate their innermost selves to each other are often futile, such as the conversation between the speaker and his lover in 'Portrait of a Lady' with its 'vague velleities and carefully caught regrets' until 'we really are in the dark'. In 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' the 'sordid' and 'oppressive atmosphere' leads to figures speaking only in muffled 'whispers'. Eliot's heavy use of intertextuality and different languages, particularly in 'The Waste Land', draws our attention to the difficulties of a writer communicating particular thoughts.

### Use of rhythms and images to convey suffering and stress of modern life:

'Prufrock' is perhaps the most prominent example of Eliot's manipulation of rhythm to underline the stresses and strains of modern existence. The frantic repetition of 'there will be time, there will be time' suggests, paradoxically, that time is a commodity which the speaker fears he does not in fact possess. Similarly, his declaration that 'I have measured out my life with coffee spoons' reflects how the **banality** and mundanity of daily existence is largely the result of aspects of modern life. Readers of *Rhapsody on a Winter's Night*, with its stanzas that begin with the telling of the time ('Half past-one...Half past-two...') will also observe how this slow passage of loneliness and being, metaphorically, in the dark. The poet's observations

**Juxtaposition:** elements in each other

**Banality:** of meaningless

**Secular:** unreligious belief

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close resemblance between commuters crossing London Bridge and the sea, a powerful image that links the routines of daily life with the struggle to stay afloat.

### **Spiritual journeys:**

Many of Eliot's poems, such as 'The Waste Land' and 'The Hollow Men', are important of spiritual journeys, that which is made by the soul from the material world. Eliot's allusions to Dante's journey through Hell in 'Prufrock' also explore the tension between the lands of the living and the dead.

### **Active Learning Task: Essay Planning**

Come up with three paragraph subheadings that you would use in a planned essay question: 'Discuss the view that Eliot's greatest achievement was to create a new language and images corresponding to the tensions and stresses of modern urban life.'

#### **Discussion Points:**

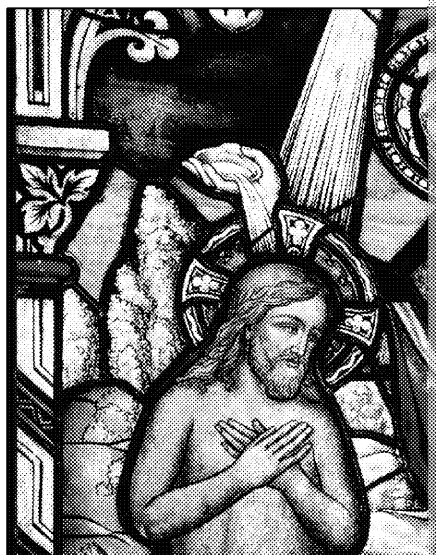
- 1) The above themes are closely interconnected. How, for example, do 'suffering' and 'loss of faith' relate to each other?
- 2) Discuss with a partner one other poem of Eliot's that explores the theme of being lost.

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## Religion

In spite of Eliot's conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1927, the attitudes of remained ambivalent. The imagery of new life and resurrection in poems and 'Animula' attest to Eliot's conviction that religion did indeed have value and morally bankrupt age. However, even in 'A Song for Simeon', a poem Eliot's new-found faith, a degree of uncertainty remains about the more fervent belief: 'Not for me the martyrdom, the ecstasy of thought and prayer'. The 'Magi', similarly, questions whether any one type of religion has inherent value. Faith so often seem to fade into obsolescence and believers are reduced to 'an alien people clutching their gods'. We see this phenomenon play itself out in a modern context through Eliot's depiction of the stark contrast between religiosity and the modern world in which it was attempting to survive. The first two lines of 'Animula' juxtapose religion's incompatibility with modern **secular** society: 'Issues from the hand of God, the simple soul' / To a flat world of changing lights and noise...'



## Modernity

As has already been explored in the 'Themes' section, Eliot's attitudes towards modernity were often profoundly negative. Three poems – 'Preludes', 'Prufrock' and 'The Waste Land' – are especially relevant in exploring these attitudes. The final stanza of 'Preludes' considers how the soul is 'trampled' by the 'insistent feet' of city workers returning home from a long day at the office, all of whom are 'impatient to assume the world'. This sense of impatience and transience can also be found in 'Prufrock', in which the speaker describes 'restless nights in one-night cheap hotels' and seeing 'lonely men in shirt sleeves, leaning out of windows'. The rush of modernity and modern life leads to fragmentation and degradation of one's inner spiritual life throughout Eliot's poetry. These attitudes are central to 'The Waste Land', which imagines the 'falling towers' of civilisation's great cities as 'broken images' from which nothing can grow.



**Fervent:** deeply committed  
**Secular:** not religious  
**Apotheosis:** the process of becoming a god  
**Trope:** a literary device, usually metaphorical

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## Women

In several of Eliot's poems, attitudes towards women are seen to be derogatory and disparaging. The simile of the woman's eye in 'Rhapsody on a Winter's Night' 'twisting like a crooked pin' carries connotations of dislike and distrust, possibly resulting from the male speaker's fear of the emotional pain that women have the power to inflict on him. Eliot reuses some of this language in 'Portrait of a Lady', which describes how the female lover 'twists' lilac petals in the fingers of her male partner 'while she talks'. This image, in particular, subverts the traditional **trope** of flowers and flowering love by connecting it instead to suggestions of deceitfulness. However, it can be argued that these negative attitudes towards women are primarily the result of the speakers' male self-centredness and not of Eliot's own thoughts or feelings. As an example, the speaker of 'Prufrock' finds it difficult to communicate with the women that 'come and go / talking of Michelangelo's failings in the rest of the poem supports the interpretation that the speaker's attitude towards women stems from his own self-loathing and weakness.



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### Discussion Points:

- 1) Do the negative attitudes towards women affect your enjoyment or interpretation of the poems?
- 2) What does the kind of language that Eliot uses about modern life suggest about modernity to have? In his depiction of modern society, what do people think or feel? What can you tell from the poems?

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## Use of Language

Eliot's language and literary style is defined by its obscurity, doom-laden and intertextuality. This section summarises the key points concerning how Eliot creates meanings in his poems.

### Imagery

- ✍ Images of death and decay permeate the poems – the physical decay reflects psychological decay of the people.
- ✍ The repetitiveness of life is explored through mechanistic imagery, e.g. played on the mechanical piano in 'Portrait of a Lady'.
- ✍ Spirituality is often contrasted to the imagery of modernity, e.g. 'The Waste Land'.
- ✍ The images in the poems serve to illuminate character, e.g. 'Prufrock'.

### Literary Style

- ✍ Various registers used echo traditional discourse, e.g. biblical syntax in 'The Waste Land'.
- ✍ Bathos is employed to reflect the banality of the human condition, e.g. the lady in 'Portrait of a Lady' will continue to have friends for tea.
- ✍ Images suggest a blurred or damaged consciousness – the spiritual loss of vision is metaphorically realised in the smoke and fog.
- ✍ References to figures from the past and literary allusions suggest world is full of displaced people with no sense of history or identity.
- ✍ Use of rhetorical questions to convey the uncertainty of modern life.
- ✍ Language is unsettled and strained. Incomplete utterances often reflect resignation to fate as hope fades, e.g. the final line of 'The Waste Land'.
- ✍ The disjointed consciousness represented by the 'fragments' of different voices reflects the lack of integration in personality as a result of fractured post-war society.
- ✍ The speaker is clearly not the poet – influenced by Browning's dramatic monologues, the speaker is a 'speaker' of sorts, although often we are audience to an internal monologue.

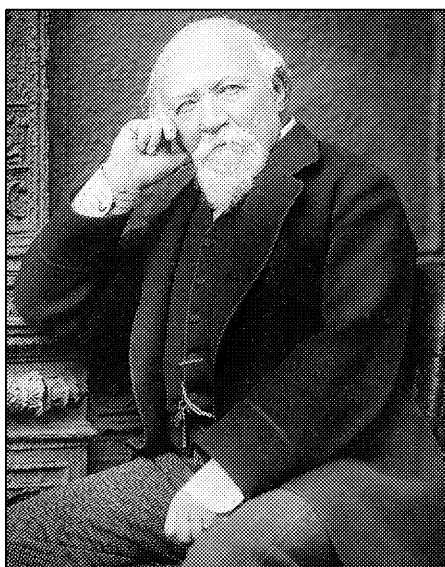
**Mechanistic:** imagery of a machine; e.g. the mechanical piano in 'Portrait of a Lady'.

**Bathos:** a sudden drop from the sublime to the trivial, e.g. the lady in 'Portrait of a Lady' will continue to have friends for tea.

**Dehumanisation:** the loss of humanity by treating people as objects, e.g. the people in 'The Waste Land'.

**Syntax:** the structure of a sentence, e.g. the fragmented syntax in 'The Waste Land'.

**Allusion:** a reference to a literary work, e.g. the allusion to the 'Waste Land' in 'The Waste Land'.



Robert Browning

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## Motifs and Tropes

- ✍ Consciousness of human limitations – characters in poems frequently
- ✍ Seeking escape through the use of stimulants or sedatives – many of the men smoke tobacco, while the women of 'A Game of Chess' are intoxicated
- ✍ Lack of real connection with others and with self leads to **dehumanisation** – reduction of men and women to a series of body parts.
- ✍ Futile gestures and irrational behaviour of human beings – no meaning in the cat and the cat in 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night' behave instinctively.

## Allusions and Intertextuality

- ✍ Allusions to Shakespearean drama lend tragic dimension to several of Eliot's poems: 'The Waste Land', 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' and *Hamlet*
- ✍ 'The Waste Land' is the most heavily allusive and intertextual of Eliot's poems. It alludes to Dante's *Inferno*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the mythical Fisher King's rule, St Augustine's prophecy of Carthage's destruction to suggest a similar fate for London and other jewels of modern civilisation
- ✍ Each of these intertextual references are examples of the 'fragments' that Eliot's 'The Waste Land' uses to 'shore against my ruins', suggesting that the speaker sees himself creating a patchwork of meaning and order out of a destructive universe
- ✍ The titles of 'Preludes' and 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night' make allusion to music only to contrast this ironically with the disharmony contained within the poems

## Active Learning Task 1: Characteristics of Eliot's Style

### Task:

Make notes on the key features of Eliot's style identified in the above section. Can you think of a poem that demonstrates each feature?

Aspect of Eliot's Style	Example of poem

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## Active Learning Task 2 – Allusions and Intertextuality

### Task:

Eliot's poetry relies heavily on literary and Classical allusions, as illustrated in 'The Waste Land'. While an A-Level student would not be expected to know all of the original texts can support understanding of the poet's meaning. Read this source for the prophetic character of Tiresias:

*Jove, they say, was happy  
And feeling pretty good (with wine) forgetting  
Anxiety and care, and killing time  
Joking with Juno. 'I maintain,' he told her  
'You females get more pleasure out of loving  
Than we poor males do, ever.' She denied it,  
So they decided to refer the question  
To wise Tiresias' judgment: he should know  
What love was like, from either point of view.  
Once he had come upon two serpents mating  
In the green woods, and struck them from each other,  
And thereupon, from man was turned into woman,  
And was a woman seven years, and saw  
The serpents once again, and once more struck them  
Apart, remarking: 'If there is such magic  
In giving you blows, that man is turned into woman,  
It may be that woman is turned to man. Worth trying.'  
And so he was a man again; as umpire,  
He took the side of Jove. And Juno  
Was a bad loser, and she said that umpires  
Were always blind, and made him so forever.  
No god can over-rule another's action,  
But the Almighty Father, out of pity,  
In compensation, gave Tiresias power  
To know the future, so there was some honor  
Along with punishment.*

**Metamorphoses** (trans. by Rolphe Humphries): *The Story of Tiresias*, Book II

In light of the above passage, why does Eliot use the blind prophet Tiresias and typists in 'The Waste Land'?

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# Form and Structure

Many of Eliot's poems have no regular form or structure and, as such, are considered free verse. His lack of consistent metre and rhyme scheme reflects an unstable world out of control.

## Metre

The majority of Eliot's poetry is written in **free verse**, or *vers libre*, a poetic form not arranged in a recognisable pattern or rhythm. Free verse was used by Eliot to transcribe someone's inner thoughts, a technique later defined as 'stream of consciousness'. This technique was developed by Imagist writers of the early twentieth century and Modernist writers such as Eliot and James Joyce. Eliot's free verse reflected the chaotic life but also its terrifying formlessness. The lack of regular structure in his poem 'The Waste Land' and 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' as bewildering places in time.

Eliot frequently **oscillates** between longer and shorter lines in poems such as 'The Waste Land' to increase the sense of destabilisation that is created by the poem's shifting between long and short lines. Unexpectedly short lines such as 'do I dare / disturb the universe?' in 'Prufrock' reflect the speaker's uncertainty in the face of a world whose order he repeatedly fails to grasp. The more regular line lengths in 'Animula', a poem about the detachment of the soul at the moment of death, indicate that Eliot perhaps considered religious faith to bring order in the face of terrifying events such as one's death.

## Rhyme Scheme

In keeping with his free verse form, Eliot does not adopt a regular rhyming pattern. Again, as in the case of 'The Waste Land', this acts as a formalistic metaphor for a disintegrating world. Just as the lines of poetry are not coupled together by rhyme, so too do the people of Eliot's modern landscapes find themselves strangely disconnected from one another. When Eliot does make occasional use of end-rhymes, it is often to satirise or parody the childish or naïve nature of the poem's subject. 'Portrait of a Lady', for example, **triple rhyme** is used by the lady at the end of the poem to undermine her defiance in the face of her disintegrating relationship.

**Free verse** is a poetic form that does not use a regular rhyming pattern or line lengths.

**Oscillates** means to move between two states or ideas.

**Triple rhyme** is a rhyme scheme where three words end with the same sound.

**Half-rhyme** is a rhyme scheme where words share some but not all sounds.

**Half-rhyme** or informal rhyme is also used, as in the cases of 'Preludes' and 'The Waste Land', to suggest that there may in fact be a fragile order to the external world. The imperfect nature of these rhymes indicates that only a fragile order to light. By the same token, these near-rhymes can also create a sense of disorder through their suggestion that the fragile structure suggested by Eliot's half-rhymes is not anything meaningful about human existence. This effect is particularly evident in half-rhymes such as 'existence/essence', 'nearer/wear' and 'meaningless/glass' which suggest the difficulty of creating order and patterns out of one's subjective experience.

## Active Learning Task: Rhyme and Satire

Find another example in 'Portrait of a Lady' where end-rhyme is used to make a point about the speaker or the 'lady'.

### Discussion Points:

- 1) Discuss with a partner two features you would each expect to find in an Eliot poem.
- 2) How does Eliot use long and short lines to illustrate his notion of how time works?

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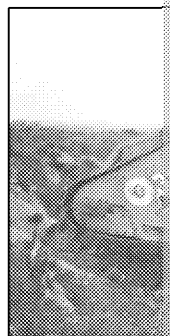


## Contextual Analysis

In the 'Genre' section of this resource, we considered how Eliot's poetry fits into the early twentieth century. In this section we will consider social, historical and cultural contexts which influenced Eliot's work.

### The First World War

As Eliot was writing his early poems while working as a teacher and a banker in England, the First World War was raging. Between 1914 and 1918, approximately six million military personnel died on battlefields across Europe. Such was the extent of the devastation that it became known as 'the war to end all wars'; it was believed, at the time, that nothing could surpass the horror of this period in history.



The war had a profound effect on Eliot and some of his more significant work. It is widely agreed, for example, that the images of apocalypse and ruination in 'The Waste Land', written in 1922, are scenes of devastation that were so common during the conflict. The couplet, 'Where the dead men lost their bones', is undoubtedly a reference to the rodent Europe in which so many soldiers died.

'The Hollow Men', too, also pays respect to those killed in the fighting, although the title is also believed to be a reference to those who brought about The Treaty of Versailles struck between the nations involved that entailed Germany paying exorbitant reparations to Allied powers. Eliot thought this course of action by the Allies to be morally repugnant, but the idea that inflicting more suffering on Germany would help to heal the wounds of the world. In the next three decades, of course, he was to be proved right.

### Eliot's conversion to Catholicism

Between the writing of 'The Hollow Men' in 1925 and his beginning of the *Waste Land*, Eliot converted to Anglo-Catholicism. He had been raised in a Unitarian family who had renounced his faith while attending college at Harvard. Throughout the 1920s, Eliot reflected this loss of faith, centred as it was on the fragmentation of society and his position within it.

However, Eliot's search for meaning and order in a particularly turbulent period. The Haigh-Wood began to break down in the mid 1920s – eventually drew him to Catholicism. He appreciated for its focus on tradition and rigid moral principles. As a result, Eliot's poetry has a distinctly religious character, especially 'A Song for Simeon', a poem about the death of Jesus. This event in Eliot's life is crucial in understanding how the man who wrote 'The Waste Land' at the end of that same decade, celebrating the 'peace' and 'salvation' offered by Catholicism.

### Active Learning Task: Contextual Research

Do some additional research on T. S. Eliot's relationship with Unitarianism. What factors led him to give up this faith as a young man?

#### Discussion Points:

- 1) Eliot believed that the details of a poet's life should not be taken into consideration when analysing his poetry. Discuss as a class whether you think it is possible to do this and what it might mean for an accurate understanding of a poet's work.
- 2) In what ways does an awareness of the wider contexts of the First World War influence Eliot's 'The Waste Land'?

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Throughout the twentieth century, several schools of critical theory emerged to interpret Eliot's poetry. The section below allows us to consider some of these interpretations, demonstrating how the meaning of complex literary texts is constantly changing over time.

## Marxism

There is a strong argument to be made for reading Eliot's 'The Waste Land' as a Marxist text. **Marxism** is founded on the assumption that human society is determined by its economic structure. In capitalist societies, such as that depicted in 'The Waste Land', this results in people feeling as though they have lost control of their own lives by giving themselves up to work that supports the capitalistic economy. We see this in the crowd of commuters crossing London Bridge, 'each man' with his eyes robotically 'fixed before his feet'. The stark contrasts between the environments of the rich and the poor in the poem also stress how economic background determines the circumstances of Eliot's Londoners.

'The Hollow Men', too, contains similar imagery that could be interpreted from a Marxist standpoint: references to the men's 'paralysed force, gesture without motion' and 'quiet and meaningless' voices are both suggestive of the way in which Marxists believe that the individual is controlled by the system. This is also suggested by Eliot's use of a form in the first two lines, 'We are the hollow men / We are the stuffed men', which deviates slightly from his typical free verse form to suggest the lack of freedom which

**Marxism:** a theory of society arguing that human life is controlled by economic circumstances

**Diacope:** a rhetorical device in which a phrase with a key word is repeated with a changed word

**Feminism:** a theory of society that argues that women should have equal rights

**Psychoanalysis:** a psychological theory that suggests that the unconscious mind influences behaviour

**Polyvocality:** a literary technique in which a text contains multiple voices or perspectives

## Feminism

**Feminist** critics would argue that the unfavourable representation of Eliot's 'Portrait of a Lady' and 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' highlights how the twentieth century undervalued and degraded the status of women. In 'Prufrock', the speaker is presented as ephemeral and unreal creatures who 'come and go'. This is a stanza from the poem in which 'sea girls wreathed with sea weed' sing to the speaker, who is inhabiting the real world.

More controversially, the female speaker in 'Portrait of a Lady' is presented as a woman who deals with emotional upset by 'serving tea to friends'. Feminists would argue that women are the product of Eliot's own unhappy and sexless marriage to Vivienne, and the misogynistic society in which Eliot lived at the beginning of the twentieth century.

## Psychoanalytic Approach

Around the time that Eliot's major poems were written, the psychoanalytic approach was becoming widespread across Europe. In works such as *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *The Pleasure Principle*, Freud argued that there existed a part of the mind called the unconscious in which unwanted or repressed feelings and desires were stored. Freud's most important contribution to psychology was his suggestion that the human mind is divided in ways that are not immediately apparent to us in our day-to-day lives.

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possibility that human beings, on some level, are strangers to themselves. A psychoanalytic approach to Eliot's work, therefore, would argue that Eliot is interpreted as depicting the multiple voices that exist within an individual. 'Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' to a patient 'etherized on a table', coupled with the description of his mental state, could also be read as the speaker's undergoing treatment in which one's unconscious thoughts are thought to be revealed to a silent therapist. Eliot himself is known to have undergone psychoanalysis, lending weight to this interpretation of the poem.

## **Active Learning Task: Eliot and Marxism**

Using what you know about Marxism, name one other poem which explores the divide between rich and poor. Find one quotation to support your choice.

### **Discussion Points:**

- 1) How would a feminist critic interpret the title of 'Portrait of a Lady'? Think about how male-dominated societies such as Eliot's tended to objectify women rather than treat them as equals.

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## Further Reading

Below are examples of further reading which will provide deeper critical knowledge as well as additional contextual information on Eliot's life and the Modernist movement.

### Additional works by Eliot and contextual background

- ✍ Eliot, T. S., *Selected Essays*, (Faber and Faber: London, 1999)
- ✍ Eliot, T. S., *The Letters of T. S. Eliot Volume 1: 1898–1922*, ed. Hugh Houghton (London, 2009)
- ✍ Raine, Craig, *T. S. Eliot*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2011)

### Critical books and essays on Eliot's poetry

- 📖 Asher, Kenneth, 'T. S. Eliot and the New Criticism', *Essays in Literature*
- 📖 Jain, Manju, *A Critical Reading of the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot*, (Oxford University Press: India, 2002)
- 📖 McIntire, Gabrielle, *Modernism, Memory, and Desire: T. S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2008)
- 📖 Montgomery, Marion, 'Memory and Desire in Eliot's 'Preludes'.' *Southern Literary Studies* (Vol. 38, 2. 1973) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3197764>
- 📖 Schuchard, Ronald, *Eliot's Dark Angel: Intersections of Life and Art* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2009)

### Context on Modernism and the twentieth century

- ➡ Bradbury, Malcolm and James McFarlane, eds. *Modernism: A Guide to the Movement*, (Penguin: London, 2009)
- ➡ Butler, James, *Modernism: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2009)
- ➡ Tate, Trudi, *Modernism, History and the First World War*, (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2009)

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## Glossary of Terminology

<b>alliteration</b>	The repetition of the same consonant sounds, usually at the beginning of a word or stressed syllable.
<b>assonance</b>	The repetition of internal vowel sounds in neighbouring words, e.g. 'each evening'.
<b>bathos</b>	Writing is bathetic when it strives to be serious but achieves only a comic effect because it is over-the-top.
<b>colloquial</b>	Refers to a type of informal diction that reflects everyday language and often includes slang expressions.
<b>consonance</b>	Consonance consists of identical consonant sounds, e.g. 'home, same'.
<b>end-rhyme</b>	End-rhyme is the most common form of rhyme, where the rhyming words come at the end of the line.
<b>eye rhyme</b>	Words that look alike but do not rhyme at all, e.g. 'blue, crew'.
<b>foreshadowing</b>	The introduction early in a story of verbal and/or visual hints of what is to come later.
<b>half-rhyme</b>	In half, or near, rhyme (also called off-rhyme), the sounds are almost but not exactly alike.
<b>hyperbole</b>	A boldly exaggerated statement that adds emphasis, but is not literally true.
<b>imagism</b>	The practice of bringing the reader into direct contact with the world, without the removal of the omnipresent 'I', the objective correlative, and the refusal to interpret images.
<b>impressionism</b>	An artistic approach where emphasis is on the subjective impression, rather than on the objective facts, in choices of form and language.
<b>intertextuality</b>	The relationship between the text under discussion and other texts, which may be literary or non-literary works.
<b>mock-heroic</b>	A bathetic elevated style dealing with mundane or trivial subjects.
<b>oxymoron</b>	A condensed form of paradox in which two contradictory ideas are put together.

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<b>paradox</b>	A statement that initially appears to be contradictory, but on inspection, turns out to make sense.
<b>personification</b>	Personification is giving human qualities to an object or animal.
<b>perspectivism</b>	The location of meaning from an individual's perspective within a narrative.
<b>polysemy</b>	The variety of meanings available in a text due to multiple interpretations.
<b>rhyme</b>	Rhyme is a pattern of words that contain similar sounds.
<b>rhyme scheme</b>	The rhyme scheme of a poem describes the pattern of rhymes at the end of its lines.
<b>rhythm</b>	A term used to refer to the recurrence of stressed and unstressed syllables in poetry.
<b>(romantic) irony</b>	A literary device that uses contradictory statements to reveal a reality different from what appears to be true.
<b>sibilance</b>	A form of alliteration or consonance based on the repetition of 's' or 'z' sounds.
<b>speaker</b>	The voice used by an author.
<b>'stream-of-consciousness'</b>	The stream-of-consciousness technique takes the reader into the mind to reveal perceptions, thoughts, and feelings on the unconscious level.
<b>symbolism</b>	The practice of representing things by means of symbols or symbolic meanings or significance to objects, events, or people.
<b>tone</b>	The author's implicit attitude toward the reader or toward events in a work as revealed by the elements of style.
<b>theme</b>	The central meaning or dominant idea.
<b>vers libre</b>	Free use of rhyme, rhythm and metre to achieve a desired effect.

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# Answers / Indicative Content

Resource Section	Question	Answer / Indicative Content
'Preludes'	Active Learning Task: Sensory Image and 'Dismembered Depiction'	<p>Correct examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sight: 'watched the night reveal images'</li> <li>sound: 'you heard the sparrow'</li> <li>smell: 'faint stale smells of beer'</li> <li>taste: 'wipe your hand across the table'</li> <li>touch: 'clasped the yellow snows'</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>street as ugly, made of 'scraps'</li> <li>woman sitting on the 'edge of the seat'</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sensory detection of dirt and decay</li> <li>modern life darkening, becoming more and more 'real'</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>women confined to interior spaces</li> <li>men linked to exterior: 'his shoes were black with rain'</li> </ul>
	Eliot and Hardy Comparative Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>both create sense of society as primitive</li> <li>exploration of transition between primitive and modern</li> </ul>
'Rhapsody on a Windy Night'	Active Learning Task: 'Images of Decay': Task 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>branch's 'twisted' appearance</li> <li>spring's exterior hardness due to cold</li> </ul>
	Active Learning Task: 'Images of Decay': Task 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>near-rhyming pattern of 'moor' and 'door'</li> <li>anaphora of 'and' at end of lines</li> </ul>
	Active Learning Task: 'Images of Decay': Task 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'all the old nocturnal smells in the air'</li> <li>suggestion that memory is fragmented</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identification of the moon as a woman</li> <li>women's tendency in poem to be associated with nature</li> </ul>
	Eliot and Hardy Comparative Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hardy's urban landscapes more similar to Eliot's than Eliot's</li> <li>both present the urban as a hostile environment</li> </ul>
'Portrait of a Lady'	Active Learning Task 1: 'Independent Opinions and Judgements'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>woman as conniving ('twisted', 'simplistic' ('I shall sit here, see you go, and then I shall be free'))</li> <li>man as uncertain/alienated ('I shall find a shape to find expression') and isolated from society ('you are invulnerable')</li> </ul>
	Active Learning Task 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal response required</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>highlights man's inability to connect with woman</li> <li>woman's direct speech makes her more powerful</li> </ul>
	Eliot and Hardy Comparative Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>male personas as weak and isolated</li> <li>also possess heightened level of awareness about own weakness</li> </ul>
'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'	Active Learning Task: 'Bathos, Banality and the Mock-heroic'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>references to life as a waste of time</li> <li>all applicable to each metaphorical journey</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hamlet quotation, emphasis on 'to be or not to be'</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>suggests that modern life does not have the same significance as the Prince finds in Hamlet</li> <li>suggests that there is no heroic journey such as the Prince finds in Hamlet</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>love song that is not about love</li> <li>struggles of life</li> <li>speaker laments the lack of time</li> </ul>
	Eliot and Hardy Comparative Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>both poets deal with themes of isolation and the passage of time</li> <li>references to the cyclical nature of life and one's failings</li> </ul>

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Resource Section	Question	Answer / Indicative Content
'The Waste Land'	Active Learning Task: 'The Burial of the Dead' – Independent Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>verbs: 'kept', 'feeding'</li> <li>adjectives: 'warm'</li> <li>associated nouns: 'tubers'</li> </ul>
	Active Learning Task: 'A Game of Chess' – Knowledge and Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>upper class, judging from her</li> <li>overpowering smells and co</li> <li>mix between interior and ex</li> </ul>
	Active Learning Task: 'The Fire Sermon' – Personal Interpretations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personified wind makes the</li> <li>river as a guiding, protective</li> <li>'cigarette ends' example of</li> </ul>
	Active Learning Task: 'What the Thunder Said' – 'These Fragments...'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>references to first person 'I' and Damyata</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>relationships as fragmented</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflects reductive nature of</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows how even 'handsome' eventually crumble</li> </ul>
	Eliot and Hardy Comparative Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>both use allusion to demon</li> <li>different points in history</li> <li>use of biblical allusions to d</li> </ul>
'The Hollow Men'	Active Learning Task: 'Dramatic Exploration'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal response required</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>linked to hollowness implied coldness of 'Rhapsody on a</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'eyes'/blindness, 'night' / d</li> <li>spiritual poverty</li> </ul>
	Eliot and Hardy Comparative Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>suffering and death as inevit</li> <li>relation of death to importan</li> <li>inevitability of forgetting the</li> </ul>
'The Journey of the Magi'	Active Learning Task: Task 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>highlighted words could incl</li> <li>'cursing', 'grumbling'</li> </ul>
	Active Learning Task: Task 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>language that describes har</li> <li>caesuras, pauses and quest</li> <li>uncertainty and doubt</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>more sceptical, doubtful, un</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'it was (you may say) satisf</li> </ul>
	Eliot and Hardy Comparative Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>both connect religion to ide</li> <li>working in everyday life</li> <li>both depict religious faith as</li> <li>doubt and uncertainty</li> </ul>
'A Song for Simeon'	Active Learning Task: Purgatorial Poems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>faith in Simeon less doubtful</li> <li>Simeon presents calmer, mo</li> <li>comparison between sorrow</li> <li>more hopeful tone in Simeon</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>possibility in last two lines th</li> <li>without the possibility of me</li> <li>this also suggested by 'no to</li> </ul>
	Eliot and Hardy Comparative Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of repeated sibilant sou</li> <li>noise, mimicking the 'chatter</li> <li>combining harsh sound effect</li> <li>divisions in modern society</li> </ul>
'Animula'	Active Learning Task: 'The Nature of the Simple Soul'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>movement from 'simple soul'</li> <li>second line</li> <li>experience suggested by the</li> <li>innocence suggested by 'ho</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>soul as religious: soul as com</li> <li>soul as secular: pleasure the</li> </ul>

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Resource Section	Question	Answer / Indicative Content
'Animula' continued	Discussion Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>combination of religious and secular views of death; religious thinking might see these two things as separate</li> </ul>
	Eliot and Hardy Comparative Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>both used idea in their poetry that the soul exists at the point of death</li> <li>souls as things which do not ascend to heaven but inhabit the earth</li> <li>inanimate things such as trees having souls</li> </ul>
'Marina'	Active Learning Task: 'What Seas What Shores'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'tooth of the dog': violence/murder</li> <li>'glitter with the glory': greed</li> <li>'sit in the sty': lack of sympathy</li> <li>'ecstasy of animals': sexual impurity</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flat and dead sound because of lack of metaphor</li> <li>effect of speaker sounding as though he is dead</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reference to 'are become insubstantial'</li> <li>power of nature to 'dissolve' human complexity</li> <li>speaker wishes to 'resign' his societal responsibilities</li> </ul>
	Eliot and Hardy Comparative Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>both see relationship as a fractious one, nature is not subsumed by society</li> <li>apocalyptic sense in work of both poets; nature destroyed and nature will take its place</li> </ul>
Genre	Active Learning Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formal: fragmentation of lines in 'Gamma-Liaison' perceiving the words and thoughts of others</li> <li>language: repeated use of the word 'he' to refer to others</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>indication through impressionistic style of subjective perception through language</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal response required: no indication of what the speaker is thinking</li> </ul>
Themes	Active Learning Task: Essay Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meaningless appearance of modern life; lack of a guiding creator</li> <li>connection between 'folly' of religious belief and the trivial in modern life</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the speaker of 'Prufrock' and his inability to act</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'use of repetition'</li> <li>'use of imagery of death/exhaustion/depression'</li> <li>'use of darkness metaphors'</li> </ul>
Attitudes and Values	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal response required: no indication of what the speaker is thinking</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>modernity's value on money and possessions</li> <li>modernity's value on work and employment</li> </ul>
Writer's Use of Language	Active Learning Task 1: Characteristics of Eliot's Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>examples of feature pairings could include 'The Waste Land', Literary Allusions / 'The Waste Land'</li> </ul>
	Active Learning Task 2: Allusions and Intertextuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>idea that clerks and typists are destined to their information-based roles but are frustrated by their lowly position)</li> </ul>
Form	Active Learning Task: Rhyme and Satire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'You will go on, and when you have propped up many a one has failed': satirises speaker's own position</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>free verse, irregular line lengths, no end rhyme</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>suggests instability in how we perceive time; lines unexpectedly short or long, mirroring how time is shorter or longer than usual</li> </ul>

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Resource Section	Question	Answer / Indicative Content
Contextual Analysis	Active Learning Task: Contextual Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unitarianism's lack of systematic laws</li> <li>Eliot perceived Unitarianism to be small and disconnected from the past</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal responses required: no indication</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows how the banks of the Thames also</li> <li>crowd of dead-like commuters comes to a certain death</li> </ul>
Literary Approaches	Active Learning Task: Eliot and Marxism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Prufrock' and the comparison of 'bracket men in shirt sleeves'</li> </ul>
	Discussion Point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>woman identified not as person but as object to be looked at and which does not have</li> </ul>

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