

Year 11

Unseen Poetry

(2020/2021 Edition Only)

A collection of 20th/21st century poems grouped by theme and questions set in the same format as the exam.

Whilst you will not study the poetry anthology in its entirety, relevant 20th Century poems from the anthology are included from page 14 onwards.

Annotate these poems to practise your poetry analysis skills before answering the questions provided with each pair to hone your essay writing.

Exam timings:

question a) 20 minutes;

question b) 40 minutes

Assessment Objectives:

AO1: Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to:

- maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response
- use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.

AO2: Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

Half-Caste

Excuse me
standing on one leg
I'm half-caste.

Explain yusef
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean when picasso
mix red an green
is a half-caste canvas?
explain yusef
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean when light an shadow
mix in de sky
is a half-caste weather?
well in dat case
england weather
nearly always half-caste
in fact some o dem cloud
half-caste till dem overcast
so spiteful dem don't want de sun pass
ah rass
explain yusef
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean tchaikovsky
sit down at dah piano
an mix a black key
wid a white key
is a half-caste symphony?

Explain yusef
wha yu mean
Ah listening to yu wid de keen
half of mih ear
Ah looking at yu wid de keen
half of mih eye
an when I'm introduced to yu
I'm sure you'll understand
why I offer yu half-a-hand
an when I sleep at night
I close half-a-eye
consequently when I dream
I dream half-a-dream
an when moon begin to glow
I half-caste human being
cast half-a-shadow
but yu must come back tomorrow
wid de whole of yu eye
an de whole of yu ear
an de whole of yu mind.

an I will tell yu
de other half
of my story

No Problem

I am not de problem
But I bare de brunt
Of silly playground taunts
An racist stunts,
I am not de problem
I am a born academic
But dey got me on de run
Now I am branded athletic,
I am not de problem
If yu give I a chance
I can teach yu of Timbuktu
I can do more dan dance,
I am not de problem
I greet yu wid a smile
Yu put me in a pigeon hole
But I a versatile.

These conditions may affect me
As I get older,
An I am positively sure
I have no chips on me shoulders,
Black is not de problem
Mother country get it right,
An just for de record,
Sum of me best friends are white

Read the two poems, Half-Caste by John Agard and No Problem by Benjamin Zephaniah. In both of these poems the poets write about being on the receiving end of racism.

(a) Write about the poem Half-Caste by John Agard, and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare Half-Caste by John Agard and No Problem by Benjamin Zephaniah. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

Mother to Son

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I've been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So, boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps.
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I've still goin', honey,
I've still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

The Class Game

How can you tell what class I'm from?
I can talk posh like some
With an 'Olly in me mouth
Down me nose, wear an 'at not a scarf
With me second-hand clothes.
So why do you always wince when you hear
Me say 'Tara' to me 'Ma' instead of 'Bye Mummy dear'?
How can you tell what class I'm from?
'Cos we live in a corpy, not like some
In a pretty little semi, out Wirral way
And commute into Liverpool by train each day?
Or did I drop my unemployment card
Sitting on your patio (We have a yard)?
How can you tell what class I'm from?
Have I a label on me head, and another on me bum?
Or is it because my hands are stained with toil?
Instead of soft lily-white with perfume and oil?
Don't I crook me little finger when I drink me tea
Say toilet instead of bog when I want to pee?
Why do you care what class I'm from?
Does it stick in your gullet like a sour plum?
Well, mate! A cleaner is me mother
A docker is me brother
Bread pudding is wet nelly
And me stomach is me belly
And I'm proud of the class that I come from.

Read the two poems, Mother to Son by Langston Hughes and The Class Game by Mary Casey. In both of these poems the poets write about life within a social class.

(a) Write about the poem Mother to Son by Langston Hughes, and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare Mother to Son by Langston Hughes and The Class Game by Mary Casey. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

Nettles

My son aged three fell in the nettle bed.
'Bed' seemed a curious name for those green spears,
That regiment of spite behind the shed:
It was no place for rest. With sobs and tears
The boy came seeking comfort and I saw
White blisters beaded on his tender skin.
We soothed him till his pain was not so raw.
At last he offered us a watery grin,
And then I took my billhook, honed the blade
And went outside and slashed in fury with it
Till not a nettle in that fierce parade
Stood upright any more. And then I lit
A funeral pyre to burn the fallen dead,
But in two weeks the busy sun and rain
Had called up tall recruits behind the shed:
My son would often feel sharp wounds again.

Catrin

I can remember you, child,
As I stood in a hot, white
Room at the window watching
The people and cars taking
Turn at the traffic lights.
I can remember you, our first
Fierce confrontation, the tight
Red rope of love which we both
Fought over. It was a square
Environmental blank, disinfected
Of paintings or toys. I wrote
All over the walls with my
Words, coloured the clean squares
With the wild, tender circles
Of our struggle to become
Separate. We want, we shouted,
To be two, to be ourselves.

Read the two poems, *Nettles* by Vernon Scannell and *Catrin* by Gillian Clarke. In both of these poems the poets write about the relationships between children and their parents.

(a) Write about the poem *Nettles* by Vernon Scannell, and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare *Nettle* by Vernon Scannell and *Catrin* by Gillian Clarke. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

Neither won nor lost the struggle
In the glass tank clouded with feelings
Which changed us both. Still I am fighting
You off, as you stand there
With your straight, strong, long
Brown hair and your rosy,
Defiant glare, bringing up
From the heart's pool that old rope,
Tightening about my life,
Trailing love and conflict,
As you ask may you skate
In the dark, for one more hour.

Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on that sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Eden Rock

They are waiting for me somewhere beyond Eden Rock:
My father, twenty-five, in the same suit
Of Genuine Irish Tweed, his terrier Jack
Still two years old and trembling at his feet.

My mother, twenty-three, in a sprigged dress
Drawn at the waist, ribbon in her straw hat,
Has spread the stiff white cloth over the grass.
Her hair, the colour of wheat, takes on the light.

She pours tea from a Thermos, the milk straight
From an old H.P. sauce-bottle, a screw
Of paper for a cork; slowly sets out
The same three plates, the tin cups painted blue.

The sky whitens as if lit by three suns.
My mother shades her eyes and looks my way
Over the drifted stream. My father spins
A stone along the water. Leisurely,

They beckon to me from the other bank.
I hear them call, 'See where the stream-path is!
Crossing is not as hard as you might think.'

I had not thought that it would be like this.

Read the two poems, Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night by Dylan Thomas and Eden Rock by Charles Causley. In both of these poems the poets write about death and dying.

(a) Write about the poem Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night by Dylan Thomas, and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night by Dylan Thomas and Eden Rock by Charles Causley. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

Let Me Die A Youngman's Death

Let me die a youngman's death
not a clean and inbetween
the sheets holywater death
not a famous-last-words
peaceful out of breath death

When I'm 73
and in constant good tumour
may I be mown down at dawn
by a bright red sports car
on my way home
from an allnight party

Or when I'm 91
with silver hair
and sitting in a barber's chair
may rival gangsters
with hamfisted tommyguns burst in
and give me a short back and insides

Or when I'm 104
and banned from the Cavern
may my mistress
catching me in bed with her daughter
and fearing for her son
cut me up into little pieces
and throw away every piece but one

Let me die a youngman's death
not a free from sin tiptoe in
candle wax and waning death
not a curtains drawn by angels borne
'what a nice way to go' death

The Mower

The mower stalled, twice; kneeling, I found
A hedgehog jammed up against the blades,
Killed. It had been in the long grass.

I had seen it before, and even fed it, once.
Now I had mauled its unobtrusive world
Unmendably. Burial was no help:

Next morning I got up and it did not.
The first day after a death, the new absence
Is always the same; we should be careful

Of each other, we should be kind
While there is still time.

Read the two poems, Let Me Die A Youngman's Death by Roger McGough and The Mower by Philip Larkin. In both of these poems the poets write about death and dying.

(a) Write about the poem Let Me Die A Youngman's Death by Roger McGough, and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare Let Me Die A Youngman's Death by Roger McGough and The Mower by Philip Larkin. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

The Emigreé

There once was a country... I left it as a child
but my memory of it is sunlight-clear
for it seems I never saw it in that November
which, I am told, comes to the mildest city.
The worst news I receive of it cannot break
my original view, the bright, filled paperweight.
It may be at war, it may be sick with tyrants,
but I am branded by an impression of sunlight.

The white streets of that city, the graceful slopes
glow even clearer as time rolls its tanks
and the frontiers rise between us, close like waves.
That child's vocabulary I carried here
like a hollow doll, opens and spills a grammar.
Soon I shall have every coloured molecule of it.
It may by now be a lie, banned by the state
but I can't get it off my tongue. It tastes of sunlight.

I have no passport, there's no way back at all
but my city comes to me in its own white plane.
It lies down in front of me, docile as paper;
I comb its hair and love its shining eyes.
My city takes me dancing through the city
of walls. They accuse me of absence, they circle me.
They accuse me of being dark in their free city.
My city hides behind me. They mutter death,
and my shadow falls as evidence of sunlight.

Postcard From A Travel Snob

I do not wish that anyone were here.
This place is not a holiday resort
with karaoke nights and pints of beer
for drunken tourist types – perish the thought.

This is a peaceful place, untouched by man –
not like your seaside-town-consumer-hell.
I'm sleeping in a local farmer's van –
it's great. There's not a guest house or hotel

within a hundred miles. Nobody speaks
English (apart from me, and rest assured,
I'm not your sun-and-sangria-two-weeks
small-minded-package-philistine-abroad).

When you're as multi-cultural as me,
your friends become wine connoisseurs, not drunks.
I'm not a British tourist in the sea;
I am an anthropologist in trunks

Read the two poems, The Emigreé by Carol Rumens and Postcards from a Travel Snob by Sophie Hannah. In both of these poems the poets write about places abroad and travelling.

(a) Write about the poem, The Emigreé by Carol Rumens and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare The Emigreé by Carol Rumens and Postcards from a Travel Snob by Sophie Hannah. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

Rubbish at Adultery

Must I give up another night
To hear you whinge and whine
About how terribly grim you feel
And what a dreadful swine
You are? You say you'll never leave
Your wife and children. Fine;

When have I ever asked you to?
I'd settle for a kiss.
Couldn't you, for an hour or so,
Just leave them out of *this*?
A rare ten minutes off from guilty
Diatribes – what bliss.

Yes, I'm aware you're sensitive:
A tortured, wounded soul.
I'm after passion, thrills and fun.
You say fun takes its toll,
So what are we doing here? I fear
We've lost our common goal.

You're rubbish at adultery.
I think you ought to quit.
Trouble is, though, fidelity?
You're just as crap at it.
Choose one and do it properly,
You stupid, stupid git.

Havisham

Beloved sweetheart bastard. Not a day since then
I haven't wished him dead. Prayed for it
so hard I've dark green pebbles for eyes,
ropes on the back of my hands I could strangle with.

Spinster. I stink and remember. Whole days
in bed cawing Nooooo at the wall; the dress
yellowing, trembling if I open the wardrobe;
the slewed mirror, full-length, her, myself, who did this

to me? Puce curses that are sounds not words.
Some nights better, the lost body over me,
my fluent tongue in its mouth in its ear
then down till I suddenly bite awake. Love's

hate behind a white veil; a red balloon bursting
in my face. Bang. I stabbed at a wedding cake.
Give me a male corpse for a long slow honeymoon.
Don't think it's only the heart that b-b-b-breaks.

Read the two poems, *Rubbish At Adultery* by Sophie Hannah and *Havisham* by Carol Ann Duffy. In both of these poems the poets write about anger in relationships.

(a) Write about the poem, *Rubbish At Adultery* by Sophie Hannah and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare *Rubbish At Adultery* by Sophie Hannah and *Havisham* by Carol Ann Duffy. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

When Autumn Came

This is the way that autumn came to the trees:
it stripped them down to the skin,
left their ebony bodies naked.
It shook out their hearts, the yellow leaves,
scattered them over the ground.
Anyone could trample them out of shape
undisturbed by a single moan of protest.

The birds that herald dreams
were exiled from their song,
each voice torn out of its throat.
They dropped into the dust
even before the hunter strung his bow.

Autumn

Autumn arrives
Like an experienced robber
Grabbing the green stuff
Then cunningly covering his tracks
With a deep multitude
Of colourful distractions.
And the wind,
The wind is his accomplice
Putting an air of chaos
Into the careful diversions
So branches shake
And dead leaves are suddenly brown
In the faces of inquisitive strangers.
The theft chills the world
Changes the temper of the earth
Till the normally placid sky
Glows red with a quiet rage.

Read the two poems, When Autumn Came by Naomi Lazard and Autumn by Alan Bold. In both of these poems the poets write about the seasons.

(a) Write about the poem, When Autumn Came by Naomi Lazard and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare When Autumn Came by Naomi Lazard and Autumn by Alan Bold. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

Funeral Blues

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message 'He Is Dead',
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now: put out every one;
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood.
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

About His Person

Five pounds fifty in change, exactly,
a library card on its date of expiry.

A postcard stamped,
unwritten, but franked,

a pocket size diary slashed with a pencil
from March twenty-fourth to the first of April.

A brace of keys for a mortise lock,
an analogue watch, self-winding, stopped.

A final demand
in his own hand,

a rolled up note of explanation
planted there like a spray carnation

but beheaded, in his fist.
A shopping list.

A giveaway photograph stashed in his wallet,
a keepsake banked in the heart of a locket.

no gold or silver,
but crowning one finger

a ring of white unweathered skin.
That was everything.

Read the two poems, Funeral Blues by W.H. Auden and About His Person by Simon Armitage. In both of these poems the poets write about death.

(a) Write about the poem, Funeral Blues by W.H. Auden and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare Funeral Blues by W.H. Auden and About His Person by Simon Armitage. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

In the Can

Every second is a fishbone that sticks
In the throat. Every hour another slow
Step towards freedom. We're geriatrics
Waiting for release, bribing time to go.
I've given up trying to make anything
Different happen. Mornings: tabloids, page three.
Afternoons: videos or Stephen King,
Answering letters from relatives who bore me.
We're told not to count, but the days mount here
Like thousands of identical stitches
Resentfully sewn into a sampler,
Or a cricket bat made out of matches.
Nights find me scoring walls like a madman,
Totting up runs: one more day in the can.

Human Interest

Fifteen years minimum, banged up inside
for what took thirty seconds to complete.
She turned away. I stabbed. I felt this heat
burn through my skull until reason had died.

I'd slogged my guts out for her, but she lied
when I knew different. She used to meet
some prick after work. She stank of deceit.

I loved her. When I accused her, she cried
and denied it. Straight up, tore me apart.
On the Monday, I found the other bloke
had bought her a chain with a silver heart.

When I think about her now, I near choke
with grief. My baby. She wasn't a tart
or nothing. I wouldn't harm a fly, no joke.

Read the two poems, In The Can by Rosie Jackson and Human Interest by Carol Ann Duffy. In both of these poems the poets write life in prison.

(a) Write about the poem, In The Can by Rosie Jackson and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare In The Can by Rosie Jackson and Human Interest by Carol Ann Duffy. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

For Heidi with Blue Hair

When you dyed your hair blue
(or, at least ultramarine
for the clipped sides, with a crest
of jet-black spikes on top)
you were sent home from school

because, as the headmistress put it,
although dyed hair was not
specifically forbidden, yours
was, apart from anything else,
not done in the school colours.

Tears in the kitchen, telephone-calls
to school from your freedom-loving father:
'She's not a punk in her behaviour;
it's just a style.' (You wiped your eyes,
also not in a school colour.)

'She discussed it with me first -
we checked the rules.' 'And anyway, Dad,
it cost twenty-five dollars.
Tel them it won't wash out -
not even if I wanted to try.

It would have been unfair to mention
your mother's death, but that
shimmered behind the arguments.
The school had nothing else against you;
the teachers twittered and gave in.

Next day your black friend had hers done
in grey, white and flaxen yellow -
the school colours precisely:
an act of solidarity, a witty
tease. The battle was already won.

My father thought it bloody queer,

My father thought it bloody queer,
the day I rolled home with a ring of silver in my ear
half hidden by a mop of hair. "You've lost your head.
If that's how easily you're led
you should've had it through your nose instead."
And even then I hadn't had the nerve to numb
the lobe with ice, then drive a needle through the skin,
then wear a safety-pin. It took a jeweller's gun
to pierce the flesh, and then a friend
to thread the sleeper in, and where it slept
the hole became a sore, became a wound, and wept.
At twenty-nine, it comes as no surprise to hear
my own voice breaking like a tear, released like water,
cried from way back in the spiral of the ear.

*If I were you,
I'd take it out and leave it out next year.*

Read the two poems, For Heidi With The Blue Hair by Fleur Adcock and My Father Thought It by Simon Armitage. In both of these poems the poets write about rebellion.

(a) Write about the poem, For Heidi With The Blue Hair by Fleur Adcock and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare For Heidi With The Blue Hair by Fleur Adcock and My Father Thought It by Simon Armitage. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

Woman Work

I've got the children to tend
The clothes to mend
The floor to mop
The food to shop
Then the chicken to fry
The baby to dry
I got company to feed
The garden to weed
I've got shirts to press
The tots to dress
The can to be cut
I gotta clean up this hut
Then see about the sick
And the cotton to pick.

Shine on me, sunshine
Rain on me, rain
Fall softly, dewdrops
And cool my brow again.

Storm, blow me from here
With your fiercest wind
Let me float across the sky
'Til I can rest again.

Fall gently, snowflakes
Cover me with white
Cold icy kisses and
Let me rest tonight.

Sun, rain, curving sky
Mountain, oceans, leaf and stone
Star shine, moon glow
You're all that I can call my own.

Overheard in County Sligo

I married a man from County Roscommon
and I live in the back of beyond
with a field of cows and a yard of hens
and six white geese on the pond.

At my door's a square of yellow corn
caught up by its corners and shaken,
and the road runs down through the open gate
and freedom's there for the taking.

I had thought to work on the Abbey* stage
or have my name in a book,
to see my thought on the printed page,
or still the crowd with a look.

But I turn to fold the breakfast cloth
and to polish the lustre and brass,
to order and dust the tumbled rooms
and find my face in the glass.

I ought to feel I'm a happy woman
for I lie in the lap of the land,
but I married the man from County Roscommon
and I live at the back of beyond.

Read the two poems, *Woman Work* by Maya Angelou and *Overheard in County Sligo* by Gillian Clarke. In both of these poems the poets write about rebellion.

(a) Write about the poem, *Woman Work* by Maya Angelou and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare *Woman Work* by Maya Angelou and *Overheard in County Sligo* by Gillian Clarke. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

The Manhunt

After the first phase,
after passionate nights and intimate days,

only then would he let me trace
the frozen river which ran through his face,

only then would he let me explore
the blown hinge of his lower jaw,

and handle and hold
the damaged, porcelain collar-bone,

and mind and attend
the fractured rudder of shoulder-blade,

and finger and thumb
the parachute silk of his punctured lung.

Only then could I bind the struts
and climb the rungs of his broken ribs,

and feel the hurt
of his grazed heart.

Skirting along,
only then could I picture the scan,

the foetus of metal beneath his chest
where the bullet had finally come to rest.

Then I widened the search,
traced the scarring back to its source

to a sweating, unexploded mine
buried deep in his mind, around which

every nerve in his body had tightened and closed.
Then, and only then, did I come close.

The Soldier

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Read the two poems, The Manhunt by Simon Armitage and The Soldier by Rupert Brooke. In both of these poems the poets write about the effects of war.

(a) Write about the poem, The Manhunt by Simon Armitage and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare The Manhunt by Simon Armitage and The Soldier by Rupert Brooke. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

Living Space

There are just not enough
straight lines. That
is the problem.
Nothing is flat
or parallel. Beams
balance crookedly on supports
thrust off the vertical.
Nails clutch at open seams.
The whole structure leans dangerously
towards the miraculous.

Into this rough frame,
someone has squeezed
a living space

and even dared to place
these eggs in a wire basket,
fragile curves of white
hung out over the dark edge
of a slanted universe,
gathering the light
into themselves,
as if they were
the bright, thin walls of faith.

Read the two poems, *Living Space* by Imtiaz Dharker and *Cozy Apologia* by Rita Dove. In both of these poems the poets write about the specific locations

(a) Write about the poem, *Living Space* by Imtiaz Dharker and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare , *Living Space* by Imtiaz Dharker and *Cozy Apologia* by Rita Dove. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

Cozy Apologia

—for Fred

I could pick anything and think of you—
This lamp, the wind-still rain, the glossy blue
My pen exudes, drying matte, upon the page.
I could choose any hero, any cause or age
And, sure as shooting arrows to the heart,
Astride a dappled mare, legs braced as far apart
As standing in silver stirrups will allow—
There you'll be, with furrowed brow
And chain mail glinting, to set me free:
One eye smiling, the other firm upon the enemy.

This post-post-modern age is all business: compact disks
And faxes, a do-it-now-and-take-no-risks
Event. Today a hurricane is nudging up the coast,
Oddly male: Big Bad Floyd, who brings a host
Of daydreams: awkward reminiscences
Of teenage crushes on worthless boys
Whose only talent was to kiss you senseless.
They all had sissy names—Marcel, Percy, Dewey;
Were thin as licorice and as chewy,
Sweet with a dark and hollow center. Floyd's

Cussing up a storm. You're bunkered in your
Aerie, I'm perched in mine
(Twin desks, computers, hardwood floors):
We're content, but fall short of the Divine.
Still, it's embarrassing, this happiness—
Who's satisfied simply with what's good for us,
When has the ordinary ever been news?
And yet, because nothing else will do
To keep me from melancholy (call it blues),
I fill this stolen time with you

Valentine

Not a red rose or a satin heart.

I give you an onion.
It is a moon wrapped in brown paper.
It promises light
like the careful undressing of love.

Here.
It will blind you with tears
like a lover.
It will make your reflection
a wobbling photo of grief.

I am trying to be truthful.

Not a cute card or a kissogram.

I give you an onion.
Its fierce kiss will stay on your lips,
possessive and faithful
as we are,
for as long as we are.

Take it.
Its platinum loops shrink to a wedding-ring,
if you like.
Lethal.
Its scent will cling to your fingers,
cling to your knife.

Afternoons

Summer is fading:
The leaves fall in ones and twos
From trees bordering
The new recreation ground.
In the hollows of afternoons
Young mothers assemble
At swing and sandpit
Setting free their children.

Behind them, at intervals,
Stand husbands in skilled trades,
An estateful of washing,
And the albums, lettered
Our Wedding, lying
Near the television:
Before them, the wind
Is ruining their courting-places

That are still courting-places
(But the lovers are all in school),
And their children, so intent on
Finding more unripe acorns,
Expect to be taken home.
Their beauty has thickened.
Something is pushing them
To the side of their own lives.

Read the two poems, Valentine by Carol Ann Duffy and Afternoons by Philip Larkin. In both of these poems the poets write about realistic people and relationships

(a) Write about the poem, Valentine by Carol Ann Duffy and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare Valentine by Carol Ann Duffy and Afternoons by Philip Larkin. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

Death of a Naturalist

All year the flax-dam festered in the heart
Of the townland; green and heavy headed
Flax had rotted there, weighted down by huge sods.
Daily it sweltered in the punishing sun.
Bubbles gargled delicately, bluebottles
Wove a strong gauze of sound around the smell.
There were dragon-flies, spotted butterflies,
But best of all was the warm thick slobber
Of frogspawn that grew like clotted water
In the shade of the banks. Here, every spring
I would fill jampotfuls of the jellied
Specks to range on window-sills at home,
On shelves at school, and wait and watch until
The fattening dots burst into nimble-
Swimming tadpoles. Miss Walls would tell us how
The daddy frog was called a bullfrog
And how he croaked and how the mammy frog
Laid hundreds of little eggs and this was
Frogspawn. You could tell the weather by frogs too
For they were yellow in the sun and brown
In rain.

Then one hot day when fields were rank
With cowdung in the grass and angry frogs
Invaded the flax-dam; I ducked through hedges
To a coarse croaking that I had not heard
Before. The air was thick with a bass chorus.
Right down the dam gross-bellied frogs were cocked
On sods; their loose necks pulsed like sails. Some hopped:
The slap and plop were obscene threats. Some sat
Poised like mud grenades, their blunt heads farting.
I sickened, turned, and ran. The great slime kings
Were gathered there for vengeance and I knew
That if I dipped my hand the spawn would clutch it.

Hawk Roosting

I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.
Inaction, no falsifying dream
Between my hooked head and hooked feet:
Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat.

The convenience of the high trees!
The air's buoyancy and the sun's ray
Are of advantage to me;
And the earth's face upward for my inspection.

My feet are locked upon the rough bark.
It took the whole of Creation
To produce my foot, my each feather:
Now I hold Creation in my foot

Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly –
I kill where I please because it is all mine.
There is no sophistry in my body:
My manners are tearing off heads –

The allotment of death.
For the one path of my flight is direct
Through the bones of the living.
No arguments assert my right:

The sun is behind me.
Nothing has changed since I began.
My eye has permitted no change.
I am going to keep things like this.

Read the two poems, Death of a Naturalist by Seamus Heaney and Hawk Roosting by Ted Hughes. In both of these poems the poets write about nature

(a) Write about the poem, Death of a Naturalist by Seamus Heaney and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare Death of a Naturalist by Seamus Heaney and Hawk Roosting by Ted Hughes. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

Dulce Decorum Est

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! – An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime ...
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, –
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

War Photographer (negative war)

The reassurance of the frame is flexible
- you can think that just outside it
people eat, sleep, love normally
while I seek out the tragic, the absurd,
to make a subject.
Or if the picture's such as lifts the heart
the firmness of the edges can convince you
this is how things are

- as when at ascot once
I took a pair of peach, sun-gilded girls
rolling, silk crumpled, on the grass
in champagne giggles

-as last week, when I followed a small girl
staggering down some devastated street,
hip thrust out under a baby's weight.
she saw me seeing her; my finger pressed.

At the corner, the first bomb of the morning
shattered the stones.
Instinct prevailing, she dropped her burden
and, mouth too small for her dark scream,
began to run...

Read the two poems, Dulce Decorum Est by Wilfred Owen and War Photographer by Carole Satyamurti. In both of these poems the poets write about the propaganda of war.

(a) Write about the poem, Dulce Decorum Est by Wilfred Owen and its effect on you. [15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

b) Now compare Dulce Decorum Est by Wilfred Owen and War Photographer by Carole Satyamurti. [25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.