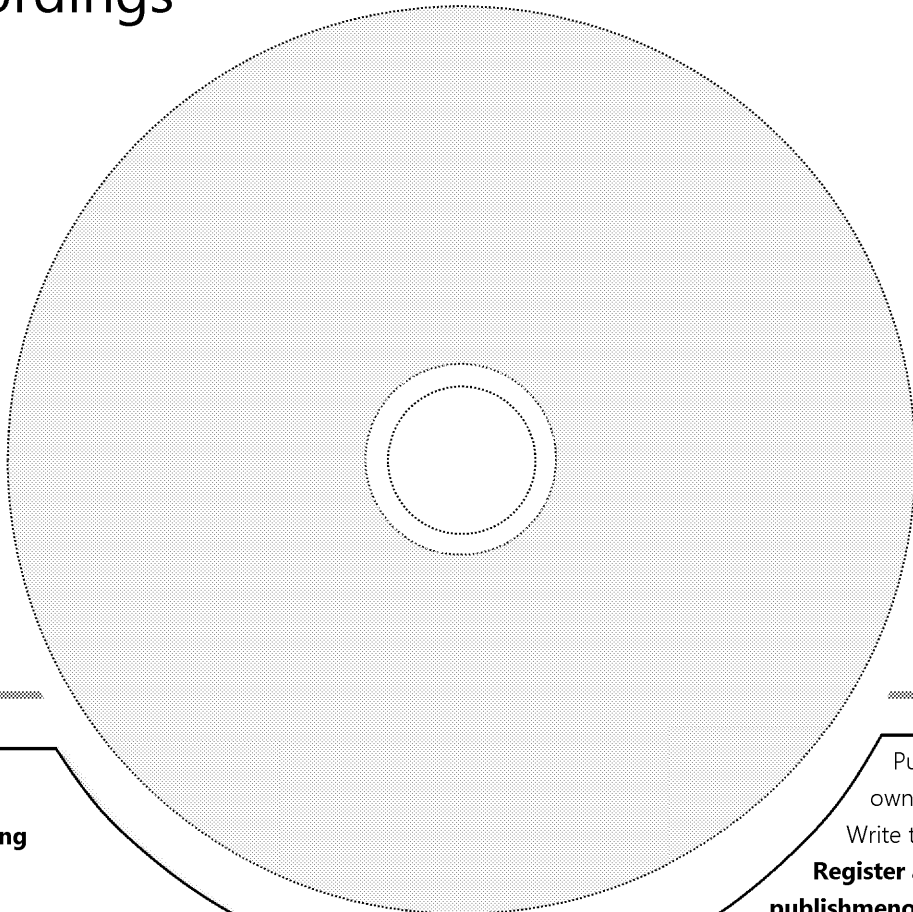




# John Donne

'Poetic Voices' Study Guide for AS / A Level  
AQA English Language and Literature with  
Recordings



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# Teacher's Introduction

This resource has been created as a supplement for any scheme of work on the AS and A Level English Language and Literature AQA examinations for first teaching 2015 (spec codes 7706, 7707). John Donne's poetry is a set text for the Poetic Voices component.

The resource is designed for students to stimulate their thinking and focuses on the content of John Donne's poetry, particularly regarding the use of language relating to the prerequisite of the examination: discussing the presentation of language, time, place, people and events.

In the first section, examination specifications are represented in the form of an 'aims' checklist.

Other features of this resource:

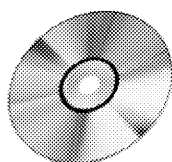
- A brief autobiography of John Donne
- The key features of each poem
- John Donne's style and voice
- The poems in context
- Chart: A brief summary of the poems
- Analysis of each poem in turn
- A comparison of the poems
- Suggestions for further reading
- A glossary of terms
- Suggested answers

## How to Use This Resource

This resource can be used as a guide for the teacher, to be given to students to work from in class, or sections and/or or activities can be set in class or as homework. Students can be encouraged to discover for themselves how events, language, time, people and place are presented within each poem (or within two or more poems as preparation for the need to be able to compare poems for the AS examination). The answers section can be kept as a reference for the teacher, or for students to use after they have completed the relevant exercise(s).

Some areas, such as analysis of phonaesthetics, have been marked 'Taking It Further' to show that they may not be suitable for all students in your class.

**Note: Any comparative work relates to the AS examination only – this has been labelled as 'AS only' in the resource.**



The audio CD provided with this resource contains recordings of the poems in this pack. The recordings are provided in both CD player and MP3 format so they can be used on a school network, provided that this can only be accessed by students attending the purchasing site.

## Free Updates!

Register your email address to receive any future free updates\* made to this resource or other English resources your school has purchased, and details of any promotions for your subject.

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

Go to [zzed.uk/freeupdates](http://zzed.uk/freeupdates)

## CD Track Listings

Track	Title
1	Air and Angels
2	The Anniversary
3	The Apparition
4	The Canonization
5	The Flea
6	The Good-Morrow
7	Womans Constancy
8	Elegy - To His Mistress Going To Bed
9	A Jet Ring Sent
10	The Relic
11	The Sun Rising
12	The Triple Fool
13	Twickenham Garden
14	A Valediction - Forbidding Mourning
15	Elegy - His Picture

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# Student Checklist of Aims

You should read this before you start your work and again after you have finished your examination needs.

Note: all points made should be supported with evidence from the texts; for example, if you say a poem is a sonnet. You need to add evidence from the poem to prove your point and describe how these lines are shaped, i.e. what kind of **sonnet** it is.

In an analysis of a poem you should use your understanding of poetry to discuss:

- how **events** are presented through the structure of the poems, the selection of narrative frames and how other poetic techniques are used to shape them ('use of narrative frames')
- how **language** and how it conveys particular **viewpoints**: including choice of **lexis**, sounds, the way they are combined and their effects).
- how **time** is represented, how it demonstrates and reviews the past, and how
- how **people** are presented: their relationships, attitudes, physical descriptions, effect of specific registers (i.e. use of formal or informal language, for example)
- how **place** and its importance, how places are remembered and represented and

In addition:

- You should use **linguistic** terminology frequently, clearly explaining the meaning of terms and selecting three or more supportive quotations from the poems where possible. Their effect should be then fully explained.

## Methods of Language Analysis

For AS/A Level Language and Literature, you need to study texts for their use of **sound** or phonetics: phonology (reasons for choosing certain sounds) and prosody (ways in which sounds are combined) and other techniques including **rhyme**, **alliteration** (begin with the same consonant), **assonance** (when a string of words begin with the same vowel), **onomatopoeia** (when a word spoken sounds like the object it represents, e.g. 'spit')

**Meanings** or semantics expressed by vocabulary (lexis) and other techniques including **metaphor** (when something is said to be something different so that you get a different meaning, e.g. He was a tiger.), the use of **idioms** (special groups of words that have different meanings, e.g. 'fed up') and meanings expressed in other ways. Donne sometimes uses **metonymy**, both of which are appropriate for a description of the ideas the poem expresses. You should also study the use of grammar; that is, how certain parts of speech, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and pronouns, can influence the meanings expressed.

**Structure:** or **discourse** (communication). How the poet uses and shapes his language so that readers or listeners understand them fully.



### Key Terms

<b>adverb</b>	a part of speech that adds meaning to the verb
<b>alliteration</b>	when a phrase uses words that begin with the same consonant
<b>assonance</b>	using vowels that sound similar
<b>discourse</b>	communication, either written or spoken
<b>idiom</b>	a special group of words that have a different meaning, e.g. 'fed up'
<b>lexis</b>	choice of vocabulary
<b>linguistics</b>	the study of language
<b>metaphor</b>	when something represents something different
<b>onomatopoeia</b>	when a word sounds like what it represents, e.g. 'spit'
<b>phonology</b>	choice of sounds, the way they are combined and their effects
<b>rhyme</b>	when the vowels of the words sound the same
<b>sonnet</b>	a poem of 14 lines of a particular structure
<b>viewpoint</b>	how a person understands the world or other people

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## The Examinations

### AS Level Examination: 'Poetic Voices'

- part of Paper 1, Views and Voices
- one question on a prose set text (35 marks)
- one question on poetry (40 marks)
- closed-book examination but the text of the poetry discussed will be provided
- 1½ hour examination
- worth 50% of the AS exam

### A Level Examination: 'Poetic Voices'

- part of Paper 1, Telling Stories
- one question on the AQA Anthology (40 marks – closed book)
- one question chosen from two questions given on set prose text (35 marks – chosen from two questions given on set poetry (25 marks – open book)
- three hour examination
- worth 40% of the overall marks

The exams will be assessed according to the following principles or 'assessment objectives'

- AO1: Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary studies and associated terminology and coherent written expression
- AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts
- AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received
- AO4: Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic and literary concepts
- AO5: Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate



#### Key Terms

<b>poetic voice</b>	how the history, beliefs and values of the poet are reflected in their work
<b>voice</b>	the special writing style of an author

**Note: Any comparative work relates to the AS examination only – this has been removed as a resource.**

# Biography of John Donne (1572-1631)

John Donne was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> January in London in 1572.

He was born into a Roman Catholic family in a period when there was much anti-Catholicism. He was only two years old, his grand uncle was hanged for being a Roman Catholic priest. Donne was a student at both Cambridge and Oxford, but was refused a qualification in both universities, not because of his work, but because he was Catholic. Understandably, he turned against Catholicism and much of this comes out in the truth of his poetry. From the time he was a student, he led a promiscuous life and the eroticism of much of his poetry.

He was a lawyer and a preacher and a 'gentle-man adventurer' who, after reluctantly becoming an Anglican, joined a sailing expedition against Spain in 1596. He became Keeper of the Great Seal and sat in the last parliament of Queen Elizabeth I.

When Donne was nearly 30, he fell in love with Anne More, the 17-year-old daughter of a friend in secret. His boss was furious. Donne lost his important post and was thrown in prison. The couple were very poor and they lived together for 13 years during which time they had three children surviving childhood.

He was eventually persuaded to become a cleric in the Church of England and served as a preacher. He gained a doctorate in Divinity from Cambridge and resumed a successful career as a preacher at St Paul's Cathedral. He was famed for his sermons and 160 of them remain today. He died in London on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1631.

Sometimes it is difficult to believe in John Donne as a real, living and breathing person. This shows Wally Donne and his wife Bess, who lived in Tasmania. Wally is a descendent of a cousin of John Donne. The photo has been provided by Geoff. 'He was a kind man interested in cars. He had a Rolls Royce with which he delivered milk. He was cynical about anything and didn't like guns, but being a farmer he had to own one. He was thin out the rabbits when they were too much of a problem. My recollection is that he had a telescopic sight on his .22 rim fire rifle. Wally had no children but he did have a daughter who inherited the clock that used to hang in the lounge room. I recall fondly sitting on the porch listening to the crackling and the measured tick-tock audible but not intrusive above the sound of conversation.'



*Wally Donne, a descendent of John Donne's cousin, with his wife Bess.*

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## The Poems

1. **'Air and Angels'**: The poet expresses an intense passionate love for his partner expressed physically as well as spiritually and will survive even though the love is different from the way a man loves a woman: they are as different as air and earth.
2. **'The Anniversary'**: This poem was written for his lover's and his first anniversary even though their bodies will die.
3. **'The Apparition'**: This is the poet seeking revenge for his lover scorning him and he asks her to repent now.
4. **'The Canonization'**: The poet chastises someone who has obviously criticised their love that the poet and his love share, he says, is so magnificent that they should be canonized as sainthood. They should serve as an example to others.
5. **'The Flea'**: A flea has bitten both lovers and the poet thinks about how they are mixed within the flea. He asks her not to kill the flea, but she does. He points out that she is diminished in any way and she would lose just as little if she acquiesced to his desire.
6. **'The Good Morrow'**: A lover philosophises. He wonders what on earth he and his lover did and fell in love. It was as if they had been sleeping until their souls woke up and fell in love. While together, they have all they need in their own tiny, cozy world. They like – sail the seas, explore the world – but only 'we' will live on because they are one.
7. **'Woman's Constancy'**: The speaker says that now that his lover has loved him, she will start making up excuses to leave him? He says he could argue against this, but she might think the same.
8. **'Elegy: To His Mistress Going to Bed'**: The poet revels in undressing his mistress. He needs to be removed savoured until he reaches his goal: his naked mistress is ready for in his equally unclothed state.
9. **'A Jet Ring Sent'**: A soliloquy to a black ring: the poet points out that it is not as brittle as his mistress's heart. He asks if it symbolises their different approaches to love: eternity, or the fragility of the substance jet that can break so easily? He asks the ring to stay on his fingers, just as it did his lover's thumb. He asks the ring to stay safely with him, just as she broke him.
10. **'The Relic'**: The poet speaks, saying that when his grave is opened again for a second time (custom), it will match what women do: that is 'bed' or have sex with more than one man. The gravedigger sees golden hair he will believe they are a couple and take the body to the King and they will be worshipped.
11. **'The Sun Rising'**: The poet chides the sun for shining on him and his mistress when he is alone. Love honours no time constraints. He asks the sun why it thinks it is so special with a wink, but he won't because he wants to keep on seeing his lover. He asks the sun to shine on them.
12. **'The Triple Fool'**: The poet says he is three times a fool: one for loving, another for writing poetry, and a third for putting his feelings into poetry which become public, and he will be fools.
13. **'Twickenham Garden'**: The poet comes to the gardens for respite but he spends more time with his lover for he is thwarted in love.
14. **'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'**: he has to leave and suggests that he is a fool for fuss. He says they love each other so strongly and spiritually that their love is not affected by distance.
15. **'Elegy: His Picture'**: Donne thinks about the effects of ageing and time on him and his lover. He gives his picture to his beloved, telling her that his picture will last longer than his looks and body will deteriorate with age.

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## John Donne's Style and Voice

He is considered to be the founder of the 'metaphysical poetry movement' in which thoughts and subjects like those beyond ('meta') nature – the supernatural, the here, truth, a superior being, the nature of love or religion.

His **style** is complex, with many metaphorical connotations, referring to concepts of which are not apparent in the poetry. These include raising questions about the nature of love, sex, heaven, death and/or the church.

Many of his poems are **dramatic monologues**: he is the only speaker, philosophically, whom we presume is the listener. His earlier poems are often about the speaker convincing a woman to agree to sexual intercourse. His later poems are trying to convince the reader that highly successful physical love is worthy of worship; that is, 'holy'.

His poems are mostly tightly structured with carefully designed rhyme schemes based on the sounds of syllables acting as cohesive devices, and regular use of the most common patterns of weak/strong syllables). Within the poems he often uses **parallelism** (e.g. 'Canonization': 'Take you a course, get you a place'. Sometimes, he frames the poem with similar ideas in the first and last lines, such as the repetition of ('tomorrow') at the beginning and end of 'Constancy', representing the brevity of their union, for it will probably end tomorrow).

However, Donne is also known for breaking poetic rules, and for producing poems which are unstructured, reflecting the way he has departed from the constricted ideas of **Petrarchan or 'Italian' sonnets** of a previous generation.

Some of his frequently used poetic techniques include the use of **conceits** (unusual metaphors or extended metaphors).

Regarding the phonology of his poems, he often uses assonance and alliteration, and **features** to give shape and meaning to the poems.

Donne rarely discusses anything chronologically (that is, in order). He mixes the past and the future, moving from one to the other to emphasise his points. He uses the past to show how things have changed and he often indulges in **deictic projection** when he refers to the future or further back into the past.



### Key Terms

<b>conceits</b>	unusual opposites often in the form of extended metaphors
<b>deictic projection</b>	mental movement towards or away from the speaker
<b>dramatic monologues</b>	when there is only one person who is the only speaker
<b>iambic pentameter</b>	ten syllables per line, alternating weak/strong syllables
<b>parallelism</b>	balance is given to certain phrases in a poem, by using similar grammatical constructions
<b>Petrarchan or 'Italian' sonnet</b>	sonnets are usually about distant love
<b>prosodic features</b>	the way in which sounds are combined
<b>style</b>	the relative formality or informality of the writing; the choice of vocabulary and the way in which the words and sentences are put together
<b>the metaphysical poetry movement</b>	was one in which poets wrote about abstract thoughts and subjects like those beyond ('meta') nature – the supernatural, why we are here, truth, a superior being, the nature of love or religion

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## The Poems in Context (AO3)

John Donne was one of the metaphysical poets of the 1600s, along with John Dryden and Andrew Marvell. They wrote about infinity, man's spirit, love or religion. However, Donne wrote about natural, physical love as something to be honoured. He often begins by appearing to describe relationships, but often develops his poem into a discussion of the soul and eternal life. Poems he wrote after he entered the ministry are slightly different in their subject matter to those he wrote before.

In his younger days, in the 1590s, Donne wrote most of his love lyrics, his erotic verse and his satires, which were published in two different volumes: 'Satires' and 'Songs and Sonnets'. He also wrote 'The Flea' and his elegies; for example: 'Elegy: To His Mistress Going to Bed'. His 'Divine Poems' were written after he and he is said to have written his 'Holy Sonnets' in the period after his wife died of a fever and their twelfth child, which was stillborn.

As he aged, some say that his many illnesses contributed to the more sombre tone of his later work. The cynicism of his earlier poems about the church changed into poems that reflected a more biblical view of the Bible after he had changed from Roman Catholicism to becoming a member of the Church of England. His later poems also focused on suffering and the nature of death and the afterlife.



### Key Terms

context

situation



*John Donne*

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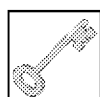


## A Summary of the Poem

Poem	Themes	Time	Place	Pe
'Air and Angels'	Forces behind physical/ethereal love gender differences	Mixed	Bed, mind	The poet mistres
'The Anniversary'	Strength of love over time, love, kings, death, eternal life...	After one year, future	Bed	The love mistres
'The Apparition'	Death, ghosts, deceit	Mainly future	Bed, his mind	The reje lover, his and her lover
'The Canonization'	Religion, love, sex, church, kings, spiritual love	Mainly future	Unknown – court?	The love criticise mistres
'The Flea'	Sex, humour, the church	Mainly present	Bed	The love mistres flea
'The Good Morrow'	Sex, future, philosophy, travel	Mainly future	Bed, his mind	The love mistres
'Woman's Constancy'	Religion, sex, constancy, the law	Indefinite	Bed, his mind	The poet mistres
'Elegy: To His Mistress Going to Bed'	Sexual intercourse, birth, clothing, royalty, religion, far-off lands, the stars	Present	In the bedroom and bed	The poet mistres
'A Jet Ring Sent'	Rings, love, marriage, darkness, eternity	Present	Unknown / his mind	The poet ring'
'The Relic'	Death, symbolism, the church	Mainly future	Unknown / his mind	The poet
'The Sun Rising'	Love, sex, treasure of the world, time	Mainly present	Bed, the mind	The poet mistres sun
'The Triple Fool'	Love, sex, fools, poetry	Mainly present	Unknown, the mind	The poet
'Twickenham Garden'	Natural beauty, love, garden, religion, magic	Mainly present	The garden	The poet
'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'	Farewell, love and loyalty, good and evil, sex, the church	Mainly present	Bed/unknown	The poet mistres
'Elegy: His Picture'	Age, love, physical appearance, farewell	Mainly future	Unknown, the mind	The poet mistres

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### Key Terms

**stanza**

a section of a poem or verse

# 'Air and Angels'

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## Events

In one long monologue the poet philosophises about love; physical, sexual, passion more ethereal, one that lasts in spite of it being founded on two very different 'beings' whose approach to love will always be very different.

He counts the times he has loved his mistress, before he really knew her properly, the 'voice' and 'flame' of angels, or intense feelings of love which must be expressed. He believed that their relationship was well grounded in the strong physical attraction but then thinks there should be more to it for he and she loved so differently.

## Viewpoint

This poem is from the speaker's point of view. Donne uses the first person (I) for what he believes and has or had experienced, or in a metaphysical sense, what man does. When he moves away from using the first person, he speaks mostly of objects or metaphysical concepts, e.g. 'air' and 'angels'.

The female point of view is absent. When he refers to 'thy' or 'thou', it is always in relation to his feelings and in relation to his standpoint; he is the dominant protagonist: in 'thy worth' (line 5), 'what thou wert, and who' (line 11), 'thy body' (line 13), 'to thy lip, thy hair for love to work upon' (line 19), and 'So thy love may be my love's sphere'.

## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

Two stanzas of 14 lines each suggest love poems – 'sonnets' – and the rhyming scheme ABBA, also suggests this. However, these stanzas are not sonnets, they are not like Petrarch sonnet writers, Donne's lines are about the tension from the power of a kind of love more accepted in his time: a more distant, ethereal kind of love. Just because of poetic content of his time, he is breaking the rules of poetic structure. The metre is iambic pentameter or five feet (pentameter) of varied, two-syllabled patterns: the more traditional is the iamb (a weak or strongly stressed syllable) and **trochee** (a strong syllable followed by a weak one).

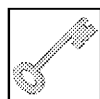
## Language

**Lexis** (choice of vocabulary) and the different **lexical fields** reflect different themes.

- **Physical love**, for example, is indicated in line 1 when he gives a number to 'thrice'), and in line 10 he says 'love'... 'must... 'take a body'.
- **Spiritual love** is a second theme; for example, in line 7 he talks about the 'soul' which is important and words relating to religion are contained within the poem – for 'glorious', and 'my soul'.

**Phonology:** Regarding the phonology of the poem, he often uses assonance, and alliteration, such as 'nor in nothing, nor in things' and also the title of the poem. Prosodic features add to the meaning and meaning to the poem.

- **Alliteration** is used to support the **rhythm** of the line, making the words important: ('when, to where thou wert'), line 7 ('since', 'soul') and line 21: ('nor', 'nothing').



### Key Terms

<b>iamb</b>	a weak syllable followed by a strongly stressed syllable
<b>lexical fields</b>	set of words that are about the same subject
<b>rhythm</b>	the beat or pulse created by the different stresses of a line
<b>tetrameter</b>	a metre of four feet
<b>trochee</b>	a strong syllable followed by a weak one

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- **Assonance** makes the words stand out and become emphasised within the poem (‘twice’ and ‘thrice’), in line 2 (‘face’ and ‘name’) and in line 6 (‘some’, ‘lovely’).
- **Prosodic features:** Sometimes he places particular sounds together for effect. Sounds next to each other can be more difficult to pronounce, causing the reader to focus on an important phrase or something reflective, indicating that there is a deeper meaning. This can be seen in line 14 (‘fix itself’), line 15 (‘whilst thus’), line 26 (‘just such’) and line 27 (‘love’s sphere’).

### Taking It Further...

**Phonaesthetics**, or the study of the relative pleasantness (**euphony**) or unpleasantness of sounds, also provides examples of the effectiveness of Donne’s writing. In line 1 the harsh plosive ‘t’ and ‘d’ sounds contrast with the euphony of the gentler ‘w’ sounds in line 2. Euphony is in line 4 (repeated use of ‘wh’ or ‘w’), line 6 (the alliteration in ‘since’), line 7 (‘more subtle’, rather than ‘subtler’), and line 10 (with frequent use of ‘w’ and ‘wh’). Examples of awkwardness and hardness to the ideas in line 1 (with the close proximity of the ‘t’ and ‘d’ sounds), line 5 (the proximity of the ‘l’s and the velar ‘g’ in ‘lovely glorious’), line 13 (the proximity of the adjacent hard velar sound of ‘k’ and the sibilant ‘s’ to the ‘x’ in ‘fix’ in ‘fix itself’), line 14 (the phoneme ‘st’ in ‘ballast’) line 17 in ‘pinnacle’ the phoneme ‘ce’, the prevalence of ‘s’ in line 18, in line 22 the hard sibilant velar and plosive sounds in ‘scattering’ in line 23 and the harsh plosive ‘t’ and sibilant ‘x’ in the repeated word, ‘twixt’.

### Other Poetic Devices

**Parallelism:** Balance is given to certain phrases in the poem; for example, in line 1 the repeated ‘thrice’; in line 2, the repeated words, ‘so in a’ give shape to the line; and in line 27, ‘sphere’ also gives a sense of stability to the line.

**Hyperbole:** Much is exaggerated in this poem: in line 5, angels are ‘worshipp’d’ rather than ‘loved’. In line 6 the word ‘nothing’ is described as ‘glorious’, indicating that the poet is using a strong word, rather than a milder word to support the veracity of his feelings behind his expression or to indicate that he is serious. To suggest steadying his love, he uses the word ‘ballast’ which is used to balance a huge ship, and in line 17 ‘admiration’ is not just encouraged, the poet has not simply overdone it, he has ‘overfraught’ love. In line 25 he speaks of ‘sphere’ or whole world and in the following lines proceeds to exaggerate the difficulty of women’s love.

**Personification** is another poetic technique used; for example, in line 12, the poet personifies love as a woman.

**Enjambment:** Donne continues from one line onto the next on six occasions, each giving it more weight. These examples can be found in lines 9 and 10, 12 and 13, 26 and 27.

**Metaphor:** The metaphors in this poem can be interpreted on several different levels: representing love with no physical substance, platonic love similar to love from a distance, as in sonnets, and ‘angels’ representing the bodily form of love or lust. As Donne is famous for his metaphors or conceits, this whole poem is based on these extended metaphors. As with many metaphors, this can be interpreted as a further metaphor for the nature of love, the difference between the two is still further, the nature of relationships between lovers and how they can develop.



#### Key Terms

<b>cacophony</b>	unpleasant sounds
<b>enjambment</b>	continuing one line into the next before it can make sense
<b>euphony</b>	pleasant sounds
<b>hyperbole</b>	exaggeration
<b>personification</b>	gives an object or animal human qualities
<b>phonaesthetics</b>	the study of the relative pleasantness (euphony) or unpleasantness of sounds

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## Time

Donne mixes the times: expressing the past, the present and the future, moving to emphasise his ideas and to give the reader a sense of involvement in the poet's journey.

Many of his expressions involve the manipulation of the verb tenses. He uses the present to show how things have changed, e.g. line 1: 'had I loved thee'. He uses the past – the thought or actions are expressed in his present, at the time of utterance – 'I bid love ask'. He often uses the present to express a general truth that refers to the future. For example, in line 4 he says: 'Angels affect us'.

When he mentions the future, much of what he says involves deictic projection as he usually predicting something, or continuing the reference to a general truth that he has just said. For example, in line 28, he says women's and men's love 'will ever be' different. Of his **deictic expressions** the most obvious one is in line 12 ('now'), although it does not indicate a time more associated with the context of his speaking, after her love has been expressed. After that ('now') his love will be able to 'fix' on her 'lip, eye and brow'.



### Key Terms

**deictic expressions** expressions that indicate the relative distance between

## People

The main person in this poem is the poet who is speaking; for example, in line 1 he is speaking to his lover, another person in the poem, but she is not participating in his speech; for example, in line 14 he wishes love to fix itself in 'thy lip, eye, and brow' to metaphysical beings in his poems. In this poem there are 'angels'; for example, 'us off'. The 'Angels' in this context mean the feelings of passionate love that affect the world (have influence over the world in Donne's time).

The section of events describes the relationship the people have as expressed through Deictic expressions that indicate his true feelings for his mistress include his use of 'thou' and 'thy' which indicate how he was in awe of her when seen at a distance, and also spiritual considerations engender elsewhere in the poem. He reverts temporarily to the direct in line 4, thereby briefly including her directly in his thinking, when he speaks of 'angels' that affect them.

## Place

'Place' can concern the relative distance and proximity between the characters and not just a specific 'place' or locations. The poet draws his lover to him and brings the relationship by referring to her and her properties frequently: in 'thy face' (line 2), 'what thou wert, and who' (line 11), 'thy body' (line 13), 'to thy lip, eye, and brow' (line 14), 'love to work upon' (line 19), and 'So thy love may be my love's sphere' (line 25). The distance is expressed by adverbs of place and the example in this poem ('where') in line 5 does not refer to the poet going to his mistress and being with her, physically and/or mentally dependent on her.



### Key Terms

**deixis** words and phrases such as 'you' and 'here' that need to be understood in context

**spatial deixis** the way in which words are used to imply space between

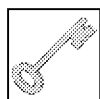
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### Individual Activities

1. Look at the summary of a novel of the same name (*Air and Angels*). 'It is about a group of upper-class people and their hopes, fears and dreams against the usual behaviour of their day. A university tutor leads a group with a young teenager.' Why did Susan Hill use this title for her book? How does it compare with Donne's poem?
2. The element of air is said to be associated with people who are Gentle according to the signs of the zodiac (which is based on birth dates). Air is said to be a sign of intellectualism. 'Airy people' are said to be good thinkers who think abstractly very well. How do you think this might or might not relate to Donne's 'Air and Angels'?
3. How many times does Donne use the word 'love' in his poem? Is it used as a verb or as a noun? Why do you think he prefers to use the word 'love'?
4. Look at the lines in which Donne repeats a word; for example, in line 10: 'a shapeless flame'. Which line do you think is the most effective, and why?
5. If 'air' is a metaphor for unobtainable, or platonic love, and 'angel' is a metaphor for love, which is most effectively portrayed in this poem? Why?



### Key Terms

**Signs of the zodiac** the different sections or signs that an imaginary path that the planets are said to take. These signs are said to be associated with our birth dates and to the signs of the zodiac.



### Group Activities

1. In pairs, take it in turns to read a line from the poem, changing one word to say the correct noun. How important are these nouns?
2. Take it in turns to read the poem up to the next comma, semi-colon or full stop; paused or stopped in these places?
3. In pairs, write one verse each without the punctuation. Swap papers and add the punctuation.
4. In pairs, take it in turns to choose a phrase that would sound awkward in modern English. Change it into a more modern form. Decide between you which you think is better to say or have a hidden meaning; for example, 'twice or thrice' could be a number of times.
5. Donne often rhymes or uses assonance within a line; for example, 'twice or thrice'. In pairs, take it in turns to select one of the lines that contain a rhyme or assonance and say which you think is most effective, and why.

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### Discussion Questions

1. Can a heterosexual man and woman really love in a purely platonic way? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
  2. Donne is a metaphysical poet, writing about spiritual, abstract ideas. Give an example of this? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
  3. Is a woman's love very different to a man's? What does Donne say? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
  4. Can you ever love someone too much? How well does this poem describe love? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
- Extension: expand on your answer to produce the introduction to an essay.**
5. Alliteration is a useful poetic technique that puts words that have the same sound together. Does it make a difference if the alliteration occurs in words immediately next to each other or a distance away? Which lines contain alliteration that has been most effective?



### Comprehension Questions

1. Which of the following words is **not** in Donne's poem?
  - love
  - lovely
  - glorious
  - admiration
  - child
  - parent
  - father
  - pure
  - purity
2. Which two poetic techniques are used in line 6: 'Some lovely glorious things'?
3. Which word in line 26 describes 'difference'?
4. Why would one think the poem is based on the form of a sonnet?
5. What bodily forms does he say angels have?



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# 'The Anniversary'

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## Events

In one long speech the poet addresses his lover, praising their love and speaking of passionate love and a love that is more ethereal, one that lasts in spite of it being 'beings' – man and woman – whose approach to love will always be very different.

In the first verse, he tells her how even the grandest of people are equal to them just as they have since they first fell in love. They will die and decay, but he comments that their love will last forever. In the first six lines of the second stanza he speaks of the end of physical being, but in the final lines of this verse he comments that their love is eternal. In the first six lines of the final stanza the poet tells his lover how secure they are in the future. He looks to the future and says they will live together loving each other for all of time and they will live again.

## Viewpoint

As with most of Donne's poems, this poem is from the speaker's point of view. Donne uses the singular (I) or plural (we) or the second person (you) for the most part, expressing his relationship and the love that he believes they have for each other. The female partner is referred to as 'my mistress'.

## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

There are three stanzas of 10 lines. The first six lines of each stanza he makes a statement, and the last four lines he makes a comment on it, referring specifically to their love.

The rhyme pattern is AABCCDDDD – that is, each verse begins with three couplets and then four lines which rhyme. What do you think the effect of this is?

The rhythm is basically iambic, that is a weak syllable followed by a strong syllable (two groups of the rhythmic pattern) per line. Speech is usually in iambic rhythm, so the poet is speaking directly to his beloved.



### Key Terms

**quatrain** a stanza of four lines

## Language

**Lexis** (choice of vocabulary) or different lexical fields reflect different themes: love, the passing of time, death and decay, and eternal life.

- **Love:** He speaks of the love they share for each other, and love as an eternal thing. He speaks of 'no to-morrow hath, nor yesterday', saying it has 'no decay' (in line 10) and is 'as noble as or even nobler than the nobility of kings, princes and their courtiers' (in line 28).
- **Kings:** Kings, princes and their courtiers are held up as examples that are noble and 14. The theme of kings and their kingdoms is continued when he speaks of disloyalty between partners and how they will 'reign' again (line 30).
- **The passing of time:** When he mentions the passing of time in line 3 he speaks of the passing of time, and in line 4 he says that even the sun is affected by it, for it is just as the poet and his lover are one year older now.

In line 5 he speaks of when they first saw each other, sometime in the past.

- **Death and decay:** Death (in lines 12 and 15) and decay (in line 7) are also referred to as 'graves' (in lines 11 and 20), 'destruction' (line 6), 'bodies' (line 20) and 'corruption' (line 20).

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- **Eternal Life:** In line 8 he says their love has no tomorrow or yesterday, it just is. In line 10 their love will keep its 'first last and everlasting day', meaning it will be eternal. He speaks of souls where only love dwells that will prove their love. He believes their love may even increase (line 19) after their physical bodies have been buried. As they will rise from their 'graves'.

One of Donne's reasons for choosing particular lexis is for its metaphorical significance. One example of this is in line 12 when instead of speaking about separation of the couple ('divorce'), reminding the reader that they are definitely a united couple in the first place.

**Phonology:** Regarding the phonology of the poem, he often uses assonance and prosodic features to give shape and meaning to the poem.

- **Alliteration:** Enhances the flow of the line as well as focusing the ear on the words that stand out and become important. Examples of this can be seen in line 12 ('death at last'), line 16 ('sweet salt'), line 22 ('now no'), 24 ('can ... kings'), line 25 ('false fears').
- **Assonance:** He uses assonance to make the words stand out and become more important within the lines; for example, line 10 ('last, everlasting'), line 11 ('hide thine eyes from ears' and 'these ... tears').
- **Prosodic features:** Sometimes he places particular sounds together for effect. Prosodic features – for example, similar sounds next to each other can be more noticeable, causing the reader to pause, and so indicate a more important phrase or so on. There is a deeper concept at play. An example of this can be seen in line 16 ('sweet salt').

### Taking It Further...

**Phonaesthetics:** Donne often includes particular sounds together because they soothe and the ideas behind the expressions are mild, ready to contrast with the harsher sounds. **euphony** (pleasant sounds) can be found in line 9: 'Running it never runs from us' the sounds leading vital words: 'r' and in 'away' give the impression of a continuous sound. In line 17: 'But souls where nothing dwells but love' the key words 'souls' and 'dwells' have an intangible sound to the line than words such as 'spirits' or 'lives' which could have been used. 'now no more than all the rest', 'But now no more', 'all the rest' and the softer sounds contrast with the harsher plosive or fricative sounds and so help to give the line a more reflective tone to the present situation.

Cacophony also features in this poem. Donne uses velar (e.g. k, g), plosive (e.g. p, b, t, d) sounds particularly to create a harsher tone to express his ardour, passion and anger towards his society and his situation that he may be alluding to or indicating by metaphor. In line 1 'All kings', the velar 'k', line 2 'all glory', the velar 'g', line 6 the plosives 'd' and 't' in 'destruction', in line 7, the plosive 'd' and the velar 'c' in the word 'decay', and in line 11 the velar 'g' and 'c' and fricative 'th' in 'Two graves must hide thine and ... corse'. The fricative 'th' and 'v' as well as the sibilant sound of 'ce' in 'death ... divorce' give the reader a distaste for death, something that he dislikes but is unavoidable. In line 20 the velar 'g' in 'graves' and 'remove' create a strong emphatic tone to emphasise the end of the mortal life and the immortality of the soul and its incumbent or tenant 'love'. In line 24 the velars 'k' in 'True' and 'false fears' and 'refrain', all contribute to the poet's expressions.

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## Other Poetic Devices

**Parallelism:** While there are no exact balancing grammatical forms within single lines, the impression of using this technique to make the lines sound complete in a similar way is seen in lines 19 'Running it never runs from us away' with the word 'run' repeated, even if they are not perfectly parallel. Line 20 'When bodies to their graves removed' and line 24: 'Can be such kings, nor of such subjects be.'

**Hyperbole:** There are numerous examples of exaggeration in the poem. The title 'An Anniversary' suggests that the couple has been together for some years, but in reality it is only the first anniversary. When comparing their love to that of kings and courtiers, he uses kings and courtiers, even the sun itself. He believes that all other loves are not them, their love will live forever. Even after they have died and been buried, their love will even increase. After they have lived their lives together until the customary reign again. All these ideas are sweeping statements and examples of Donne's freedom with language.

**Personification:** He personifies love by giving it human qualities. He says that it will keep them and will keep doing what 'he' does always (lines 9 and 10), and in lines 15 and 16, love is treated as though they are human, for he says they often 'feed'.

**Enjambment:** Line 13 continues on to line 14 and extends to line 15, so that the thought of line 14, the notion that they are special to each other, stand alone for a moment. This use of enjambment emphasizes their love and they are extraordinary. A similar use of enjambment to isolate 'we' is seen in line 24. The word 'treason' is given special emphasis by the use of enjambment between lines 24 and 25. The word 'to begin' is used to begin line 26. In lines 29 and 30, enjambment is used to pause on the word 'attain' and line 30 extends this idea and develops it further. Line 29 ends with 'attain' and line 30 extends this idea and develops it further, alluding to the phrase 'the writing on the wall', a prediction of death and the idea of the end of the world that we have about 'three score' years and 10 to live.

**Metaphor:** There are few direct metaphors of things or people standing for other things. However, he calls themselves 'princes', and in lines 23 and 24 'kings', not only a metaphor but also underlining the fact that he is speaking from his point of view, and even though he is speaking from his point of view including her, he makes no acknowledgement that she is feminine and, therefore, not a king.

However, the poem does contain a number of examples of metaphysical, or mental, or prolonged metaphors that are often contrasted with unusual examples.

An example of this is the notion of their anniversary, which marks the passing of time. The relationship with others who have also become a year older, naming imaginary kings and queens, an intangible, exaggerated form of the sun itself (verse 1).

He compares their love that will last forever to the love others have, which is bound to end.

In lines 17 and 18 he speaks of love that 'dwells' in their souls, giving an impression of a building, a home, or, as indicated by the following line, a (pleasant) prison that couples are called 'inmates'.

He likens the magnitude of their love to a country for he calls betrayal 'treason'. He compares their special qualities as being royal or kingly by exhorting her to live 'nobly' with the last two words when he speaks of their 'second ... reign'.

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## Time

The poet moves in and out of the past, present and future to give substance to his love together as if they are so bound for perpetuity. He begins in the present ('the time of speaking about the magnificence of their love, then immediately talks about the time of their first meeting (the verbs), the time when they first met a year ago and, after that, quickly moves to the time of their living forever. He reverts to a specific time in the future when their physical bodies will decay, then refers to the long distant never-ending future when their love will live for eternity. He returns to the here and now (the moment of utterance) when they are so securely in love. The concept he makes next: that they will stay in this 'noble love' until their death ('the time of their death').

**Temporal indexicals**, expressions which refer to time but whose meanings change over time. Words used to express these changes of perspectives regarding time include:

In line 4 'now' meaning at the time of utterance. In lines 8 and 10 a sense of the time of the temporal adverbs in the negative sense: 'no tomorrow' 'nor yesterday' in line 8 and 'no time' a time measurement word 'day': 'first, last and everlasting day'.

In line 24, 'now' is used at the time of utterance, expressing the present.

In line 29, although Donne uses what appears to be a specific measurement ('years and years unto years' until they reach a specific age) although considering the context, even this phrase infers time unmodified in a specific way.

Use of tense to express temporal deictics includes verbs in the present or **proximal** tense, referring to the time of speaking, 'elder', or older, by a year.

In lines 7 to 10, their love 'hath' ('has') 'no decay', 'no to-morrow', 'nor yesterday' 'keeps' on forever. However, the present tense verb forms are also used to express the time of occurrence or a permanent situation: in line 3 the sun 'makes' time, as it does always and always do. In line 4, all other things are said to 'draw' towards decay. In lines 7 and 8, 'decay' and never has and never will. Their love has no sense of time, no sense of tomorrow.

On two occasions the poet uses the -ing form: in line 9 the present progressive – 'running' referring to the time of speaking but also to all time including the past and future 'away'. In lines 18 and 19, the 'ing' verb form is used but as a gerund or noun. This means that all other thoughts will prove that their love will last.

In line 10 'keeps' is used in terms of forever. In line 17 nothing 'dwells' in souls except in this situation).

In line 20 when bodies are buried, as a rule, souls 'remove' or leave. In lines 21 to 24, in the present tense, the proximal form, for the poet focuses on what it is like for them on earth. Their souls are safe from any treason except from themselves.

Distal forms (verbs in the past tense) are also problematic. Most are used to express the time of speaking and mostly referring to a specific time in the past. In line 4 'was'. In line 5 the poet refers to a specific time in the past when they first 'saw' each other.

In line 16 in the past, when they were in love, their eyes and ears were often fed by their love.

**Future:** In lines 11 to 15 the poet distances himself from the time of utterance to the future, predicting that they will have to go through the usual earthly activities after death but even though death will enforce physical separation, there will be no 'divorce' from their love.

In lines 21 to 30 the poet brings himself closer to his lover, using pronouns such as 'we' and 'us' for lover to live with him nobly for years until the end of their lives.



### Key Terms

<b>distal</b>	form of the verb: the past tense
<b>proximal</b>	form of verbs: present
<b>temporal indexicals</b>	words, often adverbs, that indicate time and time of speaking for characters and ideas with regard to time

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## People

The main person in this poem is the poet who is speaking. He is addressing his partner on their anniversary. The partner is present only in the references the poet makes, she has as kings and princes, are mentioned to play a part in his long list of comparisons, and the people's love.

The relationship of the people is created by use of similar expressions. These include the first four lines, bringing the characters to the time of speaking: these famous people of the sun age. In line 5, he draws his lover closer to him by referring to her in conjunction with referring to how they met in the past in that line, he makes their love sound long and brings his lover close by speaking of 'our love'. The use of 'thy and my' (line 11), 'us' (lines 26, 27 and 28) and 'our' (line 30) indicates that Donne and his lover are in discussion and this reinforces the fact that he is involving her to some extent; he is not just thinking of his own. Thinking of inanimate things as people, that is, personification, makes the poem more personal, a more integral part to the relationships expressed in the poem. In line 10, he says 'he keeps his first ... and everlasting day' (line 10).

## Place

Regarding **places**, specific places are rarely named. We assume the poet is with his partner of how they are on the earth; for example, he refers to 'here upon earth' in line 2. For example, in line 3 he mentions the 'sun' and in line 20 he says: 'Souls from their bodies souls rise to heaven. Other places he takes us to in our imagination are contrasted with their corpses, he asks us to think about souls and what is within them – love.

Spatial deictic expressions are words or phrases that indicate the position, physical location of people in relation to each other and the poet include:

In lines 17 to 19 the subject is 'souls' and so in line 19 'there' refers to where the souls assume is above in heaven.

In line 23, the poet returns to earth – 'here' is qualified immediately: 'here on earth'.

In the examples given in the section above on people, when Donne includes his partner, he is bringing her closer to him.

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## Individual Activities

1. Find out which are the most prevalent words, e.g. 'love' occurs four words in particular are used in the poem so frequently.
2. Read 'Lovers' Infiniteness'. What do you think it is about and how 'Anniversary'? Prepare a short talk to give to the class about which

### *Lovers' Infiniteness*

by John Donne

*If yet I have not all thy love,  
Dear, I shall never have it all;  
I cannot breathe one other sigh, to move,  
Nor can intreat one other tear to fall;  
And all my treasure, which should purchase thee—  
Sighs, tears, and oaths, and letters—I have spent.  
Yet no more can be due to me,  
Than at the bargain made was meant;  
If then thy gift of love were partial,  
That some to me, some should to others fall,  
Dear, I shall never have thee all.*

*Or if then thou gavest me all,  
All was but all, which thou hadst then;  
But if in thy heart, since, there be or shall  
New love created be, by other men,  
Which have their stocks entire, and can in tears,  
In sighs, in oaths, and letters, outbid me,  
This new love may beget new fears,  
For this love was not vow'd by thee.  
And yet it was, thy gift being general;  
The ground, thy heart, is mine; whatever shall  
Grow there, dear, I should have it all.*

*Yet I would not have all yet,  
He that hath all can have no more;  
And since my love doth every day admit  
New growth, thou shouldst have new rewards in store;  
Thou canst not every day give me thy heart,  
If thou canst give it, then thou never gavest it;  
Love's riddles are, that though thy heart depart,  
It stays at home, and thou with losing savest it;  
But we will have a way more liberal,  
Than changing hearts, to join them; so we shall  
Be one, and one another's all.*

3. Write a letter to a friend complaining about people who are too self-centred to reflect Donne's attitude and situation.
4. Which poetic device is used in lines 12, 15, and 16?
5. Donne often repeats a word in a line, in the same form or in a different form. Which lines demonstrate this and to help give the line shape. Which lines demonstrate this

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### Group Activities

1. In groups of three, take it in turns to say a word that could replace 'dear'. The others try to name the word you have replaced. For example, 'dear' and the others should be able to recognise that it could replace 'dear'.
2. In groups of two or three, take it in turns to read up to a comma, stop and discuss how this helps you understand the poem.
3. In groups of three, rewrite a verse each, leaving out the punctuation. Then replace the punctuation in another person's example.
4. In groups of three, take a verse each and in turns choose a line which is most effective and say why. Decide as a group which line is the most effective in the whole poem.
5. In groups of three, take a verse each and decide which of these three is most effective in the verse: assonance, enjambment or metaphor. Give reasons. Decide as a group which is the most effective in the whole poem.



### Discussion Questions

1. Imagine this poem has been written in contemporary English. Would you present it to your wife or husband as an anniversary present? Discuss how your girlfriend or parent might react. Support your arguments with quotations from the text.
2. In groups of three, look at the poem from different points of view (1) as a man who only believes in the platonic love of Petrarch; 2) as a previous lover of Donne. Together, discuss whether Donne was an ideal husband.
3. How relevant would Donne's opinions and ideas within the poem be today? Support your arguments with quotations from the text.  
**Extension: Building on your ideas and quotations, formulate an argument.**
4. There are many expressions within the poem that are about the speaker's love. Identify these lines and discuss which are the most effective, and why.
5. Alliteration is a useful poetic technique that puts words that have the same sound together. Does it make a difference if the alliteration occurs in words that are close together or a short distance away? Which lines contain alliteration that is most effective?



### Comprehension Questions

1. Who or what is 'elder' by a day?
2. How many kings and their favourites are mentioned in line 1?
3. Which poetic technique is used in line 12: 'If one might, death were no more?'?
4. In lines 7 to 10, Donne uses many negative words such as 'no', 'not', 'no more'. Which are used positively or negatively?
5. How many years does Donne expect him and his partner to live?

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# 'The Apparition'

## Events

In one long diatribe (a bitter verbal attack) the poet rants emotionally charged words at her. He is furious that she has rejected him and he will haunt her and find her in their relationship too will be an utter failure.

The first four lines express the poet's indignation at his rejection and he states his intention to haunt her, for he will come and haunt her when she is in her bed. In the next two lines he accuses her of lying about her virginity, saying that he will find her already with another man and her desires will rise. Then, from lines 7 to 10, the poet focuses on how the new man will seduce her that even though she tries to wake him, he will not stir, he will pretend to be asleep – their relationship will fail. The next three lines, lines 11 to 13, are devoted to more vitriol on her, saying she will be so afraid and upset that she will look more like a ghost. The final four lines express further wishes to make her suffer in her mind – her conscience will torment her. He wants her to have to come to her senses on her own and repent in pain, rather than receive his anger later.

## Viewpoint

This poem is from the speaker's point of view, the woman has no viewpoint. He is angry that she rejected him and this personal monologue is a diatribe of vitriol; in other words, he is attacking the object of his annoyance, on the woman who dared reject him. He threatens to become a misery. He verbally attacks her, accusing her of dishonesty – saying she is not what she is. He accuses her of promiscuity, speaking of another man he will find her with and to make matters worse he speaks of that man becoming tired and unable to make advances. He entreats her to repent now rather than receive his anger later.

## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

The poem is short – just 17 lines, just as an angry verbal attack is often short and direct. There is a lot of pausing for thought.

The poem begins like a sonnet with the first four lines rhyming ABBA, but after the words spoken in anger are spouted without careful consideration or constraint. It lacks the calculated and careful designs of Petrarch sonnets that were common before Donne. In Donne's time, love from afar, couples rarely meeting or having a real relationship. The rhyme scheme is GGG. The metre is varied to indicate the uncontrolled anger of the piece.

## Language

The **lexis** (choice of vocabulary) reflects different themes, such as death, ghosts and deception.

- **Death** in line 1: 'o murd'ress I am dead', 'death' which is used metaphorically to mean that her scorn has killed him, meaning she has killed his feelings or 'spirit'.
- **Ghosts**, hence the title, and as the title suggests this ghost is not pleasant. He threatens to haunt her for in line 4: he predicts: 'shall my ghost come'. He speaks of her being neglected, covered in 'cold quicksilver' (line 12).
- A third 'theme' is **deceit**; for example, in line 5, 'feigned vestal' refers to his deception and by implication the anger he expresses from her rejection suggests that she had probably a time when she had led him to believe that his advances were reciprocated.

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**Phonology:** Regarding the **phonology** of the poem, he often uses assonance and prosodic features to give shape and meaning to the poem.

- **Alliteration:** In line 12 the poisonous venom he is spouting is further enhanced by 'quicksilver' (line 12). Other examples can be found in lines 2 ('that thou think' 'thou art then', 14 ('What ... will ..., ... will') and line 15 ('since my love is spe
- **Assonance:** He uses assonance to make the words stand out and become more memorable. For example, line 2 ('thee free'), line 6 ('will' ... 'wink'), line 8 ('pinch' ... 'think'), line 10 ('sleep ... thee'), line 11 ('... then, ... aspen wretch, neglected'), line 12 ('quicksilver' 'threat'nings rest ... innocent').
- **Prosodic features:** Sometimes he places particular sounds together for effect. For example, fricatives (both voiced and unvoiced) together ('that thou think'st thee free'). Examples of this for the words are rarely difficult to enunciate when spoken. The poet wants to make the words flow, just as one would come out with a speech in anger.

## Other Poetic Devices

**Parallelism:** Some of the lines in Donne's poems use repetition of the same word to establish balance, although because this poem is like a tirade of angry abuse, Donne uses more lines in this poem than is customary. However, there is a hint of parallelism in lines 1 and 2 ('tell thee now').

**Hyperbole:** Donne uses hyperbole to express the strength of his anger. In line 1 he refers to her as a 'murderess' and rather than being merely hurt by his rejection, he says that his 'ghost' will come to her, referring to the apparition, the title of the poem, and a more benign self. In line 6 it is not just a weakening, fading taper but a 'sick' one. If she will be unhappy, he calls her 'poor aspen wretch'. Finally, in line 12, rather than saying she is 'Bath'd in a cold quicksilver sweat' and in line 13 that she will be more

**Enjambment:** As the expressions in this poem are immediate, spilling out as though pausing for thought, there are few examples of enjambment here to prolong the effect of an idea for reflection. The enjambment here suggests the speaker is speaking rapidly without time to think. These examples are in lines 2 to 3, and lines 8 and 9.

**Metaphor:** The metaphors in this poem are more direct than usual. In line 1 he says 'I am dead' – we know this is not physically true, for the author would not be able to speak the metaphor directly relates to the woman 'killing' his feelings. He says he is 'dead' because he says he will haunt her, calling himself a 'ghost' or, as the poem suggests, an apparition. In line 5, the reference to 'feign'd vestal' is a metaphor for her being a false or lying virgin. The 'sick taper' in line 6 is a metaphor for her sexuality. It could mean the literal meaning, that he will shrink away from her, but could also be a metaphor for, in this case, lack of it. A metaphor for a poor, broken, cold shaking person is represented in line 11. In line 12 he says she is bathed in 'cold quicksilver', or mercury, which is a metaphor. It could have been a metaphor for the use of mercury to cure syphilis – he may be saying that she expresses her unhappiness at her plight in saying she will be a 'verier ghost than I' (line 13).

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## Time

Regarding **time**, Donne rarely discusses anything chronologically (that is, in order) of this in this poem, there is a clearer progression from the past, in which the reader is taken to the present in which he pours out his threats to the receiver of his diatribe and she will be most unpleasant for her.

It is obvious that he has been upset by being rejected in love in the past, for this past event threatens to haunt the perpetrator. During his rant in the present, he refers to the past; he says that she is not the virgin she claims to be, and he indicates obliquely that the past, is now and will be in the future, for he says that when he comes to haunt her he will be in her arms of another man and that she will wear him out and he will soon be tired of her. He is in the present, rather than wait for the future when she will be the recipient of his wrath.

Many of his temporal deictic expressions use adverbs of time include the following: 'then' suggests a time in the future, but it could also refer to 'now that I am dead' – that she has 'not been truly hurt', so thus referring to the time of utterance. In line 4, 'then' is used after she has thought she is free of him, then shall he come. Still thinking in the future in line 6, Donne says 'then', after he has visited her as a ghost, then her sexuality will be his. Projecting further into the future, in line 11, after she has had a new but less satisfactory lover, 'then' she will lie in quicksilver (line 12).

## People

The main person in this poem is the poet who is speaking. He is speaking to the reader and another person in the poem, but not participating in it. She is the recipient of his diatribe; 'thou thinks't thee free' in lines 1 and 2. The third person in the poem is an imaginary person taken who will be there in her bed when the poet haunts her. Although this person is represented as someone who will soon be exhausted and disinterested in the work of the poet.

Deictic expressions that indicate the relationship between the people include: in line 1, he brings her to him by including two uses of the word 'from' – when she thinks she is free of him and 'solicitations'. In line 4, rather than indicating he will come as a ghost and haunt her, he comes closer to him and the time of utterance, after she thinks she is free, 'then shall' he come, very much focused on being close to her in order to seek his revenge. After he projects a picture of her failing in love in the future he brings her closer to him again by saying 'I am a ghost than I' (line 13). He still cannot help bringing himself back into the picture in the last four lines. Their relationship is still very apparent; even if it is supposed to have ended for him. In lines 14 to 17 'I', 'thee', 'my', and 'thou' are frequent words aligning to a relationship in his mind, the distance between physical presence and imaginary presence is bridged by the more formal use of the second pronouns 'thee' and 'thou'.

## Place

'Place' can concern the relative distance and proximity between the characters and not than specific 'places' or locations. Literally speaking, we can assume the poet is in the room of his attack in an imagined situation when she has rejected him, and he is furious. She will have sex with another when he comes to haunt her.

Much of what was written above, under the heading of 'people' is also relevant to the choice of expressions such as 'I' and 'thou' he brings his ex-lover close to him while the element of distance by the use of the more formal 'thee' and 'thou'.

He does make himself appear more distant when in lines 5 to 12 he speaks of her; however, she is definitely in his mind constantly, using 'thee', 'thy', 'thou' often, a suggestion of distance. From lines 13 to 17 he comes closer to the focus of the attack, events, using 'I' and 'my' frequently.

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### Individual Activities

1. How do we know Donne is angry? Choose 10 words or phrases that most effectively
2. **AS Only:** Compare this poem to 'Woman's Constancy'. How are they different? Prepare a short talk to give to the class about which poem
3. Write a letter from his ex-lover trying to placate the angry poet. Include lines from the poem.
4. Which poetic device is used in lines 1, 2 and 11?
5. Donne often uses words that have two meanings and he often includes metaphors. Which words including the title and in lines 2, 8, and 15 do you think



### Group Activities

1. In groups of three, take it in turns say a word that could replace another word. Others try to name the word the person has replaced. For example, 'mild' and the others should be able to recognise that it could replace 'mildly'.
2. In groups of two or three, take it in turns to read up to a comma, semicolon or full stop, and discuss how this helps you understand the poem.
3. In groups of three, rewrite a section each: A) lines 1 to 5, B) line 6 to 11 to the punctuation. Swap your writing and try to replace the punctuation with a different example. Discuss why the punctuation is important.
4. In groups of three, take a section each: A) lines 1 to 5, B) line 6 to 11. Take turns to choose a line which you think is most effective, and say why. Which is the most effective in the whole poem.
5. In groups of three, take a section each: A) lines 1 to 5, B) line 6 to 11. Discuss which of these three poetic devices is used most effectively in the poem. Which metaphor. Give reasons for your decision. Decide as a group which is the most effective in the whole poem.

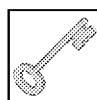


### Discussion Questions

1. Is revenge best served cold or is Donne's method preferable? (Support your answer with quotations from the text.)
2. Together discuss what the poem tells us about Donne. Support your answer with quotations from the text.
3. How much of the poem is just Donne's wishful thinking? Support your answer with quotations from the text.

**Extension: Plan an essay response for the following question: 'The poem is wishful thinking. Discuss'. Then swap your plan with a partner and give them feedback on their plan afterwards.**

4. Discuss which lines contain the most effective **imagery**. Support your answer with quotations from the text.
5. Alliteration is a useful poetic technique that puts words that have the same sound together. Does it make a difference if the alliteration occurs in words close together or a short distance away? Which lines contain alliteration that is most effective?



### Key Terms

**imagery** relating to the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell



### Comprehension Questions

1. What does Donne say he will die from?
2. How does Donne suggest she is not a virgin?
3. How do we know she will be keener than her new bedmate?
4. What does Donne say she will be bathed in?
5. How do we know he has accepted that he is finished with her?

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# 'The Canonization'

## Events

The title 'The Canonization' summarises the poet's main message: he and his lover are not worthy of the opening words immediately alert us to the fact that it is more about the extent of his love for his mistress than canonisation into the church. The aggressive tone is immediately apparent in the first overt exclamation of annoyance. The listener should stop complaining and let the poet speak. The exaggerated, indicating Donne's frequent use of hyperbole and contrasts. Instead of complaining with his listener's disapproval, or that the listener should complain about the poet's 'sneer' at his poverty. These first three lines make up the exclamation of annoyance. The poet criticises the listener, and in contrast to Donne's poverty, he scoffs at the listener's lack of arts, and the affluent company of courtiers in the king's company. He sneers at the listener's kowtow to the higher echelons of the king's society or even with the king himself. The first couplet to the first verse asks the listener to think whatever he likes, but at least

The first six lines of the second verse consist of a list of indignant evidence that the poet's love is hurting no one. He asks: 'who is hurt by my love?', 'what ships have sunk with my love?', 'what have created floods?', 'When did he change the season, prevent winter from going?', 'When do the heats in his veins give anyone the plague?'. The final three lines to this verse return to the poet's approach when he says that soldiers will always find wars, and lawyers will find cases in their arguments, but there are no arguments between the lovers, they are in love.

The first six lines of the third verse again consist of indignant demands saying that the poet is strong in their love. No matter what he calls them, one fly or another, candles or bees, they are each other so much that they find strength (represented by the eagle), and gentle in their love. They are like the phoenix (that rises from the fire). He says they are

The last three lines reflect on the perfection of their love and how they are so sure of their love and live again because of the power of their love.

In the fourth verse the poet becomes defiant. He says if they cannot love, they will not be considered worthy of a proper burial, they will become a legend, people will remember them, they aren't remembered historically. They will be in a place far superior than any other. People will remember them by these hallowed memories and raise them to the level of sainthood. This is a reference to the title: they will be canonised for their love.

The final verse is one of defiance again, when Donne declares that the listener will finally understand and will all clamour for a little of the love that the poet and his

## Viewpoint

This poem is from the speaker's point of view. The poet speaks his mind to a friend or a lover; he is just the recipient of the monologue. As is customary for Donne, the focus is on the speaker.

Donne often uses the first-person object pronoun ('me') or the first-person possessive pronoun ('my') that the poem is mostly about him, and he also uses the second-person object pronoun ('you') or the second-person adjective ('your') to indicate that he is addressing his words to someone in particular. The poem is just being reflective. It isn't until line 18 that the object of his passion is referred to as 'she' in the third verse.

He speaks more of his lover and the love they have together, by using the first-person plural possessive adjective ('our'). In the final verse, although the speaker uses the second person singular and plural ('you') appear again more frequently.

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## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

The words are grouped into five stanzas of nine lines each. The rhythm throughout (lines 1 and 7) being in iambic pentameter, some (2, 5, 6 and 8) in iambic tetrameter, which

The rhyme scheme for each verse is ABBACCCDD. The first four lines suggest the speaker's situation. The last four lines are insufficient lines for the entire form. Have a think about what you think the speaker is saying.

## Language

**Lexis:** The **lexis** (choice of vocabulary) reflects different themes: e.g. love; the Church; the spiritual life after death.

- **Love:** The theme of love is expressed in line 32: the words 'build' and 'rooms' suggest the notion that they are 'at home' with their love.

Line 41: He uses 'glasses' instead of 'eyeballs' or 'lenses', suggesting a number of 'glasses' usually associated with artificial lenses to help you see better, a drink on your view of life – is the glass half full or half empty? – and glass the reflection of what individual thinks about the world and/or love and/or religion. In line 42: 'mirrors' do not reflect, but reflect the feelings of the associated person/people and their relationship with love and other emotions.

- **Religion, the church, kings and courtiers:** In line 6, words associated with the courtiers are present: 'Honour' and 'Grace', and 'King's' in line 7 are written to suggest the heightened position of the relevant people.

There are many references to religion: 'God's sake' and 'love' (line 1), 'five' (line 6), 'the King's' (line 7), 'Contemplate' (line 7), 'ships' (line 11), 'eagle' and 'hermitage' (line 31), 'tombs' (line 35), 'hymns' (line 36), 'canoniz'd' (line 37), 'hermitage' (line 41). In line 41, the poet mentions 'eyes', which are often considered 'windows'.

**Phonology:** Regarding the phonology of the poem, Donne often uses alliteration and other prosodic features to give shape and meaning to the poem.

- **Alliteration:** He uses alliteration in line 1, 'let me love'. This alliteration contrasts hard sounds, imitating the efforts of the poet to sooth the complainant and his own. In line 3, the alliteration in 'fortune flout' helps to focus on these words, and things the complainant can criticise, they help bring this list to an affirmative end. 'ships ... sighs' the repeated 's' sounds add to the anger, as does the near-alliteration in line 21 the alliteration of 'tapers too' and the following 't' in 'cost' serve not only to also help to make the line a cohesive whole.
- **Assonance:** Assonance is another technique used to bind the words together. 'wars' and 'lawyers' binds the words together making them stand out, and, as they also serve to summarise the content of the line. In line 26: the assonance of 'wars' and 'lawyers' accentuate the contrast between the words, they are in fact opposites: when bodies go down into the earth, and yet the poet says they then rise, we assure ourselves that they will.
- 

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## Taking It Further...

**Phonaesthetics:** In line 19 thoughts of peace and calm when thinking of their love, a number of soft ‘w’ sounds. In lines 29 and 30: the fricative ‘f’ in ‘if unfit for’ quiet and ‘hearse’ emphatically, underlining the anger expressed, and the use of the w balances the two lines perfectly – if they are not fit for one thing, they are certain another alliteration is used to further adhere the words to each other with the v line 28, the cacophony of the plosive ‘d’ and ‘t’ in ‘die’ and ‘it’ respectively balances alliteration of the liquid ‘l’s in ‘live by love’. In line 31 the strong-sounding word preference to many other suitable words because of the hard velar ‘k’ sounds at word, that contrast with the rest of the line that has no velar sounds and make the its metaphorical connotations. In line 42 the sibilant ‘s’ and the ends of the words the vehemence of his idea. In line 44 the final word ‘epitomize’ rhymes with ‘spies’ role of the words.

The rhythm and cohesiveness of line 34 is enhanced by the repetition and the all ‘well a well-wrought’. In line 41, the alliteration of ‘Who ... whole world’s’ contrasts the most important words of the line: ‘contract’. In the final line, line 45, the alliteration ‘courts’ binds the words together, framing the example given.

- **Prosodic features:** Sometimes Donne places particular sounds together for effect prosodic features; for example, similar sounds next to each other can be more the reader to pause, and so indicate a more important phrase or something a deeper concept at play. Examples of this can be seen in line 1 when in ‘God sounds make these important words stand out and the repeated ‘s’ makes the significance to the words. Another example of use of prosody is in line 11 (‘the reader pause, and thus gives emphasis to the poet’s example.

## Other Poetic Devices

**Parallelism:** This poem in particular uses the repetition of words to help emphasize the rhythm and balance of the line. He wants to ensure that his listener has understood can be found in line 10, ‘Alas, alas, who’s’; as well as repeating the dramatic words sounds add venom to his cry, almost as if he is hissing out the words. In line 16, the line balance as the two ideas are presented: both the soldiers and the lawyers die ‘such’ in line 43 helps to highlight the significance of and contrast between ‘mirror copy and reflect information, ‘spies’ suggests seeing all.

Sometimes, similar grammatical forms are also used to balance the line. Examples you a course, get you a place’) and line 7 (‘Or the King’s real, or his stamped face)

**Hyperbole:** Exaggerations can be found throughout this poem. In line 1, instead of speech with an exclamation: ‘For God’s sake!’ In the first verse, he speaks of King ordinary people. The examples he gives in verse 2 are all exaggerations; he asks ‘drownd’ rather than disturbed, he says his tears have flooded the ground (line 12 spring (line 13), or when did he cause the plague (lines 14 and 15). In lines 23 and lover are the phoenix, suggesting perhaps that they are rising from the ashes of love be a legend (line 30), which, although it may be read as an exaggeration, may be we are indeed reading about their love several centuries after the event. Exaggeration they will be in line 34 ‘The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs’ and that they will be In the final verse he uses exaggerated metaphors to represent the small-minded speaks of how he and his lover contracted the ‘the whole world’s soul’, into the line 43, ‘they did all ... epitomize’ them. The final hyperbole is the idea in lines 44 courts: [would] beg from above / A pattern of [their] love!’

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**Personification:** Personification is rarely used in this poem; however, Donne does. In line 29 he says their love may be considered unfit for ‘tombs’ or a ‘hearse’.

**Enjambment:** A number of lines continue on into the next one for effect. The effect is not to make the reader think, but rather the poet uses this technique to make the reader stay for a brief moment on a line to be aware of its significance. Examples of enjambment can be found between lines 26 and 27, 33 and 34, 35 and 36, 37 and 38 and lines 40 and 41.

**Metaphor:** The entire poem may be said to be a metaphor of their love. The high canonisation, which stands as a metaphor for the high honour their love should receive. Examples offered in verse 1 are metaphors for the poet telling his listener that he should take more interest in other things than criticising the poet’s love. Verse 2 stands for the harmlessness of the poet’s love and in verses 3 and 4 there are numerous metaphors for the qualities of the poet’s and his mistress’s love. Verse 5 is packed with metaphors for the lovers’ affections and the narrow-mindedness of the listener and of others that might interfere.

In the final verse, line 45, the two contrasting words ‘mirrors’ and ‘spies’ (not normally associated with eyes) are an example of the many conceits within the poem. They appear to be opposites: the eyes see directly.

**Conceits:** Other poetic techniques include use of conceits, far-fetched metaphors. In line 39 we are expecting the contrast between ‘peace’ and war, but Donne uses the metaphor that the anger/battle is from within the person he is addressing, and within other people.

## Time

Regarding **time**, it is almost indefinable in many of Donne’s poems and this is not surprising. He is expressing his thoughts in the present, to a listener. Donne is admonishing the listener about the disapproval of Donne’s love affair. When it started is not apparent, but it is obvious that Donne is expressing his belief that their love will last forever, after mere mortals.

- Time has obviously passed already, he is not a young man for he has ‘palsy, ruin’d fortune’ (lines 2 and 3).
- Thinking about the future, he is obviously demanding that the listener goes away and lets the poet love without interference (lines 5 to 9).
- Then Donne thinks of time immemorial: soldiers and lawyers will always find time to die and live respectively, but Donne and his lover will love (lines 16 to 18).
- Their love will last forever for even though they die and their bodies will be buried, they will rise from their graves like the phoenix and live again by the inexplicable power of their love.
- Still thinking about immeasurable time in the future, Donne believes he and his lover will live forever but even if they do so, they will become a legend, they will be fitting subjects for a story (lines 28 to 32).
- Many of his temporal deictic expressions involve the use of verbs in the present tense that are occurring at the time of utterance. This is true for lines 1–3 and 20–27.
- Other occasions when the present tense is used refer to no particular time but to a general truth or an event that is always the case. Examples of this usage are in lines 10–15.
- In addition, some usage of the present tense consists of the imperative form, where the utterance demands the listener takes an action in the future. Examples of this usage are in lines 10–15.
- When he is speaking about what he has not done, the present perfect or past perfect is used for things that he has or has not done in the immediate past. Examples of this usage are in lines 10 to 15, such as ‘What merchant’s ships have my sighs drowned?’.
- Verse 4 uses verbs that indicate the future for Donne is using deictic projection to say that things will happen in the future.
- Verse 5 reverts to the past except for the first and last line in which the poet says ‘I have seen the pattern of [their] love’.
- The one temporal adverb included (‘now’) in line 39, briefly brings the discussion back to the present when the poet compares the way their love in the past was all joy but now it is all pain.

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## People

There are three main 'people' in this poem: Donne, his lover and the listener to him of his love. The voice of Donne is central; it is his point of view. His lover is second same as him for they are 'one' (line 24). The listener appears to be disapproving of the whole poem rebuts this criticism. Again, the voice is only Donne's; his listener also rebuts about the criticism: 'For God's sake hold your tongue' (line 1). He would feel all his ailments 'palsy', 'gout', 'grey hairs', 'or ruin'd fortune' (lines 2 and 3), but criticising his lover has made him furious. Donne is scathing about the beliefs his listener has and such as 'life', concentrate on getting wealthy, kowtow to so-called higher beings in our society or the king's money, so that you will 'let me love' (line 9).

Still annoyed, the poet becomes indignant in verse 2 when he demands to know just who is in this love affair. Which 'merchant's ships' has he sunk, 'Who says' his 'tears' have his 'colds' stop 'spring' from coming, when did his blood infect someone with the disease who has he hurt he demands to know.

His imagination runs riot in verse 3 when he exaggerates his annoyance by colourful metaphors. He tells his protagonist to call them what he likes, a moth or whatever like candles that die, as they 'die' in their lovemaking but soon rise again. The lover has the courage of an eagle and the gentleness and peacefulness of a dove. Like the 'phoenix', they will show the proof of the resurrection by their love.

He becomes boastful and defiant in verse 4. Even if they die from love, they can be remembered. Even if they are deemed 'unfit' for earthly burial in normal 'tombs and hearse', they will be a 'legend', to have their love revered in poetry, and in this way they will be remembered and entered into the list or 'calendar' of saints ('canoniz'd').

He is triumphant in verse 5. He is convinced that his protagonist and all those who were once thought love peaceful but now are filled with 'rage' by it, who reduced the world to a diminutive that they forced into people's eyes, their windows of their soul, and their spyglasses to scrutinise and reduce everything to its lowest form, they will all, they will 'beg from above'; they will look to them and their heightened position and try to emulate themselves on their love.

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## Place

'Place' can not only concern situations but it can concern the relative distance and characters and ideas (spatial deixis), rather than specific 'places' or locations. The apparent places indicated puts the characters and ideas in their comparative positions mentioned in the first and second verses we imagine the poet and the listener and his courtiers. In the second verse we are moved into the outside world and the affair does nothing to interfere with any other people or things on earth. The third of the metaphorical images, some present here on earth, others in heaven above, the beloved will gather to the flame of a candle (life). They are a complete pair, with the eagle and the tenderness and peace of a dove. He believes he and his beloved will like a phoenix, will rise again through the mysterious power of their love. The fourth when Donne is certain that if they are not deemed fit for earthly things, they will be considered and become legends for time immemorial through poetry that will survive beyond their earthly lives. They will become saints. The fifth verse represents a timeless and abstract zone when Donne remains convinced that all those people who ostracised the lovers – making them like hermits in their 'hermitage', once loved, it makes them 'rage', those who believed they had the 'whole world's soul' in their hands rammed it into others' eyes making mirrors and spyglasses of it, reducing everything to the understandable, they, like all 'Countries, towns, courts', will crave for a piece of Donne.



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### Individual Activities

1. Look at verse 2 and draw a picture that contains the images Donne uses in 'The Triple Fool'.
2. **AS Only:** Compare this poem with 'The Triple Fool'. Prepare a short speech explaining which you prefer, and why.
3. Write a possible reply from the listener telling Donne to calm down because of the ridiculousness of his ideas.
4. Choose the best three examples of hyperbole that you think demonstrate why you have chosen them. How would these be expressed today?
5. The poem is full of contrasts. See how many words or phrases you can find that contrast and explain how they are contrasted. For example: 'chide my wife' vs 'rich'. These contrast the negative effects of ageing with the apparent wealth of the Bishop.

**Extension: Write a short essay on the topic of contrasts in this poem.**



### Group Activities (students' own responses except for 3.):

1. In pairs, take it in turns to read two or three lines from the poem and ask each other questions. Partners say the correct word.
2. In groups of three, take it in turns to read the poem stopping at commas and full stops. Discuss how these help you understand the poem.
3. In pairs, discuss what type of questions are in verse 2. Try to change the questions so they can't be answered with 'no'.
4. In pairs, take it in turns to choose the lines that have the best imagery. Discuss which you think is the most effective in the poem?
5. In groups of five, each take a verse and rewrite a line each in modern English. Then read out a line from each group so that the others can try to say or understand it.

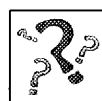


### Discussion Questions

1. Is the poet justified in his anger? In which circumstances could he be justified? In which circumstances would he not be justified? Would this be the same if you were the criticiser? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
2. Donne is a metaphysical poet, writing about spiritual, abstract ideas. Give an example of this? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
3. Donne's criticiser is a prude. Discuss.

**Extension: Write down your ideas and use them to write two paragraphs on the topic of prudes.**

4. When should love be forbidden?
5. Hyperbole is a useful poetic technique that exaggerates ideas. Do you think Donne's use of hyperbole is?



### Comprehension Questions

1. How do we know Donne is old?
2. How do we know the criticiser is wealthy?
3. Which disease is mentioned?
4. How does Donne give us the impression of graves of the wealthy?
5. Which poetic device is used in line 28: 'We can die by it, if not live by it'?

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# 'The Flea'

## Events

In one long monologue the poet tries to seduce his partner.

In the first verse, the speaker laments his lack of success in seducing his partner who is having more success than he. In the second verse the speaker dwells more on his resignation to the flea. The flea represents the couple, and the speaker asks her to give in to him, both, or even all three, by killing the flea. The final verse brings the message home when she heartlessly kills the flea. The poem ends by him pleading with her to spare it – just as killing the flea did not affect her, so she will lose nothing by giving into him.

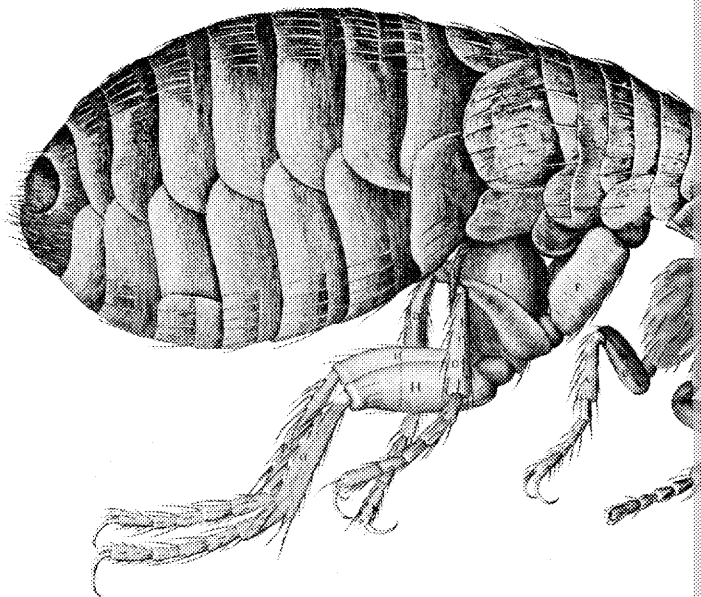
Most events spring from the thoughts and speech of the speaker. Most are imagined events that happen except the natural action of a flea which bites its hosts. However, the speaker's resignation is aggrandised into a huge metaphor representing the speaker's failed seduction, and when it is finished we are led to believe that all is not lost and this determined lover may yet succeed.

## Viewpoint

This poem is from the speaker's point of view. Donne uses the first-person object pronoun (you), frequently using the flea as a metaphor and an excuse for his seduction. The prospective lover as a couple in a future relationship. The female point of view is also used. This is important before reading the analysis below.

## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

Using the metre common in speech, the iambic metre (weak/strong), the poem is written in five lines each the lines alternating between tetrameter (four 'feet' of weak strong, weak strong) and pentameter (five feet). Each verse is carefully structured in the rhyming pattern of AABCCD. The speaker's idle thoughts of the poet, they are carefully constructed, thus giving the impression of a man who was doing when he was applying his seductive talents; he was so much aware of his own seduction that it was quite feasible that he was being calculated and cynical. For example, the repetition of 'suck', line 13 'marriage' and line 18 'three' bond the words together within the verse, making them memorable to the reader.



### Key Terms

#### pentameter

a line of verse with five metrical feet (e.g. iambic pentameter) with alternating weak/strong syllable patterns.

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## Language

**Lexis** (choice of vocabulary) reflects different themes such as sex and the Church.

There is a clear example of how Donne not only chooses lexis that make a point in the poem but also particular words that have other associations and connotations, many of the words relating to the relationship with the Church.

Even though he appears to be very earnest, keen and even serious, the poet also has a playful tongue in his cheek, he is not serious; he is being ironic or even sarcastic.

- **Sex:** He makes reference to sex and the sexual act, often metaphorically. In line 1, the reference to sex: the hymen or 'maidenhead' as if to say what a nonsense it is, that it is taking her virginity away. In line 7, the choice of the word 'woo' signals more irony. Rather than the flea has taken what it wanted from her without any hesitation or effort. The effort of seduction, it is as if the whole poem is the effort of the poet to seduce the woman.

The choice of the word 'sudden' rather than 'quick' in line 19 also has associations with the climax coming suddenly, not always 'quickly'.

His choice of lexis often reflects more than an immediate literal meaning; it is often used in a metaphorical sense. In line 4: the word 'mingled' rather than 'mixed' associates the action as being done in one fell swoop, just as Donne would like to 'mix' with his lover gently and gracefully. The word 'pampered' rather than 'allowed to take the blood unhindered', brings forth the idea of one lover would cosset the other. In line 8 'swells' rather than 'is filled' suggests the swelling of making love – the male and female organs 'swelling' in the sexual act and/or pregnancy. Also, the word 'blood' is not only used in the literal sense, it also has a metaphorical sense (line 9, family necessarily created as a result of the subject of the poem: making love). Coupling is also suggested in the phrase 'one ... made of two'. The final line of the verse helps to summarise its themes of sadness and lack of success.

In line 10, 'stay' not only means 'stop' but suggests that not only does the poet want to stop killing the flea, it infers he is asking her to wait, to be there for more time.

Line 15 also uses 'walls' (instead of body of the flea) suggesting the feeling of being unable to make a move, just as the poet is unable to make a move towards seducing the woman instead of 'black', for 'jet' and 'black' may form a single hyphenated word, just as the woman were joined. In line 16, 'apt' suggests more than the word 'likely', it also has an alternative meaning for the word: the woman who is the focus of his desire, she is a most suitable candidate to do such a murder.

In line 17, the words 'self murder' are used rather than 'suicide', inferring that she is killing herself, killing herself in cold blood as it were, and, by implication, she would do what the poet wishes to love.

- **Church:** Donne frequently makes reference to the Church. In line 15, the word 'cloister' has an association with religious places of worship for a cloister is where monks or nuns live. He also associates two opposites again: he is here like a locked-up monk who is not allowed to go out. 'cloistered' in this line suggests spending a long time alone in this room to work on the work of seduction. In line 18, the religious theme is perpetuated, this 'sins' and 'three' (the latter referring to the Holy Trinity). 'Sacrilege' suggests the killing of the flea and it also implies spoiling something sacred, or something special such as the woman's love. The word 'three' is mentioned in relation to opposites – 'three sins' that the poet is committing (or, to extend the metaphor further: three holy 'beings': the Holy Trinity: the Holy Spirit). In line 20, 'Purpled' rather than 'discoloured' makes reference to the blood of royalty, suggesting that the by her act she has involved herself in destroying the 'blood of innocence' reminds us of Herod demanding the killing of the innocent baby Jesus born in an effort to eliminate any competition. The word 'guilty' rather than 'innocent' suggests the court and the judgements made. She (as well as the flea) is being judged by the poet.

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**Phonology:**

- **Alliteration** is another important feature. In line 25, the alliteration of short 't's in 'Tis true' lead towards a contrasting, balancing alliteration of the fricative 'th' in 'thee' – the rebuttal was true of the above statements by the poet. In line 26, the poet learns that her fears are false. In line 27, the alliteration of 'Will waste' begins lessening the impact, the honour lost hardly exists.
- **Assonance:** Examples of **assonance** are in the following lines: In line 3, in 'suck' and 'thee' rhyme, which gives emphasis to the rhythm and meaning. In line 13, the poet summarises the meaning, and makes the line flow rhythmically. In line 18, the poet separates and marks out the repeated 'three'. In line 21, there is assonance connecting them, and also balancing the hard velar consonants at the beginning of the line with the plosive 't' in 'guilty'.

**Taking It Further...**

**Phonaesthetics:** Cacophony (unpleasant sounds): some sounds are used to enhance the hard velar consonants in 'Except' and 'sucked' express envy, and supposed and 'triumph'st' and 'sayest' spits the words out, making them stressed; 'thou' appears to balance it.

Donne also uses the combination of the sounds of the words for effect. Examples of suggested sibilant 's' sounds of 'sin', 'shame' and 'loss' combine the words together and long words in 'sin', 'shame' and 'loss' contrast with the length of the word 'mollify' and dwell on this key word. Line 8 features the impact of plosive 'p's in 'pampered', and it is the only word with 's's in the line. In line 17, all the words are short except 'triumph'st' which illustrates how the key words summarise the content of the line. In line 18, the poet uses the less common three-syllabled words of the poem making it more noticeable.

- **Prosodic features:** Notable effects from placing difficult to pronounce sounds at the end of a line, which causes the reader to pause and ponder the idea the words or phrase represent, can be seen in line 25 ('triumph'st, and say'st ...') and line 26 ('when thou yield'st to me,') making the poet's demand for her yielding of particular importance.

**Other Poetic Devices**

**Contrasts:** The final line, line 27, brings this amusing poem to an end with two couplets summarising the strength of the lover's endeavours, as though it were 'life and death' and at the same time belittling the whole experience in his ironic manner, as if to say it's not exactly what he needs. In line 13 he matches two opposites: the marriage bed where sex takes place and a place of religious worship, and holy matters usually far removed from lovemaking (but not in this poem). Another example of the opposites Donne manage to convey and use within a line: in the final line, 'love to look' – he is asking her to look at this insignificant, unimportant object, this 'trinket' but he demands she takes serious note of what he is saying, as his words are very important.

**Parallelism:** Parallelism is often indicated when words are repeated, so balancing the line. It is found in lines 1, 3 and 13. In line 1, the repetition of 'mark' demands the listener to take notice of what Donne is saying. In line 2, whatever she has denied him is made unimportant that the strength of line is in the lexis he has chosen not to include: 'that which thou' (referred to as 'that which thou'). In line 3, he refers to 'suck' twice, emphasising that 'suck' was accepted as the norm in the seventeenth century; people did not recoil in horror as they would today. In addition, the word 'suck' is associated with having something in your mouth used in lovemaking in the form of a kiss as well as being associated with pulling someone irresistibly, just as he would like her to find him irresistible. Donne obviously has 'suck' on his mind when one is married on his mind for he uses the word 'marriage' twice in line 13.

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**Hyperbole:** Considering other poetic techniques, line 11 contains an example of how Donne exaggerates when he says ‘more than married’; you are married or you are not, it is impossible to be ‘more than married’, unless he means that it will be as if they were married and have consummated the marriage: that is, they have had sex, which is what he is after all the time.

**Personification:** At times Donne appears to personify the flea and make it sound as if it were human. In line 8 he says it is ‘pampered’. In the second verse, the flea is given equal status as a third ‘person’; for example, in line 1 and in line 12 he says the flea is, rather than is like, ‘you and I represent them. Further human qualities are given to the flea in verse 3. In line 12 the flea has been ‘guilty’.

**Enjambment:** Lines that continue on into the next one to give more space and time for more meaningful are between lines 5 and 6, 12 and 13, 19 and 20 and 33 and 34.

**Metaphor:** The entire poem is a metaphor for their relationship. In line 1, we are told that the flea which represents their relationship, or lack of it, as the poet endeavours to see the flea as to represent a religious temple. Its sucking in line 3 represents the drawing out of their union in line 4. While he appears to be talking about the flea and how it is not sucking blood, this represents the notion he has that if they made love this would not be a loss of virginity (lines 5 and 6). In line 7 he refers more directly to the subject that the flea accuses the flea of enjoying his pleasure before he has had to woo her, not like the flea, like the pampered woman he sees before him, ‘swells’ with their two bloods could well become pregnant and ‘swell’. In line 10 superficially he pleads with her not to kill their love. He defines the metaphor in line 12, the flea is them and represents their marriage haven (line 13), and in the rest of verse 2 he continues to plead for her to live. In verse 3 she has obviously killed the flea and their love. In line 21 the poet asks why she feels. When she says she has not suffered anything for killing the flea, he then concludes that if she gave into him, she would not lose any honour either.

## Time

Donne rarely discusses anything chronologically (that is, in order). He mixes the time of the present and the future, moving from one to the other to emphasise his ideas and his involvement in the poet’s journey.

Many of his temporal deictic expressions involve the use of the verb tenses. The time of the time of utterance when the poet asks his prospective lover to notice the flea is in the present in time as the flea has already sucked blood from him and then the woman the poet is talking to is present in verse 2 as he uses the flea as a metaphor for their relationship. Suddenly in the immediate past, she has killed the flea and by association their love. From line 12 to the present and admonishes her for saying how unimportant her act was, and then in the future, saying how she would not have lost anything by giving in to him.

**Adverbs of time** are to be found within the poem but their meaning is very much different. In line 3, the flea sucked the poet first and now it sucks her. The first refers to a time before the time of utterance, now refers to the present, as would be expected. In line 7 another adverb of time is used, ‘before’, time before the time of utterance, for, unlike the poet, the flea enjoys taking from the poet. In line 24, ‘now’ reinforces the fact that the words represent the time of utterance.



### Key Terms

**adverbs of time** are parts of speech that add meaning to the verbs that describe what happened, for how long or how many

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**More on time:**

Donne rarely discusses anything chronologically (that is, in order). He mixes the past and the future, moving from one to the other to emphasise his points. He uses the past to show how things have changed.

The following description outlines his varied times within the poem. The simple past the flea did was to suck blood from his mistress. Other references to the past include when he states she has just killed the flea and asks how this flea could have been guilty if he refers to the way he knew the woman from the past.

An **imagined**, rather than real past often occurs in Donne's poetry and this poem is a good example; the reader's imagined past comes into play for the reader imagines that the speaker is in the past; for example, in line 2 he refers to how little was the reason for her in denying him that, alas, this is more than they have done yet.

**In the present**, at the time the poet is speaking, the couple look at the flea, what the speaker says, for example, in line 1 he asks her to look at this flea, and at the end of line 3, he says she is right and 6 he says she knows it cannot be said that it's a sin, a shame, or loss of virginity. The flea grows bigger, in line 7 the flea is enjoying himself before he has even tried to woo the woman. The speaker comments how the flea represents them, in line 15 he says they are together instead of apart. In line 26: the speaker says the woman is right.

**In the future:** the speaker lives in hope of having a successful union with this woman. In line 10, the speaker exhorts the woman not to kill the flea – she is obviously about to do so. In line 17 not to add 'self-murder' to her crimes and not commit three crimes by killing the flea.

There are many examples of mixing time within one line: for example, in line 3 the speaker says when he says it had sucked him, now it is sucking her; in line 7 he includes the present when he says the flea is enjoying himself before he has even tried to woo the woman. The speaker mixes the past and present in lines 25 and 26 when he says she is right, but should learn from this how little she would have done for him. In line 14, the past and present are mixed, for in the first part of the line, both he and she have objected to the relationship in the past; the second part brings us into the present when they are together: 'they are met'. Line 16 mixes the past and future: knowing the woman would not want to happen, the speaker knows she is likely to kill the flea. In lines 25 and 26, the speaker mixes the past (which is in the present), but demands her to learn from this how little she would have done for him (which is in the future). Line 27 mixes the future and the past for he says how little she would have done for him from her.

Different times are sometimes represented simultaneously; for example, in line 4, the past and present are still mingling. Sometimes the poet makes the time of events uncertain, creating a sense of uncertainty for the speaker; for example, in line 11, the speaker is about to say that they have nearly been married, but then continues: 'yea' and speaks as though they are already married in the future, indeed be more than married. The line indicates that he is indeed married and that how bravely and confidently he speaks, nothing is assured and he knows it.

**People**

There is only one main person in the monologue and that is the poet. Although he is speaking with his proposed mistress that he is speaking to, his mistress has no voice. The speaker is direct and argumentative; for example, in line 1 he does not ask – he tells his listener to look at the flea.

- The speaker reveals how resentful he is after his partner has refused his advice to have his own way and how scathing he is of her rejection; for example, in line 11 he says it is unimportant, that she was being silly to deny him. He tries to distract her from her rejection by asking her to search her mind, look at the flea and how it has joined them by mingling the two (lines 2 and 3).

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- His argument becomes stronger, it is as if he is saying, 'You've got to agree' (it is hardly a sin, a shame or losing your virginity; it is nothing (lines 5 and 6).
- He calls upon her better nature, he tries to get her sympathy: he says how lucky she is to have sex from her without any foreplay. She accuses her of indulging the flea, so why should she care for him? He asks her to see how they are already joined, their blood is mixed inside her (lines 7 and 8).
- He becomes indignant: You can imagine him pouting as he says that the flea has done what he has done (line 9).
- We get a glimpse of what his partner is like because after hearing all of this, she looks at the speaker and lifts her hand to kill the flea, making the speaker continue his argument. You can imagine him exaggerating the drama as he asks her not to kill three fleas instead of one. He is talking about killing the flea and the two of them for the flea represents them, for, after they are married, even more than married (lines 10 to 13).
- Like a spoilt child, the speaker then reminds her how their parents begrudge her sex with him even she is being awkward. He argues that they are together and you can imagine her saying 'what have you got to moan about?' (line 14).
- He says persuasively that they are together, here, cloistered within the jet-black flea. He then turns on her again, saying that knowing her usual habit, she is bound to kill the flea. It is as if he were saying, 'For goodness sake, don't kill yourself as well, you are a woman' (lines 15 and 16).
- His mood changes immediately and it's as if he is saying, 'Now you have gone and killed the flea, and you've got his innocent blood all under your nail. It was so innocent' (lines 19 and 20).
- False indignity rises again as he accuses her and says how could the flea be so bold as to mix your blood – a perfectly natural thing for him to do (lines 21 and 22).
- She is obviously not taking him seriously but joins in with his tongue-in-cheek argument. She has no speaking part in this argument, we understand that she scoffs him and she has killed the flea, none of them are dead, they are completely unaffected (lines 23 and 24).
- The ever-changing attitude of the speaker alters again and now he freely admits that he is wrong. He drives on with his argument to say that she should learn from this how petty she is and that there is nothing to fear; by giving in to him, she will lose no more than she lost when she was first married (lines 25 to 27).

## Place

Specific places are rarely named. There is no definitive place other than what ever they are in bed with a flea or two (line 1: Look at this flea).

The bed is not a place for sleep, it is a place for seduction and making love.

For example, in line 2: the speaker accuses the listener (presumed a woman) of doing this to him in line 11, they are in the bed where the couple are and will be when they marry (and will have sex regularly); in line 13, the speaker calls the bed their marriage bed, their marriage bed (and assume he means they worship each other as lovers do; and in line 15, in the speaker's imagination they are together inside the flea just as the flea has mixed their blood, and they have mixed their bodily fluids in intercourse).

In addition to this literal description, 'place' also concerns the relative distance and closeness of characters and ideas (spatial deixis). The poet and the woman are obviously close together mentally, for he is endeavouring to seduce her and she is obviously denying him. 'We are almost, nay more than married are' the poet hopes to convince her that they are almost married, because the flea has mingled blood. In the final lines, after she has scoffed at his argument about the flea representing them, he admits it, but uses this argument to say that the flea meant so little, it would be such a little thing if she yielded to him.

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### Individual Activities

1. Rewrite the poem in plain English, making sure we understand that.
2. **AS Only:** Compare this poem to another one by Donne that you are familiar with. Are they similar and/or different? Prepare a short talk to give to the class about why. (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
3. Where does Donne use the imperative form most? (The imperative form is the 'to', so the first word in the first verse comes from the verb 'to'. Why is he using this form to make his dominance felt. Does it work? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
4. Which single word or words in lines 4, 8, 10 and 18 indicate that they are a couple, they are together? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
5. Select five metaphors you think are most effective in the poem. Support your arguments with quotations from the text.



### Group Activities

1. In pairs, take it in turns to read a line, stopping just before a significant word. Name the noun. Discuss: is it the most important word in the line?
2. In groups of three, take it in turns to stop at commas, semi-colons and dashes. Discuss: which one is necessary each one is.
3. In pairs, take it in turns to provide examples of the use of alliteration. Which examples are the most effective, and why?
4. In pairs, take it in turns to choose lines that demonstrate the best use of metaphor. Which is the best over all?
5. In groups of three, take a verse each and choose the line that you think is the most important. Why do you think it is so.



### Discussion Questions

1. Is there a place for sarcasm and cynicism between lovers? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
2. Does the way Donne uses the flea to express his feelings towards his lover make sense? Why or why not? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)  
**Extension: Write a persuasive essay to argue your perspective.**
3. Could this situation occur nowadays? Why not? How could a modern poet write this poem?
4. Why do you think this poem has been so famous for so long? (Support your arguments with quotations from the poem.)
5. Assonance is a useful poetic technique that puts words that have the same vowel sound together. Does it make a difference if the assonance occurs in words immediately next to each other or some distance away? Which lines contain assonance that has been most effective?



### Comprehension Questions

1. How does Donne say he and his prospective lover are mingled?
2. What does Donne say is unfair about the flea's activity?
3. What poetic technique is used between lines 5 and 6? What effect does it have?
4. What reference to religion does he use when he talks about their love?
5. How do we know she'd killed the flea?

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# 'The Good Morrow'

## Events

Regarding events, in one long monologue the poet asks a rhetorical question that wonders... and, as if thinking aloud, dwells on the phenomenon of their relationship.

The speaker greets his silent lover with 'Good morning' and wonders what they could have been if they were not weaned until then but got their sustenance from simple pleasures, enjoying life like the legendary Seven Sleepers – Christian children who woke after 187 years in a cave under the Roman Emperor Decius – but their love makes all his other pleasures fanciful. He reflects on the awakening of souls and how they trust each other fully, making their little space.

He says, 'Let sea adventurers find new worlds, let others follow maps that show us our world.' In the third verse he begins by returning to the physical side to their relationship, his face is reflected in her eyes and hers in his, but soon thinks of realms beyond the physical, he thinks of them as hemispheres that have no north or west, or the accompanying metaphors, he ends stating that the perfection of their unity will make them immortal.

## Viewpoint

This poem is from the speaker's point of view, and, although someone else is present, the speaker, her point of view is absent.

## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

The poem is carefully structured into three verses of seven lines each, the lines are in iambic pentameter with rhyme: ABABCCC, with each line in the customary iambic pentameter (five 'feet') except for the extended final line (line 7) which is in iambic hexameter (six 'feet').

The first four lines of each verse pose a rhetorical question or look inward and consider their relationship, while the final three lines balance these with answers, decisive expressions and final conclusions as to the nature of their relationship and their future.

## Language

**Lexis** (choice of vocabulary) reflects themes of sex, emotional love, hope, philosophy.

- **Sexual connotations** include: in line 2, 'weaned' is not only an exaggeration as they had not even been weaned off their mothers' breast – the latter reminding him of his lover after a night of passion. More sexual connotations are found in words 'sucked', 'country' and 'pleasures', and line 5 when he uses the word 'country'. In line 19, 'mixed equally' means imbalanced as well as referring to the couple's relationship. The poem includes the word 'slacken' rather than 'weaken', referring to sexual prowess.
- **Love:** In line 16 the word 'hearts' is a symbol of love reflected in their 'faces' cutting also meaning heartless; declining where the sun sets, also meaning love, their world that is strong, invincible.
- **Hope:** The title, 'Good morrow', is not only a greeting but the promise of a good future.
- **Philosophy:** Line 1: 'I wonder' heralds the speaker's philosophising by asking 'What on earth?', meaning 'What on earth?'. In line 8, 'waking' has two meanings: awakening and the rousing of spiritual awareness.
- **The world and travel:** In line 12 'sea- discoverers' refers to his own travels across the world, the hemispheres represents halves, like the two heart-shaped 'halves' of the world.

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**Phonology:**

- **Alliteration:** He uses **alliteration** to soften or strengthen the rhythm. In line 1, the 'w' in 'weaned' suggests the soft gentleness of a baby breastfeeding. In line 4, the alliteration 'country pleasures' highlights these key words. Alliteration is also used for emphasis in line 18.

Sometimes he places particular sounds together for effect. In line 12, the 's' in 'sucked' is onomatopoeic like the sound of the sea; in line 14, the 's's' in 'possess' make the line sound like a hiss; in line 18, the less common usage of 'sh' and 'p' in 'sharp' and the plosive 'd' with 'c' in 'country' underline the meanings. In line 21, the hard-sounding velar 'k' in 'alike' and 'slacken' makes the line sound like a slap.

- **Assonance:** He uses assonance to make the word stand out and become more memorable. In line 3, the assonance of 'But' 'sucked' 'country', along with one of the words 'country pleasures', the female sexual organ, suggest sexual activity. In line 6, the assonance of 'country pleasures' underlines key words. In line 7, the assonance of 'dream ... thee' creates a sense of finality. In line 8, 'now' and 'our', 15: 'thine', 'eye', 'thine', and 'none', 20: 'our' and 'thou', and 21: 'love' and 'none'.

**Taking It Further...**

**Phonaesthetics:** Examples of euphony, sounds that are pleasant to hear and so suggest a pleasant impression of a reflective or pleasant idea or thought, may be found in lines 1 ('I was weaned') with the predominance of the soft 'w' sounds. Line 6 begins pleasantly with 'country pleasures'.

On the other hand, there are a number of lines which demonstrate cacophony, which is unpleasant to the ear, awakening the reader to a dramatic idea or thought. Examples include line 3: 'sucked on country pleasures, childishly' with the plosive 'b' and 'p' sounds combined with the hard velar 'c', line 4: the onomatopoeia 'snorted', line 18: 'sharp' with 'sh' combined with a plosive 'p', the plosive 'd' with the hard velar 'c', line 19: 'mixed' with 'm' reflecting the imbalance of the idea of them not being as the words describe, and line 21: 'love' with a close combination of the sibilant 's' and velar 'c', making the word stand out to emphasize the idea it portrays.

- **Prosodic features:** There are only two examples that might be construed to be unusual in the pronunciation and so the flow of the language, and they are in line 3 ('possess') where the pause created by placing the three sibilant sounds close together is reinforced by the close proximity of the words 'mixed equally' reinforces their meaning.

**Other Poetic Devices**

**Parallelism:** Repetition is another technique used in this poem to create balance and emphasis on an idea. The emphatic parallelism in the second verse when each line begins with 'I' emphasizes their relationship. The word 'love' is repeated in line 10, ensuring its prominent position. 'world' is repeated and 'world' appears again in the next line providing emphasis and contrast between the whole world and their tiny, exclusive world of love. The parallelism in the repetition of 'I' brings the poem to an emphatic close.

**Hyperbole:** Some of the poetic techniques used include the use of exaggeration. In line 4, two or more relevant connotations: in line 4, reference to the 'Seven Sleepers' and the legendary children who miraculously woke after sleeping hundreds of years, and 'world' transforms a single room to the whole world.

**Personification:** Personification does not feature strongly in this poem, for the personification of the morning. However, in line 3 it may be said the country pleasures are personified as metaphors for mother's breasts, for when they were children the poet says they 'sucked'.

**Enjambment:** The structure of the poem is given symmetry by the use of enjambment. The first two lines with both sets of lines ending the first line with 'thou and I'. The reader is left with a sense of symmetry.

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they are a couple and then needs to go on to the next line to discover the association in line 21 'love', as though this were a deliberate construction by Donne to emphasise

**Metaphor:** The poem has many metaphors. The title 'Good morrow' appears to be a glance, but then could stand for a good tomorrow, meaning a good future. The fact that the mothers' breasts and that they were not 'weaned' to say that they were very naïve when they first met and fell in love. The metaphor of the sleeping children of the world is innocent, asleep, unaware of the world of love before they met each other. In verse 16 a metaphor for the discovery of love which turned the room into 'an everywhere' which expanded, they knew much more about the world and love after they had experienced it. 'hemispheres' (line 17) become metaphors for the world, their world of love.

**Words with multiple meanings:** In line 8, 'good morrow' has two meanings: 'hello' and 'here's to our good future'; in line 9, 'watch' means both to watch or look at each other and 'sights' means things that you see and insight or awareness; in line 11, 'one' means the two of them being as 'one'; and in line 6, 'beauty' has two meanings: – in a wide sense in line 15, 'face' 'eye', they are 'facing' each other – they accept each other and their faces are reflected in their eyes.

Regarding **time**, Donne rarely uses time in a linear order. He mixes the times together, moving from one to the other to emphasise his points. He uses the past as a contrast to things that have changed. This applies to this poem in particular.

In line 1: 'I wonder', signals that the whole poem is more about an eternal truth than a question that begins a rhetorical question (one that does not expect an answer). In line 2 'Did' refers to a time before they fell in love. 'Weaned' suggests the poet is not just thinking of the love they had then with their mothers when they breastfed. In line 3, 'sucked' shows the closeness they had as breastfeeding babies do, 'country' in the past they were not just but innocent children seeking 'pleasures' in the fresh air, playing as children do. It suggests whether they were so unaware, so much in a deep sleep so they 'snorted' or 'snored' like those who slept for centuries. Donne is adding to the sense of timelessness with this reference which indicates he is still thinking of rustic countryside by referring to the home of an animal that were when they were younger.

He returns to the present in line 5 with 'Twas so' when he answers his own question about the nature of his philosophising. He returns to the past in line 6, when he thinks of the past when he started making love to women but thinks now (line 7) that his experience then was different as he compares his experience with the one he has now with his lover. He moves to the future as he looks forward to a wonderful future after their 'souls' have woken and, in line 9, they are together wholly. In line 10, the poet alludes to a general (timeless) truth: the 'love' is different from any other kind of love, and in line 11, he brings the listener/reader back to the present as he has made a whole world of this tiny room. In lines 12 and 13, he uses an imagination where others read 'maps', explore the 'seas' and find new worlds (speaking literally). In the present, saying let us stay here and possess each other, make ourselves one (that is, in line 16, he is in an even smaller, more specific moment in time when you can imagine them looking at each other's 'face', where they can see the reflection of their faces in each other's eyes and reveal the 'plain' truth: that they love each other. Lines 17 to 21 stay in the present but give into hints of the future – asking where they could find better halves to make a better match, so much, not one of them can die – anything that dies is not so well matched (or, in other words, love).

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## People

The main person in this poem is the poet who is speaking; for example, the very first line. Those two words herald his lengthy monologue, philosophising about their situation. In his speech, she has no voice – the female point of view is not expressed. Other people are mythical or unreal, used to support his ideas. In verse 1 he could be said to be talking about them. He suggests they were so innocent and unknowing before they met, they had had 'sucking' from their mothers' breasts ('country pleasures'). The mythical seven centuries until they were found are used as metaphors for their sleeping minds.

In the second verse he speaks of other (imaginary) people seeking their new world in the physical world, using maps and making discoveries; much less exciting than the world they discovered in each other.

## Place

'Place' can concern the relative distance and proximity between the characters and the specific 'places' or locations. However, such distances are expressed through metaphor. 'wonder' indicates that the poet is about to phrase a rhetorical question; we imagine they have had sexual intercourse, so 'the place' is more than likely in bed. He wonders when they were with their mother, breastfeeding, that is – 'placed by her side', or about a walled enclosure ('the Seven Sleeper's den') in which mythical children sleep.

Then the poet is 'placed' in his imagination looking back to the time he'd seduced her when they were nothing like the lover he is with now.

We imagine them in bed again (line 8) where he talks about their 'waking souls', and how love making them so cozy in their metaphorical 'little room', a little room that is their bed. He dismisses those who have gone on adventures over the seas, who have pored over maps of different worlds, and suggests they stay where they are in their own comfortable beds. They are facing each other, seeing the love they have for each other reflected in their eyes.

The poet and his lover are obviously close, very close, whereas his descriptions of other people set them quite apart from them.



### Individual Activities

1. Verse 1 is very like a dream. In a few paragraphs, describe the idea of dreaming, or draw a picture containing the images presented.
2. **AS Only** Compare this poem to 'Sun Rising'. How are the poems different? Give a short talk to give to the class about which poem you prefer and why, with quotations from the text.
3. Which poetic technique is used in lines 2, 3 and 4? Which do you think is the most effective technique in the entire poem?
4. What effect does repetition have in line 15? Are there any other lines with repetition? Which is an important feature? Which usage do you think is most effective, and why?
5. In your opinion, which line contains the most effective use of alliteration?



### Group Activities

1. In groups of three, take a verse each and take it in turns to use a synonym for the most important words in the verse. The others will try to guess the words.
2. In pairs take it in turns to read the poem, stopping at any commas. Discuss how they help you understand the poem.
3. Lines 20 and 21 are very closely connected in the choice of language. Discuss how they are connected.
4. In pairs, decide which line produces the most effective imagery. Discuss why.
5. In threes, take a verse each and write down three phrases that you like. On a separate sheet write down what you think Donne meant by them. Discuss the phrases. In turns try to interpret others' phrases, the original words and their meaning. Discuss any similarities or differences you have. For example, 'twas but a dream of thee' and on a separate sheet of paper write 'It was nothing to what you are really like'.

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### Discussion Questions

1. How important is it for lovers to talk about their relationship?
  2. In relation to this poem, how important is it, or not, that Donne's poem is written in the first person?
  3. How does Donne make love sound more universal than just between two people? Support your arguments with quotations from the text.
  4. Donne is a metaphysical poet, writing about spiritual, abstract ideas. Can you think of another example of this? Support your arguments with quotations from the text.
- Extension: Develop your answer into an essay plan in groups, then present it to the class.**
5. Assonance is a useful poetic technique that puts words that have the same vowel sound together. Does it make a difference if the assonance occurs in words immediately next to each other or a distance away? Which lines contain assonance that has been most effective?



### Comprehension Questions

1. What kind of questions does the poet ask?
2. What pleasures does Donne say they have as children?
3. How many sleepers were there in the myth?
4. What two meanings has 'waking souls'?
5. Which two compass points does he not mention?

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# 'Woman's Constancy'

## Events

In one long monologue, the poet thinks about the constancy of his woman, saying that she will make up excuses to leave, pretend that she'd made a vow to someone else in the past, or say that she cannot stay with him if she is to be true to herself.

The poem opens with a statement, saying now you have loved me for a whole day. He then asks the recipient, when she leaves tomorrow what will she say? Will she pretend she made a vow previously or say that they are not the same people they were before, or that the promises they made for fear of spoiling their love can be withdrawn, or that just as death cancels marriages, so after a deep sleep after lovemaking lovers can cancel their previous agreements; or will she justify herself, by saying she has to leave if she wants to stay true to herself?

In the last four lines, he turns his argument and calls her a proud fool. He tells her he could quell her slippery arguments and win, if he chose to do so, but he won't. The final rhyming couplet brings the poem to a dramatic, unexpected end when he says that tomorrow he might think the same as her.

Line 3 heralds a moment of accusation when he accuses her of making up excuses, she will 'antedate' a vow to another.

## Viewpoint

The poet speaks to his lover appearing to involve her in what he is saying by using pronoun ('you'). Because both the singular and plural second object pronouns are used, the speaker is addressing her as 'woman' as an idealist presentation of females in general. However, there is no explicit female point of view expressed as his and his alone and the female point of view is absent.

## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

The poem looks very much like a sonnet, but in true Donne tradition, the usual Petrarchan sonnet is altered and instead of 14 lines there are 17. In the beginning, the couplets are indicated, starting AA BB CC as expected, although the regular metre is rarely the same. The lines are of different lengths, suggesting the whole poem is a falsehood in itself. Line 4 is a couplet and this makes the reader or listener stop and more readily recognise the change.

The entire rhyme scheme is basically AABB CCC DEE DEE FF EE, suggesting the poem is divided into four lines, two **tercets** of three lines each and finally two couplets.



### Key Terms

**tercet** a stanza of three lines

## Language

**Lexis** (choice of vocabulary) reflects different themes: sex, religion and the law. The poet's use of plain words, suggesting that their relationship from the start is a simple one, is different from those he speaks of in other poems.

- **Sex:** Various words reflect his beliefs regarding his religion and sex: In line 6, 'womb' suggests Donne's religious background and his belief that heightened sexual passion is a sin against religious fervour.
- **Religion:** Reference to God is never far away and in line 7, '*wrath*' continues the theme of religious fervour.

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- **The law:** Hints of the law are often present. For example, in line 9, 'contract' in line 10, 'Bind' reminds us of the legal bond; in line 11, 'justify' continues the word 'justice'; in lines 12 and 13, 'falsehood' is like an accusation of a witness being untrue to herself; and in line 15, 'Dispute' is also a legal reference.

Line 6 contains a rare four-syllabled word, which is one of the longest words making it important. It could easily be spoken with a 'reverential' tone and the poem altogether, hinting of thoughts other than the base subject of sexual intercourse at the moment.

He often selects words that indicate more than one meaning at the same time. Instead of the word 'not', so hinting that he may 'abstain' from having a relationship with her until the end. In the final line, line 17, the word 'may' rather than 'probably will' 'I don't really care anyway' end. Just as their relationship fizzles out, so does the affair.

### Phonology:

- **Alliteration:** Examples of alliteration that emphasise key words can be found throughout the poem. The soft-sounding alliteration of 'w's in 'when', 'what' and 'wilt' contrasts with the harsher 'thou leav'st, ... 'thou say?'. In line 3, the fricative 'th' in 'thou then' underlines the fact that this is a consequence rather than the next occurrence in events. More examples can be found in line 8 with the predominance of 't's in 'true ... true ... untie', in line 10, 'Bind' and 'bind'.
- **Assonance:** He also uses assonance to make the words stand out and become more memorable; for example, assonance is used in line 1, 'Now thou' providing a strong contrast with 'vain' and 'scapes', in line 16, the assonance between 'abstain' in this line and 'abstain' in line 17, underlining the fact that even though she is so vain he will not attack her. The rhyming of the end of lines 16 and 17: 'do' and 'too' underlines that he is not really caring. The way 'For by tomorrow, I may think so too'.

### Taking It Further...

**Phonaesthetics:** Donne quite often uses the pleasantness (euphony) and unpleasantness of sounds to contrast each other. In line 3, for example, the gentle, soft, pleasant 'w' in 'when' and 'what' made' make these words less prominent than the harsher sounding plosive 't' in 'thou then' and 'vow'. Other examples can be found in line 5 'not just those' and line 9 'so lovers' contracts'. In lines 14 and 15, as we reach the climax of the poem, there are examples of cacophony 'Vain lunatic, against these 'scapes I could / Dispute and dispute' and the more pleasant sounding last words of the poem.

- **Prosodic features:** Sometimes he places particular sounds together for effect. He uses various prosodic features; for example, similar sounds next to each other can be more memorable for the reader to pause and so indicate a more important phrase or something more significant. A deeper concept at play. This occurs in line 5, when the plosive 't's and the fricative 'th' in 'those' immediately following in the phrase 'not just those' brings it out for the reader pause to be able to pronounce 'just those', making them the most important words in the line.

In lines 12 and 13, 'falsehood' is in both lines, which means she is not being true. 'falsehood' and 'true' are the only words in the line with plosives: 'd' and 't' and are key words that are an exact opposite.

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## Other Poetic Devices

**Parallelism:** On two occasions, a sense of parallelism is apparent when the poem uses the same word in close proximity: in lines 9 and between lines 12 and 13.

**Hyperbole:** Although the poet is probably being sarcastic, within the sarcasm, he is not. In the first line he says his lover has loved him 'one whole day' – an exaggeration of the moments. In line 8, rather than speak of separation or divorce, he exaggerates the pain and calls her a 'vain lunatic', which is very unlikely to be true and a milder phrase would be more appropriate.

**Personification:** While personification does not feature strongly in this poem because the two of them, both people enough, there is one example of personification in line 12. In special personal qualities for in the line previously, Donne speaks of 'reverential' personification.

**Enjambment:** Examples of lines needing to run on into the next one in order to complete the thought are between lines 4 and 5, 6 and 7, 12 and 13, and 15 and 16.

**Metaphor:** While Donne appears to be writing a poem about an unfaithful woman, he may also be said to be using this example as a metaphor for the nature of all worldly relationships and or the difficulties of his relationship with the Church.

Donne often includes opposites; for example, in line 13 the opposites of 'falsehood' and 'scapes' in line 14, with the first part of the word missing, could mean 'escapes' or 'escaping from the argument, from him and from the whole scene.'

## Time

Regarding **time**, Donne rarely discusses anything chronologically (that is, in order of time) using verbs in the past tense (their distal form), present (their proximal form) and moving from one to the other to emphasise his points. He uses the past as a contrast to things that have changed; consequently his poems often start in the present, looking back towards his wishes for the future.

Complexity in his expression of time is a particular feature of this poem; he often speaks of the present at the same time infers a status that is eternal. In line 1, 'Now' means the here and now in his time, the immediate past, at this moment and in this line it also means 'after this' for him for the whole day. Also, 'one whole day' demonstrates the complexity. On the one hand it was a long time – 'one whole' – not part of a day, whereas on the other hand he says 'Gee, a whole day!'

In line 2, 'Tomorrow' indicates that he is thinking of the immediate future, thinking of years; in line 3, there is a contradiction of time. He asks will she backdate – that is, sometime in the past, and then he immediately mentions a future 'new-made voice'.

In lines 4 and 5, he is immediately in the present within his argument suggesting 'the same as we were'. Then he mixes the present and the past in 'We 'are' the same'.

Line 6 is in the immediate past, speaking of oaths that they 'made', while lines 7 and 8 are something that is spoken of in the present, but actually applies to the past, the present line, he says to avoid God's wrath any may promise they haven't loved in the past, future, and in line 8, death unties any marriage knot.

Line 9 continues with this general truth, but implies the present: lovers' contracts will be dissolved similarly when they sleep in the future (line 10). In line 11, he is in the argument saying 'or your own end to justify' now and/or in the future. In the immediate past 'having purposed' change, to the future in line 13, when he says she admits that they are not made for each other. In lines 14 and 15, he is in the present, sarcastically calls her a 'Vain lunatic', and then admits he could (in the future) be 'conquer'. The present and future are represented in lines 16 and 17 too, when he says that he is not going to argue for (in the future), by 'tomorrow', he may think the

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Many of his temporal deictic expressions involve the use of temporal indexicals of time such as 'now' (lines 1 and 4) and 'tomorrow' (lines 2 and 17). Rather than use state, they are used as adverbs to extend the time, 'now' meaning taking into context in the past, now...; also 'tomorrow' may at first reading be taken to mean the now but be interpreted as an adverb, suggesting she will behave in a certain way sometime. 'antedate' (line 3) is also a particular expression that indicates time – in this case

## People

As with most of his poetry, the main person in this poem is the poet who is speaking person in the poem, but not participating in it. She is the recipient of his speech. metaphysical beings in his poems. In this poem people are also made reference to

The central person is the speaker, the lover who indulges in a dramatic monologue. the speaker speaks for her or presumes to know how she would react. He indicates love for him for he is immediately sarcastic – to love someone for a whole day is true love is supposed to last a lifetime and beyond according to some of his other

He presumes she is going to leave him the next day, or at least soon in the future. What will you say? but he obviously does not expect her to answer. He is the context her (line 2). He assumes she will pretend that she has made previous vows to so makes up on the spur of the moment (line 3).

He hints that underneath he understands, for even though he accuses her of saying word 'we' and not 'you' (line 5).

In lines 6 and 7, he indicates that their union was highly successful, for he relates while making love, were made in 'reverential' fear: that is, promises made in defence experience that almost reached the heights of religious fervour at the climax of the forbid themselves from enjoying such an experience and spoil this gift from God. read her mind, saying she may say that, as death ends marriages, so their relationship and 12, he says that just as their union and the feelings they have for each other asleep, in his long-winded array of excuses, he also suggests she will end their relationship justify doing so by saying that, in order to be true herself, she denied her true self believes she thinks that she can only be her true self again by getting out of this relationship 14, the speaker gets carried away and starts calling her names, inferring that his time exaggerating the hurt so much that he is really being sarcastic – he is being although calling her 'vain' he reveals that he himself suffers from vanity when he 'her' argument and he would undoubtedly win if he felt like it, but then, magnanimity chooses not to. In line 17 this final line summarises what has really been going on that he too might think the same and wish to finish their relationship. In other words relationship and all the above was sarcastic play.

## Place

Specific places are rarely named. We assume the poet is in bed with his mistress whole day (line 1). He indicates other beds in line 3 for the speaker imagines his and will pretend to have made promises to them. However, 'place' also concerns proximity between the characters and ideas (spatial deixis), rather than specific 'remainder of the poem concerns the speaker's thoughts, which are rarely associated unless inside his mind where he does all his thinking and where he conjures up his

At first he distances himself from the woman, accusing her of making excuses to He accuses her of having many partners before. He indicates she is fickle, not 'con until the end of the poem when in the final line he brings everything to an anticlimax made he admits, in the end, the he may be like-minded, he might be just as fickle

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### Individual Activities

1. Imagine you are the woman receiving this poem. Write a description after hearing this. Use quotations from the text to illustrate your point.
2. **AS only:** Compare this poem to another one by Donne that you are familiar with. Are they similar and/or different? Prepare a short talk to give to the class about why. Support your arguments with quotations from the text.
3. Which line(s) contain a paradox (a statement that sounds improbable or contradictory, but on inspection, may be true)? Identify the words that are the opposite in meaning, but on inspection, may be true.
4. Look for three examples of alliteration. Which do you think is the most effective?
5. Look for unexpected pronouns in lines 1, 5 and 7 in the poem and explain their use. For example, the formal 'thou' in line 1, could have been the more formal 'you', but this would not be the case if the speaker was addressing a woman.



### Group Activities

1. In pairs, A represents Donne and B represents his mistress. In the first line, A says what he says and B says what his mistress might say or be thinking.
2. In pairs, take it in turns to stop at commas, full stops and question marks. Discuss the punctuation needed and how they help you to understand the poem.
3. In pairs, take it in turns to say a line or lines which you believe refer to men. Then take it in turns to say which lines you believe refer to women. Which lines do you think you found the most personal or general?
4. 'One whole day' could be said to be sarcastic, meaning 'for only a day'. Find other phrases you think are very sarcastic. Then take it in turns to say which lines you think are not sarcastic.
5. In pairs, take it in turns to change an adjective in a line. Your partner has to guess the original adjective.



### Discussion Questions

1. Are both people in the relationship in this poem equally guilty of being unfaithful? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
  2. What signs are there that Donne may have been thinking of marriage? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
  3. Are both women and men mostly constant in their relationships? Who is the most likely to change? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
  4. Donne is a metaphysical poet, writing about spiritual, abstract ideas. Is this poem a good example of this? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
- Extension: Develop your ideas into an essay on this subject. Remember that the poem is of Donne's work.**
5. Assonance is a useful poetic technique that puts words that have the same vowel sound together. Does it make a difference if the assonance occurs in words immediately next to each other or a distance away? Which lines contain assonance that has been most effective?



### Comprehension Questions

1. What technique does the phrase 'one whole day' represent?
2. What does Donne say they made in reverential fear?
3. What do true deaths untie?
4. What kind of lunatic does he call her?
5. Why is the final line so surprising?

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# 'Elegy: To His Mistress Going to Bed'

## Events

This poem is from the speaker's point of view, and although someone else is obviously undressing – her point of view is absent. The poet, the lover, in this long monologue undresses, but his impatient words belie his patience as he revels in every step she takes.

## Viewpoint

This poem is from the speaker's point of view. Donne uses the first person (I) at the beginning, establishing that his wishes are what matters. He instructs her in each step as she undresses (line 1 'come', line 5 '[take] off' and line 7 'unpin'), revelling in each one. The final line is a direct address to her.

## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

The poem consists of 48 lines of rhyming couplets in the common iambic pentameter (10 syllables).

## Language

**Lexis** (choice of vocabulary) reflects different themes: sexual intercourse, birth, crown, lands, the stars.

- **Sexual intercourse:** This poem was banned when it was first written because of its explicit reference to sexual intercourse. Much of the lexis has hidden and overt reference to the **sexual act**. In line 3 'stand' refers to his sex organs, his organ has been waiting and is tired from being ready: 'standing' is a metaphor for many of his thoughts. He speaks of 'labour' (line 1), line 10 he mentions 'bed' which is certainly not to sleep. In line 12 'That still can be, and still can stand so high' refers to her corset, in line 14 'flowery meads th'hill's shadow steals' is more than a metaphor for her anatomy. In addition, the reference to 'flowery meads' also refers to her anatomy, thereby hinting that this woman is free, wild and ready for him to take. 'Wings' suggests the crown of royalty, but the crowning glory of his sexual desire, which is on her physical body: like the bone under the antler of a deer, also called a coronet, is the region of her pubic hair. The royal connotations ('Coronet' and 'Diadem') are given them due importance. In line 24 he comes down to the basic physical nature of our hairs, but these our flesh upright'. In lines 25 and 26, he is obviously speaking very little to the imagination: 'Licence my roving hands, and let them go, Below, Below.' The climax is resolved in line 33 when full nakedness is achieved: 'For gems that women wear are compared to the delights men find in their bodies: 'For gems that women use ...' It is no coincidence that he likens her gems to 'Atlanta's balls', which are mythological golden apples the ancient Greek Hippomenes used to distract the goddess of love so that he could marry her, and on the other directly to the sexual organ.

He refers to childbirth, a natural event subsequent to sexual intercourse. In line 34 it is expressed with a capital letter, giving her due importance.

- **Religion:** References to religion and the Church are also present. Line 18 speaks of 'temple', in lines 19 to 23 'In such white robes, heaven's Angels used to be, For thou bringst with thee, A heaven like Mahomet's Paradise; and though, Ill spirits be, this these Angels from an evil sprite'. The word 'licence' in line 25 is also a reference to religion. The activity would normally be 'licensed' by the Church when the couple married. 'For unbodied, bodies uncloth'd must be'; in lines 45 and 46 mention is made of 'white linen' which was worn by penitents.

In line 6 he likens her **world** to the 'world' at large. In lines 17 to 26 he likens her sex to the discovery of new worlds: 'O my America! my new-found-land, ...'

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- **The heavens:** The heavens often feature, as he speaks of 'heaven's Zone' (line 1) the word 'zone' comes from the Greek for 'girdle'.
- **Clothing:** In line 7 he asks her to 'unpin' her 'spangled breastplate', 'unlace' and 'unlace' says 'off with that ... busk', – the immovable part at the centre of a corset that holds her 'gown' comes off, line 17 says 'Now off with those shoes, and then safely'

The law and legal bonds are referred to in lines 31 and 32 when he says: 'To what shall be.'

### Phonology:

- **Alliteration:** Examples of alliteration when the same consonant sounds are used in rhythm and make the words stand out can be found in lines 6 ('far fairer'), 7 ('th'eyes'), line 13 ('gown going'), line 22 ('walk' ... 'white'), 26 ('before', 'behind'), 29 ('my mine'), 32 ('set' ... 'seal'), 35 ('to taste') and 47 ('to teach').
- **Assonance:** Assonance is also used to make important words stand out. Often the assonance in the line, but these words are more than often summaries of the

Examples of this may be found in lines 7 ('that spangled'), 10 ('it is'), 20 ('bring easily'), 24 ('set... hairs' ... 'flesh'), 25 ('let them'), 26 in which all the words begin with 'b' ('before, between, behind, above, below'), 28 ('man mann'd'), 29 ('my mine discovering'), 31 ('be free'), 32 ('then where' ... 'set'), 33 ('due to'), 37 ('eye like'), ('gay' ... array'd'), 42 ('will dignify'), 43 ('see revealed'), 45 ('this ...linen') 46 ('teach thee') and 48 ('than man').

### Taking It Further...

**Phonaesthetics:** In this poem sounds that are hard and decisive often use plosives ('th', 'v', 'f'), sibilant sounds ('s', 'sh', 'ch' 'x') or the velars ('k' and 'g') to reinforce his mistress to disrobe. Examples can be found in line 1 ('come'), lines 5, 11, 15, 17 and 25 ('licence').

These contrast with the more gentle euphonic liquid sounds of 'l' and 'r' which are cacophonous sounds; for example, lines 1 and 2 ('come' ... 'powers defy' / 'labour')

- **Prosodic features:** This poem is more immediate than most. The poet is direct although, because of the large number of items he asks her to remove, one might think he wants to savour the experience, but nevertheless, he wants her to act now. As a consequence there are only a few examples of when he uses the juxtaposition effect occasionally. Examples may be found in lines 5 ('like heaven's Zone give shadow steals')



### Key Terms

**schwa** an unstressed vowel that is not pronounced, usually

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## Other Poetic Devices

**Parallelism:** This poem sometimes uses repetition to balance the relevant phrases. Examples can be found in lines 1, 2, 3, 12, 18 and 34 when he repeats the same verb. The repetition of the word 'off' five times within the poem, many times at the beginning of the poem together – summarising what the poet wants his mistress to do with her

**Hyperbole:** This poem, like most of Donne's, exaggerates. He uses exaggerated terms when he speaks of the items he tells his mistress to remove and when he thinks of sexual intercourse anticipated. Lines that reflect this include lines 1 ('all rest my powers glistening') 6 ('But a far fairer world encompassing. '), 7 ('spangled breastplate'), 12 ('flowery meads th'hill's shadow steals'), 16 ('The hairy Diadem'), 18 ('love's hallow'd temple'), 19 ('Mahomet's Paradise'), 25 ('Licence my roving hands'), 27 ('O my America!'), 28 ('My Empirie of precious stones, My Empirie').

These examples all exaggerate the notions to extremes.

**Personification:** In this exaggerated description of a bedroom scene, many items are personified themselves or are given human qualities. In lines 3 and 4, the 'foe', if it is understood as the male organ, is spoken of as a person – it is 'tir'd with standing though he never fight' (line 4). He 'envies' her busk (which is the hard centre of her corset), thus giving it human qualities. His roving hands be 'licenced' – given permission to act just as a person might be.

**Enjambment:** In the excitement of his anticipation of sexual intercourse the poet uses enjambment. Examples may be found between lines 19 to 20, 39 to 40, 40 to 41, 44 to 45.

**Simile and Metaphor:** There are a number of similes in this poem; for example, in line 1 'glistening' 'like heaven's Zone'. In lines 15 and 16, taking her gown off is likened to 'flowery meads th'hill's shadow steals' (line 16); that is, when the shadows of the meadows full of flowers steal away, or leave, and in line 21, the happiness he brings her is likened to 'Mahomet's Paradise', that is, like heaven. In line 36 the woman's 'gems' or jewels (a metaphor for 'Atlanta's balls', like the golden balls of the Greek myth that her suitor Hippomenes threw to win her) he entered a race that meant if he beat her, she would marry him. In lines 39 and 40, he believes all women are arrayed 'Like pictures, or like books' 'gay coverings': – their faces are like them – in a purely physical sense. In line 44 he says he should know her 'As liberties have full view and knowledge of her bodily parts associated with sex and its results'.

While this poem appears quite obvious in its meaning, a number of expressions are used for things that might be construed as crude if not qualified in this manner. In line 2, 'work' which usually means 'work' but in this case it is a metaphor for the effort made by the poet in controlling his passion while he waits. The first 'foe' in line 3 is not so much the woman so desires but as yet does not have, and the second time the word 'foe' is used, it is his male organ that so desires her and is about to penetrate her for it 'Is tir'd with standing though he never fight' (line 4). In line 7 she is asked to 'unpin' her 'spangled breastplate' which probably is some such garment. The metaphor makes it to be something more significant – in this case, warding off the desirous partner) of religious (or passionate) importance. Vestments had particular status, as real breastplates sometimes offered, but in this case it means to be and untouchable while she is wearing it. The poet wants her to remove it for his pleasure. The things she is making or even the simple acts that she is doing, are for the poet 'music to his ears'. In line 11, when speaking of the hard centre of her corset, he calls it a 'happy' busk, standing for the so-called hard-heartedness of her being so difficult to please. In lines 15 and 16 he speaks of an item that may hold extra hair pieces as a 'crowned' with royalty. In line 16 her normal hair is called her hairy Diadem (because it is called 'diadem' (a jewelled crown) it is more than likely he is actually referring to the feathers of a crown he covets. In line 18 the bed is called 'love's hallow'd temple'. In line 19 the 'white' of her skin is called 'purity, heavenly, whereas the angel she brings and the joy she brings in line 21 is called 'Mahomet's Paradise'. In line 27 her new-found body is described as 'O my America'.

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follows on in line 28 to call it his 'kingdom' which is safest ruled by one man – his vein, he calls her his 'mine of precious stones', harking back to her 'jewels' he so (29). In line 31 he presents a paradox: 'To enter in these bonds, is to be free', a man because of his desire for her but also being free to enjoy and exploit this desire.

In line 32 he will 'seal' his love, just as documents are 'sealed' to make them secure. In role reversal, the poet calls the gems that women use (rather a man or men) to make look at a 'gem' ('jewel' in the metaphorical sense). Man's 'earthly soul', his base views of women's 'jewels' of the physical body, not 'them' the real or more meaningful qualities both physical and mental. Having just previously said in lines 38 and 39 a woman as physical bodies to desire, in lines 40 to 43 he calls women 'mystic books' beyond base level that only 'we' (men) can dignify women's good looks ('grace') and qualities revealed. In line 45, he speaks of casting aside 'this white linen'; this is, your clothes, but also the purity white suggests. In line 48 'covering' is used not a man having sexual intercourse with her.

## Time

This poem appears to be happening in the present, the poet is watching his mistress encourages her with each step. Common temporal deictic expressions are there referring to the time represented. The man is obviously restless, impatient (line 1 looks forward (suggesting the future) to the final consummation of his desire (line labour', that is, he is suffering as a woman does in child labour while his desires remain focus of his attention ('the foe') having had (in the past) 'the foe' his sexual organs now fed up with 'standing', that is, being erect 'though he never fight' though he getting) into battle, or consummates / is consummating their union (yet) (lines 3 time of utterance, and he starts making demands on his mistress to remove her indeed mean right now at the time of utterance. In line 14 time is immeasurable 'th'hill's shadow steals'. 'When' does not indicate a specific time dependent on a any time when the shadows go away.

'Now' in line 17 moves the speaker and his mistress on in time to the next stage 18 means next. In lines 19 and 20, 'heaven's Angels used to be received by men' the past, but is more likely to mean 'usually'. The following lines are all at the time 'To enter in these bonds, is to be free' he is still referring to the present for he is bonds or ties of desire, he is free. In line 32, 'then' refers to sometime after he has of 'freedom' he next will be able to lay claim to his mistress and place his hand on will be able to 'seal' his desire (line 32). Lines 33 to 43 the poet speaks of time in the beauty of women and men's relation to them applies always, yesterday, today poet returns to the first-person pronoun ('I') and the time of utterance until the (line 43) probably refers to 'as that is the case', rather than a time expression.

## People

There are two main people in this poem: the poet who dominates and who has the who is undressing, preparing for 'bed'. Other people included are men and women philosophises about the relationship between angels and men and women (lines

Deictic expressions or words or phrases that indicate the relationship, physically and his lover include the use of a number of imperatives that indicate the domin her to act as the commands: 'Come' (line 1), 'Off' (line 5, line 11, line 15), 'Unpin

Concerning the sexual tension, he regularly aligns the prospective lover with him the lines. He begins the poem using the first-person pronoun 'I' more often than with his reiteration of his dominance as a teacher still using the formal 'thou' wh

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## Place

Place can be the relative distance and proximity between the characters and ideas, or specific 'places' or locations. While it is most likely this takes place in a bedroom, the distance between him and his mistress, so that the unsatisfied desire the poet feels demands her to 'Come', not to come towards him but to start taking action, to start. The commands he continues to give distance them for he is the dominant one, or she appears to be the compliant recipient doing what he asks. He often creates a sense of distance (mentally) away from him when he philosophises about the wonders of her body, or grandiose ideas, such as her body is a whole world (line 6), of the angels in heaven (line 20). He also uses grandiose metaphors such as his 'America' his new world (line 40) or line 40 he speaks of 'lay men', or ordinary men, placing himself above them in the sky. Ordinary men do not have his appreciation or understanding. In line 41 he speaks of how men can really appreciate the grace or beauty of women. In the last two lines, line 42 expresses the notion that he is the superior being for he says he is naked first to her, she does not know as much as he does and that all she needs to have covering her is a (good) man, assuming he means himself.



### Individual Activities

1. Investigate the pieces of clothing the mistress wore – and make drawings of them. Ask a person or the rest of the class to name them.
2. **AS Only** Compare this poem to another one by Donne that you are familiar with. Are they similar and/or different? Prepare a short talk to give to the class about why. Support your arguments with quotations from the text.
3. Find three similes in the poem. Try to rewrite the lines turning them into metaphors. Do you think Donne chose to include similes in this poem? Support your arguments with quotations from the text.
4. Look for three examples of mentioning 'white'. Do you think 'white' is used in a specific case? Prepare a short explanation for the class. Support your arguments with quotations from the text.
5. Choose the most effective examples of assonance and prepare a short presentation for the class. Support your arguments with quotations from the text.

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### Group Activities

1. In pairs, A speaks the first line: usually a command, B speaks the second line: usually information or making a comment, and continue this way until the end of the poem. Vary this pattern and why?
2. In pairs take it in turns to read the poem stopping at commas, semicolons and full stops. Why are they needed?
3. In groups of four, take seven lines each and copy the lines without punctuation. Give examples and try to replace the correct punctuation. Discuss why you chose that punctuation.
4. In groups of four take seven lines each and choose the most effective line. It in turns to explain your reasons for your choice to the other groups.
5. In groups of four take seven lines each of the poem and choose one line to read smoothly. Explain the reasons for your choice to the other groups. Give quotations from the text.



### Discussion Questions

1. Discuss: Why could this poem be considered art rather than pornography? Support your arguments with quotations from the text.
2. Donne is a metaphysical poet, writing about spiritual, abstract ideas. What is the purpose of this? Support your arguments with quotations from the text.
3. Is this poem from the heart, or exaggerated so that it becomes cynical? Support your arguments with quotations from the text.  
**Extension: In pairs, work on an essay plan for this topic. Then write your answers and feed back on what your partner has done well at.**
4. Which are the three most different examples of the lifestyles in Donne's poem (for example, women wore corsets)? Which are the most similar?
5. Assonance is a useful poetic technique that puts words that have the same vowel sound together. Does it make a difference if the assonance occurs in words immediately next to each other or a distance away? Which lines contain assonance that has been most effective?



### Comprehension Questions

1. What is the first piece of clothing he asks her to take off?
2. What did he ask her to unpin?
3. What metaphor does he use for the bed?
4. Which prophet does he name?
5. Which country does he call her?

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# 'A Jet Ring Sent'

## Events

This is a brief poem of three stanzas. In the first verse the poet appears to have been cast aside by his mistress who has cast him aside. He addresses the ring, questioning what it stands for and in the second verse we know that the speaker is addressing his mistress, pointing out that she is made of more durable material than this jet ring, and asks if the ring represents their relationship. She may be suggesting that their relationship is fickle and the 'jet' ring is to set him away, perhaps he should throw away the ring too. In the final verse he returns to her and asks to keep the ring, saying that it would be safer with him than with her, for she is just as likely to break their relationship.

## Viewpoint

The viewpoint is from the speaker alone. There are no other viewpoints outwardly. We can assume that his mistress has cast him aside and wishes to cancel their relationship. The ring is the only thing he has received.

## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

There are three stanzas.

The metre is mostly iambic (a weak syllable followed by a strong syllable) and, typically, changes this for effect; for example, in line 8 the syllables start with a long one and the phrase 'fling me away' stand out. He also changes the rhythm by including a dactyl as well as in the last lines of the other verses (lines 4 and 12).

The lines are not equal in length, with the first line of each verse being relatively short (four 'feet' or eight syllables in iambic metre (tetrameter), the second line and fourth line being a common iambic pentameter (five 'feet' of 10 syllables) and the third line in each verse containing some 14 syllables. These changes help the rhythm appear more like a thought as it comes in the way in which the poet is thinking aloud.

Most verses use a simple, direct rhyming scheme: AABB, although the lines are varied to reflect their broken relationship.

## Language

**Lexis** (choice of vocabulary) reflects different themes: love, relationships, darkness

- The whole poem contains lexis that reflects their relationship with symbols. The speaker is in despair about his 'heart' being 'black' in line 1. He is in despair for his mistress has flung him away. In line 2 he claims that the stone is as 'brittle', as easily destroyed (or destructive) as their relationship. 'Nothing is more endless' than his love and 'nothing sooner broke'n' than her love. He asks about 'marriage' and how it is different, while in lines 6 and 7 he asks why such a ring is given to their 'loves'.
- The broken **relationship** he has had with his mistress is another related theme. The stone, saying it is not as 'black' nor as 'brittle' as their respective 'heart's' and 'stone' if it represents their two opposing loves: 'shall both our properties by time be made 'endless', hers soon ceasing. Their relationship is not like a 'marriage', not like a marriage ring (line 5). In lines 7 and 8 he asks what the purpose was for the ring if it was sent to represent their relationship and that he should 'jettison' it away. Although he is no longer addressing the mistress with his thoughts, he is, by addressing the ring, his relationship and how he still has feelings for her for in line 9 when he asks to keep the ring he wants something to remember her by at least, so in line 10, he makes a decision to keep it round his finger, just as a marriage ring is circled round a finger and just as

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In the last two lines, lines 11 and 12, the strength of his feeling and unwilling relationship is reflected by bitter words: although it seems he is addressing the ring, he is addressing himself and his mistress when he says 'be justly proud ... safe'. In his barbed comment in line 12 he says that, just as she broke faith with him, she

- **Darkness** is another theme. A jet ring by nature is extremely dark: 'black'. In line 12, the sadness within the rejected poet's heart in line, and this in turn sets a dark tone for the verses.
- **Eternity** is referred to in line 4 when he speaks of his love in which 'nothing more endless' is contrasted by his suggesting that the ring represents him in their relationship. The ring is broken away, something cheap and worthless, hardly eternal. More references to eternity are in line 10 when he asks the ring to 'circle' his thumb – the ring is endless, it is in contrast to eternity, has no beginning or end.

**Phonology:** Regarding the **phonology** most of the words are short, sharp monosyllabic and prolific.

- **Alliteration:** There are some examples of words beginning with similar sounds and interest to the lines and these words. Examples may be found in lines 2 and 11 ('dost dwell').
- **Assonance** is the most noticeable effect in the sounds of the words in the poem. At the ends of the lines, the words 'art' and 'heart' are repeated in the first two lines, linking them together irretrievably, thus underlining the way in which the jet ring is like hearts.

In line 3 the assonance of 'thee' and 'be' makes the two words which are adjacent and hint at providing a summary of the whole of the line, although 'be' is part of the ring. The ring is or represents them and the poet asks if the ring should speak for them.

In the final verse in the last two lines, the characters within the poem are summed up. The word 'me' in line 11 with 'she' and the beginning of line 12 and 'thee' at the end of the verse and the whole poem, taking us through thinking about the ring and bringing us back to thinking about the subject of the poem – the ring.

## Other Poetic Devices

**Personification:** In the first two lines he speaks to the ring as if it were a person, as the poet's heart or as brittle as that of his mistress's heart. The last verse is one long line where he speaks to the ring as a person and asks it to be 'proud' and 'safe' and to 'dwell' safely.

**Simile** is used in the negative sense in the first two lines also by the way in which the ring is not as black as his heart, nor as brittle as hers.

**Rhetorical** questions which are not expected to be answered appear in the third line while the poet philosophises about the nature of the ring and his relationship with it.

**Hyperbole:** In line 4, the poet speaks of his love as 'nothing more endless', which is at least. If something is endless, that is it, it cannot be 'more' endless.

**Parallelism:** Line 4 uses a typical example, the two phrases begin with the same word. 'Nothing' is more endless than his love; 'nothing' is sooner broken than her love. The parallelism is and memorable.

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Other **cohesive devices**: The first two lines form a full circle as the first two and last two lines rhyme. The first line ends with 'thou art', emphasising the fact that the poet is speaking to the ring. Also, the word 'black' rhymes with the endings of the last two lines in verse 2, thus tying the verses together.

### Taking It Further...

**Phonaesthetics**: The frequent reference to 'black' encourages the use of the harsh consonants 'b', 'p', 't', 'd', and the velar 'k'. 'black' and 'jet' are examples. Other cacophonous words include 'heart' (line 2), 'properties by thee be spoke,' (line 3). In line 4 the euphony of the beginning of the verse is contrasted with the harsher word 'broke' at the end. In lines 5 and six fricatives are used to contrast words 'stuff' and 'tough', as does the word 'fling' in line 8. 'Broke' and 'break' stand out in the last line.

### Time

Donne does not present his ideas chronologically (that is, in order), which is customary in the present when he says to the ring 'Thou art'. He soon indicates the past when he refers to his ex-lover's 'heart'. He is remembering what happened between them before now. He asks a rhetorical question to the ring, asking what will the ring say or represent in the future which he does not know. In the last line of that verse, line 4, time is indefinable. He says 'time is broken' which is very quickly and easily broken. We do not know when this has happened precisely. The ring is in an ageless state of being not related to a specific time.

When he begins the second verse with the word 'marriage', he is thinking about the idea that he had probably thought of having a strong, lengthy relationship as marriage. The same line is in the present when he states that marriage rings are not made of jet. He offers a general statement that applies to the past, present and future – there is no time. There have been, are and always will be made of stronger material than jet. The rhetorical question brings us into the eternal, non-time-specific realm, while at the same time brings us close to the present specifically to this ring. He asks why a less precious material should be used to make a ring in the present, suggesting that the name of the material that makes the ring, jet, suggests the past) that it is telling him that he is cheap, nothing but a fashionable ring that is not serious. Then he suggests a future act as if it is an order to fling him (or the stone) to the present) the stone to stay with him since it had arrived some time earlier (in the past) on the finger top as it did her thumb, and, continuing in the present, tells it to be proud of its position. In line 12 he reverts to the past talking about how she broke her faith to them and when she would probably break the ring.

Expressions heralding these changes of time are mainly expressed in the verb tense. 'are' means 'are' – in the present time at the time of utterance, and in lines 3 and 12 'will' is a future event or idea.

### People

There are three 'people' in the poem: the poet who is doing all of the talking and finishing their relationship and the jet ring personified. Concerning spatial deixis, the poet distances himself from his previous lover for he is alone with the jet ring. The jet ring is the way he personifies it, addressing it as if it were a person able to have feelings (to it as 'thou'). His ex-lover is hardly mentioned, so he thus distances himself from her. He compares the ring to her and the ring is considered far better than her and it is far more durable than her as 'brittle' as her heart (line 2). In line 7 he speaks of 'our loves' but only because they symbolise their (past) love? The ring is closer to the poet than his ex-lover for he has it on his finger as it did her thumb (line 10). The ring is with him and close to him and although his ex-lover is the ring that he addresses, she is secondary in the hierarchy. In the hierarchy between them even more so, for the ring should draw closer to him than her, she is the one who broke the poet's.

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Regarding **places**, specific places have not been named in this poem, which is customary on occasion we do not know where he is when he is delivering this soliloquy for it is in a lover's bed, as is also customary for this poet. The relative distance between the speaker and the section on people also applies to a description of 'place' in the poem. The character of closeness or distance from each other as explained in the section above on 'people'.



### Individual Activities

1. Why do you think there are few uses of assonance and alliteration?
2. Why does Donne use the word 'broke' to end the first verse?
3. Which phrase in verse 2 suggests the alternative meaning of 'jet' – 'jetting'?
4. What are the two rhetorical questions?
5. Why are these rhetorical questions so long?



### Group Activities

1. In pairs, look at the poem and break it up so that you can take it in two voices in the poem – the decisive poet who frets about his heartless decision, and the less decisive poet when he is thinking about the future. Read the poem through in those two voices, making them sound realistic.
2. In groups of three, read a verse each and decide:
  - a. Which verse is the most decisive, and why?
  - b. Which verse might be said to be the slowest, most thoughtful?
  - c. Which verse is the one that seems to hark back to the past most?
3. In groups of four, allocate three different lines for each of you to take. Give your four separate modern language examples to another group. Which group represents the poem in order. The different modern poems could be chosen so that each represents the poem best.
4. In pairs, decide which single four or more words in each verse are said with great emphasis to make the poem more meaningful, e.g. 'nothing' in verse 1.
5. In threes, rewrite a verse each leaving out the punctuation. Swap your versions and try to replace the punctuation. Discuss why the punctuation is important.



### Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the relationship of this couple. Was the relationship a serious one?
2. Why would anyone send a ring to someone they'd broken up with? Was the ring a simple gesture to say the relationship was finished or something more?
3. Although the relationship has ended, how do we know he is bitter? Does it really end amicably?
4. Why does he keep the ring? Why would anyone keep a ring that has been broken? Is it wise to do so?
5. How important are rings? Would it matter if you wore any number of rings on the wedding finger if you were not married?



### Comprehension Questions

1. Which lines feature enjambment by running the lines together?
2. Why does he run line 6 on into line 7 this way?
3. Which single wholly positive line is there in the poem?
4. Which pair of words are repeated in lines 1 and 2, and why?
5. Which other ring is the jet ring compared to, and why?

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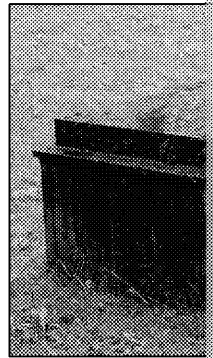
# 'The Relic'

## Events

Verse 1: The poet speaks of the time when his grave is opened to remove the bones of women whom we 'bed' and who are bedded by more than one man. When he has brightly coloured hair, he should leave us alone, for he will think that we are a lover who would at least be able to meet for a short while in this grave on Judgement Day.

Verse 2: If this grave is dug in a time when bones are dug up, and some consider it a tradition, the poet suggests their bones will be taken to the Bishop and King as relics. Some consider Mary Magdalene and the poet someone closely associated with her, some men, lovers, and some men, will adore them. The poet expresses his wish that the miracle will be appreciated at this future time.

Verse 3: The poet dwells on the miracles. First that they loved well and faithfully, the second that they took no notice of each other's sexuality, just like angels who have no sexuality, the third that they might have kissed when meeting or saying farewell but not during moments of affection when they fed on each other's love, the fourth that they did not touch each other's sexual organs even though nature allows free love before marriage, and the fifth that his lover was herself a miracle, for the number 5 represents five women (see Donne's poem 'The Primrose').



## Viewpoint

As is customary in Donne's poems, there is one voice, one viewpoint which is the poet's. It is a relationship that he had with a particular woman. In this poem, the two remain separate but they never express it sexually – a similar kind of distant love appreciated often expressed in sonnets written earlier: Petrarchan or Italian sonnets.

## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

There are three verses of 11 lines each. The metre is mostly the common iambic pentameter. The lines are irregular in length although the final iambic pentameter line in each verse to a serious close, contrasting with the more cynical lines previously. The rhyme scheme is AABBCDDCEEE.

## Language

**Lexis** (choice of vocabulary) reflects different themes: graves, sexual relationships

- The church **graves**: The first line mentions the poet's 'grave' after he has died in line 3. Other associated words include: 'bed' in line 4: a place to lie down in lines 5 and 14, and 'grave' is used again in the last line of the first verse. 'Bone' in line 6 refers again to graves.
- **Sexual relationships (or lack of)**: in lines 3 and 4: 'woman-head' refers to women that they are used to bedding, or making love, to more than one mate. In line 5 indicating the owner was once full of life, and also suggesting Mary Magdalene usually depicted with long golden hair. In line 8, 'loving couple' refers to the poet (platonically), saying he hopes the gravedigger would believe they were a loving couple in the physical sense of the word, and thus leave the grave alone. The reference to the depth of their love. In line 17 he refers specifically to 'Mary Magdalen', a name he knew and also referring to Mary Magdalen, believed by the Roman Catholic Church to be a prostitute and a woman much admired, often represented in art by a beautiful woman. The same line ends with 'and I', connecting the poet with her – that is, in some ways he refers to them as 'harmless lovers', lovers who did not actually physically love for each other. In lines 23 to 30 he speaks of how they loved each other well in a platonic way.

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- **The Church:** From line 1 Donne regularly makes reference to the Church dir usually placed within the churchyard and here Donne mentions how the cus grave and remove the bones to a chancel so that another body could be pla heart of his comments there is a seriousness, the lexis used to describe the humour behind his expressions, specifically ‘second guest’ meaning the bod keep. In lines 3 and 4 with ‘more than one a bed’ Donne speaks of women n person – hinting of the prostitution that Mary Magdalene was purported to Church. This was refuted by others and it is no coincidence that Donne was Catholic Church but later changed to be an Anglican. The ‘bracelet of bright reference to Mary Magdalene who is often depicted with long golden hair. busy day’ signify that the poet is thinking of Church-driven ideas – the souls together when the final Judgement Day comes. ‘Mis-devotion’ in line 13 ref practices as Donne sees it – practices of the Roman Catholic Church when the bones to the bishop and the king, also a leader of the Church (line 15), and m (line 16) when his lover will be ‘Mary Magdalen’ whom women will ‘adore’ ( Roman Catholic Church is the registration of miracles which Donne now refe final verse, five miracles are numbered; ‘five’, in line 23, stands for women a miracle she was’. The other four ‘miracles’ relate to his relationship with the it was a miracle that they could love well and faithfully, second, in line 25, th other’s sexuality, third, in line 28, that they might kiss when meeting but no and fourth, in line 29, when they did not express their love physically. Line restrictive laws (of the land and the Church) when free love made available forbidden before marriage.

**Phonology:** Regarding the **phonology** most of the words are short, sharp monosyllabic and prolific.

- **Alliteration** is a poetic device used to connect the lines in sound and meaning to the meaning of the line and are thus highlighted by the shared sound. Ex second’, ‘bracelet’, ‘bright’ and ‘bone’ in line 6, line 7 ‘let’ and ‘alone’, line 11 ‘Mary Magdalen’, line 20 ‘since’, ‘such’ and ‘sought’, line 23 ‘we’ and ‘well’, (depending on pronunciation), and ‘why’, line 25 ‘never knew’, and in line 30 ‘sets free’.
- **Assonance:** besides the words that rhyme at the end of the lines, assonance is used as a cohesive device also in the following examples: lines 5 and 9 are connected with the assonance of ‘spies’ at the end of line 5 and line 9 are connected with the assonance of ‘lies’ and ‘device’ (along with ‘mis-devotion’ and 19, are also connected by the assonance between ‘then’, ‘Magdalen’ and ‘sets free’).

### Taking It Further...

**Phonaesthetics:** In this poem for, in the example, euphony is used to give it a sense of spiritual thoughts that underlie the words. Contrast occurs from lines 13 to 17 with the use of plosives and fricatives in the words: ‘mis-devotion doth command, Then ... that commandment ... the king, To make us relics; then Thou shalt be ... Magdalen’. Similarly in lines 25 to 26 ‘Coming ... going Perchance ... kiss, but not between those who are free’ line 30 ‘sets free’, stand out.

- **Prosodic features:** The consecutive fricative in line 8 cause the reader to pause at ‘that there’, however, placement of sounds together is only one small effect of the thought behind the words.

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## Other Poetic Devices

**Parallelism:** Repetition of words, syllables and forms are also used to add to the poem. The following examples apply to 'The Relic': 'To' is repeated in line 4 for two equal phrases are balanced either side of the conjunction 'and' in line 11. In line 17 the same verb form.

The repetition of 'miracle' in lines 37 to 39 is also a useful cohesive effect.

**Hyperbole:** There are a number of exaggerations. According to Donne in this poem one man (lines 3 and 4), which is an exaggeration and generalisation: there may be one hair has been left on or near a skeleton, it is unlikely to be 'bright' or appear as a woman say they will meet each other again in paradise if they so believe, but it is an exaggeration might believe that a gravedigger will think they are lovers that plan to live again together for a while again on Judgement Day (lines 8 to ten). It is also very unlikely that a gravedigger will take the bones of lovers to the Bishop or the King to be considered worthy 'relics' (lines 11 to 13). He justifies the worthiness of his lover by saying she will be a Mary Magdalene (line 17). Other times he says 'all' women will adore them (line 19), that they have made a number of statues included 1, the fact that they loved well and faithfully, 2 that they took no notice of the fact they might kiss when meeting but not during moments of affection, 4 they did express their love for herself is a 'miracle'.

**Personification:** In line 3 graves are said to have 'learned' that women bed more than men.

**Enjambment:** A number of lines join together to add to the fluency of the ideas. Lines 14–15, 16–17–18, 25–26 and 27–28.

**Metaphor:** The poet calls the remains of hair next to a skeleton 'a bracelet' (line 11) which associate with jewels, something shiny, bright and pleasant to look at such as the things worn with beautiful girls and with the beautiful women artists usually paint to represent themselves.

In line 2 he calls a replacement dead body 'a guest' for the grave to 'entertain', in a tongue-in-cheek; he is not really serious about what he is saying. In the final verse he uses a metaphor for the intensity and validity of their platonic love.

**Puns:** He often uses a play on words – words that have more than one meaning – which is applied. The word 'grave' refers to the burial place but also suggests that he is talking about a matter, even though he is being cynical. 'Grave' could also suggest his sadness. He is talking about a place to lie down in, a grave, but he is also talking about women having more than one meaning associated with 'bedding' or having sexual intercourse with someone.

## Time

Donne does not present his ideas chronologically (that is, in order), which is customary in a soliloquy is in the present, but as the poet speaks, he speaks of the future and the past. The things that happen after he and the person he loves from afar die and are buried together and the past. He speaks of the past, present and future: a general truth, when he comments that the fate of the man (line 4). Most of the poem, however, concerns deictic projection or placing the focus on thinking about it, which is indicated by the first word of the poem: 'when'. He projects to some time in the future when 'mis-devotion' (line 13) or bad religious practices and the actions of a gravedigger will take their bones to the Bishop and King to be made relics (lines 11 to 13). These are unrealistic, tongue-in-cheek predictions until line 21 when he speaks of further predictions. He would hope that later on in the future his poem would have taught what miracle he would look back from the future to what he and his lover had achieved (lines 22 to 24).

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## People

The one main person in this poem is the poet and it is only his voice that we hear. He has a close relationship with a woman, and although this relationship is believed to be strong, she never has a say in this monologue.

He speaks of other people: the gravedigger, the Bishop and the King, but they are only mentioned in fanciful ideas. He says when the gravedigger digs up the poet's grave to replace him, it was the custom in those days, the gravedigger will find some bright hair that will be found on the bodies in the grave were lovers, waiting until Judgement Day to communicate again.

The poet also generalises about women, whom he says are promiscuous.

Donne indicates that their relationship is close (in spirit) and although in the first verse he uses the possessive pronoun 'my' which makes the poem appear to be about him and his relationship with the notion of the gravedigger and what he will find, Donne moves to use the first-person plural pronoun 'us' which includes his lover in his thoughts (lines 7, 14, 15, 16 and 19). He uses the regular use of the first person plural 'we' in the final verse, until the last two lines where he refers according to the people presented. He is brought closer to his lover by use of lexical choices (the poet and his lover) 'meet'. The final verse, as mentioned previously refers to the poet's desire in maintaining their platonic love, a miracle in itself.

## Place

Regarding **places**, specific places have not been named in this poem, which is customary for a monologue.

The main place is the poet's grave as he imagines it in the future. He imagines his relationship with the woman he had loved from afar. The grave is described as a 'bed', a place of rest and a place of love.

In the beginning of the poem, the poet is obviously at some distance from his beloved. He is not himself and his grave. Not until line 6 do we find it is relevant to her and that he is speaking to her. When he speaks of 'us' in line 7, he immediately distances himself by talking of them as a group. The second-person plural object pronoun ('us') is used in lines 15 and 16; but again, this is a distance from their relationship at the time of utterance, as he projects his thinking into the future that possibly happen. Even when he appears to speak to her directly, addressing her as 'my dear', he is including her in his reverie about some distant imaginary time in the future although she is not calling her 'a Mary Magdalene'. In lines 19 and 20 he moves himself further away from his thoughts to include 'all women' and 'some men'.

The first person singular and plural forms 'I' and 'we' in lines 21 and 22 again are used to describe what is happening at the time of utterance but are used as items that participate in his imagination of the future; they are not directly personal until lines 23 to 31 when he speaks of their relationship and its effect. He is the only one speaking; his partner does not have a voice and he does not have a partner. He then uses the first person plural ('we'). In the final two lines he returns to using the first person singular pronoun 'I'; the poem is really about his ideas and beliefs when he speaks about himself.

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## Individual Activities

Read Donne's poem 'The Primrose' and answer the questions:

*Upon this Primrose hill,  
Where, if Heav'n would distil  
A shower of rain, each several drop might go  
To his own primrose, and grow manna so;  
And where their form and their infinity  
Make a terrestrial Galaxy,  
As the small stars do in the sky:  
I walk to find a true Love; and I see  
That 'tis not a mere woman that is she,  
But must or more or less than woman be.*

*Yet know I not which flower  
I wish; a six, or four;  
For should my true-Love less than woman be  
She were scarce any thing; and then, should she  
Be more than woman she would get above  
All thought of sex, and think to move  
My heart to study her, and not to love;  
Both these were monsters; since there must reside  
Falsehood in woman, I could more abide  
She were by art than Nature falsified.*

*Live primrose then, and thrive  
With thy true number five;  
And woman, whom this flower doth represent,  
With this mysterious number be content;  
Ten is the farthest number; if half ten  
Belong unto each woman, then  
Each woman may take half us men;  
Or if this will not serve their turn, since all  
Numbers are odd or even, and they fall  
First into this, five, woman may take us all.*

1. If a primrose usually has five petals, which line suggests he is looking for something that is very rare, such as true love, or a four-leafed clover?
2. Which verse relates to 'The Relic' and why?
3. Which of the following themes do this poem and 'The Relic' share: numbers, graves, and falsehood in women.
4. Which of the following words are used in both 'The Primrose' and 'The Relic': broke, Heav'n, love or loved, woman or women, sex, heart, falsehood, all, second, bed and souls?
5. Why do you think these words are often written by Donne?

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## Group Activities

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Read Donne's poem 'The Primrose' (above) and answer the questions:

1. In pairs, discuss the ways in which 'The Relic' and 'The Primrose' are similar.
2. In pairs, discuss the ways in which 'The Relic' and 'The Primrose' are different.
3. In groups of three, A, B and C take it in turns to read one of the verses of 'The Relic' to the rest of the group who do not have sight of the poem. Each reader makes a few changes to the verse for the listeners to make the necessary corrections.
4. In pairs, take it in turns to find examples of alliteration. Then try to change some of the other words to create more alliteration. Discuss why you think Donne did not use the phrases you have invented, e.g. 'When my grave is broke up' – could be 'When my grave is graded up'.
5. In pairs, take it in turns to find examples of assonance. Then try to change some of the other words to create more assonance. Discuss why you think Donne did not use the phrases you have invented, e.g. 'When my grave is broke up again' – could be 'When my grave is raided again'.



## Discussion Questions

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1. Can love be eternal?
2. Satire can be defined as using humour to expose foolishness through ridicule. Is Donne being satirical in this poem? Which lines (if any) are mostly satirical and which the least?
3. What is Donne's attitude towards love? What evidence is there in the poem to support this?
4. What is Donne's attitude towards death? What evidence is there in the poem to support this?  
**Extension: Write one paragraph on Donne's attitude to death in this poem, and one on his attitude in one other poem of your choice. How are they similar or different?**
5. Does it matter where and how you are buried? Can loved ones communicate after death? How much do you agree or disagree with the attitudes on these subjects presented in 'The Relic'?



## Comprehension Questions

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1. Which line in the first verse demonstrates personification?
2. What would alert the gravedigger to realise the bodies in the grave were significant people?
3. Which phrase is used to represent Judgement Day in line 10?
4. Which lines in verse 2 use alliteration?
5. In verse 3, which line describes love as nourishment?

# 'The Sun Rising'

## Events

In the first verse, the poet chastises the sun for shining on him and his lover. He says that the sun should be busy with other things, such as waking up chivvy schoolboys late for school, or unwilling apprentices and huntsmen that the king is ready to go out, or get the ants moving. Love, the poet says, is the most precious thing in the world, and the sun should not be wasting its time on the climate ('clime') and nor should it.

In the second verse the poet still focuses on the sun, saying its beams are worthy of being used to wake up the king. However, the poet does not want to do this, for that moment is his lover's. Her eyes are brighter and stronger than the sun's beams, and if she has to wake up the king, she should come late tomorrow and tell him whether all the precious spices of the Indies are still the most precious in the world or are the most precious things not in the bedchamber. The poet asks the sun to ask kings what they think about this and he says they will agree with him.

In verse 3 he continues, saying that his lover and he are more worthy than all the other people in the world to act a part in a play compared to the real world which is their love; honour is limited and they are striving for the best and purest (alchemy being basically the search to create gold). The sun's job is done on the lovers and his job is done (i.e. he doesn't need to bother shining on anyone else). The lovers' bed is the centre of the world.



## Viewpoint

The viewpoint is of the poet, none other. As is customary with many of Donne's poems, the viewpoint is given by the poet: a lover who awakes to the sun, which he chastises, for the sun cannot be as good as love.

## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

The poem consists of three verses of 10 lines each, mostly in iambic metre. However, the poet breaks with formalities, confirming that Donne likes to break with formalities. One formality that he breaks with is the rhyme scheme: abbaccdee.

## Language

**Lexis** (choice of vocabulary) reflects different themes: the sun, love, the treasures of the world.

- Lexis that refer to **the sun** in a literal sense, include 'Sun' (line 1), 'windows' (line 2), 'shines' (line 3), 'beams' (line 11) and 'shine' (line 29). In a metaphorical sense, the poet calls it 'busy old fool' (line 1), and a 'saucy pedantic wretch' (line 5). He says the sun is 'strong' (line 11). He asks why it should 'call' on them and why its movements are 'strong' (line 4). He says the sun is only half as happy as they are (line 25).

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- **Love** is the central theme of the poem, although there are only a few words 'lovers' (line 4), 'love' (line 9), 'bed' (line 30). This is a testament to Donne's when he speaks of other things that affect the lovers to express his ideas about love, is greater than the 'unruly Sun', which he also describes as a 'busy old pedantic wretch' (line 6) who should 'chide' (line 6) other lesser beings such as 'apprentices' (line 6), 'courthuntsmen', 'the king' (line 7), 'ants' (line 8). Love the poet calls the 'hours, days, and months' the 'rags of time' (line 10). The sunbeams that he calls 'reverend and strong' (line 11) for the lover can eclipse His lover's eyes are so powerful and strong that they could easily have 'blinded art half as happy as they are (line 25). All the sun has to do is to 'warm' the lover 'the world' (line 28).
- **The treasures of the world** are referred to as being of less value or magnitude with his lover or than the beauty of his mistress. Such lexis include: 'the Indies' (line 19), 'states and princes' (line 21), 'honour's', 'wealth', 'alchemy' (line 24), 'sphere' (line 30).
- **Time:** Lexis relating to time includes: 'seasons' (lines 4 and 9), 'late' (schoolboys), 'months' and 'time' (line 10), 'tomorrow late' (line 16), and 'yesterday' (line 17) used in a chronological sense, but are terms used to affirm the strength of the love.

**Phonology:** Regarding the **phonology**, many of the descriptive words are short, sharp, and that sound blunt, giving them more of an accusative sound. These include 'busy old pedantic wretch, go chide' (line 5), 'I could ... cloud them with a wink' (line 13), and 'art half as happy' (line 25).

- **Alliteration:** In line 2 'thou thus' emphasises the two words which are the cause of the love why it is doing what it is doing. In line 3, 'curtains' and 'call' are two vital words and their form an alliteration makes them stand out more. Similarly, the words 'schoolboys' and 'sour' in line 6, 'court-huntsmen' and 'king' in line 7, 'no', 'knows' and 'nor' in line 9, 'thou think' in line 12, 'could eclipse' and 'cloud' in line 14, 'tomorrow' 'tell' in line 16, 'half' and 'happy' in line 25, 'warm', 'world' and 'thy', 'these' and 'thy' in line 30.
- The repetition of the use of the letter 'l' in line 9 makes a more unified phrase.
- **Assonance** is another frequently used poetic device that John Donne includes with no exception. Similar vowels within a line make the words hang together more. Examples include: line 1 'fool' and 'unruly', line 2 'dust' and 'thus', in line 3 the repetition of 'lovers' and 'run', line 5 'pedantic' and 'wretch', line 9 'alike' and 'clime', 'no' and 'wink', line 14 'not' and 'long', line 15 'eyes', 'blinded' and 'thine', line 17 'where', 'leftst' and 'them', line 20 'And' and 'shalt', 'hear' and 'here', line 21 'nothing' and 'is', line 23 'do', 'to' and 'to' and 'but' and 'us', line 24 repetition of 'mimic' and 'alchemy', line 25 'sun', 'art' and 'half' and 'as' 'happy' and 'as', 'warm' and 'warming', 'done' and 'us', and line 30 'bed' and 'centre' and the 'world'.

Many of these examples use assonance to hold the line together, to underline the meaning for the line (as in line 2) and many form key words that summarise the content of the line.

Note that as well as puns on words, Donne also includes the same sounding words with different meanings (homonyms) in a natural way, as demonstrated in line 20 with 'he' and 'he'.

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### Taking It Further...

**Phonaesthetics:** Contrasting hard sounds with softer more liquid ones is another feature of the poem. In line 1, the only sibilant sounds are found in the first and last words of the line: 'b

- **Prosodic features:** The poet also uses prosodic considerations for effect. Use of enjambement in line 1, where the enjambement disrupts the rhythm slightly and causes the reader to pause, thus forcing them to contemplate the meaning intended, giving it more importance and credence. In line 2 with a mixture of plosive and fricative consonants in 'dost thou thus', the plosive 't' gives emphasis to 'must' in 'must to' and the repeated sibilant 's' in 'that the' pauses before the important word 'king', line 12, placing the sibilant 's' together in 'shouldst thou think' makes the reader (or the sun) to pause to consider what to think, and in line 18 when 'thou leftst them' causes the sun to pause and wonder if what he says could be true.

### Other Poetic Devices

**Parallelism:** When a word is repeated, it is obviously providing an example of assonance. In line 2 the poet lists where the sun is shining: repeated 'all' in line 24 has a similar effect and the final line, line 30, is also an example of its repeated pattern in its use of words: 'This bed', 'thy centre', and 'thy sphere'.

The repetition of 'all' in line 24 has a similar effect and the final line, line 30, is also an example of its repeated pattern in its use of words: 'This bed', 'thy centre', and 'thy sphere'.

**Hyperbole** is frequently used by Donne and is used in this poem. Exaggerations include the sun having human qualities, chastising the sun with very strong language, rather than being a simple object (lines 1 and 5), generalising by assuming that all apprentices are sour (line 6), assuming that all huntsmen have a place in his discussion (line 7), raising the meaning of 'love' as having human qualities (line 9), saying sunbeams are reverend (line 11), suggesting that the poet's eyes could blind the light of the sun (line 13), suggesting his lovers' eyes could blind the light of the sun (line 15), and suggesting whether it still has reign over the spices of the Indies or does the poet and his lover have the world in the close enclosure of their bedroom and are equal if not above to all other things.

**Personification and metaphor:** Donne uses a **conceit** or long **metaphor** and **personification** as though it were a human being throughout the poem. He gives it human qualities such as 'unruly' (line 1). He chastises the sun for 'call'ing on him and his lover (line 3) and follows in line 5 with more descriptions related to people: 'Saucy pedant', 'schoolboys and prentices'. In lines 7 and 8 the poet instructs the sun to 'go' and 'leave' the sun. In line 11 the sun's beams are referred to as 'reverend' and 'strong' – more human qualities. He believes the sun to 'think' and in line 15 he refers to the sun as though it has eyes. He asks the sun, as though it were human, to look and come back the next day to tell the poet if they are still where he left them or are they with the poet. In lines 19 and 20 he asks the sun if he saw yesterday and he will find them with the poet. In line 25, the poet continues to personify the sun as though it were human, saying that the sun is only half as happy as the poet and his mistress. In lines 27 to 30 the poet refers to the sun as though it were human, saying that its duty is to warm the world but that he is the couple for they are the whole world, everything that matters is with them, the centre of the universe (lines 17 to 20).

**Enjambment:** The depth and length of Donne's imagination into the realms of the sun, extending the lines so that they run on into the next line. This poem thus has a number of enjambed following lines: 5 to 6, 9 to ten, 10 to 11, 14 to 15, 16 to 17, 21 to 22, and 27 to 28.

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## Time

The poem is written as though the poet were in the present at the time of utterance. The sun is the source of the rays of the sun, and he speaks to the sun, chiding it for irritating him by indicating that his night of passion (we assume) has come to an end. He is thinking away from the situation into possible (but unrealistic) events at some time in the future, as the sun changing the lovers' seasons and the poet orders the sun to take action to go and chide others (lines 5 to 8) or he asks the sun to check the next day if all the spices of the Indies are still there (lines 13 to 20) or he informs the sun that it is only half as bright as it should be (lines 21 to 24). The world of the lovers (lines 13 to 20) or he informs the sun that it is only half as bright as it should be (lines 21 to 24). The world of the lovers (lines 13 to 20) or he informs the sun that it is only half as bright as it should be (lines 21 to 24).

Some lines are in the present in a more permanent sense: expressing a general truth that is true now and will always be true. Examples of this are in lines 9 and 10 when he speaks of the sun's rays and climate, and has no sense of time, and in lines 21 to 24 when he likens his lover to the sun, being equal or even better than the magnificence of princes, and their states and

The past does not feature strongly in this poem. There is limited reference to the sun to check to see if all the spices of the Indies and the kings it had shone on the poet and his lover (lines 17 to 20).

## People

There are two real people in the poem: the poet and his mistress, and a third mentioned in the title, the sun. While the title suggests the sun is the most important being, it is the poet's voice that is most much in control of everything that is said. He is the main person. His mistress is

Other people that are mentioned are mere recipients of actions taken by the sun: schoolboys, apprentices, court huntsmen, kings, 'ants' (lines 6 to 8), and 'princes' (lines 13 to 15) to shine on instead of shining on the poet and his lover.

The poet obviously considers that he and his lover are a very close couple for he speaks of them as 'us'. As though protecting his lover, the poet demands the sun into his bedroom. He appears to distance himself as if to continue to challenge the sun on her behalf but does so with reverence and awe, declaring how he is loath to even look away for a moment. The sun's rays are stronger than the sun's (lines 13, 14 and 15). Line 20 confirms his and his lover's relationship: 'She' in line 21 may refer to two important aspects: his lover, and 'love' itself. The poet's support how close he considers their relationship. Line 30 balances line 20 for in line 20 'all', meaning everything that matters, is in their bed, where they are in a tiny space. In line 30, extended outwards when he says 'thou' meaning the sun, the shining light is 'everywhere' (and their) whole world.

## Place

Specific places have not been named in this poem. We can assume that he is in his bedroom and is awoken by the strong beams of the sun as it shines through the windows and the sun. The only other places mentioned are included in his extended metaphor of the sun, the spices are still there and referring to the powerful strength of the love he and his lover. The sun is the most powerful, someone who is 'all states' (line 21) and also by saying that the sun is in their bedroom where their bed is the centre of the world and the walls, the sun's

Considering 'spatial deixis' concerning the relative closeness or distance of the poet and his lover, the poet is very much in the place where events are occurring, when he has this relationship. There are also many times when he projects himself forward into the future, distant and unknown and immeasurable 'place' in the future or in the past. Although his mistress is very close to him in the poem in lines 14 and 15 when he says 'But I would not lose her sight so long; if he she appears to be very distant in the thoughts he expresses, even though one as close. It is almost as if the sun is closer to the poet than she is, although we can see the sun away, according to the language that is used, rather than the deeper thoughts and

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has. In lines 14, 15 and 21 he makes reference to his mistress but in terms of her than with him. This is evident because he uses the third person 'she' or its object personal and closer second-person pronoun ('you').

In lines 25 and 29 he seems to be closer to his mistress for he includes the use of 'us'. However, on closer inspection he is addressing the sun and speaks on behalf of speaking to her about their own relationship. She is still a distant person with regard



### Individual Activities

1. Many of the examples of assonance within the poem hold the line or form of the line, underline the natural flow of the rhythm for the cases form key words that summarise the content to the line (as in assonances according to their purpose).
2. **AS Only:** Read the following poem that mentions the sun, compare the questions below:

*My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;  
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;  
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;  
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.  
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,  
But no such roses see I in her cheeks,  
And in some perfumes is there more delight  
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.  
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know,  
That music hath a far more pleasing sound.  
I grant I never saw a goddess go;  
My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.  
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare  
As any she belied with false compare.*

- a. Which poet addresses his poem to the sun and which to his mistress?
  - b. If the poets before Donne dwelled on love from a distance and more about the physical nature of it in the present, when did Donne?
  - c. Who do you think is the poet that wrote this poem?
  - d. Count the lines. What kind of poem do you think it is?
3. Which words in the poem indicate that Donne is speaking directly philosophising about its effect?
  4. Which lines contain evidence that Donne is personifying the sun?
  5. What do lines 9 and 10 tell us about Donne's opinion about the re

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### Group Activities

1. The words 'chide' in line 5 and 'tell' in line 7 could be said to be exact form that looks like the infinitive form of the verb without 'to'). In each and find other examples of the imperative. Discuss what effect using the imperative is the most effective and prepare an explanation with arguments with quotations from the text.
2. In groups of three, read a verse each and decide:
  - a. Which verse is almost entirely about the sun?
  - b. Which verse might be said to be the most satirical?
  - c. Which verse appears to speak about the mistress and their relationship?
3. In groups of three, allocate a verse each to translate the adjectives in your three separate modern language examples to another group. Match the lines in the poem in order. The different modern words could be chosen to represent those of the poem best.
4. In pairs, decide which single four or more words in each verse are said with great emphasis to make the poem more meaningful, e.g. 'I have seen his face'. Write down the words and explain why you chose them.
5. In groups of three, rewrite a verse each leaving out the punctuation. Discuss why the poem is still understandable without punctuation and try to replace the punctuation. Discuss why the poem is still understandable without punctuation. (Students' own responses.)



### Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the relationship of the poet and the sun. What does it tell you about the poet's attitude towards his lover?
2. Is it all right for a man to speak entirely for the one he loves? Is Donne too protective towards his lover?
3. Is love more important than anything else? If you are in love, does it affect your time and other commitments?
4. Do you think Donne is too superior or cynical in his attitude in this poem?  
**Extension: develop your ideas into an essay with the following title: 'The Sun Rising' is too cynical in "The Sun Rising". Discuss'.**
5. What is 'true love'? What are Donne's beliefs about the nature of love?



### Comprehension Questions

1. Which is the first line that demonstrates how Donne is personifying the sun?
2. What technique is used in lines 3, 21 and 24?
3. Who does Donne say are always tardy and who are always disagreeable?
4. What poetic device is used in line 15?
5. Which line in verse 2 contains a pun?

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# 'The Triple Fool'

## Events

The poet philosophises in a soliloquy about love and poetry. First of all, he is twice foolish because he has loved and because he has been foolish enough to write about it in poetry. If the woman whom he had loved had not denied him, then he may have been a wise man. Just as the earth's streams dilute the salt in the sea, he thought if he could sooth the pain of his feelings by taming it in poetry, all would be well, but this was not so. In the second verse, he finds that after he has done this, when another man makes his poem into a song and sings it he releases the same pain and grief the poet felt before, so now this makes him a fool three times over.

## Viewpoint

It is the viewpoint of the poet and the poet only. He speaks of his grief and pain from a failed love affair. He claims he is a fool three times over, first by falling in love and thereby feeling the pain of denial, second by composing a poem describing his feelings, and third by letting other people say or sing his poem so that he relives the same pain and grief.

## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

This poem consists of two verses of 11 lines each in iambic metre.

The number of feet using the iambic patten, weak-strong syllables vary per line, a trimeter), four feet (a tetrameter), and the more common five feet (pentameter) verse for they are the same, consisting of 343, 535, 545 55 according to the differ

The rhyming scheme is also carefully shaped: AABBBDCDCDEE, reminding us of sonnets the customary rhyming couplet. (Spenserian or Shakespearean sonnets consist of according to this pattern.) It is probably no coincidence that the verses are 'foolish' needed for a sonnet.

## Language

**Lexis** (choice of vocabulary) reflects different themes: fools, poetry and love.

- **Fools:** The fools in this poem are the poet. He says he is 'two fools', or twice but has been denied and has written poetry about it. He becomes a triple fool when he has to live through his pain and grief again after the poem has been written. From the opening of the poem it is clear that the poet is admonishing himself for his own poetry as 'whining'.
- The 'fool' rather than a comedian in this poem is someone who is unwise, for he could have been had he not been rejected (line 4).
- **Poetry:** His entire message is in the form of a poem: this one. Within this can talk of the 'whining poetry' he wrote after being rejected in love (line 3). He chooses the exact words needed to express his feelings when he says if he is suffering (line 8), he thought he could reduce his pain after this rejection 'the poet philosophises that the 'fierce'ness (line 10) of grief is usually 'tame'd' or reduced and constrained in 'verse' (line 11). Someone 'set' his poem in song and when he sings to others, the singer brought back the intensity of the poet's grief that had originated (lines 13 to 16). The poet continues to dwell on the nature of poetry when he honours 'love and grief' (line 17) but not in a way that 'pleases' when it is 'repeated' are increased when made public in song (lines 19 and 20). In line 22 he sums up the truth: those who are only a little wise make the best fools.

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- **Love:** The theme of love is central to this poem for the opening statement by 'for loving' and a fool for 'saying' that he was in love (lines 1 and 2). The pain his love is expressed through his harsh descriptions of the earth's 'inward na water is 'purge'd rather than dissipated by the sea when it enters the earths 7). In line 9, the difficulty in finding the most fitting word within the poem is going through 'rhyme's vexation'. The amount of grief he feels is portrayed by tempered if restrained or 'brought to numbers' by expressing it with careful when it could not be as 'fierce' as it is while it is unrestrained (lines 10 and 11 after he has constrained in poetry his pain from being rejected in love another pleasing many others with his lovely voice sets his pain free again (lines 12 to poetry or 'verse' that when read does not 'please' or move the listeners as much when both love and grief rule or 'triumph' when they are made public in this

**Phonology:** Regarding the **phonology**, most of the words flow smoothly until a dis such as in lines 6 and 7: 'th' earth's ... crooked lanes' 'purge sea water's fretful salt and 'f' and the hard velar 'c' sounds bring the reader up short and make the idea hard 'x' sound in the word 'vexation' in line 9 has a similar effect.

- **Alliteration** is present in this poem and is used to highlight some of the key this poetic technique in lines 2 ('saying so'), 4 ('where's', 'wise', 'would'), 11 ('sing'), 19 ('such songs'), 21 ('which' 'was') and 22 ('who' 'wise' and 'best' 'be
- **Assonance** is another technique used in this poem to help the rhythm flow ( sound more cohesive or joined together (as in line 11) or to emphasise the p Examples of assonance may be found in lines 3 ('in' whining'), 4 ('wise' 'I'), 8 ('allay'), 10 ('grief', 'be', 'fierce'), 11 ('it', 'it' 'in'), 15 ('by' 'delighting') 16 ('wh ('but' 'such' and 'not of'), 20 ('both' 'so') and 21 ('so grow').
- **Prosodic features:** Certain sounds are placed together to disrupt to rhythmic to slow the pace, pause and think about those particular words. Mild exam 6 ('th' earth's inward'), and line 7 ('sea water's fretful salt') although most o smoothly in spite of the bitter message relayed. Choice of vocabulary is per prosodic features.

### Taking It Further...

**Phonaesthetics:** This poem uses cacophony (unpleasant sounds) to convey the m the other more euphonious sounds. Cacophonous words, many of which exploit 'p', 't' and 'd', fricatives: 'th', 'f' and 'v', sibilants 's' and 'ch' or the velars 'k', 'g' a following lines: the title: 'The Triple Fool', line 1, 'two fools, 6 'crooked', 7 'fretful 'vexation', 10 'grief brought ... fierce', 11 'tames it, that fetters it, ... verse', 13 'ar 15 'delighting ... frees again' 16 'grief ... verse ... refrain', 17 'love ... grief tribute .. such songs', 20 'both ... triumphs so ... published', 21 'grow three', and 22 'best fo

### Other Poetic Devices

**Parallelism:** A clear example of parallelism is in line 11 'he tames it, that fetters i form is mirrored. While there are few lines that demonstrate such exact parallel balance in the lines by the suggestion of repetition. Evidence of this can be found 'that wise man, that would not', 21 'which was two fools, do so grow three', and fools be'.

**Hyperbole** is frequently used. Although the poet reacts in a commonly human w himself a fool for falling in love in the first place, something that we call ourselves not only calls himself a fool once but calls himself two fools (line 1) and finally th the idea. His poetry is not sad when he writes of his pain but 'whining' (line 3), a his poem, as if he were mocking his talent as a poet. The sea does not lessen its the streams (or 'lanes'), it 'purges' its 'fretful' salt away (line 7).

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**Personification** is used to make his ideas more personal to the reader. The seawater is personified as a man who is 'vexed' by his salt (line 7). It was as though the sea had feelings and was upset by its salt. In line 8, the poet speaks of 'vexation' or worries, although in this case it could be argued that the vexation is the poet's. The poet uses personification to structure his thoughts into rhyme. In line 11 he speaks of 'taming' grief and how he 'chains it up', speaking as if grief were a wild creature that needed to be restrained.

**Enjambment:** Donne extends his lines by running them onto the next line, thus further reinforcing his messages. Examples of this can be found between lines 2 and 3, 6 and 7, and 10 and 11.

**Oxymoron or paradox:** In this poem Donne uses a technique of putting together two opposite ideas, making the reader think about it and understand the paradox. In this case, of loving. He says he thought he could allay or lessen his pain by writing about it. In line 8, speaking of rhyme, he speaks of its 'vexation', or its annoyance (line 9). In lines 14 and 15, singing about his pain from being rejected in love and yet also says that such singing is 'whining poetry'. Line 22, contains an excellent example of an oxymoron. He says that he who 'sings' is a 'fool'. If you are wise, in normal circumstances you cannot be a fool. In addition, if you are wise, you are wholly wise, and that you cannot be 'a little' wise.

**Simile and metaphors:** An example of simile is in lines 6 and 7 in which the poet's feelings of rejection and of feeling so foolish are likened to 'earth's inward narrow crooked fretful salt away'. In other words, he thought he would stop his 'salty' tears by doing so. The metaphor of poetry is used to describe the poet's feelings.

Grief is metaphorically treated as a wild animal: the poet speaks of 'taming' and 'chaining it up' and saying it was 'restrained' in verse. The poet's pain is treated like a tangible object that can be 'chained' and 'sings' it (rather than sings about it) in lines 13 and 14.

## Time

Regarding **time**, Donne begins in the present at the time of utterance (line 1) when he is a fool because, in the past, he fell in love and wrote about it, making him what he is now. It could be said that he projects himself in his mind back to the past and imagines what he would have been if he hadn't been rejected; he might have been a wise man rather than a fool. All the while, up to the time of utterance, he wonders just where that man is, meaning the one who would have loved the woman. He returns to the present simply stating a general truth that rivers reduce their flow by being constrained. This permanent fact is used by Donne as a simile – believing (lines 10 and 11) that his grief is expressed and constrained in verse, and for this poet, (lines 8 and 9) he believed that writing would reduce the intensity of his grief through the act of constructing his poem. In line 20, when he has written his poem, some man will put his poem to music and, with his voice, will sing the song to others, 'delighting' them but so letting out the grief that he has constrained within his poem. By delighting everyone with his beautiful voice and releasing the grief and pain again, but in song the grief and pain will increase and be released into the open. Here Donne speaks of one event, but then, as he often does, generalises it into the present and future: grief and love belong in verse, he says (line 17), 'But when you read.' (line 18) – but not appreciated the same way as they are when the poem is sung. The rule or principle is continued and the poet says songs increase the powerful feeling and its overpowering effect is so made public. In line 21, he reverts to himself and his situation for loving and a fool for saying so, and now, in the present, he is a fool again just like those who are a 'little wise' – that is, those who think they are wise, but are hardly wise.

## People

The main person in the poem is the poet who is expressing his feelings after (we assume) being rejected. He takes on other guises: he is a fool twice, once for loving and once for saying that he would have loved the woman where the man is that would have existed had he not been denied in love; he assumes he would have been a wise man, rather than the fool he now calls himself (lines 4 and 5). He is also a person who is writing 'whining poetry' (line 3), a misguided person for believing that he could reduce his pain by writing his thoughts into verse (lines 8, 9 and 10). Another person in the poem is represented by the 'man' who will sing the poet's poem to others.

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particular but a prediction that some person will put his poem into song, bringing love again more so than in the poem, so the feelings are increased to ‘triumph’ and when he, the poet, is made a fool for a third time. The past explanation can also be explained using what is called the **historic present** (or the **dramatic** or narrative present) in talking about the past.

In the last line, Donne speaks of ‘mankind’ for he who is ‘a little wise’, makes ‘the personal qualities, for Donne describes how it is ‘tamed’ and ‘fettered’ like a wild animal. ‘some man’ tries to show off his art and voice and puts Donne’s poem to music (but is cynical about his poetry – he no longer describes it as ‘whining’ – but in the next line his carefully constructed and constrained verse is opened wide, and the feelings are released and increased when sung, making his private words and feelings public. In two lines, Donne returns to the man he was in the opening of the poem, calling himself a fool three times over.

## Place

Regarding **places**, specific places have not been stated in this poem, which is customary. The places, they are abstract, such as where his feelings are placed: in ‘whining poetry’, in the earth, its rivers that decrease the salt from the sea as it flows into them. This desire is the poet hoping that, just as the salt is dissipated, so his grief in love should have been put into verse (lines 6 to 9).

‘Place’ is also related to the poet’s use of time – he ‘places’ himself for the most part in the present utterance, but then projects himself in his mind back into the past and into the future. This is at the time of utterance when he calls himself ‘a triple fool’, the title of the poem.



### Key Terms

<b>dramatic present</b>	another name for the historic present
<b>historic present</b>	the present tense used in the telling of a story
<b>narrative present</b>	another name for the historic present

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## Individual Activities

1. Shakespeare said: 'A fool thinks himself to be wise, but a wise man does not think he is a fool.' Does Donne really think he is a wise or foolish person in 'The Triple Fool'? Use the poem to support your discussion.
2. **AS Only:** Read this poem by Donne that also contains the word 'wise' and answer the questions below:

### *'The Bait'*

*Come live with me, and be my love,  
And we will some new pleasures prove  
Of golden sands, and crystal brooks,  
With silken lines, and silver hooks.*

*There will the river whispering run  
Warm'd by thy eyes, more than the sun;  
And there the 'enamour'd fish will stay,  
Begging themselves they may betray.*

*When thou wilt swim in that live bath,  
Each fish, which every channel hath,  
Will amorously to thee swim,  
Gladder to catch thee, than thou him.*

*If thou, to be so seen, be'st loth,  
By sun or moon, thou dark'nest both,  
And if myself have leave to see,  
I need not their light having thee.*

*Let others freeze with angling reeds,  
And cut their legs with shells and weeds,  
Or treacherously poor fish beset,  
With strangling snare, or windowy net.*

*Let coarse bold hands from slimy nest  
The bedded fish in banks out-wrest;  
Or curious traitors, sleeve-silk flies,  
Bewitch poor fishes' wand'ring eyes.*

*For thee, thou need'st no such deceit,  
For thou thyself art thine own bait:  
That fish, that is not catch'd thereby,  
Alas, is wiser far than I.*

Answer the questions:

- a) Which poem says the poet is unwise, and why? Which one says he is wise, and why?
- b) Which poem focuses on i) the poet and his feelings and which on ii) the art of seduction?
- c) Name three poetic devices that the poems have in common. Explain your answer.

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3. In line 6 of 'The Triple Fool', which words may be inspired by the b rejected in love? In lines 7, 8, 9 and 10, are there any other words someone else?
4. Which lines in 'The Triple Fool' seem to summarise his previous th
5. Which lines in The Triple Fool are in the customary iambic pentam regular weak/strong pattern that occurs five times.) Is there any p



### Group Activities

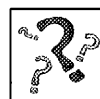
1. In pairs, take a verse each and compare the metres. Are the verse construction according to rhyme and metre? Discuss why.
2. In groups of four, take it in turns to read the poem, stopping when completed. Is there any pattern to this? What does the poet use to
3. In groups of two, write a verse each leaving out the punctuation. Put in the punctuation. Check your work with the original poem. Do you need punctuation to maintain an even flow to the rhythm.
4. In pairs, take it in turns to state the lines and the specific phrases that powerfully the poet's use of imagery. Describe the particular images in your mind.
5. In pairs, take a verse each and change the adjectives into a modern language. Try to name the adjectives that had been changes. Which adjectives were negative? Which modern adjectives were more or less close to the original Donne?



### Discussion Questions

1. Does Donne reduce his suffering from unrequited love? Are there any lines that reduce the pain of unrequited love by writing about it? (Do not forget to use quotations from the text.)
2. Is Donne a fool or is he just displaying human qualities? (Do not forget to use quotations from the text.)
3. Look at the way the poem is structured. Is there enough evidence to suggest that constructing poetry in Donne's style is 'vexatious' as he suggests?
4. Is Donne being cynical for the whole poem? Which lines are most cynical?
5. Is Donne right when he says both grief and pain 'triumph when put to song more effective in expressing deep emotions?

**Extension: In groups, choose one of these discussion questions and each write the essay individually and swap your work – give your partner one point that did well and one point to improve.**



### Comprehension Questions

1. Why does Donne say he is a fool three times?
2. Which poetic technique is used in line 2?
3. What metaphor does Donne use in line 6 for rivers and streams?
4. Which poetic technique is used in line 11 when talking about grief?
5. Which poetic device is used in line 14?

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# 'Twicknam Garden' (also 'Twickenham Garden')

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## Events

The poet, feeling unhappy, comes to Twickenham Garden to see spring and is called but a traitor to himself, he is ensnared with a love that changes everything and he thinks it would be better for him if winter destroyed the wonder of the place and that a mocking him. So that he may not be disgraced, nor cease loving, love, he asks, take me here, make him into a mandrake plant (which was believed to have magic qualities of sterility) so that he could grow there, or turn him into a stone fountain, the water out the year.

Lovers will come with crystal phials, or little bottles made of crystal for holding spring water. Donne says the lovers should take water from the fountain or his tears, which are the source of love. He suggests lovers should compare his tears to those of their mistresses for false if they do not taste like the poet's for the poet's tears are genuine. Unfortunately, it is not apparent in the eyes, and you cannot judge a woman by the tears she sheds, just by the shadow. He decries the contrary female sex for no one of the sex is honest except his mistress to be genuine, such truth is killing him.

## Viewpoint

The poet's viewpoint is the only one presented here. The only voice is that of the poet in the situation. We can assume that his mistress had rejected his love, and thus assume the situation is minimal.

## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

The poem consists of three verses of nine lines in each.

The metre, if measured by syllables only, could be construed to consist of the common foot (two feet or groups of weak + strong syllables) or iambic tetrameter (four groups of weak + strong syllables). The number of syllables per line is 10:8:8:10:8:10:8:10:10. However, the first three verses are more regular, and the whole poem can be read as if flowing in a designated metre: iambic tetrameter, iambic tetrameter, iambic pentameter, iambic tetrameter, iambic tetrameter, iambic pentameter and iambic pentameter in each verse.

The rhyming pattern is ABABBCCDD for each verse.



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## Language

**Lexis** (choice of vocabulary) reflects different themes: love, and the garden and its

While the poem is about Twickenham Garden, in which the poet is thinking, it is the pertinent themes of unrequited love and magic that are indicated by the lexis.

- **The garden** is referred to as a place which can cheer him up with signs of 'spring'. What his eyes and ears see and hear the soothing sounds and sights of the spring in line 4 may not only refer to a soothing substance but may refer to a plant. In line 6, while it is not certain, one can imagine him looking at a spider, which is an overpowering, negative kind of love he calls 'spider Love' that changes every substance exuded by the tamarisk tree and also referred to in the Bible as manna for the Israelites. Here he says even this can be changed to 'gall' or bitterness by the beauty of the garden is apparent as he calls it a 'true paradise' in line 9. In the Garden of Eden when he declares he has brought a 'serpent', or a snake, into the garden in lines 10 and 11 he calls upon winter to darken the garden and in lines 12 and 13 to prevent the trees from mocking him with their 'laugh'ter'. In line 16 he asks for a 'stone fountain' where he can 'weep' continuously through the year. The choice of 'stone' for the fountain, stone being a hard, cold and relatively unfeeling material, wishes to be unaffected by his feelings. In lines 19 and 20 he says that lovers should collect 'his tears' or droplets of water in their 'crystal phials', usually used for magical potions. All these ideas are explored with the background of the subject of love.
- **Love** is the central theme of the poem. The garden is used as a reference point for the poet's conceit to represent the beauty of life and love. The poet is suffering from unrequited love. References to the garden to express the bitterness of his feelings in contrast to the beauty of the garden. In the opening line, words are selected to endorse the pain of his rejection in the garden. In lines 2, 3 and 4, he admits to coming to the garden to be soothed by its beauty. In lines 6 and 7, he speaks of 'spider Love' which has magic powers that can change everything, even 'manna' into something bitter and 'gall'. In line 13 his unhappy thoughts call upon winter to come with a heavy frost to darken the garden that appear to 'mock' and 'laugh' at him because of their beauty. In lines 14 and 15 he asks for a 'stone fountain' to some 'senseless' place in the garden, a place that will numb his feelings, or a 'stone fountain' so that he can cry the whole year round. In the third verse he asks for a 'stone fountain' more. He speaks of his tears being the only ones to be genuine, not like those of his mistress. He bemoans the fact that you cannot know a woman's true feelings by looking at her face. He more judge her feelings through her tears than you can by looking at her smile. He confesses that his mistress is the only one that is true in love (but we assume she is not) that is upsetting or 'killing' him.
- **Magic** is frequently referred to within the thoughts of the poet. In lines 6 and 7, the poet says which 'substantiates all' for the spider was thought to have magic powers, to turn the heaven ('manna') into something bitter ('gall'). This garden is no ordinary garden. He turns the Garden of Eden ('true paradise') into which he has brought his 'serpent' or a snake. He gives nature human qualities for he calls for a heavy 'frost' to prevent or 'fool' him and 'mocking' him. In lines 15 to 18 he assigns 'Love' magic powers to lead him to a spot in the garden, to turn him into a mandrake plant, which has magic powers. He asks for a 'stone fountain' so that he can weep freely through the fountain's flowing water. In lines 19 and 20 he asks to come to the fountain with their crystal phials (usually known for containing magical purposes). They should fill their phials with his 'tears' to compare with his. By comparing them, if they are not the same, then their mistresses' are false. Only his tears are genuine.

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- **Religion:** references are made to events from the Bible, the text of the Christian

In line 6, instead of saying that everything is changed into something else, Donne uses the word 'substantiate' which is usually used specifically to represent the Catholic Church's belief that the wine taken in Mass actually turn into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. In line 7, the poet refers to the 'gall' that fell from heaven to save the Israelites. In the same line 'gall' is used to represent the bitter 'gall' mixed with wine that Jesus had been offered to drink to ease his suffering before his crucifixion. 'Gall' has been accepted as representative of something bitter or 'vinegar', but 'gall' is more than sour, was most likely to be a poison, which has been given as the reason for the

In line 9 the Bible of the Christian religion is mentioned in the form of the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil' in Eden when the first man and woman were created and in which they learnt that they were represented by the snake or 'serpent' who persuaded Eve to steal an apple which was forbidden to do this by God.

In line 10, rather than saying 'it would be better', Donne says that it would be better if he would become more 'whole' – implying he would be free from sin in the present world.

In lines 11 and 12 he speaks of the 'glory' of the place, 'glory' being a word used in religious matters, and in line 12 he speaks of 'grave' frost, not only meaning 'grave' but also inferring a seriousness associated with grave or serious religious matters.

In line 13 he speaks of trees 'laughing' and 'mock'ing him to his 'face', perhaps referring to the trees that mocked at his crucifixion.

In line 20 he speaks of 'love's wine', wine being often mentioned in the Bible where it was said to turn water into wine and it is wine that is used in the Mass ceremony.

In line 23, the poet speaks of the eyes which were once thought to be 'the windows of the soul' as mentioned in the Bible.

**Phonology:** Many of the words are monosyllabic, making the poem flow simply and smoothly. To disturb the flow with longer words that contrast or add meaning to the single-syllable words, this can be found in line 1 when the nouns 'sighs' and 'tears' are qualified by two-syllable words 'surrounded'. The many 's's' in this line help to hold the line together; that is, mainly mono-syllabic words (except for the two-syllable verb 'received') until the word 'everything' which has three syllables. Line 6 contains an all-important four-syllable word 'substantiate' which contrasts with the remainder of the line. Other words that stand out similarly are 'gall' (line 7) and 'wholesomer' (line 10).

- **Alliteration** is used to add to the flow of the rhythm and to highlight important words. Examples include: line 1: 'sighs' and 'surrounded', line 2: 'seek' and 'spring', line 5: 'but' and 'bring', line 7: 'this', 'thoroughly' and 'thought', line 12: 'frost' and 'forbid', line 15: 'leave loose', 'senseless', and 'piece' and 'place', line 17: 'Make me' and 'mandrake', line 20: 'love's wine' and 'tears', line 22: 'For' and 'false', line 25: 'shadow' and 'she', and line 27: 'sighs'.
- **Assonance** is also used to add to the flow of the rhythm and to highlight significant words. Examples include: line 2: 'Hither' and 'spring', line 3: 'And at', 'mine eyes', 'mine' and 'mine', line 5: 'anna', line 8 'and that', 'place' and 'may', line 12: 'and' and 'that', 'did' and 'did', line 15: 'endure', 'yet' and 'let', line 16: 'senseless', line 17: 'make' and 'mandrake', line 19: 'hither' and 'crystal', and 'lovers' and 'come'.
- **Onomatopoeia:** There are at least two examples of words that sound like the actions they represent. 'blasted' and 'sighs' in line 1 sound like the actions they represent.

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- **Prosodic** features are sometimes explored so that the reader is sometimes... Certain sounds that are difficult to pronounce are put close together so when he or she pronounces the sounds, he or she also pauses for a moment so that the important words are also conveyed. Examples of this can be found in line 21 'mistress' tears of the lovers to focus on their mistresses' tears. In line 26 'perverse sex' is halting because of the same sound as the word sex begins. The strength of the feelings of the poet is shown by the strong choice of the word 'perverse' but also by the pause that is necessarily made when the words are spoken.

### Taking It Further...

**Phonaesthetics:** In this poem there are many examples of Donne using cacophonous words to emphasise his thoughts and to contrast with more harmonious euphony as the voice of the lover's wine'). Cacophonous words, many of which exploit the harsh sounds of plosives and fricatives: 'th', 'f' and 'v', sibilants 's' and 'ch' or the velars 'k', 'g' and 'ng', can be found in line 12 'grave frost did forbid', 13 'mock me to ... face', 14 ' But that .... not this disgraces', 15 'loving, Love, let', 16 'Some senseless piece of this place be', 17 'Make ... mandrake', 18 'fountain weeping out', 19 'Hither with crystal phials, lovers, come', 20 ' And take care of your tears at', 22 'For ... false, that taste not just like', 23 'Alas, hearts do not ... eyes she has but she' and 27 'Who's therefore true, because ... truth kills'.

### Other Poetic Devices

**Parallelism:** This poem also contains a clear example of a line that is balanced by the same form. In line 3: 'And at mine eyes, and at mine ears', the phrases are exact repetitions of the same words at the end. Another indication of parallelism may be found in the first line (the speaker is surrounded with tears).

**Hyperbole:** Many of Donne's ideas are exaggerations. He uses this technique so that the meanings intended. There are few hints or gentle allusions (although, of course, there are symbolic interpretations). He is not overcome with sadness, he is 'blasted' with grief. In line 4, he does not speak of being gently soothed by a balm that soothes the malady he has received 'balms' that cure 'everything'. In line 5, rather than speak of letting himself be a 'self-traitor', a much harsher expression. In line 6, the 'spider' rather than the snake 'substantiates' or changes everything ('all') completely, rather than alters his own state at the moment. In line 7 such change 'converts' rather than affects his good or his badness represented by 'manna' converted to 'gall'. In line 8 he does not suggest that the Garden of Eden, he asks that it may 'thoroughly' be 'true paradise', rather than just a place. In line 10 he says 'twere wholesomer' rather than it would be better; he is saying that winter 'benighted', turned everything into complete darkness like the night, rather than just a dark day. In the same line he speaks of the 'glory', raising the beauty of the place to something that God is worshipped. In line 12 he speaks of a 'grave' frost, inferring that the frost is very important – rather than simply heavy. The frost is asked to 'forbid' a stronger word than to prevent. In line 13 the trees are not described as contrasting with his sad spirits, but as forcing him to his face, a much harsher response. Rather than going to a quieter, less beautiful place, he wants to go to a place that is completely devoid of anything that might appeal to him – a 'senseless' place (line 16). In line 18, he asks to be turned into a fountain which he calls the water his tears so that he can weep for the rest of the year. In line 22, rather than the words are false, he declares 'all' of them are 'false'. In line 26 he says that no women, but his would-be lover. In the final line, line 27, her truth apparently 'kills' him –

**Enjambment:** Donne makes some of the lines run on into the next line so that his readers' minds for long enough to grasp their significance. Examples of this are in lines 13, 14, 15 and 16, 19, 20 and 21.

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**Metaphor:** The entire poem contains a conceit or an extended metaphor comparing a beautiful garden in the spring and a lover who is feeling very bitter after suffering. The poem are more examples of metaphor, some of which may be so hidden or known as an unreported experience, but the following metaphors are very likely to be contained in the poem and 2 'I' may not be simply the poet but a metaphor for what the poet is feeling; the epitome of suffering that occurs after being rejected in love. In line 6, 'spider' represents an influence that can alter everything. The beautiful garden is changed and ruined by the influence of an unrequited lover. Twickenham Garden stands for the Garden of Eden, the garden in which man and woman were created and the garden in which these first human beings were represented by a snake: the 'serpent' that the poet says he brought into the garden represents bitter love, love which changes everything, just as a spider may cast its web and its bitterness ruins the beauty underneath and in the whole garden. In line 2, 'spring' represents a new beginning for the poet. In line 6 'transubstantiates' represents communion, which members of the Catholic Church believe that the blood and wine they take in communion is the blood and wine of Christ. In line 7 'manna' and 'gall' represent good and evil. The good can be changed into bitterness. In line 9 Twickenham Garden is a metaphor for a 'true paradise' in which sin or, as some authors suggest, erotic love represented by a serpent appeared. In line 10 'winter' is a metaphor for darkness and the poet says it would be 'benighted' the 'glory' (or the worship of God) in the place (line 11). A 'grave' represents a serious coldness that he asks should descend on him and the garden to 'forbid' or 'prevent' his apparent unaffected cheerfulness from 'mocking' or 'laughing at' him or his bitter love. In line 14 'disgrace' is a metaphor for the disgrace Eve suffered when cast out from Eden for sinning. Such disgrace the poet or the bitter love he represents does not want to suffer the disgrace of sinning by expressing his love physically, yet he still expresses his love in a cold dispassionate way, represented by his desire to be led by 'Love' into a 'stone' (line 16) and be changed into something material, like a mandrake plant (line 17), represented by a stone that suffers pain only when pulled out of its resting place in the earth or a 'stone' that is cold, hard and heartless, we assume, but something that produces water, which represents a fountain that flows continuously. In line 19 'crystal phials' not only represent the literal items but also represent containers or even sacred, serious 'crystal clear' thoughts. Sacred phials were often used to hold the tears of mourners and left in the Roman graves, so in this case they represent the poet's thoughts when collecting or observing the tears of lovers. In line 20 'lover's wine' represents tears that are nourished or fed by genuine feelings. Wine was thought to be nourishing and the poet says tears of mistresses the poet says should 'taste' the same as his if they are genuine. In line 23, 'hearts' represent places, where feelings are expressed. 'Hearts' that 'shine' in the 'eyes' represents the feelings expressed in the eyes, which were once part of the soul. In other words, one cannot judge how a woman really feels, even if you look into her eyes that are supposed to let you see or understand her soul. In line 25 the shadow of the mistress is more than the literal shadow her body casts but, because she is said to 'wear' it, it represents the shadow or a shallow representation of herself the mistress 'wears' or puts on, just as she would a dress.

**Personification** is used in the poem and inanimate things are said to or asked to behave in human ways. In line 12, he speaks of the frost 'forbidding' the trees to 'laugh' and 'mock' him (line 14). In line 18 he speaks of a stone fountain 'weeping'.



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## Time

Donne begins in the simple present at the time of utterance, when he comes into (lines 1, 2, 3 and 4). From lines 5 to 9 he writes in the present but the ideas are more a general truths as he speaks of how 'spider Love' changes everything, and, in the future to 'gall'. He asks that this place be called, now and in the future, 'true paradise' for him to go into the place. Note that he speaks of the immediate past, using the present perfect. In the second verse he moves his thoughts away from the present and into the future (lines 10-18) where he would better if the place was darkened and if he were taken to a 'senseless' place like a fountain. Still in the future from line 19, he says how lovers should come with their 'tears' from the fountain and use them to judge the validity of their mistresses. Donne makes statements using the present simple, stating his beliefs as if they were general truths. You cannot see how a woman really feels by her tears or by looking into her eyes. Donne goes straight back to the present and the reason for his pain: his proposed lover is true, but not for him, so her 'truth' 'kills' him.

While there are no obvious temporal deictic expressions, ones that indicate time he is speaking at the time of utterance. While he is walking in the garden his thoughts and project him into the future to times that are non-specific.

## People

There are two people in the poem. The main one is the poet who has entered the garden in pain he is experiencing after being rejected by a woman he is in love with. There are other people personified for Donne personifies them, making them appear to behave like human beings. This section above on personification. Other people who come into the picture are other women who use the tears of their lovers to see if they are true or false. He also comments on women who say that they are all false except the one he is addressing his thoughts to (lines 22 to 24).

It is obvious that the poet is feeling very passionate about his relationship and its rejection. The opening words are emphatic and declarative: he is not simply feeling sad but turns his anger onto himself, calling himself 'self-traitor' (line 5). The strength of his metaphors and his outrageous requests to be turned into a stone for a year (and more) (line 18).

He tries to exacerbate the anger to include all other lovers and warns them about declaring 'all' [women] are 'false' (line 22). The last two lines explain the real reason for it was not her falseness that hurt him, it was her truth that 'killed' him.

## Place

One specific place mentioned in this poem is obviously Twickenham Garden, the place of comfort in the garden and calls it 'true paradise' (line 9). We are given an indication of the beauty contrasting with Donne's sad spirits. It is spring time when the garden is in full bloom. Although there is no direct statement, we can imagine that the garden, like most gardens, is inspiring Donne to speak of his 'spider Love' that changes everything (lines 6 to 7). If winter came and darkened the place, the frost preventing the trees from 'laughing', Donne speaks of going to a less inspiring part of the garden where he would like to be turned into a fountain (lines 15 to 18). One can imagine that both may be in the garden already, taking water from the fountain and going home to their mistresses to test to see if they are true (lines 19 to 21). Much of the actual content of the places mentioned is left to the imagination.

The lover who rejected him is obviously at some distance from him for he only refers to other lovers to be wary of the falsehood of women in all the verses; he does not direct his anger to her. She is only mentioned in the last two lines, when he finally confesses it was her truth that 'killed' him.

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## Individual Activities

1. How do we know that Twickenham Garden is beautiful? What clues does Donne give us? (Does he use any poetic techniques to make this clear?)
2. Which examples of hyperbole can you find? Rewrite these exaggerated statements so they would be more down to earth and sensible.
3. 'Tears' are mentioned in all three verses. Why do you think this is important?
4. Which lines in 'Twickenham Garden' seem to summarise the content of the poem?
5. Which lines in 'Twickenham Garden' are in the customary iambic pentameter? (The poem has a regular weak/strong pattern that occurs five times.) Is there anything else about the poem that is unusual?



## Group Activities

1. In pairs, take it in turns to read out a word or phrase from the poem. The other person has to guess whether it is a) happiness, b) grief and pain. Which do you think has the most impact on the poem?
2. In groups of four, take it in turns to read the poem, stopping when you reach a line. The other three people have to guess when the line is completed. Is there any pattern to this? What does the poet use to make this happen?
3. In groups of three write a verse each leaving out the punctuation. The other two people have to put in the punctuation. Check your work with the original poem. Do you think you need punctuation to maintain an even flow to the rhythm?
4. In pairs, take it in turns to state the lines and the specific phrases that you think most powerfully the poet's use of imagery. Describe the particular images that come to your mind.
5. In threes, take a verse each and change the adjectives into a modern language. Try to name the adjectives that had been changed. Which adjectives were most negative? Which modern adjectives were more or less close to the original? (Donne?)



## Comprehension Questions

1. Which seasons are mentioned in this poem, and what is their effect on the poem?
2. Which poetic technique is used in line 3: 'and at mine eyes, and at mine ears, and at mine feet'?
3. In line 6, what indication is there that many of Donne's metaphors are based on the human body?
4. Which poetic technique is used in line 13 when talking about the tears?
5. Why does the poet want to be turned into a fountain?

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# 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mo

## Events

This poem consists of a progression of the poet's thoughts: just as good men tell their unhappy friends say that he has had his last breath, others say 'no'. He sees they should fade away without a fuss, not shed tears, or wish storms to change to their joy to tell those who are not of the same understanding about their love damage and fear, men consider what they have done and what they might have spheres, though much greater, is the more innocent, or not understood or felt or thrives on the senses cannot tolerate the absence of their lover, for absence takes love depends on: sex.

But he believes they have a much purer, spiritual kind of love which they do not their minds are assured, and they care less about the physical love they will miss.

Their two souls are, therefore, one, he says and, even though he must leave, he but rather believe that their love will increase like gold beaten in to a larger, thin distinguished, he says, then they are like two firm arms of a compass. Her soul, it only moves if the other one does, and it is the same with their souls. Though her centre, then when the other arm moves, she leans towards it or stands straight v home. So she will be the same to him. He must go, or move at an angle, but her circle, back to where he began with her.

## Viewpoint

The poet's viewpoint is the most important. He is trying to persuade the lover he souls will be united in heaven. We hear his voice only; his lover has no part to play Donne's imagining.

## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

There are nine verses of four lines each in iambic tetrameter; that is, there is a regular line consisting of four 'feet' or groups of weak/strong ('iambic') stress patterns.

The rhyme is also simple and clear: ABAB.

## Language

**Lexis** (choice of vocabulary) reflects different themes: good and evil, the Church

- **Good and evil:**

**Good:** References to good are in line 1, when Donne speaks of 'virtuous' men passing away 'mildly' or peacefully. In line 12, the movement of the spheres from damaging or spoiling anything on the earth such as their love. In line 17 much more 'refined', or pure, and in line 20 he says how they do not care about senses felt by our eyes, lips and hands (line 21) for their souls and their love as one, pleading with his lover not to suffer from a break in their love, but rather its more ethereal rather than physical entity (line 23).

**Evil:** The title contains evidence that the poem is about something considered 'evil', for it contains the words 'forbidden' mourning. Other references to 'profanation' indicates that the joys of the couple were not only spoiled but he speaks of how it would make their joys bad to tell the 'laity' of their love, the people rather than elite members of the clergy. In line 9, the damage and evil mentioned to compare with the activity of the spheres which are less damaged 'dull' love, driven by the moon and the (physical) senses, rather than involving soul is sense' infers that love that relies entirely on the physical senses, is 'dull' tolerate absence (line 15) because it is based solely on the senses, and when senses (line 16).

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- **The Church:** Donne began life as a Catholic and changed later to become a Protestant. So much of his poetry contains reference to the Church and its beliefs and practices. He refers to the notion of good and evil as believed by the Church: the mourning according to the way in which he is supposed to behave, the love he had for his wife according to the expected code of behaviour. In the first and second line, the poet refers to the eyes of the Church, who pass away 'mildly', who 'whisper' to their 'souls' – a word associated with the Church's vocabulary; the poet says how it would be difficult to act to tell the 'laity', that is non-members of the clergy, about their love. In line 35, he is firmly establishing the belief that there is life after death, which is in line with the Catholic faith.
- **Sex:** Although the central theme of the poem concerns spiritual love, it is probable that some of the words chosen have sexual allusion. Such phrases include: 'let us melt' (line 9), 'sublunary lovers' love' – the moon having romantic connotations (line 13), 'senses' (line 14), 'eyes, lips and hands' – often focused on in foreplay or when making love ('expansion' (line 23), 'stiff' (line 26), 'leans and hearkens after it' (line 31), 'grows erect' (line 32), and 'thy firmness' (line 35).

**Phonology:** Regarding the **phonology**, rather than short, emphatic, single-syllable words, Donne uses more than one syllable, giving the impression of gentle, lengthy, persuasion. For example, in 'Valediction Forbidding Mourning' the words 'virtuous', 'men', 'are', 'said', 'to', 'pass', 'mildly' move from four to three to two syllables in each line, 'virtuous' men are said to pass 'mildly'.

- **Alliteration** is used to emphasise important words and to make the line flow more easily. Examples are found in line 3: 'some', 'sad', 'say'; line 4: 'so', 'no', 'noise'; line 8: 'to tell'; line 13: 'lovers', 'love'; line 14: 'soul is sense'; line 15: 'lips'; line 27: 'fixed foot'; line 29: 'centre sit'; line 36: 'makes me'.
- **Assonance** is also used frequently in this poem to make the words sound more cohesive. Examples are in the title: 'Forbidden Mourning'; line 2: 'soul', 'so', 'no', 'let', 'melt'; line 13: 'lovers', 'love'; line 16 'thing', 'which', 'it'; line 15: 'lips', 'miss'; line 22: 'though', 'go'; line 23: 'an expansion'; line 26 'stiff', 'twin', 'move', 'do'; line 29: 'it', 'in', 'sit'; line 30: 'yet', 'when', 'other', 'far', 'doth'; line 31: 'grows', 'home', 'and', 'as', 'at'; line 33: 'such', 'must', 'be', 'me'; line 34: 'other', 'firmness', 'circle'; and line 36: 'end where'.

Some of the words Donne chooses contain alliteration within such as in line 15: 'lips', 'miss'. This effect may also be considered in the 'rhyming' and rhythm placed in a similar position in the penultimate lines of verses 2 and 3: 'profane' and 'mildly' respectively.

- **Prosodic features:** The majority of this poem flows smoothly and the juxtaposition of words creates this effect except perhaps in situations like an example in line 24., 'Like gold' and 'doth' for a very brief moment if both words are spoken clearly, unless they combine to create the 'g' of 'gold' so that there is only one sound.

### Taking It Further...

**Phonaesthetics:** In this poem there are many examples of Donne using cacophonous words to emphasise his thoughts and to contrast with more harmonious euphony or pleasant sounds. Cacophonous words, many of which exploit the harsh sounds of plosives: 'b' 'p' 't' 'k' 'g' 'd' 'c' 'f' 'sibilants 's' and 'ch' or the velars 'k' 'g' and 'ng', can be found in the following lines: 10 ('tempests move') 11 ('trepidation of the spheres') 12, ('greater far'), 14 ('(Whose breach, but an expansion)'), 26 ('As stiff twin compasses are two'), 27 ('the fixer moves') ('grows erect').

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## Other Poetic Devices

**Hyperbole:** Donne's style includes much exaggeration. In this poem examples in the first two lines he speaks of 'virtuous men', inferring all virtuous men. Rather than would spoil their joys, he uses a much stronger word: 'profanation'. In line 17 he is 'refined'. In lines 23 and 24 he speaks of their love expanding, comparing it to other substances: gold.

**Personification or conceit:** In the last four verses, their relationship is described as if they respond to each other as though they were inextricably attached like the arms of a compass.

**Metaphor:** The whole poem is a metaphor for their love. The poet is obviously believing that their love will endure, far more than if their love was based solely on a physical relationship. The relationship is represented as a compass, by implication something used in the exacting work of a circle round which the poet is said to move full circle.

**Enjambment:** The lines in verse 4 are incomplete, they run on to the next one, so that the idea is emphasised: when a partner leaves a relationship based solely on physical love, such love will be spoiled for the partner will miss the physical sensations that define it. In line 23 underline the sense of parting for line 22 breaks the line up so that it has to continue on the beginning with 'a breach'. In verse 7 the first two lines and the second two lines of the next verse supporting the idea of the compass with two arms which represent the two of them.

**Contrast:** Donne uses contrasting ideas for effect. In line 5, the gentle notion of a partner leaving contrasts with floods of tears and tempests in the next line. In line 11 the 'trepidation' contrasts with their 'innocence' in line 12. In line 23 'a breach' contrasts with an 'expansion'.

## Time

In this poem, Donne writes mostly in the present simple, speaking of generalisations that are true now and are likely to be true in the future. In verse 1, a 'virtuous' man leaves quietly, some say that he is gone forever, some say that he is not. In the second verse, still in the present, he speaks in his immediate present, he implores his lover to let him go quietly. The lover and the uninitiated know about it. In verses 3 and 4, the poet moves back into the present to speak of general truths. Earthquakes do damage but movement of the spheres, although much greater, is removed from the basics of Earth, do not affect us, they are 'innocent'. The love based only in a physical way will suffer when one of them goes away. The other will be left behind, now removed. In verses 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, the poet speaks again directly to his lover for a different purpose. By means of deictic projection he mentally predicts events in the future and spiritual they will not miss each other physically. They will be like a compass with two arms, both inextricably connected so that they move in synchronisation when one moves.

## People

The people in this poem are mainly the poet and his (silent) lover. Other characters are mentioned in support for his ideas. In line 1 he speaks of 'virtuous men' passing quietly, their fate is uncertain about whether men, when they 'pass', go on forever or not. In the second verse he speaks to the uninitiated or 'laity' about their love, they would not understand. In verse 3, he speaks of 'mankind', that interprets meaning into the occasion of earthquakes. The final verse is about the two of them, as represented by the poet's ideas.

The poet moves in and out of their relationship. At first he speaks of things outside of their relationship, then, in verse 2, he speaks to his lover very tenderly, pleading with her not to leave him. He does not return to their relationship until verses 5 and 6, when he speaks of their love, for it rises above the mundane physical side that others rely on. Using the metaphor of a compass, he continues to speak of the strength of their union in the last three verses and, like a compass, always be attached and he will be drawn back in full circle.

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## Place

Specific places have not been named in this poem, which is customary for Donne and others, leaving us with a mystery. We do not know where they are. The only references are to ethereal, untouchable places, such as the spheres. There may be a hint that he is perhaps surveying a map of the world as it was known then, but there is nothing other than that he uses the compass as a metaphor for their love. Spatial deixis indicates how closer or further away from his lover. When he is closer to her he speaks directly to her, as in the above section on 'time', and when he projects his thinking into the future he is full of hope.



### Individual Activities

1. Read 'A Valediction: of Weeping' also by John Donne. Find at least two (if possible, three if needed) that show the poems have similar topics, e.g. 'face' in this poem and 'Valediction Forbidden Mourning'.

#### *A Valediction: of Weeping*

*Let me pour forth  
My tears before thy face, whilst I stay here,  
For thy face coins them, and thy stamp they bear,  
And by this mintage they are something worth,  
For thus they be  
Pregnant of thee;  
Fruits of much grief they are, emblems of more,  
When a tear falls, that thou falls which it bore,  
So thou and I are nothing then, when on a diverse shore.*

*On a round ball  
A workman that hath copies by, can lay  
An Europe, Afric, and an Asia,  
And quickly make that, which was nothing, all;  
So doth each tear  
Which thee doth wear,  
A globe, yea world, by that impression grow,  
Till thy tears mix'd with mine do overflow  
This world; by waters sent from thee, my heaven dissolved*

*O more than moon,  
Draw not up seas to drown me in thy sphere,  
Weep me not dead, in thine arms, but forbear  
To teach the sea what it may do too soon;  
Let not the wind  
Example find,  
To do me more harm than it purposeth;  
Since thou and I sigh one another's breath,  
Whoe'er sighs most is cruellest, and hastes the other's death*

2. Which similar metaphors do both these poems contain? How do the relationships of the lovers is treated?

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3. Search 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning' for three or more examples. In other words, Donne carefully selects single effective words, many several words to express the same idea. Write other phrases that you have chosen; for example: 'virtuous men' = men who have been content to die releasing their souls peacefully without making a fuss.
4. Which lines in 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning' contain words that they have on the meaning expressed?
5. Which same noun is used at least five times in 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'?



### Group Activities

1. In pairs, take it in turns to read out a word or phrase from either 'Weeping' or 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'. The partner guesses the word. Discuss why it is easy / not easy to distinguish them.
2. In groups of four, take it in turns to read 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning' using semi-colons and full stops. Why does he use semi-colons and not full stops? Discuss the effect of the punctuation.
3. In groups of three, write a verse each, leaving out the punctuation. Put in the punctuation. Check your work with the original poem. Do you need punctuation to maintain an even flow to the rhythm?
4. In pairs, take it in turns to state the lines and the specific phrases in 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning' that demonstrate most powerfully the poet's use of imagery. Which images that are brought to your mind?
5. In threes, take three verses each and change the adjectives into adverbs and try to name the adjectives that had been changes. Which adjectives were negative? Which modern adjectives were more or less close to the original? Donne?



### Discussion Questions

1. Is spiritual love more powerful and longer lasting than physical love? Wholly, partially or not at all? Why? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
2. Donne is a self-assured yet enigmatic, or puzzling, poet. Is this true? Support your arguments with quotations from the text.  
**Extension: Write a short essay using your answer, comparing your poem to one other poem of your choice.**
3. Which do you think Donne believes most important: following your lover faithfully to your lover, even if it's against the Church's rules; or striving for a spiritual state with your love? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
4. Look at the section above on metaphors. Which metaphors (including the ones mentioned) are a) the most unlikely, b) the most effective, and c) the most difficult to understand? (Support your arguments with quotations from the text.)
5. Assonance is a useful poetic technique that puts words that have the same vowel sound close together. Does it make a difference if the assonance occurs in words immediately next to each other or at a distance away? Which lines contain assonance that has been most effective?



### Comprehension Questions

1. Which floods are mentioned?
2. Which poetic technique is used in line 24 'Like gold to airy thinness'?
3. Which word in verse 2 indicates that many of Donne's metaphors are 'strange'?
4. Which poetic technique is used in line 27?
5. Which parts of the body would they not miss?

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# 'Elegy: His picture'

## Events

The poet tells his lover to take hold of a picture of himself. He will hold a picture of him is now, but after he has died and they are both no more than shadows of themselves than before. When he comes back he will be weather-beaten, his hands oars or tanned from the sun, his face and chest covered, his hair and his head swollen and careworn. His body will be a sack of bones, broken inside, and his skin will be scattered with gunpowder. If fools ask his lover how she could have loved so coarse and foul a picture will say what he was really like and you will say does the hurt he has endured decay me? Or does the hurt change his mind, making him love something he used to and delicate in him before was only like child's milk on which love fed and grew, to tolerate and learn from things that it was not used to or that seem or taste harsh.

## Viewpoint

Here is one voice, the voice of the poet thinking about his possible death as he leaves on a voyage. He imagines that if he returns he will look different and battle-worn but that and he will have grown from his experiences.

## Structure of the Poem: Rhythm and Rhyme

This is a single couplet poem of 10 couplets, making 20 lines altogether. The lines are in iambic pentameter (weak/strong syllables in five groups or feet). Each couplet rhymes AA, BB, CC, DD, EE, FF, GG, HH, II, JJ.

## Language

**Lexis** (choice of vocabulary) Different choices of lexis reflect different themes: physical appearance, farewell, love.

- **Physical appearance:** There are many examples of lexis that refer to physical appearance. Examples include: line 5: 'weather-beaten', 'hand', line 6: 'torn', 'tann'd', line 7: 'face', 'breast', 'broken', 'bones', line 10: 'powder blue stains', 'skin', line 12: 'foul' and 'coarse', line 13: 'fair', 'delicate'.
- **Farewell:** As for the subject of a farewell and/or death there were only four words meaning related to these words made the subject the main theme for the poem. The word 'elegy' is usually associated with a serious musing on someone who has died. In Roman poems elegies were written as a series of elegiac couplets similar to the poem. Examples include: in line 1: 'farewell', line 3: 'dead' and line 4: 'shadows'.
- **Love:** Although the entire poem is an act of love, the poet giving his lover his picture there are other direct references to the subject including: line 2: 'my heart', 'love', line 18: 'love's ... state', line 19: 'nurse', 'grown', and line 20: 'feed'.

**Phonology:** Regarding the **phonology**, most of the words are short, sharp monosyllabic and prolific. This gives the impression of a speaker speaking clearly and quickly, giving his lover a picture of himself after he has left.

- **Alliteration** is used to emphasise key words and help the lines flow. Examples include: 'before'; line 5 'when weather-beaten', line 6: 'torn', 'tann'd'; line 7: 'haircloth', 'storms'; line 9: 'bones' 'broken'; line 10: 'stains' 'scattered' ... 'skin'; line 16: 'nurse', ... 'now' and line 20: 'tastes tough'.
- **Assonance** is another technique used to make the lines hold together and to emphasise main words. Examples of assonance can be found in the title, in 'elegy', 'his ...'be'; line 5: 'when weather -', 'back' ... 'hand'; line 6: 'oars torn'; line 7: 'breast', 'care's' ... 'o'erspread'; line 9: 'bones' 'broken', 'within'; line 11: 'tax' ... 'have'; line 14: 'reach me' ... 'decay'; line 15: 'reach', ... 'he'; line 17: 'which in him'; line 19: 'did' ... 'it' and line 20: 'feed' ... 'seems'.

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## Other Poetic Devices

**Parallelism:** There are some examples of balanced lines which contain similar forms on either side. Some examples of this, although they are not exactly parallel, do give a sense of balance. These are in line 13 'This shall say what I was, and thou shalt say', and line 16 'Shall I love to see?'.

**Hyperbole:** Using the word 'elegy' in its traditional sense makes the poem an elegy. The trip is dangerous, and although the trip is dangerous, he is not dead yet, so an elegy as a deep reflection is premature. However, Donne was one of the first people to use the word 'elegy' in a broader sense, not restricted to remembering someone who has died. When Donne describes his experiences, they are exaggerated for effect. Examples include in line 2, when instead of her in his head, he speaks of her picture being in his 'heart' where his 'soul' dwells; in line 6 his hands are not just worn but 'torn'; in line 7 he describes his face as a stiff cloth containing horsehair; in line 8 his head is not lined with worry but covered in care; in line 9, he is not just older and his bones weaker, his body is described as broken inside; in line 10, he did not simply experience war, he describes his skin as blue stains of gunpowder as though he was inextricably involved in the fighting; in line 11 he calls 'fools'; in line 12 he describes himself as 'foul and coarse'; in line 20 he describes the experiences he had as tasting 'tough' or acidic rather than simply difficult.

## Time

Donne's comments are in the present while he speaks of the future. In lines 16 to 20, he looks to the future, looking back to the past that is, now, and how he looks in the present. His current state and character are but the start of his development, the development that will have to be assumed in a dangerous future away from his lover.

While presenting the picture to his beloved and he is addressing her directly, he is speaking in the present simple. By means of temporal projection, in other words projecting from the past and into the future – his poem covers all time, as described above.

## People

The main person in the poem is the speaker, the traveller who is saying farewell to his lover. She is the person to remember him by. While we assume there is a lover present, she has no voice. In line 11 he speaks of 'rival fools', men who may show an interest in his lover who are not real, they are imagined.

The poet is obviously very fond of the lover he is speaking to, giving her a picture of her so much that he says he will always remember what she looks like in his heart. He projects deictically into the future and fears he will be much changed after going to sea and that he will still be able to love him when he has become 'foul and coarse' (line 14). He projects that she will stand by him, and love him, no matter how he has changed, indicating implicitly.

## Place

Specific places have not been named in this poem, which is customary for Donne. The descriptions suggest where the couple is. We can assume that the couple has met in a place suitable for meeting in, a place suitable for him to take his farewell. We do not know where the description of how he may be affected brings us to believe that he could be joining a ship after which he may return with gunpowder stains on his skin. His weather-beaten face suggests he will be out in all weathers, such as aboard ship. Life will not be easy, for in the moment he is only a fresh young man and will cut his teeth on harrowing experiences.

Spatial deixis within the poem brings the poet closer or further away from his lover. He speaks directly to her, as described in the above section on 'time', and when he projects to the future he is further away from her.

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### Individual Activities

1. Draw a picture board story to represent events in the poem. Which represent? Why? Which images were hardest to represent? Why?
2. Look again at 'Elegy: To His Mistress Going to Bed'. How do that e content, style and in attitude towards his mistress?
3. For 'Elegy: His Picture' write a description of how the poet might ha the poem was written. Then describe how he might appear after h What do you think will not change?
4. Search 'Elegy: His Picture' for three or more examples of effective think some examples are more effective than others.
5. Could 'Elegy: His Picture' be one long metaphor for the way the po over the years? Give reasons for your decision, supporting your an text.



### Group Activities

1. In pairs, take it in turns to read out a word or phrase from either o Mistress Going to Bed' or 'Elegy: His Picture'. The partner guesses why it is easy/not easy to distinguish them.
2. In groups of four, take it in turns to read 'Elegy: His Picture', stopp stops. Why does he use semi-colons and not always full stops?
3. In groups of four, write five lines each leaving out the punctuation put in the punctuation. Check your work with the original poem. D need punctuation to maintain an even flow to the rhythm.
4. In pairs, take it in turns to state the lines and the specific phrases i demonstrate most powerfully the poet's use of imagery. Describe b brought to your mind.
5. In fours, take five lines each and change the adjectives into a moder and try to name the adjectives that had been changed. Which adje negative? Which modern adjectives were more or less close to the Donne?



### Discussion Questions

1. Is it a good idea to leave your picture with your loved one when yo arrogant assuming that your loved one should stay faithful even th What is Donne's attitude? How does his attitude differ to yours o Support your arguments with quotations from the text.
2. Donne is a metaphysical poet, writing about spiritual, abstract ideas example of this? Support your arguments with quotations from th
3. When soldiers return from war, there are often problems with relat they come back. What would be the reasons for this? Would this i Support your arguments with quotations from the text.
4. is old age something to fear? Does the affection of a couple chang Donne think? Do you agree? Support your arguments with quotat
5. Assonance is a useful poetic technique that puts words that have th Does it make a difference if the assonance occurs in words immedi distance away? Which lines contain assonance that has been mos



### Comprehension Questions

1. Where does Donne say his soul dwells?
2. Which two poetic techniques are used in line 8 'With care's rash su
3. Which word in line 14 describes the way he has been damaged or experiences in the outside air, possibly on board a ship?
4. Which four key words indicate Donne's metaphor for childhood in metaphor?
5. Which word is personified in line 14?

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## AS Only: A Comparison of the poems

### Suggested Order in Which the Poems were Written

While there is no definite evidence when Donne's poems were written, it seems they were written on more youthful, explicitly sexual themes, and his later poems dwell on touching on death and the afterlife.

Examples of his earlier poems are probably the two 'elegies': 'Elegy: His picture' before he left for a Spanish expedition in 1596, and 'Elegy: To His Mistress Going to Bed' someone who has died, for it is sexually explicit, with the lover sitting naked watching her.

According to a publication of his work in 1635, if the poems had been entered in chronological order, the poems appear to be 'The Flea', 'The Good Morrow' and 'Woman's Constancy'.

Some poems most probably date from after 1603 when King James I took the throne. Donne mentions the king's hunting, and in 'The Canonization' he mentions the king's death. Poems written at about the same time, if we are to use the 1635 edition, include 'The Triennial' and 'The Anniversary'.

After then, 'Twickenham Garden' would have been written on or after 1607 if it alludes to the year she moved to Twickenham. In the 1635 edition the following poems were probably written later in Donne's life: 'The Apparition', 'A Valediction: Forbidding Entry' and finally 'A Jet Ring Sent'.

### Similarities

John Donne's typical style and preferences are evident in each of these poems. The poems are written from a first-person viewpoint and are presented for the most part as monologues. The poet is the only speaker and assumes that he understands the thoughts of his lover or the recipient of his words.

Themes such as the nature of love, spirituality, relationships (both spiritual and sexual) are common. Donne does not present his thoughts chronologically (that is, in order). He moves between past and future regularly, often relating back to past events or relationships or predicting future events. He is often exactly where he is situated when he expresses his thoughts. Much of what he writes is about what is happening in his mind or that of his lover. Many of his poems use iambic pentameter. The structure of lines of poetry, and his rhyme schemes are usually clear-cut and defined. Donne often imitates the common form used in his day: the sonnet, a poem of 14 lines. The poems in this resource are not sonnets but appear to be very like them. A Petrarchan sonnet has a rhyme scheme: ABBA ABBA CDE CDE and is usually about platonic love. Donne's sonnets focus on the physical nature of love. Some of his poetry begins to resemble the other main form of the sonnet: the Shakespearean sonnet with the rhyme scheme: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG. He often uses enjambement (using enjambment). Donne's poetic techniques include regularly using alliteration (when words together begin with the same letter sounds), assonance (when words together have the same vowel sounds), parallelism (when words in a line are balanced, such as in a couplet), and prosodic features (when particular sounds put together may help or interrupt the flow of a poem) and personification (when objects are given human characteristics). He often plays with words that have two meanings, sometimes with both meanings having some relevance to the poem.

### Differences

Besides the difference shown by the presumed time of life when Donne wrote his poems, the following differences were particularly noticeable.

'Elegy: His picture' dwells more on the physical appearance of the lover than any other poem. His physical appearance will change over the years. The form is relatively simple, compared to the more elaborate forms that he wrote later, ones that resembled sonnets.

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**'Elegy: To His Mistress Going to Bed'** dwells on sexual foreplay when the poet asks his mistress to undress slowly before their lovemaking. This poem is perhaps more explicit than it was in his day. The distance created between the lovers was one of control rather than causing the poet emotional pain as in many of his later poems. Its form is in couplets throughout and, supporting his idea of extending the foreplay, this poem is in iambic pentameter. Even though these first two poems are titled 'elegy' and adopt the custom of Greek elegies, neither of Donne's elegies relate to mourning the dead.

**'The Flea'** is the most humorous poem. His elongated metaphor also relates to his mistress's lovemaking, this time with more reference to seduction. Although he is being cynical and humorous, tongue-in-cheek manner and does not have the deeper darker thoughts of his other poems. It is also in couplets but extends into three rhyming lines at the end of each verse.

In **'The Good Morrow'** Donne refers more to the nature of their love and their emotions (if any) rather than a purely sexual relationship. His choice of language and symbols is more complex than in his previous poems. For example, in line 3 he writes that the lovers are 'childishly', thus producing mixed images, of a carefree childhood in the countryside bringing to mind the baby sucking on its mother's breast, which also has sexual connotations. The poem seems straightforward with a rhyming scheme of ababcc in the three stanzas. More to the structure for in the first four lines he asks a rhetorical question, the last line of the first stanza.

**'Woman's Constancy'** contains one long argument that the poet expresses, one which is on its head in the final four lines. He typically assumes to understand what his lover will know what she will say and do, that she will leave him and present reasons from that perspective. He twists the argument in the end, claiming that he too may not take their relationship seriously. There appears to be more emphasis on the use of language as the argument twists and turns. There are more references to physical love than in his previous poems. He also generalises, discussing love in general and how marriage binds people together. While humour is present in this poem, it is not as light-hearted and ridiculous as in 'The Flea'. The form is cleverly shaped to support the argument, moving from groups of four lines together, down to three and finally two.

**'The Sun Rising'** also moves away from direct reference to a sexual relationship, using a metaphor about the sun, personifying it and relating its power to the nature of their love. The poem consists of three stanzas of 10 lines each, which is quite different to his previous poems.

**'The Canonization'** extends the notion of the powerfulness of their love so that it should be considered so hallowed, so special, that they should be canonised. This is a reference to the Church and its customs. The poet is indignant that anyone should disapprove of their love. How Donne expresses very different emotions in his poems – in this case, he is arguing that it is right for love to flourish and be revered over and above the Church's notion of love. The form is a Petrarchan sonnet, which usually concerns spiritual love. The shape of the beginning is traditional with its ABBA rhyming scheme; however, typical of Donne, the feeling is not from afar, but a tirade of annoyance that someone should question what is obvious. This poem, perhaps more than any other, brings in the notion of the height of sexual love leading to spiritual enlightenment.

**'The Triple Fool'** is the only one of the group in which the poet chastises himself, but the theme of love and relationships is maintained, it is presented differently. In this poem, it is for admitting that he was in love and for writing 'whining' poetry about it. After the first verse, some 'fool' sings and it brings him more grief. In this poem there is a particular paradox in the last line 'Who are a little wise, the best fools be'. This reflects Donne's style of his poetry, but here it is constrained within one line. Although he does not address one person, the poet, being the central voice in this poem, comes in different guises. The form hints again at a sonnet, but as each of the two stanzas have only three lines, it is short of sonnets.

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**'Air and Angels'** is a poem that most obviously demonstrates Donne's use of con unexpected opposites. In this case one would expect 'air' and 'earth', or 'angels' case. 'Air' has many different connotations and can be construed in this poem to 'angels' may represent physical love. Donne's belief that true love reaches the s represented by the Church is evident in this poem. This poem is the closest to us verses consist of the customary 14 lines and the first four lines beginning as a Petr emphasises the main theme of the poem: the nature of love for a sonnet is tradit subject.

**'The Anniversary'** is the only poem celebrating the lovers' anniversary – their first power of love to live forever even after the physical bodies die, in this poem he a the time of their celebration. The three stanzas have a similar grouping of the line when the first four lines of the verse asked a rhetorical question and the last line answer the question. In this poem, the first six lines of a verse make a statement verse commented on the statement.

**'Twickenham Garden'** introduces a new theme: magic, and this is the only place wh is in a definite, physical place: the garden. He appears to chastise himself as he d poem he speaks more of his deep feelings of unhappiness and his need for the n soothe his troubled spirit. He goes further than many of the other poems in refer in the Roman Catholic Church as opposed to the Anglican Church that he later su speaks of the substantiation: the belief by the Roman Catholic Church that the br actually turn into the body and blood of Christ. The three verses of nine lines be ABAB, but soon change. More than ever, it may be said that he speaks more dire well as potions and magic, pleading to be changed into mandrake.

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**'The Apparition'** demonstrates similar feelings of anger as expressed in other poems. The form of a strong desire to seek revenge against his mistress to whom the poem is dedicated. The exaggerated anger suggests that the poet is mocking the situation and previous poets. The poem is in one long verse of 17 lines, as if in one long angry tirade, though this poem is the same length as 'Woman's Constancy' and both poems relate to love, however, with very different attitudes. In this poem the poet is hurt and threatens a lover who appears to have rejected him, whereas in 'Woman's Constancy' it is a question less emotionally and in a reasoned argument, admitting in the end that they are about their relationship.

**'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'** is about love, but in this case love is considered that it should not be shared with ordinary people and, because the lovers are separated, 'forbidden'; that is, it should not happen, for their love will remain constant and unusual conceit in which the poet compares two lovers who are separated to the poem reflects that sense of coming full circle and compares well with 'A Jet Ring' which is the focus of much of the poet's commentary. Here the last line refers to the lovers. In 'The Sun Rising' the lovers defy time while in this poem the lovers challenge that time should diminish their love at all. The poem contains the most verses of the poem, each verse consists of four lines each, giving them a sense of balance, just as the comparison of a sonnet by using the rhyming pattern abab that usually begins a Shakespearean sonnet.

**'The Relic'** focuses more on graves and death than perhaps any of the other poems. However, after he had died, but even that is broken and probably reused, as was the case with the relic. However, the theme of the poem is about how strong and powerful he and his lover were and how they outlive their graves. People will look back and wonder at the magnitude of their lives as relics, as relics are adored by the Church. The poem is shaped into three stanzas, each stanza is in strict iambic pentameter, supporting the more serious, almost instructive tone of the poem. The third line of each stanza is longer than the previous regular lines, most of which are less regular.

**'A Jet Ring Sent'** is unique in its focus on a ring symbolic of the ending of a relationship. The attitudes of the lovers, one representation of eternity and eternal love, the other is made of jet. 'Jet' also indicates the theme of darkness that is in this poem: the color of the mood of the thwarted lover. The three stanzas of four lines each have very similar structures. The third line is usually the longest and asks a question which is answered, the final line

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# Writing Essays

## Sample Questions

Have a go at writing a response to some of these sample questions. Then compare your response with the sample schemes that follow – what band do you think it would achieve? Or give your essays to a friend to mark your work and offer some feedback and suggestions for improvement.

### A Level

**You will be able to have your Anthology in your examination.**

1. Examine how Donne presents his views about sexuality and relationships in 'The Good Morrow' and in one other poem of your choice.
2. Examine how Donne presents time in 'The Sun Rising' and one other poem of your choice.
3. Examine Donne's speakers' attitude towards other people in 'The Relic' and in one other poem of your choice.
4. Examine how Donne presents the effects of absence in a relationship in 'A Valediction: For the New-Moon's Sighting' and in one other poem of your choice.
5. Examine Donne's use of exaggeration in 'The Sun Rising' and in one other poem of your choice.
6. Examine how Donne presents his views on fidelity in 'Woman's Constancy' and in one other poem of your choice.
7. Examine how Donne presents a sense of place in 'Twickenham Garden' and in one other poem of your choice.
8. Examine how Donne uses contrast in 'Air and Angels' and in one other poem of your choice.
9. Examine how Donne's relationship with the Church shows its influence in 'The Apparition' and in one other poem of your choice.
10. Examine the point of view presented in Donne's poem 'Elegy: to his mistress' and in one other poem of your choice.
11. Examine how Donne presents time in 'The Anniversary' and in one other poem of your choice.
12. Examine how Donne uses humour in 'The Flea' and in one other poem of your choice.

*More A Level essay practice questions (not exam-style):*

1. Examine the structure of 'Elegy: His Picture' and one other poem of your choice.
2. Examine Donne's use of language in 'The Apparition' and in one other poem of your choice.

### AS

**You will not be able to have your Anthology in your examination.**

1. Compare and contrast how Donne presents his views about relationships between two people in 'The Good Morrow' and 'To His Mistress Going to Bed'.
2. Compare and contrast the use of conceits in 'Air and Angels' with 'The Apparition'.
3. Compare and contrast Donne's attitude towards love in 'Elegy: To His Mistress Going to Bed' and 'The Apparition'.
4. Compare and contrast how Donne uses humour in 'The Flea' and 'The Triple of Hell'.
5. Compare and contrast Donne's presentation of time in 'The Good Morrow' and 'The Sun Rising'.
6. Compare and contrast the structure and its effects in Donne's 'Woman's Constancy' and 'The Apparition'.
7. Compare and contrast events in 'The Apparition' and 'Air and Angels'.
8. Compare and contrast Donne's use of symbolism in 'A Jet Ring Sent' and 'The Apparition'.
9. Compare and contrast Donne's presentation of relationships in 'A Valediction: For the New-Moon's Sighting' and 'Woman's Constancy'.
10. Compare and contrast Donne's different presentations of place in 'Twickenham Garden' and 'The Apparition'.

*More AS essay practice questions (not exam-style):*

1. 'Donne uses similar techniques in his poems, but often for different effects.' Discuss this statement in relation to 'The Flea' and 'His Mistress Going to Bed'.
2. 'Common themes often underlie Donne's poetry.' Discuss this statement in relation to 'The Good Morrow'.
3. 'Cynicism is rife in Donne's poetry.' Discuss this statement in relation to 'The Apparition'.
4. 'There is only one person in Donne's "Elegy: His picture".' Compare the poem with 'Elegy: To His Mistress Going to Bed' and discuss the validity of this statement.

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## How to Prepare to Answer the Questions

### A Level

A Level includes a great deal of reference to linguistic examples, uses formal language and detailed comparison.

**Question:** Examine Donne's presentation of relationships in 'The Anniversary' and 'Woman's Constancy'.

#### Suggested method:

1. Read the question and underline the key words.

'Examine' Donne's presentation of relationships in 'The Anniversary' and one other.

2. Identify another poem for comparison by considering the themes in the poem and what is said about. You can choose a poem similar to the mandatory poem, or completely different. You should show some sort of link between the poems which provides reasoning for your choice. If you choose a poem that has both similarities and differences as this will give you more to examine. For this question, suggested poems you could compare are 'Woman's Constancy' or 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'.
3. Try to answer the question as briefly as possible in an introductory paragraph. **relevant:** events, poetry structure, poetic techniques, language including choice of words, phonology (the sounds of the language), time and how it is manipulated, personification, attitudes, physical descriptions, speech and thoughts, register, how a sense of time is created, what is remembered and what effect they have on the people. Use linguistic terminology.

For example:

*Both 'The Anniversary' and 'Woman's Constancy' present the poet's thoughts on the relationship with his current lover and on the nature of love itself. In both poems it is only the poet's perspective that has no say and this helps show his attitude of dominance in their relationships. In 'The Anniversary' the poet is faithful and in 'Woman's Constancy' the lovers' relationship is more complex.*

4. Take each statement in this paragraph and write a paragraph focusing on it, clearly answering everything you set out in your introduction. When the theme is shared between the poems, you could write a paragraph on how it functions in each.

Examine the relationships:

**Note:** 'Examine' means to look at, describe or investigate, so, although you may not be required to do some comparison is inevitable and what you need to do is to give some detail.

*e.g. for your first three paragraphs:*

*In 'The Anniversary' he is celebrating when he and his lover 'first one another' and this is significant because it was when he and his future wife first met. He praises the glory of their relationship and their courtiers, even the sun itself, also suffer from the passing of time. The poet thinks that he and his lover are far above these high and mighty examples and their relationship will not 'decay' as others' will. He contrasts their eternal love with the decay of others' relationship. There is further contrast in the second stanza when he speaks of the 'eternity' of their relationship. He also uses lexis and phrases that relate to physical expressions of love such as 'these eyes and ears'. In the final stanza, still exalting their relationship, a note of hesitation appears and he asks a question: 'Who is safe as we?' suggesting a doubt in each other. However, as with many relationships, if one has to ask the question, it is an element of doubt in their minds to begin with.*

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In spite of the positive lexis that reinforces the strength of their union, the woman has no say and he assumes she agrees with all that he says. His femininity stretches to calling her a 'prince' and 'king'.

In contrast to 'The Anniversary', in 'Woman's Constancy' the poet understands only superficial and temporary. He has no respect for her and is sarcastic as he says she has loved him 'one whole day', which is an extremely short time of 'The Anniversary'. He thinks of her as separate for the only line when they are together, as 'we', is in line 5. This shows that their relationship is superficial.

5. Examine further. The questions are designed to ask you to show what you know as information as you can and make this information relevant, by describing how Donne presents the relationship using different techniques. Use one paragraph for each question.

The use of the word ('tomorrow') at the beginning and at the end of the poem encapsulating this single moment in time which represents the brevity of their relationship. He doubts the strength of their relationship and lexis and phrases that show 'deaths', 'untie', 'unloose', 'falsehood', 'vain lunatic' and 'abstain'. It is more likely they will separate and deny each other and he admits this in the last line.

This poem also expresses the nature of their relationship by contrasts. This is seen when Donne is contemplating his lover's future thoughts, contrasts strongly with the language in line 5 when he brings his thoughts back to the present and just before line 10, he questions whether marriage and their relationship are the same. When he asks if lovers' 'contracts' are 'unloosed' after sleep, which he calls 'death', these questions are rhetorical and he does not want an answer, they suggest that the relationship is not permanent. From line 11, he addresses her and her only. His accusations are reinforced by the use of 'falsehood'. She would be false no matter what she would have said. The poem ends with the powerful accusations before it.

In this poem also, the poet dominates as the speaker, and this is made clear by the phrase 'vain lunatic' shows he has the courage to call her such names, it demonstrates his dominance. The lexis 'dispute' and 'conquer' contain war-like references and he is the victor.

6. Add a conclusion. This paragraph will usually mirror your first paragraph.

Thus, it can be seen that in both 'The Anniversary' and 'Woman's Constancy' Donne expresses his thoughts on his relationship with his current lover and on the nature of love. In both poems different techniques have been used to reveal their relationships and it is clear that Donne's dominance which shows his dominance whether he is a faithful lover as in 'The Anniversary' or a dominant lover as in 'Woman's Constancy'.

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**AS Level**

AS Level includes a great deal of reference to linguistic examples, uses formal language comparison.

**Question:** In 'The Anniversary' and 'Woman's Constancy' compare and contrast how the two people are presented.

**Suggested method:**

1. Read the question and underline the key words

In 'The Anniversary' and 'Woman's Constancy' compare and contrast how the people are presented.

2. Try to answer the question as briefly as possible in an introductory paragraph

*Both 'The Anniversary' and 'Woman's Constancy' present the poet's thoughts on his current lover and on the nature of love itself. In both poems it is only the woman who has no say and this confirms his attitude of unwitting dominance. In 'The Anniversary', the lovers are loyal and their relationship has lasted. In 'Woman's Constancy', the relationship is very brief and their loyalty questionable.*

3. Describe the first poem ('The Anniversary') and how the poet uses his technique to create an attitude and that of his lover in the mind of the reader. For example:

*In 'The Anniversary' he is celebrating when he and his lover 'first one another' met. He extols the glory of their relationship and their courtiers, even the sun itself, are subject to the passing of time. It is evident that he holds that he and his lover are far above these high and mighty. Their love and his lover share will not 'decay' as others' must. To express the longevity of their love and eternity a string of temporal lexis highlights this concept: for their love has 'run' it never runs away' But truly keeps his [its] first, last and everlasting. 'run' indicate continuity ('running') and constancy ('it never runs') away 'it never runs' suggests that their love will indeed 'keep'. In the second stanza, the speaker considers their 'grave' and, using almost brutal contrast, he speaks of their 'grave' (or corpse). The more formal usage of the second-person pronoun [thy] suggests that he is still in awe of his beloved. It is not until the final stanza that he presents himself as an equal couple, using the pronouns 'we' and 'us' more frequently than 'I' and 'you'. He contrasts their spiritual eternal love with their earthly physical relationship. He alludes to the religious sense. In the second stanza this contrast is compacted. While separating them, he also uses lexis and phrases that relate to physical experience: 'these eyes and ears', extending the imagery of 'sweet, salt tears'. Even within the latter phrase, Donne uses opposites of 'sweet' and 'salty'. In the final stanza, still exalting their 'king', a slight hesitation appears and he asks a question: 'Who is safe as we?', alluding to the other. However, as with many relationships, if one has to ask the question of doubt in their minds to begin with.*

*In spite of the positive lexis that reinforces the strength of their union, the woman has no say and he assumes she agrees with all that he says. His femininity stretches to calling her a 'prince' and 'king'.*

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4. Describe the second poem ('Woman's Constancy') and how the poet uses his attitude and that of his lover in the mind of the reader.

In 'Woman's Constancy' the poet has no allusions about the temporary nature of their affair, using sarcasm in the first line when he says she has 'no more than a week's time' as an example of hyperbole, for it is an extremely short time when compared to 'the Anniversary'. In the first line he continues this sarcasm by indicating their separation. Later in the poem he reverts to the more formal 'you' indicating their separation. He also brings himself closer to the plural 'we' as in line 5, the only line when he speaks of them as a couple, as evidence that their relationship is superficial and fleeting.

The temporal deictic expression 'tomorrow' can be interpreted literally or figuratively. 'Tomorrow' in line 2 and in the final line may mean the future or some indefinite time in the future. The lexis used surrounding the nature of the relationship: the first usage relates it to when, at an indefinite time, whereas 'tomorrow' in the final line is related to a modal verb, 'may', one that may or may not happen at some time in the future.

The repetition of 'tomorrow' at the beginning and at the end of the poem emphasizes this single moment in time which represents the brevity of their union.

Doubt exists in the lexis of this poem. This doubt also relates to the nature of the relationship. The lexis and phrases indicate the relationship as 'leav'st', 'antedate ... new-made vow', 'forswear', 'deaths', 'untie', 'unloose' and 'abstain' all indicate semantics associated with separation, dislike and denial that this couple will separate and deny each other.

This poem also expresses the nature of their relationship by contrasts. The poet contrasts strongly when Donne is contemplating his lover's future thoughts, contrasts strongly in language in line 5 when he brings his thoughts back to the present, the time they are. In line 8 to 10, he questions whether marriage and their liaison separates the marriage bond, he asks if lovers' 'contracts' are 'unloosed' although his questions are rhetorical, they present the case for the fragility of the relationship. He never uses the first person plural, he addresses her and her only. His repetition of key word: 'falsehood'. She would be false no matter what she does. This contrasts strongly with the powerful accusations preceding it.

In this poem also, the poet dominates as the speaker, and this is made clear by the phrase 'vain lunatic' indicates he has the courage to call her such names, as he thinks. The lexis 'dispute' and 'conquer' contain war-like elements in which

5. Explain how the poems are similar.

Both poems use similar techniques to indicate the nature of their relationship, themes, especially a love relationship, and project thoughts into the future. Using different deictic expressions, they portray their relative closeness or separation. The poet uses different deictic expressions, they portray their relative closeness or separation. The poet uses different deictic expressions, they portray their relative closeness or separation. The poet uses different deictic expressions, they portray their relative closeness or separation.

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6. Explain how the poems are different.

The poems differ in the way they employ their techniques. The attitudes are different. In 'The Anniversary', the poet praises their relationship, claiming 'Woman's Constancy' the poet denigrates it claiming in the second line that the relationship will last 'tomorrow'. 'The Anniversary' presumes that their relationship is happy and long-lasting. 'Woman's Constancy' presumes that their relationship is short and ends in part them. Their love will last forever, for their love has 'no tomorrow', while in 'Woman's Constancy' he presumes it will be short, using hyperbole sarcastically to castigate him for 'one whole day'. This example also demonstrates the different manner in which the poet addresses his lover in these two poems. In 'The Anniversary' he thinks of his lover as a separate individual, while in 'Woman's Constancy' he philosophises about couples in general ('true deaths marriages untie'). The element of doubt, it is much more fleeting in 'The Anniversary'. 'Who is safe from the question directly, it is declaring that they, more than any others, are safe from the doubt in 'Woman's Constancy' is fully substantiated. 'Tomorrow when she asks a question is also in the form of a question but this time it has no hidden meaning, it is a direct question. The poet can invent what he believes the lover will say. She is not involved in the relationship.

7. Finish with a conclusion that mirrors the first paragraph.

Thus it has been shown that both 'The Anniversary' and 'Woman's Constancy' show the poet's thoughts on his relationship with his current lover and on the nature of love. In 'The Anniversary' only the poet's voice we hear, the woman has no say and this confirms his dominance in their relationships. However, the poet presents very different attitudes in the two poems. In 'The Anniversary' the lovers are loyal and their relationship has lasted a long time. In 'Woman's Constancy', the relationship is very brief and their loyalty has been tested.

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# Mark Scheme

## A level Section C: Poetic Voices (Questions 10–17)

### AO1 level 5 (marks 13–15)

To gain top marks, you need to use literary and linguistic terminology well, describe events as presented, use an academic style of writing, provide relevant comment and examples from the texts. After making a point, follow it up with relevant comment.

### AO1 level 4 (marks 10–12)

You are liable to gain level 4 marks if you are relevant but occasionally not accurate with examples. You need to write well using a formal style for this level.

### AO1 level 3 (marks 7–9)

You are liable to gain level 3 marks if you use some terms accurately, and only your style may be straightforward and clear rather than formal.

### AO1 level 2 (marks 4–6)

Level 2 is only awarded to you if you only use general terms, refer to only a few examples and in a sense of order.

### AO1 level 1 (marks 1–3)

This mark refers to answers that are not well organised, do not use linguistic terminology and include only some relevant features.



### AO2 level 5 (marks 9–10)

To gain top marks you need to explain how meanings are created in the texts, refer to specific lines in poems that provide specific support for your answer to items in the question. You need to understand what the question is asking as accurately and as widely as possible. You need to understand the meanings within the poem and you need to include relevant comment to the point, and not include irrelevant material. You should explain fully how the poet achieves his effects and describe in detail the techniques the poet uses and how they add to the meaning of the poem.

### AO2 level 4 (marks 7–9)

You are liable to gain level 4 marks if you only explain how some of the meanings are created, only refer to a few relevant sections of the poems, and interpret the question requirements only deeply and widely as possible. You may show you understand some of the meanings, include some relevant examples from both poems, keep to the point most of the time, do not include irrelevant material, explain to a certain extent how the poet's voice is made effective, describe the techniques the poet uses and how some of them add to the meaning of the poem.

### AO2 level 3 (marks 5–6)

You are liable to be marked at level 3 if you answer the question simply, only provide a few relevant examples from each of the poems, and if what you say is relevant to the question, indicate that you understand something of how the poetic voice is presented and include relevant quotations from the poems to show how the poet has constructed his poem.

### AO2 level 2 (marks 2–4)

Level 2 may be given to you if you only make slightly relevant comments on the meanings, include a few relevant examples from both poems, you may only choose items from one poem, you may include some evidence that you understand how the poet made up the poem and how he got his ideas across.

### AO2 level 1 (marks 1–3)

This mark is given to answers that are short, briefly mentioning what the question asks for, provide little information and make few references from the texts. These answers may only mention a few details and may mention how the poet achieves his effects very briefly if at all.

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## AS Section B: Poetic Voices (Questions 5–8)

### AO1 level 5 (marks 13–15)

To gain top marks, you need to use literary and linguistic terminology well, describe events as presented, use an academic style of writing, provide relevant comments and examples from the texts. After making a point, follow it up with relevant comments.

### AO1 level 4 (marks 10–12)

You are liable to gain level 4 marks if you are relevant but occasionally not accurate with examples. You need to write well using a formal style for this level.

### AO1 level 3 (marks 7–9)

You are liable to gain level 3 marks if you use some terms accurately, and only your style may be straightforward and clear rather than formal.

### AO1 level 2 (marks 4–6)

Level 2 is only awarded to you if you only use general terms, refer to only a few examples and lack a sense of order.



### AO2 level 5 (marks 13–15)

To gain top marks you need to explain how meanings are created in the texts, refer to both poems that provide specific support for your answer to items in the question. Interpret meanings as widely as possible. Show you understand the meanings within the poem, include relevant examples from both poems, keep to the point, and don't include irrelevant material. Explain fully how the poet's voice is made effective and describe in detail the techniques the poet uses and how they add to the meaning of the poem.

### AO2 level 4 (marks 10 – 12)

You are liable to gain level 4 marks if you only explain how some of the meanings are created, only refer to a few relevant sections of the poems, and interpret the question as widely as possible. You may show you understand some of the meanings within the poems, include some relevant examples from both poems, keep to the point most of the time, explain to a certain extent how the poet's voice is made effective, describe the techniques the poet uses and how some of them add to the meaning of the poem.

### AO2 level 3 (marks 7–9)

You are liable to be marked at level 3 if you answer the question simply, only provide a few relevant examples from each of the poems, and if what you say is relevant to the question, indicate that you understand something of how the poetic voice is presented and include relevant quotations from the poems to show how the poet has constructed his poem.

### AO2 level 2 (marks 4–6)

Level 2 may be given to you if you only make slightly relevant comments on the poems, include a few relevant examples from both poems, you may only choose items from one poem, you may include some evidence that you understand how the poet made up the poem and how he got his ideas across.



### AO4 level 5 (marks 9–10)

To reach this level you need to describe how the texts are connected, using literary terminology to explain how the poems are similar and how they differ using a formal style of writing. You should support your discussion of both poems with relevant examples.

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**A04 level 4 (marks 7–8)**

You may be marked at this level if you describe how some of the texts are connected, use linguistic terminology, explain how some of the poems are similar and how some are different, discuss the formal style of writing and provide examples from both poems.

**A04 level 3 (marks 5–6)**

Level 3 may be awarded to you if you cover both of the poems and describe in some detail how they are similar and different.

**A04 level 2 (marks 3–4)**

You may only be given level 2 if you make only a slight indication of difference or similarity between the poems.

**How to Revise**

You should choose a preferred method or methods:

- Make notes of the details you would use to answer one or more of the sample questions and reducing the notes until you have only a few pages to remember.
- Make notes of the different ways the poems portray a theme: e.g. love, religion, eternity, death.
- Read a section of this resource three times. Then read each sentence three times to write notes that would support answering one of the sample questions.
- Take each poem in turn and list quotations that you think summarise the main message of the poem.
- Draw diagrams to represent the structure of the poem or strong images.
- Draw a timeline for each poem.
- List objects that the poems include.
- Try to use single words to summarise the main message of the poem, e.g. 'The poem is about...'
- Select words that you do not know from the glossary and search for at least three examples to demonstrate the term in one or more of the poems.
- Read through the information on one of the poems. From memory brainstorm ideas to answer one or more of the sample questions.

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# Glossary of Terms

<b>adverb</b>	a part of speech that adds meaning to the verb
<b>adverbs of time</b>	parts of speech that add meaning to the verbs, telling for how long or how many
<b>alliteration</b>	when a phrase uses words that begin with the same
<b>assonance</b>	using vowels that sound similar
<b>cacophony</b>	unpleasant sounds
<b>conceits</b>	unusual opposites often in the form of extended metaphor
<b>context</b>	situation
<b>deictic expressions</b>	ones that indicate the relative distance between character and speaker
<b>deictic projection</b>	mental movement towards or away from the speaker
<b> deixis</b>	words and phrases such as 'you' and 'here' that need to be understood
<b>discourse</b>	communication either written or spoken
<b>distal</b>	form of the verb: the past tense
<b>dramatic monologues</b>	when there is only one person who is the only speaker
<b>dramatic present</b>	another name for the historic present
<b>enjambment</b>	continuing one line into the next before it can make sense
<b>euphony</b>	pleasant sounds
<b>historic present</b>	the present tense used in the telling of a story that has already happened
<b>hyperbole</b>	exaggeration
<b>iamb</b>	a weak syllable followed by a strongly stressed syllable
<b>iambic</b>	foot using patterns of weak/strong syllables
<b>idiom</b>	a special group of words that has a different meaning from the individual words 'fed up'
<b>imagery</b>	relating to the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell
<b>lexical fields</b>	lexis that are about the same subject
<b>lexis</b>	choice of vocabulary
<b>linguistics</b>	the study of language
<b>metaphor</b>	when something represents something different
<b>narrative present</b>	another name for the historic present
<b>onomatopoeia</b>	when a word sounds like what it represents, e.g. 'spit'
<b>parallelism</b>	balance is given to certain phrases in a poem, by repeating words or using similar grammatical constructions
<b>pentameter</b>	a line of verse with five metrical feet (e.g. iambic pentameter) using weak/strong syllable patterns.
<b>personification</b>	gives an object or animal human qualities
<b>Petrarchan or 'Italian' sonnet</b>	sonnets are usually about distant love
<b>phonaesthetics</b>	the study of the relative pleasantness (euphony) or unpleasantness (cacophony) of sounds
<b>phonology</b>	choice of sounds, the way they are combined and the way they are used
<b>poetic voice</b>	how the history, beliefs and values of the poet are reflected in their writing
<b>prosodic features</b>	the way in which sounds are combined

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<b>proximal</b>	form of verbs – present
<b>quatrain</b>	a stanza of four lines
<b>rhyme</b>	when the vowels of the words sound the same
<b>rhythm</b>	the beat or pulse created by the different stresses of
<b>schwa</b>	an unstressed vowel that is not pronounced, usually
<b>signs of the zodiac</b>	the different sections or signs on an imagined path that are said to take. These signs are said by some to influence birth dates and to the signs they are associated with
<b>sonnet</b>	a poem of 14 lines of a particular structure
<b>spatial deixis</b>	the way in which words are used to imply space between
<b>stanza</b>	a section of a poem or verse
<b>style</b>	the relative formality or informality of the writing relating to vocabulary and the way in which the words, phrases and together
<b>temporal indexicals</b>	words, often adverbs, that indicate time and the relationship and ideas with regard to time
<b>tercet</b>	a stanza of three lines
<b>tetrameter</b>	a metre of four feet
<b>the metaphysical poetry movement</b>	was one in which poets wrote about abstract thoughts beyond ('meta') nature – the supernatural, the natural truth, a superior being, the nature of love or religion
<b>trochee</b>	a strong syllable followed by a weak one
<b>viewpoint</b>	how a person understands the world or other people
<b>voice</b>	the special writing style of an author

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## Further Reading

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- Broadbent, John (1964) *Poetic Love* Chatto and Windus
- Carey, John (2011) *John Donne: Life, Mind and Art* Faber Finds
- Corns, Thomas N (1993) *The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry, Donne*
- Gardner, Helen (ed) (1962) *John Donne: A Collection of Critical Essays* Prentice
- Gill, Richard and Lee, Victor (2007) *Oxford Student Texts: John Donne: Select*
- Legouis, Robert (1928) *Donne the Craftsman* Paris: Henri Didier
- Lovelock, Julian (1973) *Donne's Songs and Sonnets: A Casebook* Macmillan
- Parks, Mungo (2016) *The Poetry of John Donne: A Critical Study Guide*
- Roston, Murray (1974) *The Soul of Wit: A Study of John Donne* Clarendon Press
- Saunders, Ben (2006) *Desiring Donne: Poetry, Sexuality, Interpretation* Cambridge University Press
- Shami, Jeanne et al. (2011) *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*
- Stubbs, John (2007) *Donne: The Reformed Soul* London: Penguin
- Westwell, R J (2014) *A Close Look at Unseen Poetry*
- Winny, James (1981) *A Preface to John Donne* Longman

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# Suggested Answers

## 'Air and Angels'

### Individual Activities

1. The hopes, fears and desires of the upper-class people in the novel are similar to those of the poet as he exhorts the woman he has loved from afar to love him in a physical way, loving the focus of his affection from afar, but after they have made love in a physical way and he declares that things will never be the same because men and women will always be different.
2. 'Air' in both cases represents intellect, an abstract concept – in Donne's poem, representing the mind.
3. 'Love' is used 12 times if you include 'lovely'. It is mostly used as a noun, for the whole nature of 'love' rather than being specifically about how he loved.
4. Students' own responses
5. Students' own responses

### Group Activities and Discussion Questions

Students' own responses

### Comprehension Questions

1. father
2. assonance and hyperbole or paradox
3. 'disparity'
4. 2 × 14 lines: a sonnet has 14 lines
5. face and wings

## 'The Anniversary'

### Individual Activities

1. Students' own responses
2. 'Lovers' Inifiteness' could have been written at the very early stage of his love for her. 'Anniversary', one year after they had first met.
3. Students' own responses
4. alliteration
5. (lines 1, 9, 13, 20, 23, 26, 28, 29)

### Group Activities and Discussion Questions

Students' own responses

### Comprehension Questions

1. the sun
2. all of them
3. alliteration
4. positively
5. three score

## 'The Apparition'

### Individual Activities

1. Students' own responses
2. Students' own responses
3. Students' own responses
4. assonance
5. 'apparition', 'free' from his attention and from their relationship, 'stir' from sleep and to protect or to keep her in her way of thinking.

### Group Activities and Discussion Questions

Students' own responses

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**Comprehension Questions:**

1. her scorn
2. calls her 'feigned vestal'
3. she tries to wake him
4. cold quicksilver
5. He says his love is spent

**'The Canonization'****Individual Activities**

Students' own responses

**Group Activity**

1. Students' own responses
2. Students' own responses
3. Rhetorical questions because they do not require an answer
4. Students' own responses
5. Students' own responses

**Discussion Questions**

Students' own responses

**Comprehension Questions**

1. gout, palsy, grey hairs
2. 'with your wealth'
3. the plague
4. half-acre tombs
5. alliteration

**'The Flea'****Individual Activities**

1. Students' own responses
2. Students' own responses
3. At the beginning of each verse. It shows that the poet is trying to be dominant but does not succeed.
4. 'two bloods mingled'; 'one blood made of two'; 'three lives in one'; 'killing three'
5. Students' own responses

**Group Activities and Discussion Questions**

Students' own responses

**Comprehension Questions**

1. in the flea's blood
2. It didn't have to woo her to get what it wanted
3. enjambment, the reader pauses on 'said' and so the following words become more
4. he calls it a 'temple'
5. her nail was described as 'purpled'

**'The Good Morrow'****Individual Activities**

1. Students' own responses
2. Students' own responses
3. Students' own responses
4. It balances the line rhythmically and emphasises how important the two lovers are
5. Students' own responses

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**Group Activities and Discussion Questions**

Students' own responses

**Comprehension Questions**

1. rhetorical – ones that do not need an answer
2. country, breastfeeding
3. seven
4. awake in the morning, awake to each other while they are in love
5. east and south

**'Woman's Constancy'****Individual Activities**

1. Students' own responses
2. Students' own responses
3. line 13 '*Can have no way but falsehood to be true?*' Also, line 3 '*antedate/new-made*'
4. Students' own responses
5. In line 5: '*We are not just those persons which we were?*' You would expect 'who' in 'we' to have chosen to use this pronoun because he wanted to make the relationship impersonal. 'In wrath, any may forswear?' you would expect 'its' rather than 'his' but in this case the poet personalises 'love'.

**Group Activities and Discussion Questions**

Students' own responses

**Comprehension Questions**

1. hyperbole or sarcasm/cynicism
2. oaths
3. true marriages
4. vain
5. He accuses her of being mean to him by leaving him the next day with all sorts of excuses. He'll probably feel the same.

**'Elegy: To His Mistress Going to Bed'****Individual Activities, Group Activities and Discussion Questions**

Students' own responses

**Comprehension Questions**

1. girdle
2. her breastplate
3. a temple
4. Mahomet
5. America

**'A Jet Ring Sent'****Individual Activities**

1. Because he wants the poem to sound like ordinary speech.
2. To emphasise the poem is about the break in their relationship.
3. 'fling me away', etc.
4. lines 3 and 4: '*What would'st thou say? shall both our properties by thee be spoke,*  
—Nothing more endless, nothing sooner broke?'  
and  
lines 6 and 7: '*Oh, why should ought less precious, or less tough*  
*Figure our loves ?'*
5. The long questions emphasise that he is thinking about the ring and his situation at the final verse when he comes to a decision.

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**Group Activity**

1. Suggested answer:

**A** { *Thou art not so black as my heart,  
Nor half so brittle as her heart, thou art;*

**B** { *What would'st thou say? shall both our properties by thee be spoke,  
—Nothing more endless, nothing sooner broke?*

**A** *Marriage rings are not of this stuff;*

**B** { *Oh, why should ought less precious, or less tough  
Figure our loves? except in thy name thou have bid it say,*

**A** *'—I'm cheap, and nought but fashion; fling me away.'*

**A** { *Yet stay with me since thou art come,  
Circle this finger's top, which didst her thumb;  
Be justly proud, and gladly safe, that thou dost dwell with me ;*

**B** *She that, O! broke her faith, would soon break thee.*

2. a. verse 3 when he makes a decision
- b. verse 1 when he philosophises about the ring and whether it represents their relationship
- c. verse 2 when he talks of marriage and speaks bitterly of what the ring might say
3. Students' own responses
4. Students' own responses
5. Students' own responses

**Discussion Questions**

Students' own responses

**Comprehension Questions**

1. lines 6 and 7
2. To form a long rhetorical question to emphasise that he is thinking at length about the ring
3. line 11: 'Be justly proud, and gladly safe, that thou dost dwell with me'
4. 'thou art', emphasising that he thinks of the ring as representing their relationship, making them a cohesive whole.
5. A marriage ring which is made of better, more durable material than the jet ring which represents the fragility of their relationship.

**'The Relic'****Individual Activities**

1. line 12: 'I wish for a six or four'. He wishes he could find a flower that has four or six petals, which is not impossible to find.
2. Verse 5 because it also relates the number five to a woman and says that the flower is a woman
3. Religion, numbers and falsehood in women – in 'The Relic' he says women bed more than men
4. love/loved, woman or women, sex, nature, five, men
5. They represent some of the main themes of his poetry.

**Group Activity**

1. Written by the same poet, include similar themes seen from different perspectives: religion, the significance of a woman being represented with the number five (and men being represented with the number six)
2. 'The Relic' is about the bodies and souls of the lovers after death, while 'The Primrose' is about the significance for searching for true love.
3. Students' own responses
4. Students' own responses
5. Students' own responses

**Discussion Questions**

Students' own responses

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**Comprehension Questions**

1. line 1
2. parallelism
3. schoolboys and apprentices
4. assonance
5. line 20: hear and here

**'The Triple Fool'****Individual Activities**

1. Outwardly, he calls himself a fool three times: for loving, for saying so and for allowing himself to be magnified in song. However, although he denigrates himself by calling his poetry 'whining', he sees himself a good and effective poet, for he complains later in the poem how carefully he has controlled his intense feelings of distress but when someone puts the poem to song, the good work of the poet's constraints within the poem so that intense feelings of love and grief are released again.
2. a) In the 'The Triple Fool' the poet says that he is a fool three times: for falling in love, for allowing his grief in love to be increased in song. 'The Bait' mentions a fish being used as a metaphor for a woman avoiding seduction.
  - b) i) 'The Triple Fool' and 'The Bait'
  - ii) 'The Bait'
3. c) i) They both use metaphor. ('The Triple Fool' represents allaying strong feelings of grief with salt when it flows into streams. 'The Bait' uses a fish as a metaphor for a woman avoiding seduction.)
  - ii) They both are from the poet's point of view. In 'The Triple Fool' he speaks from his own point of view. In 'The Bait' the poet's voice is dominant, while he attempts to seduce a woman.
3. line 6: 'inward narrow crooked'; line 7 'purge' – not only is the sea salt purged but he purges his poetry; in line 8 he says 'draw' instead of write, suggesting he was 'withdrawing' his feelings from the poem's vexation but the poet's vexation – trouble he has in choosing the right words; line 10 'numbers' refers to grief but more to the countable structures within the poem: the number of lines in a verse, and the rhythm and rhymes
4. the last two lines of each verse
5. lines 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 22. There is a pattern: they are situated in the same way in each verse ends with three lines in iambic pentameter together.

**Group Activity**

1. suggested answer – yes, the verses are constructed in the same metre, in order to control and constrain his feelings in such a straitjacketed style.
2. suggested answer: yes, there is a pattern: lines: 3 + 2 + 4 + 2 (see below) and the poet uses the same thoughts by using commas, semi-colons or full stops.

1. *I am two fools, I know,* 3a
2. *For loving, and for saying so* 4 a
3. *In whining poetry;* 3 b



4. *But where's that wise man, that would not be I,* 5 b
5. *If she would not deny?* 3 b



6. *Then as th' earth's inward narrow crooked lanes* 5 c
7. *Do purge sea water's fretful salt away,* 5 d
8. *I thought, if I could draw my pains* 4 c
9. *Through rhyme's vexation, I should them allay.* 5 d



10. *Grief brought to numbers cannot be so fierce,* 5 e
11. *For he tames it, that fetters it in verse.* 5 e



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12. *But when I have done so,* 3 a  
 13. *Some man, his art and voice to show,* 4a  
 14. *Doth set and sing my pain;* 3 b



15. *And, by delighting many, frees again* 5 b  
 16. *Grief, which verse did restrain.* 3 b



17. *To love and grief tribute of verse belongs,* 5 c  
 18. *But not of such as pleases when 'tis read.* 5 d  
 19. *Both are increased by such songs,* 4 c  
 20. *For both their triumphs so are published,* 5 d



21. *And I, which was two fools, do so grow three.* 5 e  
 22. *Who are a little wise, the best fools be.* 5e

3. Students' own responses for the punctuation. The words needing punctuation to mark 'where's', line 6: 'th' earth', line 18: "'tis', line 19: 'increasèd'
4. suggested answers:
- line 3: 'In whining poetry'
  - line 6 and 7: 'Then as th' earth's inward narrow crooked lanes  
Do purge sea water's fretful salt away,'
  - line 8: 'if I could draw my pains'
  - line 9: 'Through rhyme's vexation.'
  - line 10: 'Grief brought to numbers cannot be so fierce,'
  - line 11: 'For he tames it, that fetters it.'
  - line 13: 'Some man, his art and voice to show,'
  - line 14: 'Doth set and sing my pain'
5. Students' own responses

### Discussion Questions

Students' own responses

### Comprehension Questions

1. He is a fool for loving, for saying so and for letting himself suffer again when his feet
2. parallelism: 'for loving' ... 'for saying'
3. lanes
4. personification for he says grief is 'tamed' and fettered' like a wild being
5. Alliteration: Doth set and sing my pain

## 'Twicknam Garden'

### Individual Activities

1. Suggested answer: In line 2 he mentions 'spring' when most gardens are beautiful. He receives beautiful sights and sounds that soothe and cure everything. In line 5 he suffers from badness, calling himself a 'self-traitor' for bringing his 'spider Love' that changes the beautiful garden into a dark unpleasant place. In line 9, he calls the garden 'true park'. In line 13 you can imagine the trees sparkling in the sunlight for he accuses them of being 'dark'.
2. Students' own responses
3. Students' own responses
4. Students' own responses
5. lines 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 22. There is a pattern: they are situated in iambic pentameter. Each verse ends with three lines in iambic pentameter together.

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**Group Activity**

1. Students' own responses
2. Suggested answer: yes, there is a pattern in the first four lines of a verse, then the next four lines with a couplet: the end of each thought is marked by a semi-colon or full stop.
3. Students' own responses
4. Students' own responses
5. Students' own responses

**Discussion Questions**

Students' own responses

**Comprehension Questions**

1. spring, to cheer him up and winter to darken the garden in sympathy with his dark skin
2. parallelism
3. The word 'transubstantiate' is used to represent the belief in the Catholic Church that bread and wine turn into the body and blood of Christ.
4. Personification for he says the trees 'laugh and mock' him.
5. So that he can weep for the whole year, the water flowing from the fountain a metaphor for tears.

**'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'****Individual Activities**

1. Suggested answer: 'tears' and 'tear-floods'; 'globe' and 'circle'; 'moon' and 'sublunary'; 'death' and 'pass'; 'sigh' and 'sigh-tempests'.
2. Suggested answer: similar: both poems use the 'world', the 'globe' or a 'full circle' as a metaphor for the world in terms of the world of the lovers; both poems mention the 'spheres' and/or 'circles' representing their love. 'Valediction Weeping' is more concerned with their relationship and the immediate effect of their parting, whereas 'Valediction: Forbidding Mourning' concerns a more spiritual and so is above being affected by the physical loss of their parting.
3. Students' own responses
4. Suggested answer: lines 7 'profanation', 11 'trepidation', 13 'sublunary' and 16 'elementary' are long and sound important and take longer to pronounce and work out their meaning and so are significant.
5. Suggested answer: the word 'soul' is mentioned at least five times because the poem is about the love between their souls.

**Group Activity**

1. Students' own responses
2. Suggested answer: the semi-colons end part of an idea but also connect it very closely to the next comment on the same idea.
3. Students' own responses for the punctuation. The words needing punctuation to match the rhythm with letters missed out or an accent added to affect the stress (e.g. "twere', 'assured').
4. Students' own responses
5. Students' own responses

**Discussion Questions**

Students' own responses

**Comprehension Questions**

1. 'floods of tears' in line 2
2. Simile: comparing the 'expansion' of their love to gold that is beaten and expands to fill the vessel.
3. The word 'profanation' is used in preference to 'spoil', for 'profanation' refers to the desecration of the Church's terms.
4. Alliteration in 'fixed foot'.
5. Suggested answer: in line 20 'Care less, eyes, lips and hands to miss'.

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## 'Elegy: His picture'

### Individual Activities

1. Students' own responses
2. Suggested answer:  
content: a) 'Elegy: To His Mistress Going to Bed' and b) 'Elegy: His Picture' are about about saying 'farewell' to his mistress's clothes in a lustful way while b) is saying fare dangerous journey.  
style: both consist of one long verse of rhyming couplets; however, a) is more than Donne deliberately wishes to prolong the experience, as it is like one long attempt and succinct. The words tend to be shorter and more definitive.  
attitude: a) is lustful, with Donne focusing on his mistress; b) is much more respectful rather than 'my picture' and Donne is focusing more on himself and how he will char
3. Students' own responses
4. Students' own responses
5. Students' own responses

### Group Activity

1. Students' own responses
2. Answer: the semi-colons end part of an idea but also connect it very closely to the fo same idea.
3. Students' own responses for the punctuation. The words needing punctuation to m with letters missed out (e.g. "'tis', 'twill')
4. Students' own responses
5. Students' own responses

### Discussion Questions

Students' own responses

### Comprehension Questions

1. In his heart
2. Alliteration: 'sudden storms', metaphor: troubles or bad experiences represented a
3. The word 'hurts'.
4. 'milk', 'childish', 'nurse', 'feed'  
The metaphor consists of Donne speaking of the say in which children are given sust breast milk which gives them a sound start in life. This is what 'feeds' their growth have toughened the man to cope with life and all the difficulties he encounters as he
5. Suggested answer: in line 14 'worth' is said to 'decay' which is usually associated with ('concrete') beings.

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