

Name:



# Revising the Anthology



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(a  sign tells you the poem is negative about the subject whereas a  tells you it is positive - this is too simplistic for some poems of course!)

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## English Literature-Component 1 Section B

**Part 1 – write about the named poem (20 minutes -15 marks)**

**Part 2 –write about the named poem from Part 1 in comparison with another of your choice (40 minutes- 25 marks)**

### Top Tips for in the exam!

#### Part 1

1. Before you write your answer to **Part 1**, highlight the key word in the question (usually the theme of the poems).
2. On the actual poem, jot down anything you can remember about the poet/when it was written/why it was written (Context A03)
3. Annotate the poem looking for:
  - The significance of title
  - Whether it is positive or negative towards the topic
  - Point of view
  - Interesting word choices, including similes/metaphors etc
  - How it starts
  - How it ends

**Don't panic if you now only have 10 minutes left of your 20 as you can take 5 minutes out of your comparison time.**

4. Write your answer!
  - Start with a short paragraph about context so you don't forget to mention it.
  - Then.... Write about the poem starting with the title (and tracking through the whole poem making points if you find it difficult to know where to start)

#### Part 2 –The comparison



1. Remind yourself of the theme (in the question)
2. Choose a 2<sup>nd</sup> poem that compares well – remember the groupings!
3. Jot down the title of your 2<sup>nd</sup> choice and what you know about context .
4. Before you start your answer, sketch a quick chart that you will address the key points you want to make (see next page).  
Don't spend ages drawing the boxes- it is the words that matter.
5. Complete the chart.
6. Write your answer using the chart- you have 7 clear points of comparison to work with.

**Completing charts for different poem combinations is a good way to revise!**

**You can also use the steps above to write about the 2 Unseen poems- here, of course, you will not know any context!**

	Named Poem	My choice
Context?		
+ or -towards theme?		
What does the title mean?		
Point of View?		
Language points?		
Structure?		
Mood/tone?		
Anything else?		

## Key Poetic Terms (which you can use in Component 2 Section C too –the Unseen Poetry)

- **Alliteration** (the repetition of the same sound or letter at the beginning of each or most of the words in a sentence- used for reflective description or to create more drama or danger)
- **Onomatopoeia** (It creates a sound effect that mimics the thing described)
- **Assonance** (repetition of a vowel sound)
- **Repetition** (which words and why?)
- **Hyperbole** (deliberate exaggeration for impact)
- **Metaphor** (comparison without as or like)
- **Simile** (comparison with the words as or like)
- **Personification** (when an object is given human characteristics)
- **Imperative** (commands e.g. 'Take it' in 'Valentine')
- **Stanza** (a group of lines that are often repeated to form the metric of the poem)
- **Perspective** (point of view- can be 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>/person or 'a soldier' or a hawk for example)
- **Enjambment** (where lines in a poem drop to the line below- usually for emphasis on a word that would have been in the middle of a line otherwise)
- **Tone** (the writer's attitude towards the subject)  or 
- **Mood** (the atmosphere in the poem)

## 'Dulce et Decorum Est' by Wilfred Owen

### Context:

**Wilfred Owen fought and died in the First World War and much of his poetry is about the horrors of that conflict.**

Wilfred Owen is one of the most famous war poets. He was born in 1893 and died in 1918, just one week from the end of World War One. His poetry is characterised by powerful descriptions of the conditions faced by soldiers in the trenches.

His poem could be said to be violent and realistic, challenging earlier poetry which communicated a pro-war message. The first-hand experience of war is arguably one reason why there is such a shift in the attitude of poets towards war.

### Subject:

- The poem describes a gas attack on a trench in World War One. The poem reveals to the reader the terrible consequences of a gas attack.
- It also presents the unglamorous reality of trench life, with the soldiers described with the simile as being 'like old beggars'.
- The Latin used at the end of the poem means 'It is sweet and honourable to die for your country', a concept Owen is strongly denying.

### Themes:

- Warfare – As Owen describes it, war becomes a never-ending nightmare of muddy trenches and unexpected gas attacks.
- Suffering - Physical pain and psychological trauma in this searing description of a World War I battleground.
- Patriotism - Owen turns patriotic feeling into a kind of deadly life force.
- Versions of Reality - The people at home just can't understand how horrible life on the front actually is. The poet creates a line between the civilians who prop up war efforts and the men who fight their battles.

### Tone:

- The tone of this poem is angry and critical.
- Owen's own voice in this poem is bitter – perhaps partly fuelled by the fact that he can do nothing to change the situation.
- Owen dwells on explicit details of horror and misery in order to maximise the impact

### Links to other poems:

The war cluster: 'The Manhunt' - similar in the negative effects of war; 'The Soldier' – complete opposite in tone; 'Mametz Wood' –similar in the appalling loss of life ; 'A Wife in London' - similar topic but this deals with effect on a family of a man's death (different war too)

### How it is organised:

- The poem consists of four stanzas of various lengths.
- The first fourteen lines depict the situation and the events which take place, the last fourteen lines show the consequences of what has happened and Owen's reflection on it. The final four lines are his plea to the reader to avert similar suffering in the future.
- The heaviness and misery of the men is reflected in the slightly dull and routine ab ab rhyme-scheme.

### Which lines are useful in terms of A02 analysis?

1. In the first two lines of the poem, the soldiers, many of whom would still have been in their teens, are described as: 'bent double like old beggars'; 'knock kneed'; 'coughing'; cursing through 'sludge'. – Imagery, simile, verbs, alliteration...
2. "He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning." – This nightmare scenario of the gas attack is heightened by words which gather in intensity - Imagery, violent verbs
3. The repetition of the 'If .. you' construction at the start of lines 16 and 21 highlights Owen's anger and direct (almost accusing) communication to his readers.
4. "To children ardent for some desperate glory" - oxymoron. The youths long for glory, perhaps for the adulation of fame, yet it may only be won when they can no longer appreciate it.

## 'Mametz Wood' by Owen Sheers

### Context :

Born in Fiji, Owen Sheers grew up in Wales. He writes about places and landscapes but is really interested in people who live or have lived within them.

### Subject:

*Mametz Wood* was the scene of fierce fighting during the Battle of the Somme, one of the bloodiest battles of the First World War. Soldiers of the Welsh division were ordered to take *Mametz Wood*, the largest area of trees on the battlefield. The generals thought this would take a few hours. It ended up lasting five days with soldiers fighting face-to-face with the enemy. There were 4,000 casualties, with 600 dead. The Welsh succeeded but their bravery and sacrifice was never really acknowledged.

### Themes:

- Reflections of how that week in 1916 have been buried and forgotten.
- Highlighting the injustice of history.
- The poem offers justice or redemption for the dead.
- A 'hymn' to their memory.

### Tone -

- Sad
- Sombre
- Reflective

### Links to other poems: War

'Dulce Et Decorum Est' – Wilfred Owen

'The Soldier' – Rupert Brooke

'Manhunt' – Simon Armitage

'A Wife in London' – Thomas Hardy

### How it is organised:

*Mametz Wood* is written in three-line stanzas. The length of the lines changes. In some cases, (for instance lines 4 and 12) the longer lines very clearly break up the neat form of the poem. These suggest the uneven ploughed field or the chits of bone rising out of the ground.

The use of full-stops shows there is a clear, regular structure within the poem: a single stanza is followed by a pair of stanzas, then another single stanza is followed by another pair. The final, seventh stanza acts as a conclusion.

This structure reflects the changing focus of the poem – from the land (the single stanzas one and four) then bones and people (the paired stanzas that follow).

The final stanza then combines these three elements into a single image: the 'unearthed' skulls singing in celebration.



### Which lines are useful in terms of A02 analysis?

1. There is no rhyme scheme, but assonance and alliteration mean the stanzas are linked by sounds. The first stanza, for example, starts with the soft sound of "farmers found". We then hear the harder 'b' of "blades" and "back" which is picked up in the second stanza with "blade", "blown" and "broken bird's egg". The next stanza also has "breaking blue". Along with the chipped sound of bone in "chit" and "china" this form of alliteration perhaps echoes of the sound of gunfire and battlefield destruction.
2. Stanza 2 metaphors in 'the china plate of a shoulder blade....broken bird's egg of a skull' which draw attention to the fragility of the soldiers who died.
3. Stanza 2 personification in the line 'And even now the earth stands sentinel, reaching back into itself for reminders of what happened'
4. Stanza 3 metaphor in the line 'where they were told to walk not run towards the wood and its nesting machine guns' (and the juxtaposition between the warm/safe connotations of 'nesting' and the brutality of the gun)
5. Stanza 5 metaphor in 'twenty men buried in one long grave, a broken mosaic of bone linked arm in arm' that depicts the scene of the mass grave.
6. The visual image of the soldiers' heads being thrown back by the impact of bullets is suddenly switched in the final stanza, however: their heads are back and jaws open because they are singing.

## 'The Manhunt' by Simon Armitage

### Context:

- Simon Armitage was born in 1963 in Yorkshire, where he still lives. His poetry demonstrates a strong concern for social issues, as well as drawing from his Yorkshire roots. Simon uses colloquial (everyday/ slang) language to present his poetry. He has worked on several TV programmes; including a documentary on permanently injured soldiers and their lives.

### Subject:

- *The poem* is written from the perspective of the wife of a soldier who has sustained serious injuries at war and has returned home. The poem explores the physical and mental effects of living with injuries sustained when on active service in the armed forces.

### Themes:

- The poem is about the patience and love, as the wife carefully explores her husband's injured body with love and care
- Conflict and war are clearly presented in the poem. It explores the cost of war those serving in the armed forces.
- The injured husband is unable to reconnect to his wife verbally about his experiences at war, this affects their whole relationship as a married couple
- The poem is not about making judgements about the war or the armed forces, but instead about the impact of the war and the effects that it can have on a relationship

### Tone:

- Tender
- Fearful/anxious/frustrated

### How it is organised:

- The poem is made up of mostly unrhymed couplets. This creates a sense of fragmentation which mirrors the feelings of the soldier's wife, as she seeks to understand the man that her husband has become.
- The poem describes the phases in which the wife searches for answers from her injured husband who has recently returned from the war zone. The poem ends as the search is brought to a close.
- The poem is made up of just one stanza, but this is broken up continuously with lines of enjambment. This could represent the chaotic life of the soldier and his experiences of the war
- The title of the poem links back to the idea of searching for a man. The idea of a 'manhunt' often conjures up imagery of capturing a man or criminal. The wife's search is for her husband, someone she knows very well, but who seems so *lost* to her after his experiences at war.

### Which lines/ words are useful for A02 analysis?

1. The first line of the poem includes prominent verbs such as 'search' 'explore' and 'handle'. These verbs refer to the wife's 'search' into finding her lost husband. Words such as 'explore' 'handle and hold', 'mind and attend' are all references to the careful treatment of her husband's injured body from the war. This could also be referring to his damaged state of mind and his mental health.
2. The speaker compares her husband's body to inanimate objects. For example, she **metaphorically** compares his broken jaw to a 'blown hinge' this creates ideas of something mechanical, but broken at the same time. His collar bone is 'damaged, porcelain' and this **metaphor** brings to mind something delicate that has become broken, possibly the man's mental state and frame of mind. The **metaphor** 'frozen river which ran through his face' could be referring to the fact the man had been shot, and the bullet ricocheted through his face into his body. Therefore, the 'frozen river' could represent the scar on his face. The adjective 'frozen' could suggest that the man has become cold, but the word 'river' connotes **imagery of a journey**. However, 'frozen river' suggests that the man is unable to move forward with his life.
3. There are also lots of **sensual and loving verbs** in the poem, reflecting the intimacy of husband and wife. The wife says remembers back to the happy memories at the beginning of the poem as she says 'passionate nights and intimate days.' However, the **mood** of the poem later changes as the wife says 'climb the rungs of his broken ribs.' **This metaphor** shows there has clearly been a change within the husband, both physically and mentally
4. The husband has a 'grazed heart' which metaphorically could suggest that his heart has been damaged through manmade objects such as bullets and weapons. However, it could also refer back to the fact that he is unable to connect to his wife verbally about his experiences at war, which affects their whole relationship.
5. The image of the bullet that ricocheted through his body is compared as being a 'foetus'. This strange comparison creates the imagery of a baby, a life within his body.

## 'A Wife in London' by Thomas Hardy

### Context:

Hardy is one of the most renowned 19<sup>th</sup> Century poets and novelists in English literary history. He was born in 1840 in the English village of Higher Bockhampton in the county of Dorset.

Hardy's well-known war poems spoke against some of the horrors of war, notably the Boer War and World War I. Hardy addressed the conflicts from viewpoint of ordinary soldiers, expressing his distress over the consequences of war. His work had a profound influence on other war poets such as Rupert Brooke and Sassoon. In 'A Wife in London' he looks at the terror of war from the perspective of a wife of a soldier who is fighting in the Boer War (1899-1902) which took place in South Africa and related to disputed lands. It involved the British and the Boer people, who originated from Holland.

### Subject:

- A wife waiting for news of her husband who has been fighting in the Boer War in South Africa
- She receives a letter which tells her that her husband has died but ironically then receives another letter, written by her husband before he died, talking of the plans he had for them when he returned from the war

### Themes:

- War
- Death
- Love

### Tone:

- Bleak, gloomy tone created by the description of the setting
- Positivity ("jaunts"; "summer"; "new love") at the end only adds to the poignancy and sadness of the situation

### Links to other poems:

'Manhunt' (Simon Armitage) – a partner of a man injured in war comes to terms with his pain  
'Dulce Et Decorum Est' (Wilfred Owen); 'The Soldier' (Rupert Brooke); 'Mametz Wood' (Owen Sheers) – death and suffering caused by war

### How it is organised:

Two parts (The Tragedy and The Irony), the second of which adds to the grief felt by the wife as she receives her husband's letter

Punctuation often used to break up the rhythm and results in disjointed lines, reflecting the thoughts of the wife

### Which lines are useful in terms of A02 analysis?

1. "Tawny vapour" and "the fog hangs thicker" ominous, threatening nature of the fog; symbolism; darkness; increasing intensity in the second part of the poem ("thicker") symbolises the increasing sorrow of the wife; pathetic fallacy
2. "Like a waning taper" image; simile; candle going out symbolic of the end of the husband's life; death
3. "A messenger's knock cracks smartly" onomatopoeia; breaks the quietness of the first stanza
4. "He – has fallen – in the far South Land..." punctuation (dashes and ellipsis) create a disjointed pace, almost as if the wife is faltering; caesuras; euphemism ('fallen' makes the idea of his death less horrific?)
5. "His hand, whom the worm now knows" gruesome image; death and burial; present tense

## 'The Soldier' by Rupert Brooke

### Context

Brooke's poem reflects the idealistic, pre-war perspective.

It gives us an insight into how people can romanticise war when they haven't yet experienced it.

The destruction of this pre-war idealism was almost as significant for Europe as the destruction of so many young lives.

### Subject

- 'The Soldier' is a sonnet in which Brooke glorifies England during the First World War.
- He speaks in the voice of an English soldier as he is leaving home to go to war.
- The poem represents the patriotic ideals that characterized pre-war England.
- It portrays death for one's country as a noble end and England as the noblest country for which to die.

### Themes

- The speaker implies that England is mother to him. His love for England and his willingness to sacrifice is equivalent to a son's love for his mother; but more than an ordinary son, he can give his life to her.
- The soldier-speaker of the poem seeks to find redemption through sacrifice in the name of the country.
- The soldier also has a sense of beauty of his country that is in fact a part of his identity.

### Tone:

- Patriotic – speaks with pride about dying for England
- Positive- shows no fear of the battlefield
- Sentimental- speaks warmly about his homeland

### Links to other poems:

His depiction of dying in battle is a **complete contrast** to all the other poems in the collection on the subject of war.

### Structure

- The poem is written as a sonnet (a 14-line poem). This is traditionally the structure used for love poems so it could suggest that the form of the sonnet reflects the speaker's love for his country.
- The rhyme scheme is that of the Shakespearean sonnet: rhyming abab cdcd efef and a final rhymed couplet  
eg. As in Shakespearean sonnets, the dominant meter is iambic.

## Language; A02

1. The speaker begins by addressing the reader, and speaking to them in the imperative: “think only this of me.” This sense of immediacy establishes the speaker’s romantic attitude towards death in duty.
2. The images and praises of England run through both the stanzas.
3. The sights, sounds, dreams, laughter, friends, and gentleness that England offered him during his life till this time are more than enough for him to thank England and satisfactorily go and die for her.
4. A “happy” England filled his life with “laughter” and “friends”, and England characterized by “peace” and “gentleness”.
5. The speaker implies that England is mother to him. His love for England and his willingness to sacrifice is equivalent to a son’s love for his mother; but more than an ordinary son, he can give his life to her.

## Key Quotes:

‘If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there’s some corner of a foreign field  
That is forever England’

‘In hearts at peace, under an English heaven’

‘A body of England’s, breathing English air’

## 'Valentine' by Carol Ann Duffy

### Context:

Duffy is the first female Poet Laureate and has won a very wide audience of readers. She combines tenderness and toughness and often presents unconventional attitudes in her poems. Her poetry has included:

- monologues from the point of view of disturbed characters
- feminist themes and approaches
- difficult subjects, encouraging the reader to explore alternative points of view

She has said that most of her work consists of love poems, claiming that it has been important for “poets down the centuries...to describe, interrogate and celebrate love, one of the most intense and important of human experiences.”

### Subject:

- Challenging the stereotypical view of a Valentine's gift when the speaker presents their lover with an onion
- Proving that the onion is a more realistic representation of love, highlighting that it is not always simple or pleasant

### Themes:

- Love
- Relationships
- Pain/grief

### Tone:

- Blunt, forthright statements (declaratives) create a direct tone
- Tone of certainty and confidence (verb “will” suggests a definite tone)
- A more violent, sinister tone emerges towards the end (“lethal” and “knife”)

### Links to other poems:

Cozy Apologia (Rita Dove) – looks at love in a more positive light but acknowledges the mundane reality of it

'Sonnet 43' (Elizabeth Barrett Browning); 'She Walks in Beauty' (Lord Byron) – contrasting poems, offering a more traditional, conventional love poems

'The Manhunt' (Simon Armitage) – difficult relationship between the speaker and a man who has been injured in war; reality of love

### How it is organised:

Short (sometimes just one word) line lengths and one-line stanzas support the blunt, direct tone.

Irregular stanza lengths mirror the unpredictable nature of love and the speaker's state of mind

### Which lines are useful in terms of A02 analysis?

1. “It is a moon wrapped in brown paper” metaphor; begins the extended metaphor
2. “It will blind you with tears/like a lover” simile; second person pronoun; image of blindness suggesting no way of seeing a way out; pain/grief
3. “Its fierce kiss will stay on your lips” personification; sibilance; adjective; sensory image
4. “Cling to your fingers; cling to your knife” repetition; verb; second person pronoun; connotations of knife

## 'She Walks in Beauty' by Lord Byron

### Context

Lord Byron was the 6th Baron Byron, a British poet, politician, and a leading figure in the Romantic movement. Today the word 'romantic' evokes images of love and sentimentality, but the term 'Romanticism' has a much wider meaning. It covers a range of developments in art, literature, music and philosophy, spanning the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

The above poem was written by Byron in response to seeing his cousin, Lady Wilmot Horton, in a mourning dress at a party of Lady Sitwell's on June 11, 1814.

The woman is unnamed in the poem and she seems to be unobtainable. She's really quite striking, and the speaker compares her to lots of beautiful but dark things, like "night" and "starry skies." The second stanza continues to use the contrast between light and dark, day and night, to describe her beauty.

### Subject

An analysis of the many facets that come together to form a beautiful woman. The poem breaks down a woman's beauty by descriptions of physical, spiritual and intellectual traits.

### Themes

- Appearance
- The opposing forces of darkness and light to describe beauty,
- A sense of wonder of the natural world
- Beauty of nature

### Tone

- Romantic
- Calm
- Love struck
- Serene

### Links to other poems

'Sonnet 43' by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

'Cozy Apologia' by Rita Dove

### How is it organised

This poem is an 18-line poem with three, six line stanzas. The rhythm of the poem is highly regular. This consistent rhythm emphasises the regularity of the subject's walk but also her faultless perfection. Working against this rhythm, Byron makes much use of enjambement. It is almost as though the speaker cannot pause for breath in trying to tell the reader about how beautiful this woman is.

### Lines for A02

1. "Of cloudless climes and starry skies" alliteration/ sibilance
2. "She walks in beauty like the night" positive simile
3. "How pure how dear their dwelling place" personification to describe the clarity of her thoughts
4. Antithesis (opposites) is used on a number of occasions eg 'One shade the more, one ray the less'



## **Poem: 'Sonnet 43' by Elizabeth Browning**

### **Context:**

Elizabeth Barret Browning was a Victorian poet. She suffered from a lifelong illness and married the poet and playwright Robert Browning, who was a major influence on her work and to whom *Sonnet 43* is addressed to. The poem is part of a longer sonnet sequence of 44 sonnets, called 'Sonnets from the Portuguese'.

Elizabeth Barret Browning's sonnet sequence was written before she married Robert Browning, to express her love for him. She attempts to define her love for him and the poem opens with one of the most famous questions in poetry "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways."

### **Structure:**

*Sonnet 43* is the length of the traditional sonnet (14 lines), other than that the poem does not follow the rules. There is a regular rhyming scheme and Browning often uses assonance (repeating vowel sounds) "praise" and "faith". This can be seen as surprising, as Browning wrote her poem to define what perfect love is, yet the structure of the poem avoids perfection.

The poem makes use of repetition, for example the phrase "I love thee" is used eight times and reflects the devotion the poet feels for her husband and the nature of love. Repetition can also be seen with the line "depth and breadth and height" as the use of list is repetitive in nature. This could suggest the speaker's excitement and breathlessness towards her husband.

Love is compared to important concepts such as "being and ideal Grace", "Right" and "Praise". The use of capital letters emphasises these words.

The opening rhetorical question implies a conversation between lovers, and the exclamation mark at the end of the first line makes the poem seem light hearted and playful. The speaker is responding enthusiastically to the challenges of listing the ways in which she experiences love.

Lines become frequently broken up within the poem through the use of punctuation. At the end of the poem, there is another suggestion that the speaker is excited. "I love thee with the breadth, / Smiles, tears, of all my life!" The speaker is passionate in her expression.

### **Attitude, themes and ideas:**

*Sonnet 43* presents the ideas of love as powerful and her love enables her to reach otherwise impossible extremes.

As well as the use of lists that the speakers present throughout the poem, the speaker also defines her love as being spiritual "feeling out of sight." Love is something that is not tangible or palpable.

The poem is autobiographical and it refers to "my old griefs." This could link back to the fact that Browning's parents had strong disagreements with her parents. The speaker therefore sees her love as something positive and life changing.

Browning also mentions her loss of religious faith in the poem. "I love thee with a love I seemed to lose/ With my lost Saints!" Her loss of faith symbolises that her lover in the poem becomes a spiritual saviour. She is not totally without faith, but instead "If God choose, / I shall but love thee better after death." Here she asserts the idea that God controls her future then she hopes to be reunited with her lover in the afterlife.

## Poem: 'Cozy Apologia' by Rita Dove

### Context:

- As the poem is dedicated 'for Fred' we can assume that the poem was originally written about and dedicated to Rita Dove's husband, Fred Viebahn. Rita Dove is black and African American, and Fred Viebahn is white and German. In a very modern reflection upon love and relationships, the poet compares her partner with more traditional ideas of men and male heroism. The poem notes details of the couple's domestic life as writers, 'Twin desks, computers, hardwood floors'. It is set against the arrival of Hurricane Floyd, a powerful storm which hit the east coast of the USA in 1999. This factual, real-life context supports the idea this is an autobiographical poem.

### Subject:

- Snug and 'cozy' in her home, waiting for a storm to hit, the poet begins to daydream about her partner
- She compares her partner to heroic knights of old (stereotypes) and other "worthless" boys she used to date
- She considers how happy she is with the 'cozy' life she's made with her partner. 'Apologia' means 'in defence of' – so this is a justification of her 'cozy' life.

### Themes:

- Biography and memory; The impact of the weather on people's lives (nature); Men/relationships/love

### Tone:

- Personal/confessional/intimate
- Conversational – a dreamy, wandering
- Playful, light-hearted, ironic at times - content with life

### Links to other poems:

- 'Valentine' – contrast in its depiction of love / 'Sonnet 43' – similar in its positive depiction of relationships/love

### How it is organised:

- The poem starts off in rhyming couplets, after stanza one this changes
- Most lines have four stresses ('As standing in silver stirrups will allow'), but some lines have five stresses ('This post-postmodern age is all business: compact disks'). The gradual break-down of the rhyme scheme and the poem's irregular rhythm might also be said to imitate the oncoming storm. The speaker's memories become scattered, just as Hurricane Floyd will scatter debris

### Which lines are useful in terms of A02 analysis?

1. "There you'll be, with furrowed brow/And chain mail glinting, to set me free" – this is a traditional image of heroic masculinity; the exaggerated "furrowed brow" and "chain mail glinting" suggest she is being playful and affectionate, but not too serious
2. "Today a hurricane is nudging up the coast, /Oddly male: Big Bad Floyd" – Dove personifies the hurricane ("nudging") again jokingly. The punctuation here starts to disrupt the fluid rhythm of the poem as the storm has disrupted her everyday life
3. "thin as liquorice and as chewy, /Sweet with dark and hollow centre." – this simile compares the "worthless boys" unfavourably with her partner. The adjectives "chewy", "thin", "sweet" and "hollow" show how weak they are compared to him
4. "When has the ordinary ever been news?" – this rhetorical question focuses the reader on the poet's ordinary life and her 'defence' of its cosiness against the modern desire for drama
5. "I fill this stolen time with you." – this metaphor of "stolen time" ends the poem ambiguously; the poet maybe suggesting that Floyd has taken time away from her and she is just filling it with thoughts of him. However, the phrase is also used to describe precious moments (she has managed to 'grab' some time and keep it to herself).

## 'To Autumn' by John Keats

### Context:

Inspired by a walk through the countryside. Six months after completing it, he experienced the first signs of the tuberculosis that would end his life. In the poem it is almost as though the medically-trained poet has understood that his life will soon end and he is preparing himself for death. Keats died in 1821 aged just 25.

Classified as a Romantic poet. Romanticism was a general artistic movement (literature, music, the visual arts, etc.) which dominated European culture from the late century until the mid-19th century. Among its key aspects were:

- a deep appreciation of the power and beauty of nature
- a recognition of the influence of the senses and of personal emotion
- an understanding of the deeper meaning of life

### Subject:

- mankind's relationship with a particular time of year.
- Personification of Autumn – bringing it alive

### Themes:

- nature – flowers and fruits –
- the English countryside/landscape
- passing of time/ageing

### Tone :

Gentle, soft and appreciative of natural beauty

- wistful and dreamy
- Slightly sad and nostalgic

### Links to other poems:

- Wordsworth Prelude/Heaney – Naturalist/ Hughes – Hawk Roosting
- Larkin Afternoons (contrast landscape)/Imperceptibly – possibly for time links)

### How it is organised:

- 3 x regular stanzas with 11 lines and a gentle, regular rhyme scheme (ababcbdedcce)
- Speaker in poem seems to be an observer actually addressing the season of autumn as if it were a person
- Each stanza begins with an exclamation or question that is then developed into a detailed description full of metaphor, imagery and other techniques.

### Which lines are useful in terms of A02 analysis?

1. *'Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!'* – exclamation, sibilance, alliteration, tone, structure of stanza, nature
2. *Thee sitting careless on a granary floor* – personification, harvest time, tone 'careless/relaxed'
3. *Thy hair soft lifted by the winnowing wind* – descriptive, alliteration, personification, movement, assonance, weather, nature
4. *'While barred clouds bloom the soft dying day'* – ageing, weather, nature, sadness, imagery
5. *'in a wailful choir small gnats mourn'* – onomatopoeia, dying, sadness, aspects of the season.

## Extract from 'The Prelude' by William Wordsworth

### Context:

**William Wordsworth** (1770-1850) was a member of the Romantic group of poets. He was brought up in the Lake District, a place that influenced his writing - as did the fact that both his mother died when he still a schoolboy. He spent a lot of time with his grandparents in Penrith, a rugged and wild place. He went on a walking tour of Europe and fell in love with a French woman with whom he had a child, but because of war between Britain and France, he didn't see his daughter or her mother for many years. Over the years he lost more children and after the death of his daughter, Dora, in 1847, was so devastated he wrote no more poetry. Some of this sadness is evident in the extract.

*The Prelude* is a famous work of literature. It is a long autobiographical poem in 14 sections. Wordsworth began it in 1798 then continued work on it throughout his life. His wife, Mary, published it three months after his death in 1850.

### Subject:

- The exhilaration and freedom (not going home when called) Wordsworth felt as a child, skating around the frozen lakes of Cumbria
- A winter afternoon in the Cumbrian/Lake District landscape

### Themes:

- celebration of childhood
- grand scale of nature/ the (English) countryside
- passing of time and memory

### Tone:

- grandiose, daunting (nature of the landscape )
- fast paced, free and joyous
- Slightly sad and nostalgic

### Links to other poems:

-NATURE LINKS - Keats, To Autumn; Heaney, Naturalist/; Hughes – Hawk Roosting

- OTHER LINKS - Larkin, Afternoons (contrast **urban and country landscapes but also** similarity of **adult versus child life** portrayed in both poems); Living Space (cramped, urban, crowded- different times and completely different places + similarity of the '**joy**' of life still expressed in LS)

### How it is organised:

- Part of a longer poem so this is just 22, unrhymed lines with plenty of long sentences and enjambment to echo the speed and flow of the skaters
- Speaker in the poem is actually the poet – his own experience along with his group of friends 'we'
- Blank verse, unrhymed to allow imagery to flow, uninterrupted to allow the 'narrative' to flow from the details of the skaters far out to the mountains and sky above
- This extract begins and ends with the evening sky – structure takes us down from the set sun to the bottom of the valley and then back up to the surrounding mountains and finally to the heights where '*the orange sky of evening died away*'

**Which lines/words are useful in terms of A02 analysis?**

1. ***'happy time it was indeed...a time of rapture'*** – joyful, exhilarating tone, expresses the happiness of childhood
2. ***'sun was set', 'cottage windows through the twilight blaz'd' and 'orange sky of evening'*** – warm imagery that brings out the cold, white colours of the 'frosty season' through direct contrast–
3. ***'I wheel'd about like an untir'd horse'*** – image/simile describing moves, speed and joy of childhood links to nature
4. ***'hiss'd along the polished ice/' and 'the precipices rang aloud' and 'every icy crag tinkled like iron'***– know at least one of these aural images, be able to comment on the sibilance and assonance and onomatopoeia.
5. ***'an alien sound of melancholy'*** – onomatopoeia, ageing of the poet and his memory of a time long gone, sadness, aspects of the season. The metaphor itself recreating the fading and strange melody of noises that echo around the mountains.

## 'Death of a Naturalist' – Seamus Heaney (1939 – 2013)

### Context:

Seamus Heaney is an Irish poet and was the eldest of nine children. Growing up on a farm, a theme that we see in much of his work, his childhood was blighted by the tragic death of his 4-year-old brother Christopher in a road accident.

'Death of a Naturalist' is both a description of Heaney's experience with nature as a boy, and a metaphor for the loss of his childhood innocence, as he looks back wistfully at his youthful naivety.

During his childhood, his life experiences may have forced him to grow up and face 'adult reality' sooner than he would have wanted to – this may be suggested in his poetry.

### Subject:

The death referred to in this poem is metaphorical and refers to the loss of innocent enthusiasm of a child as the realities of life begin to be sensed but not quite understood. A naturalist is, of course, someone who spends time enthusiastically studying nature.

It is looking at nature through the eyes of a young child and then how his perceptions change as he gets older.

### Themes:

Nature

The idea of growing up

Naivety becoming reality

### Tone:

Enthusiastic and interested in first stanza – childhood energy and viewpoint of things.

Second stanza becomes more realistic with some of the positivity and the 'shine' rubbed away

### Links to other poems:

*To Autumn* – by Keats – an observation of Nature changing/perceptions of elements of nature

*Hawk Roosting* – by Hughes – observation of Nature; political issues of power

*Prelude* – by Wordsworth – some unpleasant realities of nature/harshness.

### Structure/How it is organised:

Two stanzas break up the poem: The first stanza seems positive, adventurous; full of wonder. The second stanza is negative in comparison, full of disgust, sense of fear.

### AO2 Focus:

1. The use of **military imagery** [link to the Irish Troubles perhaps...?] – 'ranks', 'grenades'
2. The use of a **first person** monologue – makes it believable, a personal account
3. **Onomatopoeia** – 'The slap and pop were obscene threats', 'croaked'
4. **personification** – [Frogs] 'gathered for vengeance'/'daddy frog...mammy frog' – connection/feel emotion
5. **simile** – 'loose necks pulsed like sails'/'poised like mud grenades'
6. **metaphor** – 'The great slime kings' [Frogs = importance/power]
7. **blank verse** – simply as if narrator is telling a simple story
8. References to **senses** – touch/sounds etc – 'farting', 'coarse croaking', 'warm thick slobber'

<http://www.sheerpoetry.co.uk/gcse/seamus-heaney/notes-on-selected-poems/death-of-a-naturalist>

## 'Hawk Roosting' by Ted Hughes (1930-1998)

### Context:

Hughes was aware of the violent forces of nature. As a child he became interested in the natural world and harsh environments.

"The poem of mine usually cited for violence is the one about the Hawk Roosting, this drowsy hawk sitting in a wood and talking to itself. That bird is accused of being a fascist... the symbol of some horrible genocidal dictator. Actually what I had in mind was that in this hawk Nature was thinking. Simply Nature."

Ted Hughes, London Magazine, January 1971

The poem was published in 1960, during a time of suspicion and distrust between the East and the West, politically.

### Subject:

In this poem, Hughes writes in the imagined voice of a hawk. The hawk, in other words, is personified. The hawk's tone of voice is proud, arrogant, he thinks of himself as master of his world. Indeed, like a God, he has power over life and death. His whole life is spent either being in 'sleep' or hunting for prey. And even when he is asleep he dreams of mastering his hunting and killing technique.

Hughes personifies a **hawk**. He describes it as a survivor and a **killer**. He compares the hawk's **freedom to act on instinct** with the way we are ruled by thoughts, arguments and regulations.

*Some people think that Hughes is:*

- Praising the bird, its single-minded determination and its freedom.
- Neutral about the bird, and just describing it objectively.
- Using the bird as a metaphor for the extreme state of mind of a potential human killer possibly Hitler.

Literal – a celebration of the hawk

Metaphorical – exploration of themes associated with the hawk: 'hawk-eyed' = observant; 'hawkish' = aggressive toward other countries; agile, quick, deadly killer.

### Themes:

Power – both physical and political authority

Death – linked with images of Creation (religion)

Violence and Cruelty

Laws of Nature

### Tone:

Direct, plain speaking (suggesting brutality), strong, arrogant, proud.

Negative language used: e.g. 'no' – may suggest immovable, inflexible, strength of character, determination.

### Links to other poems:

**Death of a Naturalist** (Heaney) – Nature – simple ideas, effectively create strong images

### How is it organised?

- This poem has a strong, regular form.
- It is written in six stanzas of four lines each.
- The overall effect of the form is to express strength and control, inflexible.
- The first two stanzas are about his physical superiority – both in what his body is like and where he can sit.
- Stanzas three and four reveal his power of nature, and how he holds everything, including life and death, in his talons.
- The final two stanzas form a kind of justification for his actions. He explains why he is not just right because of physical superiority but also the way he acts without deception.
- First person narrative – type of internal monologue
- Short, blunt lines – no sentimental imagery – again, suggest strength

### AO2 points:

1. 'hooked head and hooked feet' –repetition - consistently harsh, brutal, dominant.
2. 'convenience', 'advantage', 'for my inspection' – everything for the benefit of the hawk
3. 'Creation' – Biblical connotations – suggest superiority, God-like, omnipotence (all powerful)
4. End-stopped lines (short lines ended with full stop): series of simple statements emphasise authority: no arguing.
5. Metaphors line 11 ' My feet are locked upon the rough bark' + Line 17 'The allotment of death' ( + juxtaposition between growth /the natural world v's death)

*Analysis of poem:*

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/gcse/english/poetry-of-tedhughes/revise-it/hawk-roosting>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6g95E4VSfj0>



## 'Afternoons' by Phillip Larkin

### Context

- Philip Larkin (1922-1985) was born and lived in England. His personality was of a solitary English man who hated fame and didn't want to attach himself with public literary life.
- He is famous for writing poems which contained detailed observations about everyday life and relationships. However, his critics say that his poetry was rather negative and miserable.

### Subject/structure

It is about the passing of youth and the setting-in of middle age. But rather than focusing on his own middle age (Larkin was in his mid-thirties when he wrote the poem, in 1959), Larkin examines the lives of others, analysing the existence of a group of young mothers he observes at the local recreation ground 'setting free' their children on swings and in the sandpit at the new playground.

The setting is late summer or early autumn: Larkin appears to have written this poem in September 1959, but this setting of late summer fits with the theme of fading youth treated later in the poem, as does the afternoon setting.

In the **second stanza, Larkin broadens out this vision of the mothers** supervising their children at play: he imagines the women's husbands 'in skilled trades', as well as the other details of their ordinary lives, such as their wedding photo-album near the television at home, and the daily chores these stay-at-home mums have to carry out, such as all the washing generated by the family.

**As we move towards the third and final stanza, Larkin returns to the present scene**, noting that the children wish to be taken home. He concludes that the women's 'beauty has thickened' and that something 'is pushing them to the side' of their lives. What does he mean?

**The unrhymed form reflects the poem's focus on an unsatisfactory life**, or rather generation of lives, with no hope of being able to pin down precisely what has led to the women's lives being so unsatisfactory.

They have lost autonomy over their lives, despite – or, perhaps more accurately, **because of – the orderliness depicted in the middle stanza**. Only the new generation, their children searching for acorns and being set free on the swings and in the sandpit, can now feel that same intensity of feeling that the mothers once felt. In the last analysis, 'Afternoons' offers at once a vividly specific and hauntingly elusive depiction of the passing of youth, one that is all the more powerful because Larkin is writing about people at one remove from him: strangers he has observed in passing, people he does not know.

### Themes

- Time / passing of time
- Decay and decline
- Cyclical nature of life
- Reflects upon the subject of marriage and working class life
- Tone
- emptiness in domestic life
- sense of their own entrapment, and desire to break away.

## Links

'To Autumn' (contrast in the tone of the two poems in terms of time passing)

'Cozy Apologia' (contrast in the tone of the two poems as studies of domestic life/relationships)

'As Imperceptibly as Grief'

### **Which lines are useful in terms of A02 analysis?**

1. The seasons mark how time changes their lives. "The wind / Is ruining their courting places" now, as autumn and winter approach,
2. The juxtaposition of "And the albums lettered, / Our Wedding, lying / Near the television", shows that their marriages and love have now, somehow, been pushed aside and reduced and the double meaning of 'lying' !
3. The verb "expect" commands the women; their children and the thousand other domestic necessities trap them.
4. "Their beauty has thickened" is a metaphor for captures the signs of age, the beauty of youth filling out...
5. Plural on the title gives a sense that the scene painted in the poem applies to many days, and to life in general.

## 'As Imperceptibly as Grief' by Emily Dickinson

### Context:

- Birthplace: Amherst, Massachusetts. She was born and lived in 'Homestead' Main Street for all but 15 years of her life. She spent a lot of time writing in her bedroom and actually rarely ever went out after 1865.
- The house on North Pleasant Street where she lived between the ages of 10 and 25 was built next to a graveyard, with her bedroom window facing the cemetery. Five of her school friends died of consumption and were buried in it during her time there. The idea of God's Grace, his benevolence towards undeserving humanity. It is, however, tempered by the reference to 'harrowing' with its associations of the 'harrowing of hell' by Christ on humanity's behalf. The experience of grief is also 'harrowing', perhaps, at times.

### Subject:

- Dickinson uses a series of images to explore how grief/loss affects us – mostly images of seasons
- Dickinson compares the dusk/end of the day to a guest leaving
- Dickinson compares the end of summer to death

### Themes:

- Loss and grief
- The passage of time and how this may affect us

### Tone:

- Reflective, contemplative
- Elegiac
- Consolatory at the end – grief transformed into something more positive

### Links to other poems:

- 'Afternoons' Philip Larkin – similar use of imagery and tone
- 'Ozymandias' P B Shelley – passing of time

### How it is organised:

- The relatively short lines might reflect the ephemeral nature of time (moves on quickly)
- Shift in tone from beginning to end – initially it is sombre and elegiac but the poem moves towards a final more hopeful suggestion that something positive can result from the process of grief/loss.

### Which lines are useful in terms of A02 analysis?

1. "As imperceptibly as grief/The summer lapsed away, –" – comparison of grief with summer, suggesting it is a natural process, universal to human experience
2. "A quietness distilled, /As twilight long begun, /Or Nature, spending with herself/Sequestered afternoon" – grief is compared with Nature, personified as a lonely, isolated figure emphasised by the alliteration of "spending" "herself" and "Sequestered"
3. "A courteous, yet harrowing grace," – oxymoronic phrase: "grace" is an undeserved gift (positive image) whereas "harrowing" suggests extreme suffering and distress, reflecting the contradictory nature of time and our relationship with it.
4. "As guest who would be gone." – grief is again personified as a "guest" – would this "guest" then be missed?
5. "Our summer made her light escape/Into the beautiful." – More personification; "light escape" and "something beautiful" suggest grief can be transformed into something positive.

## 'Ozymandias' by Percy Shelley

### Context:

**Percy Bysshe Shelley** (1792-1822) is one of the most famous poets in all of English literature. He was one of a group of poets who became known as **The Romantics** - a general artistic movement (literature, music, the visual arts, etc.) which dominated European culture from the late century until the mid-19th century. Among its key aspects were:

- a deep appreciation of the power and beauty of nature
- a recognition of the influence of the senses and of personal emotion
- an understanding of the deeper meaning of life

He was expelled from university for writing about atheism (not believing in God) which led to him to fall out with his father who disinherited him. In the same year, 1811, he eloped and married aged 19. His bride, Harriet Westbrook, was only 16. They moved to the Lake District.

Three years later, Shelley left for Europe with another woman, Mary Godwin (who later became **Mary Shelley** and wrote *Frankenstein*). Shelley had children by both women. In 1816, Harriet Shelley's body was recovered from a lake - it was thought she had killed herself. Three weeks later, Shelley married Mary.

Shelley drowned at sea during a sailing trip to Italy.

Shelley was well known as a 'radical' during his lifetime and some people think *Ozymandias* reflects this side of his character. Although it is about the remains of a statue of Ozymandias (another name for the Egyptian pharaoh Rameses II) it can be read as a criticism of people or systems that become huge and believe themselves to be invincible.

### Subject:

The narrator of Shelley's poem says he met a traveller from an "antique" (ancient) land and then tells us the story the traveller told him.

The man had seen the remains of a huge statue in the desert. There were two enormous legs without a trunk and next to them lay a damaged "visage" (face). At the foot of the statue were words which reflected the arrogance and pride of Ozymandias. Those words seem very hollow now as the magnificent statue is destroyed and none of the pharaoh's works have lasted.

### **Attitudes, themes and ideas**

It is likely that Shelley told the tale of the fall of this once-great king to make a general statement about politics in his day. He was not a supporter of the royal family. No matter how great a king might be, he isn't immortal - neither he nor his works will last forever.

- **Even the mightiest will fall:** Ozymandias thought his works would last forever and would be above everyone else's. Not true. Nothing is left intact and his own statue is in ruins.
- **You can't beat time.** Even a king dies and so will all the things he has built.
- **Pride comes before a fall.** Ozymandias' boasts about his own greatness seem very hollow now.
- **The power of art and words.** The only thing that does last is part of the statue and the powerful words on the inscription.

**Tone :**

Gentle, soft and appreciative of natural beauty

- wistful and dreamy
- Slightly sad and nostalgic

**Links to other poems: The Passing of Time**

'Afternoons' – Philip Larkin

'As Imperceptibly as Grief' – Emily Dickinson

**How it is organised:****Form**

Ozymandias is a sonnet (a poem of 14 lines), although it doesn't have the same, simple rhyme scheme or punctuation that most sonnets have. Some lines are split by full stops and the rhyme is irregular at times.

It is written in iambic pentameter, which Shakespeare used widely in his plays and sonnets.

**Which lines are useful in terms of A02 analysis?**

1. Shelley creates a memorable image of this "vast" and once great statue, now in ruins.
2. He also places it in the middle of a huge desert with nothing else around it, which highlights its fall from grace.
3. What was once so magnificent - a symbol of the king's great power - is now "sunk... shattered... lifeless".
4. We have no sympathy whatsoever with the statue or the king though, due to some of Shelley's descriptions: "sneer of cold command... hand that mocked them" and the arrogance of the words displayed at the bottom.

## 'Living Space' by Imtiaz Dharker

### Context

Imtiaz Dharker is a Pakistan-born British poet, artist and documentary filmmaker. Dharker was born in Lahore to Pakistani parents.

The poem describes the slums of Mumbai, where people migrate from all over India in the hope of a better life. The slum areas are living spaces created out of all kinds of found materials: corrugated sheets, wooden beams and tarpaulin

### Subject

The poem describes a ramshackle living space, with its lack of 'straight lines' and beams 'balanced crookedly on supports' Dharker celebrates the existence of these living spaces as a miracle.

The lines of the buildings are slanting and unstable, balancing precariously between dangerous and 'miraculous'. The eggs in a basket that hang out 'over the dark edge' are an act of faith, not only because someone has so delicately placed them in such a ramshackle environment, but also because they contain new life. The eggs, like the buildings are miracles.

It may seem like an act of faith to live in one of these rough structures - a daring attempt to live in such a place. In this way the poem represents the fragility of human life and celebrates the way that faith brings boldness.

### Themes

**Fragility**- the building structures and the eggs are both fragile. The buildings have no 'straight lines' and are held together by nails that 'clutch at open seams'(personification)

**Faith**- to live in a space that is unstable and apparently verging on collapse, requires a strong faith in the building's structure.

**Boldness**- there is a boldness implied in the way that people squeeze into these structures and, despite the apparent danger, create a living space. They add ordinary objects to make a home, hanging wire baskets of eggs in the same way people would in more sturdy buildings.

### Tone

Celebration at the way faith is working in these places.

Bright, playful, heroic.

Even though the poem highlights poverty in the slums it describes the surroundings in a playful way.

### Links to other poems

'Cozy Apologia' by Rita Dove.

Both poems describe a precarious contentment. In '*Living Space*', the houses themselves are unstable and in '*Cozy Apologia*', the imminent storm threatens upheaval. However, the people in both situations seem content with their place in the world. They use a conversational style that includes the reader. Both poems refer to faith.

## How is it organised

'Living Space' is written in one long thin stanza with 22 short lines. Each line varies in length. The longest, 'The whole structure leans dangerously', appears considerably longer on the page than the others, perhaps echoing the fact the whole structure is leaning over. The effect of this is to create a poem that appears as precarious as the physical structures it describes. The lines of different lengths seem to jut out into the page like some of the crooked beams the poet presents.

There are some instances of rhyme in the poem (that/flat, beams/seams, space/place, white/light). In these cases, the rhyme acts as a way of holding the poem together. In that respect, the rhymes are similar to the nails in the poem which are attempting to lend stability to the overall structure.

Dharker uses enjambment throughout this poem with lines spilling over into one another. This reflects the way the slum structures lean over and on top of each other.

The first half of the poem describes the structure. From line 11 onwards we are presented with an image of something inside: people living in the space, and the eggs hanging in a basket. This makes the second half of the poem more hopeful, as if showing the power of faith

## Lines for A02

1. "Nails clutch at open seams" – The word clutch gives the nails a human characteristic and suggests that they are reaching forward. The nails are personified and seem to want to join the structure more solidly.
2. "The whole structure leans dangerously towards the miraculous." -Descriptive imagery
3. "Beams balance"-alliteration
4. "these eggs in a wire basket....as if they were the bright, thin walls of faith" simile suggesting the eggs are strong and confident in an uncertain environment.
5. "... crookedly on supports thrust of the vertical"-The disjointed sounds of the lines perhaps recreate the jagged, crooked skyline phonologically

## 'London' by William Blake

### Context:

William Blake was a poet and artist who specialised in illuminated texts, often of a religious nature.

He rejected established religion for various reasons.

One of the main ones was the failure of the established Church to help children in London who were forced to work.

Blake lived and worked in the capital, so was arguably well placed to write clearly about the conditions people who lived there faced.

### Subject:

- The poem describes a journey around London, offering a glimpse of what the speaker sees as the terrible conditions faced by the people who live in the city. Child labour, restrictive laws of property and prostitution are all explored in the poem.
- The poem starts with a criticism of laws relating to ownership. The 'charter'd Thames' is a bitter reference to the way in which every aspect of life in London is owned, even the river, which is often used in other poems as a symbol of life, freedom and the power of nature.
- Blake's poem also criticises religion and its failures. The speaker draws attention to the cry of the chimney sweeper and the blackening of church walls, implying that the church as an institution is inactive, unwilling to help those in need.
- It ends with a vision of the terrible consequences to be faced as a result of sexually transmitted disease.

### Themes:

- Blake's speaker has a very negative view of the city. For Blake, the conditions faced by people caused them to decay physically, morally and spiritually.
- For Blake, buildings, especially church buildings, often symbolised confinement, restriction and failure.
- In this poem, the lines "the Chimney-sweeper's cry / Every blackening church appals" provide an association which reveals the speaker's attitude. Money is spent on church buildings while children live in poverty, forced to clean chimneys - the soot from which blackens the church walls. To Blake, this makes a mockery of the love and care that should characterise the Christian religion.
- The "blackening" church walls are also linked to the running of "blood down Palace walls" - a clear allusion to the French Revolution. The speaker is perhaps arguing that, unless conditions change, the people will be forced to revolt.
- The poem as a whole suggests Blake sees the rapid urbanisation in Britain at the time as a dangerous force. Children are no longer free to enjoy childhood; instead working in dangerous conditions. Charters restrict freedoms, ultimately resulting in the restriction of thinking.

### Tone:

The tone of the poem is at times biblical, reflecting Blake's strong interest in religion. It is as if the speaker is offering a prophesy of the terrible consequences unless changes are made in the city. The poem is pessimistic. It is without hope for the future.



### Structure:

- *London* is presented in a very regular way, much like a song. There is a strict abab rhyme scheme in each of the four stanzas.
- The four stanzas offer a glimpse of different aspects of the city, almost like snapshots seen by the speaker as he walks through the streets.

### Language:

- In the first stanza, Blake **uses repetition** twice, firstly using the word "charter'd". This is a reference to the charters that allocated ownership and rights to specific people. Many, including Blake, saw this as robbing ordinary people of their rights and freedoms.
- The second use of repetition is with the word "marks". This has a dual meaning: it refers to the physical marks carried by people as a result of the conditions they endure, and is also suggestive of the speaker recording evidence during his walk through the city streets.
- In the first three lines of stanza two, the speaker makes it clear that "every" sound he hears is evidence of the "mind-forg'd manacles". Manacles are like handcuffs. The **metaphor** is suggesting that people's minds are restricted and confined - that the city has robbed them of the ability to think.
- The poem is full of **negative words**: "weakness", "woe", "cry", "fear", "appals", "blood", "blights", "plagues" and "hearse" are just some of them.
- The poem ends with a startling **contrast** in the **oxymoron** chosen: "marriage hearse". To Blake, marriage should be a celebration of love and the beginning of new life. Yet here it is combined with the word "hearse" - a vehicle associated with funerals. To the speaker of the poem, the future brings nothing but death and decay.

### Links to other poems:

'Living Space' – Imtiaz Dharker: huge contrast in atmosphere/structure ('Living Space' is precarious yet positive whilst *London* is confined and restrictive) Biblical references in both.

### Which lines are useful in terms of A02 analysis?

1. In the first stanza, Blake uses repetition twice, firstly using the word "charter'd". This is a reference to the charters that allocated ownership and rights to specific people. Many, including Blake, saw this as robbing ordinary people of their rights and freedoms.
2. The second use of repetition is with the word "marks". This has a dual meaning: it refers to the physical marks carried by people as a result of the conditions they endure, and is also suggestive of the speaker recording evidence during his walk through the city streets.
3. In the first three lines of stanza two, the speaker makes it clear that "every" sound he hears is evidence of the "mind-forg'd manacles". Manacles are like handcuffs. The metaphor is suggesting that people's minds are restricted and confined - that the city has robbed them of the ability to think.
4. The poem is full of negative words: "weakness", "woe", "cry", "fear", "appals", "blood", "blights", "plagues" and "hearse" are just some of them.
5. The poem ends with a startling juxtaposition in the line : "marriage hearse". To Blake, marriage should be a celebration of love and the beginning of new life. Yet here it is combined with the word "hearse" - a vehicle associated with funerals. To the speaker of the poem, the future brings nothing but death and decay.