



GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE

Unseen poetry preparation

Teacher Guide

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Introduction

Responding to poetry

GCSE English Literature assesses the extent to which candidates can develop an informed, personal, critical response to a text, considering some of the ways in which the writer has presented their ideas. Some aspects of the course also assess the ability to make comparisons and links across texts, and the relevance of contextual factors (AO3).

The key skills for unseen poetry are:

AO1 – read, understand and respond to texts, maintaining a critical style and developing an informed personal response, using textual references including quotations to support and illustrate interpretations (12 marks)

AO2 – analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate (12 marks)

Students are also asked to identify the similarities and/or differences between the two previously unseen poems (8 marks).

Unpicking the assessment objectives

Assessment objective 1

A ‘response’ in its broadest sense refers to the candidates’ ability to understand what the text might mean – to them, possibly, and to other readers. A response refers to:

What is this text trying to say?

Why might it have been written?

What is it encouraging the reader to think/feel?

What ideas is it presenting/exploring?

In other words.... What do you think it *means*?

The ability to select ‘textual references’ could mean an apt quotation – an element of the text that provides a really good example of the point the candidate is making. However, it is the skill of precisely unpicking and selecting textual *references*, rather than using *quotations*, that is important.

Assessment objective 2

Explaining writers' use of language/structure/form refers to how the text has been constructed; in other words, the deliberate decisions the writer has made in order to get their meanings across to the reader. This might, in some cases, include aspects of language **and** structure **and** form. Candidates working at the highest level of ability would be expected to consider all three aspects of writer's craft; however in most cases, candidates will be selecting the most relevant, appropriate aspect of conscious crafting to analyse. Literary terminology can be considered a shorthand for candidates with which to explain the ways in which a writer has used language, structure and/or form to communicate meaning to the reader.

Identifying similarities and/or differences

The selection of the two unseen poems will be driven by the fact that students are invited to identify similarities/differences between them. Therefore, the link(s) between them will be clear. As students work through the two discrete responses, they will be forming ideas which can be used in their response to this short, synoptic task.

Using the Teacher Guide

The activities and approaches suggested in this Teacher Guide are designed to provide opportunities for students to develop a skills set that will enable them to respond to unseen poetry. The activities will reference some of the poems and poets in the accompanying Unseen Poetry Anthology, although this does in no way preclude teachers from choosing other poems to support the preparation for unseen poetry. Each lesson plan contains suggested creative and imaginative approaches alongside skills-based activities. Taken holistically, the overall aim is to build confidence in approaching poetry and progression in AO1 and AO2, as well as to introduce the skill of comparison. The lesson plans form a sequence of learning, however this in no way precludes teachers from adapting/altering in order to suit the needs of their groups and students. The lesson plans include some suggestions for creative opportunities as well as some 'deeper learning' activities designed for potentially higher-attaining groups.

You might deliver this unit as an introduction to the teaching of poetry as a whole; in other words prior to study of the cluster/s being used for Unit 2 Section B. If so, the skills being developed in this unit can be built upon later in the course.

Collection of poetry to support preparation for the unseen poem

William Blake: *A Poison Tree*

I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears,
Night and morning with my tears;
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright.
And my foe beheld it shine.
And he knew that it was mine,

And into my garden stole
When the night had veiled the pole;
In the morning glad I see
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

John Keats: *Ode To Autumn*

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cell.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir, the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallops, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Thomas Hardy: *The Voice*

Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me,
Saying that now you are not as you were
When you had changed from the one who was all to me,
But as at first, when our day was fair.

Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then,
Standing as when I drew near to the town
Where you would wait for me: yes, as I knew you then,
Even to the original air-blue gown!

Or is it only the breeze in its listlessness
Traveling across the wet mead to me here,
You being ever dissolved to wan wistlessness,
Heard no more again far or near?

Thus I; faltering forward,
Leaves around me falling,
Wind oozing thin through the thorn from onward,
And the woman calling

Christina Rossetti: *A Birthday*

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me.

W. H. Auden: *If I Could Tell You*

Time will say nothing but I told you so,
Time only knows the price we have to pay;
If I could tell you I would let you know.

If we should weep when clowns put on their show,
If we should stumble when musicians play,
Time will say nothing but I told you so.

There are no fortunes to be told, although,
Because I love you more than I can say,
If I could tell you I would let you know.

The winds must come from somewhere when they blow,
There must be reasons why the leaves decay;
Time will say nothing but I told you so.

Perhaps the roses really want to grow,
The vision seriously intends to stay;
If I could tell you I would let you know.

Suppose all the lions get up and go,
And all the brooks and soldiers run away;
Will Time say nothing but I told you so?
If I could tell you I would let you know.

Wilfred Owen: *Anthem for Doomed Youth*

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, —
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing down of blinds.

Robert Frost: *Mending Wall*

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbour know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbours."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"Why do they make good neighbours? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbours."

Dorothy Parker: A Well-Worn Story

In April, in April,
My one love came along,
And I ran the slope of my high hill
To follow a thread of song.

His eyes were hard as porphyry
With looking on cruel lands;
His voice went slipping over me
Like terrible silver hands.

Together we trod the secret lane
And walked the muttering town.
I wore my heart like a wet, red stain
On the breast of a velvet gown.

In April, in April,
My love went whistling by,
And I stumbled here to my high hill
Along the way of a lie.

Now what should I do in this place
But sit and count the chimes,
And splash cold water on my face
And spoil a page with rhymes?

Maya Angelou: *Still I Rise*

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

Jo Shapcott: *The Great Storm*

We rode it all night. We were not ourselves then.

Through the window everything was horizontal.
In cars and ships and woods, folk died.
Small trees scattered like matchsticks
and a whole shed flew by. The world roared.
A branch broke into the kitchen,
strewed twigs into the banging cupboard,
filled broken crocks with leaves. I heard
a tricycle roll up and down the attic as
the firmament streamed through smashed tiles.

I loved you but I loved the wind more,
wanted to be as horizontal as the tree tops,
to cling to the planet by my last fingernail,
singing into the rush, into the dark.

I didn't know then I would watch
my beloveds peel off the earth
each side of me, flying among tiles, bins,
caravans, car doors and chimney pots,
watch them turn themselves into flotsam
and disappear as wholly as the pier
the next morning, a Friday, mid-
October. Gone, split, vamoosed
like the fifteen million trees.

Wendy Cope: *Spared*

*'That Love is all there is,
Is all we know of Love...'*
– Emily Dickinson

It wasn't you, it wasn't me,
Up there, two thousand feet above
A New York street. We're safe and free,
A little while, to live and love,

Imagining what might have been –
The phone call from the blazing tower,
A last farewell on the machine,
While someone sleeps another hour,

Or worse, perhaps, to say goodbye
And listen to each other's pain,
Send helpless love across the sky,
Knowing we'll never meet again,

Or jump together, hand in hand,
To certain death. Spared all of this
For now, how well I understand
That love is all, is all there is.

Tony Harrison: *The Pen and the Gun*

There's never a time I use this fountain pen
without I'm haunted by a pigeon's pain.

This pen scrats out the panic that it felt.
It took almost two days dying. All my fault.

My friend Pinhead got an airgun once
and what we did with it still makes me wince.

His mam bought him it when his dad died.
She thought it'd help him not to miss his dad.

It was the thing that Pinhead wanted most.
He had the first few goes, and always missed

the pigeon on his chimney, nowhere near,
so wide the bird stayed basking, unaware.

Then I tried and got, beginner's luck, a hit,
of sorts, with my first ever shot.

It fell in the gutter out of reach and sight
but for its claws that scraped against the slate

and scratched all day, all night, and not until
teatime the next day were those claws still.

I was young enough to cry. Never again
did I show any interest in a gun

I grew to think the pen far mightier than
though the scraped claw sound still haunts me from back then.

This pen scratching like its slowly blunting claw
has haunted me for fifty years or more.

Sophie Hannah: Your Dad Did What?

Where they have been, if they have been away,
or what they've done at home, if they have not -
you make them write about the holiday.
One writes My Dad did. What? Your Dad did what?

That's not a sentence. Never mind the bell.
We stay behind until the work is done.
You count their words (you who can count and spell);
all the assignments are complete bar one

and though this boy seems bright, that one is his.
He says he's finished, doesn't want to add
anything, hands it in just as it is.
No change. My Dad did. What? What did his Dad?

You find the 'E' you gave him as you sort
through reams of what this girl did, what that lad did,
and read the line again, just one 'e' short:
This holiday was horrible. My Dad did.

Owen Sheers: Not Yet My Mother

Yesterday I found a photo
of you at seventeen,
holding a horse and smiling,
not yet my mother.

The tight riding hat hid your hair,
and your legs were still the long shins of a boy's.
You held the horse by the halter,
your hand a fist under its huge jaw.

The blown trees were still in the background
and the sky was grained by the old film stock,
but what caught me was your face,
which was mine.

And I thought, just for a second, that you were me.
But then I saw the woman's jacket,
nipped at the waist, the ballooned jodhpurs,
and of course the date, scratched in the corner.

All of which told me again,
that this was you at seventeen, holding a horse
and smiling, not yet my mother,
although I was clearly already your child.

Brian Patten: *In the Orchard After Midnight*

February's over – in the orchard after midnight,
Muffled up against the cold, whiskey on the table,
Head back, staring skywards –
I raise a glass to him – two months dead now –

The grass white, crunchy as sugar,
His ghost, moth quiet,
Steps out of nowhere and is beside me.

Blue shirt open at neck, fawn slacks, sandals-
No coat needed against this worldly frost-
He smiles, takes a chair opposite,

Falls through it, grimaces, nods OK, tries again.
“Not used to this being dead stuff,” he says.
Sits finally, breath smelling of ice and apples.

Underfoot, violets turn mauve in the moonlight,
Tendrils of river mist drift through him.
Somewhere an owl takes out its oboe.

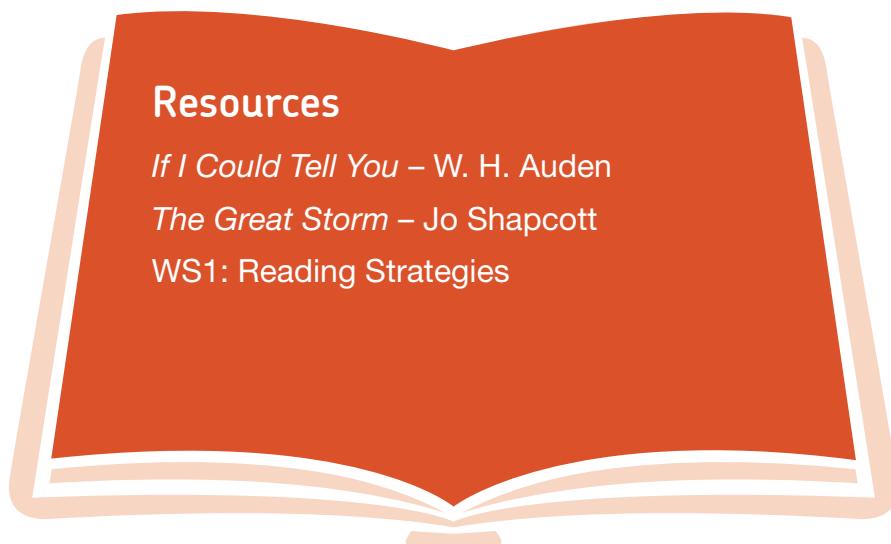
I pour him one ghost glass after another –
We down the bottle – who cares if we get smashed now?
Celia's up in London– can't see us.

“The stars are bubbling away nicely,” he says.
“It's God's soup, spilt out across the heavens,” I reply.
We exchange banter, his ghost and I, the best of mates still.

Lesson plans

Lesson one – exploring approaches to a first reading

The big question: is there one way of approaching a poem for the first time?



Objective

To allow students to explore a range of ways of approaching a poem for the first time.

Start to learning

Give students the Unseen Preparation Anthology to look at. Allow around ten minutes for them to quickly skim and scan the poems. Ask students to discuss in pairs what we might “notice” when we look at a poem for the first time.

Display a copy of *If I Could Tell You* by W. H. Auden for ten seconds before blanking it from the screen. Ask students to scan the poem in the ten seconds, and then make a note of one thing which they ‘noticed’ about the poem. Use sticky notes for this activity.

Repeat this activity twice more. Students should now have three things written on their sticky note.

Develop the learning

Give students a hard copy of the poem and display the following list, either on whiteboard or using WS1 – Reading strategies:

- highlight verbs
- circle punctuation
- pick out three neon lines/ vivid words/phrases
- consider meaning of title
- think about first and last lines
- highlight emotion words
- find examples of imagery
- highlight alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia
- highlight structural features.

Direct students to read the poem through three or four times, undertaking one task from the list on each reading. Annotate on their copy of the poem if useful.

A large orange circle containing the text "Lesson one" in white.

Lesson one

Taking it further

Put students into small groups. Place a copy of *The Great Storm* at the front of the room. Ask one member of the group to come up and look at the poem for 10-30 seconds only, then return to their group and write down what they remember from the poem. Repeat until all members of the group have participated.

Students take sticky notes and sheets from last exercise to display on flip-chart/noticeboard.

Deeper learning

Ask students to select one aspect of either *If I Could Tell You* or *The Great Storm* that they 'noticed'. Write a short paragraph explaining why the writer might have used that particular feature, thinking about the impact that it has on the overall meaning of the poem?

Reviewing learning

Pairs discuss what they have learned about the way they approach an unseen poem. Draw attention to the variety of responses.

Key learning point

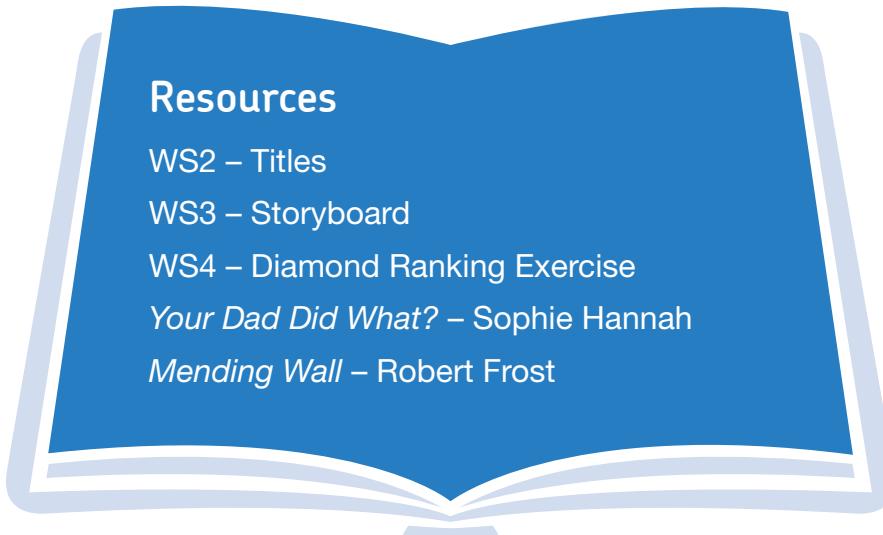
Students write a sentence explaining what they have learned from this lesson: they may consider...

- there are a variety of ways to approach a first reading of a new poem
- there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way of approaching a new poem
- it is important to notice what is interesting to you.

NB: Students should aim to have used all the strategies from the above list, plus any others the teacher thinks relevant, by the end of this unit. The list can be revisited in subsequent lessons.

Lesson two – titles and meanings

The big question: does the title of a poem matter?



Objective

To recognise the significance of the title of a poem

Start to learning

Revisit sticky notes from Lesson one and remind students about the variety of ways of “reading” a poem. Ask pairs to quickly remind each other of one strategy that they remember or used in the previous lesson.

Display or distribute WS2. Working individually, select two or three titles and quickly predict what the titles they have chosen might encourage the reader to think the poem could be about.

Develop the learning

Choose one of the titles they selected. Read the poem, thinking about what connections could be made between the title and the ideas/feelings/attitudes they see in the poem. Write a paragraph of no more than thirty words, aiming to explain why they think the writer might have written the poem.

Creative opportunity

Give students the following writing task:

It is the start of the new school year – the Autumn term – and I want you to spend 10 minutes writing about what you did during your holiday – “Where have you been if you have been away or what you’ve done at home if you haven’t been away.”

Taking it further

Display the title *Your Dad Did What?*. Ask students to discuss in pairs what this poem might be about, based on the title alone.

Give students copies of *Your Dad Did What?* by Sophie Hannah to read, either individually or in pairs/small groups. You might want to ask students to create a storyboard of the poem using WS3.

This activity could be extended to a discussion of what might have happened to the boy's father. Using one piece of evidence, ask students to justify their ideas.

Using WS4, ask students to consider some of the ideas about poetry. When they have selected their primary reason from the Diamond Nine, ask them to explain how Sophie Hannah demonstrates this idea with this particular poem.

Lesson two

Deeper learning

Read *Mending Wall* by Robert Frost. Ask students to consider how the title of this poem links to the overall meaning. Is there a metaphorical connection, perhaps, between the narrative of the poem and the title?

Reviewing learning

Discuss their hypotheses based on the title *Your Dad Did What?*. What specific aspects of the poem link to the title? Why do we think Sophie Hannah might have entitled her poem *Your Dad Did What?*

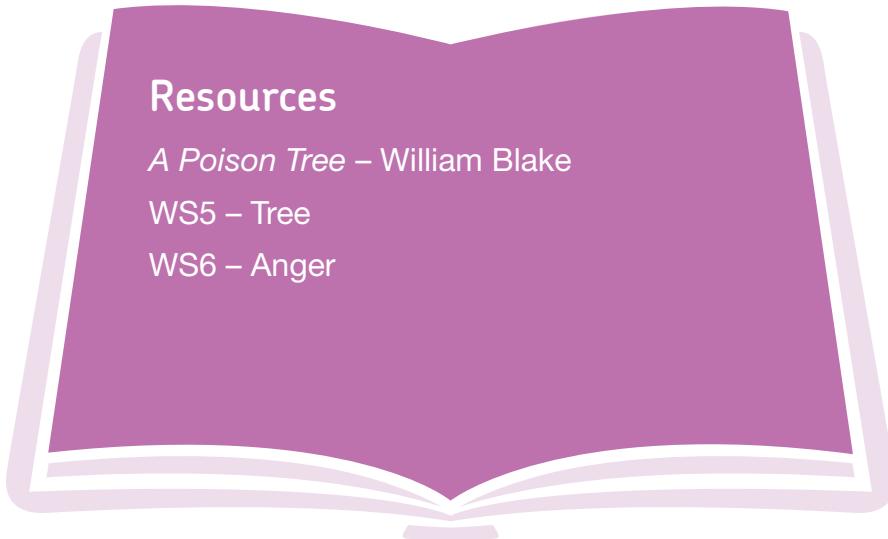
Key learning point

Students write a sentence explaining what they have learned from this lesson: they may consider...

- the particular significance of the title to the themes and ideas
- why the title is interesting
- the use of the title: to emphasise a point, to reflect, to add another layer of meaning such as irony.

Lesson three – unlocking implied meanings

The big question: is the writer in charge of the meaning of a poem?



Resources

- A *Poison Tree* – William Blake
- WS5 – Tree
- WS6 – Anger

Develop the learning

Using WS5, ask students to think of as many ways as they can to describe a tree.

Ask students to consider the following questions:

What is a tree for? What does a tree need? What does a tree provide?

Now, can connections be made between ideas about anger?

Objective

To develop the ability to connect literal to implied meaning.

Start to learning

Read *A Poison Tree* by William Blake. Ask students to quickly write down a summary of the literal, surface content of the poem: ‘this poem is about a man who plants a tree...’

Students should quickly point out that this is not what the poem is ‘about’.

Creative opportunity

Ask students to imagine they are the speaker. Working in pairs, either write down or explain to each other the story of the poem. Focus on the feelings and the overall message of the poem. What do they think the point being made might be?

Taking it further

What might happen if you dwell on a negative emotion rather than dealing with it? Discuss this idea with the class. Using WS6, students could be asked to think of as many synonyms for ‘anger’ as they can, in order to deepen their exploration of the ideas being expressed.

Deeper learning

A Poison Tree is from *Songs of Experience*, a collection which tends to focus on ideas about humanity after the fall of man. Which of the seven deadly sins might Blake be using *A Poison Tree* to explore? Students might want to also read *London* which is also from the same collection.

Reviewing learning

Go back to their ideas about a tree. Why might Blake have used the image of a tree to develop his ideas about anger?

Lesson three

Key learning point

Students write a sentence explaining what they have learned from this lesson: they may consider...

- if it is important to look for an implied meaning
- how the surface meaning links to the implied meaning
- in what way does the content of the poem supports/reinforces the themes being explored.

Lesson four – imagery

The big question: why use images when you could just say what you mean?



Objective

To explore the language of metaphor.

Start to learning

Working together, ask students to think about the image ‘watered shoot’. How much can they say about this image? What happens to a shoot when it is watered? Why does a shoot need water? What does watering a shoot suggest about the person doing the watering?

Develop the learning

Give students a copy of *A Birthday* by Christina Rossetti and ask them to highlight all the positive images. What connects these images? Aim to guide students towards the idea that the majority of the images focus on the idea of nature/growth.

Ask students to look at the first and last line of the poem; together, these summarise the overall point being made. Working either on their own or in pairs, write for five minutes about the image ‘watered shoot’, aiming to link it to the overall meaning of the poem.

(NB: ‘timed LAL’ is a strategy aimed at encouraging students to write at speed about a detail, linking the detail to the overall meaning. Used as a regular part of a teaching sequence, the aim is to encourage students to access higher attainment bands by focusing in detail on one particular aspect of a text. Limit the time to five minutes and ask students to do a word count on completion. The ‘winning’ students can then have their work read out/visualised by the teacher for the class to assess the extent to which it meets the AOs being addressed.)

Creative opportunity

Ask students to write similes which suggest strong love/joyful feelings, beginning with ‘my heart is like...’

Taking it further

Ask students to look at the unseen poems and find some more examples of nature being used as a key image. You might draw particular attention to:

If I Could Tell You
by W. H. Auden

The Great Storm
by Jo Shapcott

Ode to Autumn
by John Keats

Not Yet My Mother
by Owen Sheers

(*Nothing Gold Can Stay* by Robert Frost also uses nature as a central image.)

Lesson four

Find a word/phrase/line from two or three of these poems which seems to be saying something about nature. This might be about things growing/dying, or the weather, or the seasons. Ask students to think about the way nature is being used in the examples they have selected. Is there a common theme or idea here? For example:

- the idea of cycles – change, repetition of patterns
- growth and rebirth
- nurture
- beauty
- death.

Either individually or in pairs, ask students to think of four or five statements about nature: they might suggest ‘nature always repeats itself’ or ‘nature is always changing’ or ‘nature is about growth and decay’.

Deeper learning

Ask students to think about why it might be that nature is a common image in poetry. In what ways can ideas about nature connect with ideas about people/humanity/life?

Reviewing learning

Each student selects one of their statements from the ‘Taking it further’ activity and writes it on a sticky note. Collate these on the board. The teacher then selects a note at random to read to the class, asking for an example from one of the poems they have looked at which could be used to support the statement. Alternatively, circulate the sticky notes around the room for students to each have one to respond to by finding a piece of supporting evidence.

Key learning point

Students write a sentence explaining what they have learned from this lesson: they may consider...

- why poets might choose to use imagery in their poems
- how thinking carefully about the images in the poem helps the reader too.

Creative opportunity

Students close their eyes and visualise an Autumn scene. Alternatively, present a series of images related to Autumn on the whiteboard. Allow two minutes to think of what they might see, smell, hear; think about objects, colours, animals, locations.

Quickly write a list of the ideas they imagined.

Now do the same for ‘Spring’.

Choose three words which summarise the differences between Autumn and Spring.

Read *Ode to Autumn*, making a list/highlighting the colours, fruits, vegetables, plants, creatures, sounds that are listed in the poem. Compare this with the two lists the students devised themselves.

Lesson five – making selections

The big question: how much of a poem should you write about?



Develop the learning

Taking the idea of photographs further, ask students to think about the properties of a photograph; how it captures/freezes/holds a moment in time. Can students link this idea of ‘capture/possession’ to how a parent might feel about a child, or how a child might feel about a parent?

Objective

To select ‘neon’ moments to link to themes, ideas and feelings.

Start to Learning

Read *Not Yet My Mother* by Owen Sheers. It might be useful to reference some other poems here: Carol Ann Duffy’s *Before You Were Mine* (WS19) is an obvious choice. Ask students to think of one word or phrase that they would use to summarise this poem. You might want to ask students to think of an alternative title, perhaps.



Lesson five

Taking it further

Once they have explored the main ideas of the poem, ask students to select two or three moments from the poem to think about in a little more detail. This might be a particular line, or a particular word, or even an aspect of structure, such as the repeated lines in the first and last stanza, or the impact and meaning of the first word: 'Yesterday'. Ask students to write a paragraph in timed conditions (of around five minutes), suggesting what their selected moment adds to the overall meaning of the poem. WS7 provides some exploratory vocabulary which can be used to encourage students to consider ideas and start to explore alternatives.

Deeper learning

Using WS8, work in pairs to dig a little deeper into the possible meanings and connotations of the phrase 'your hand a fist under its huge jaw'. What might the word 'fist' suggest about the speaker's mother? What could the 'huge jaw' relate to? One member of the pair could be asked to think of a positive connotation of 'fist' and 'jaw', and the other member of the pair to think of a negative connotation of each.

Reviewing learning

In pairs, students discuss which connotation is more likely given the overall feelings/tone of the poem. Discuss these conclusions with the class.

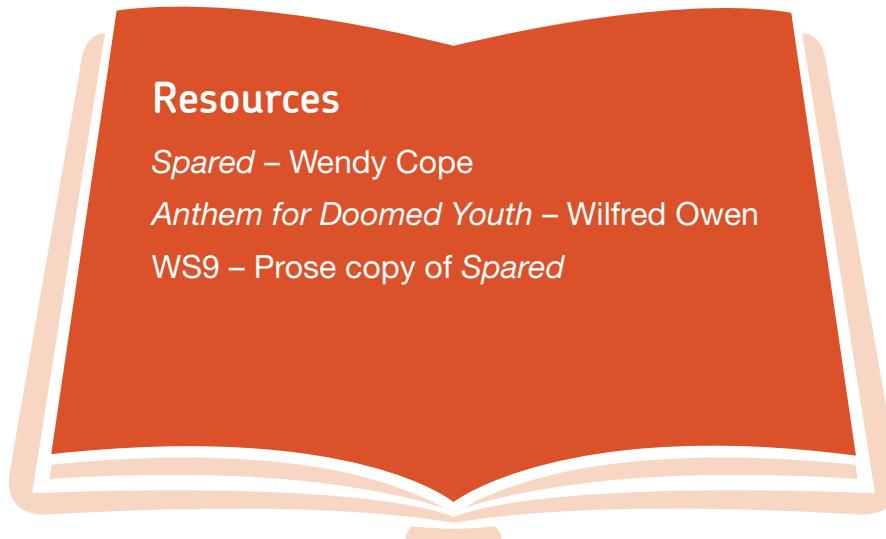
Key learning point

Students write a sentence explaining what they have learned from this lesson: they may consider...

- what choosing their own significant elements to focus on enables them to do
- how thinking about how an image links to the overall meaning of the poem helps an overall understanding of the themes and idea.

Lesson six – exploring structure

The big question: does it matter where things are in a poem?



Objective

To link structure to meaning.

Start to learning

Put the word ‘structure’ on the board and ask pairs to discuss for one minute what this word might mean in terms of a poem. Can they think of some examples of choices a poet makes in terms of ‘structure’?

Working in pairs, ask students to go through the collection of fifteen poems quickly (in no more than ten minutes), making a list of as many structural elements and features that they notice. This list might include:

- beginnings/endings
- repetition
- use of white space
- pace created by punctuation
- enjambment
- caesura
- rhythm.

Develop the learning

Read the prose version of *Spared* by Wendy Cope provided on WS9. Tell students that the poem is constructed in four four-line stanzas (not including the epigraph). Ask students to see if they can work out where the line and stanza breaks might come. Students could be encouraged to read the poem aloud in order to ‘hear’ where the natural pauses might be.

When students have made their decisions, distribute the original version of the poem. Ask students to see if they notice any particular structural features being used by the poet. They might mention:

- the caesura in lines three and fourteen
- the hyphen in line five
- the enjambment in the last stanza
- the repetition in the last line.



Lesson Six

Taking it further

Select one or two of these structural features to explore in a little more detail. What might be the purpose for the caesura in this particular places? Why might the poet have used repetition in the last line? Try to ensure that students link their point to an idea about what the poem is about.

Draw attention to the two moments in the poem where the poet employs a full stop. What might be the particular significance of these two moments in particular? Can students suggest a reason for Cope's decision to emphasise these specific moments through her choice of punctuation?

Deeper learning

Ask students to consider any form/structural features they notice in *Anthem for Doomed Youth*. The following might be possible areas to explore:

- use of form
- repetition
- punctuation
- sound patterning (rhyme, assonance, consonance).

Reviewing learning

Is punctuation important in poems? What does it add? Ask students to discuss what might be different about *Spared* if different decisions had been made by the poet regarding the placing of the punctuation.

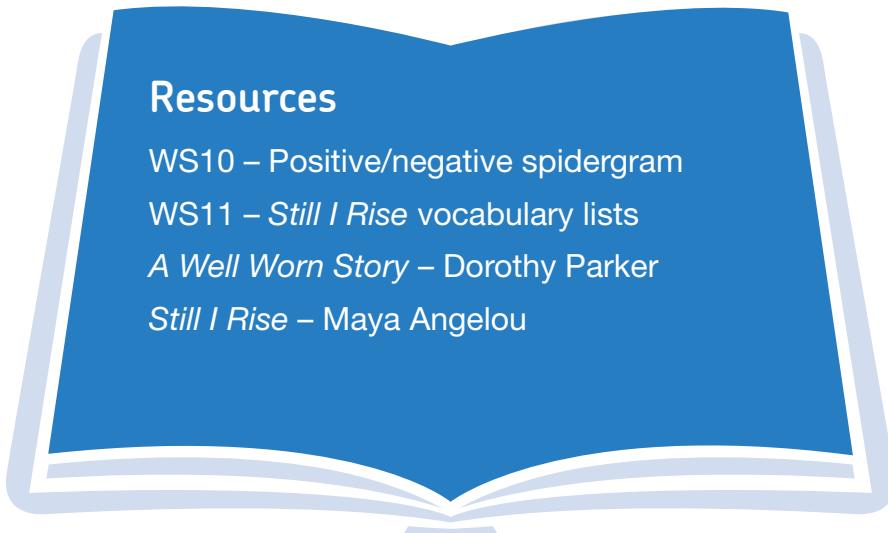
Key learning point

Students write a sentence explaining what they have learned from this lesson: they may consider...

- what noticing the way the poem has been put together enables them to understand
- the different ways poets use the structure of their poem
- what the deliberate use of punctuation and positioning allows the poet to achieve.

Lesson seven – exploring language choices

The big question: how much can one word say?



Develop the learning

Ask students to look at the verb choices; they might want to highlight or underline all the active verbs in the poem. Draw attention to: ‘ran/trod/walked/stumbled/sit/splash/spoil’. Is there a ‘journey’ here? Is there a contrast between the tone of the start of the poem and the end? Is there a contrast between ‘before’ and ‘after’? How might the way the verb choices develop, link to the story of the poem – the contrast between the beginning and the end of the romance?

Objective

To develop the ability to link specific word choices to overall meaning.

Start to learning

What do we mean by the two words: ‘positive’ and ‘negative’?
What kind of feelings might a ‘positive’ poem attempt to convey?
What about a ‘negative’ poem? Using WS10, ask students for suggestions of moods we might expect to experience.

Read *A Well-Worn Story* by Dorothy Parker. Discuss whether the tone of this poem is positive or negative. It is likely that the majority will identify that it is negative. Ask for some examples of specific words that might have led them to think that the tone is negative rather than positive. Alternatively, students could highlight the positive and negative vocabulary as they listen to the poem.

Lesson seven

Taking it further

Students might also notice that Parker is using some sound patterning as contrast in this poem. For example, can students identify the alliteration, particularly of ‘s’ and ‘t’? Students should be starting to identify that the overall meaning of the poem is being highlighted by some techniques. Once this is established, work either individually or in pairs to write a paragraph explaining:

- what this poem is about
- the mood/tone of the poem
- the words and sounds the poet has used, and how these link to the meaning.

Deeper learning

Ask students to consider again the sound patterning being created by the alliterative use of ‘s’ and ‘t’. Can this be linked to the oxymoronic phrase ‘terrible silver’, perhaps?

Creative opportunity

Using WS11, ask pairs to choose either Box 1 or Box 2. Allow five minutes for a short piece of writing (of any genre) which aims to include as many of the vocabulary choices as possible in that time whilst retaining cohesion.

Read *Still I Rise*.

Reviewing learning

Write a sentence explaining how the writers of either *A Well-Worn Story* or *Still I Rise* create a specific mood in their poem.

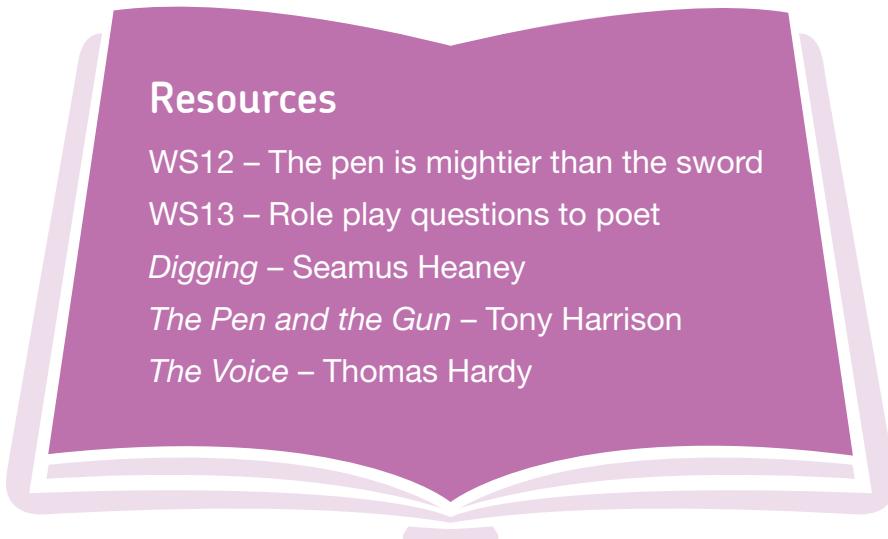
Key learning point

Students write a sentence explaining what they have learned from this lesson: they may consider...

- why it is important to consider the meaning and effects of particular word choices
- what thinking carefully about particular word choices enables them to do.

Lesson eight – speakers and voices

The big question: is the poet the same as the speaker?



Resources

WS12 – The pen is mightier than the sword

WS13 – Role play questions to poet

Digging – Seamus Heaney

The Pen and the Gun – Tony Harrison

The Voice – Thomas Hardy

Develop the learning

Read *Digging* by Seamus Heaney. Ask students to think about the ideas and feelings in this poem. You might want to approach this using a hot-seating activity; either teacher, or student, in role as the speaker. Can we summarise the speaker's attitudes and feelings in one sentence, perhaps? Alternatively, use WS13 as stimulus for a role-play activity.

Objective

To explore the idea of poetic 'voice'.

Start to learning

Ask students to consider the adage: 'the pen is mightier than the sword' on WS. What do they think this might mean? Use WS12 to write down some ideas, either individually or in pairs/small groups.

Lesson eight

Taking it further

Read *The Pen and the Gun* by Tony Harrison. Students can then think about the ways in which similar ideas are being explored in this poem. Again, students can explore the ideas presented by using a role play/hot-seating activity, which may then enable them to develop some ideas about the language being used and how this might give the reader some interesting insights into who the speaker is and the kinds of things they might be feeling.

Creative opportunity

Working in pairs, one member of the pair to write a letter to an absent partner, the other member of the pair to record a verbal message. Students may decide the reason for the absence but must not refer to this explicitly in either the written or verbal letter.

Compare their two versions. Which was the hardest to create? Why? Which has the most impact?

Read *The Voice* by Thomas Hardy and discuss what they think is the reason for the absence being presented here. Can they suggest any aspects of the poem that might support their theory?

Deeper learning

In both *Digging* and *The Pen and the Gun*, the speakers use particular memories in order to explore wider ideas. What connects the ideas being explored by both of these poets? Why might they have chosen to recount seemingly ‘personal’ anecdotes?

Reviewing learning

What is the difference between ‘speaker’ and ‘poet’? In these particular poems, is the speaker the same as the poet? What might lead us to this conclusion?

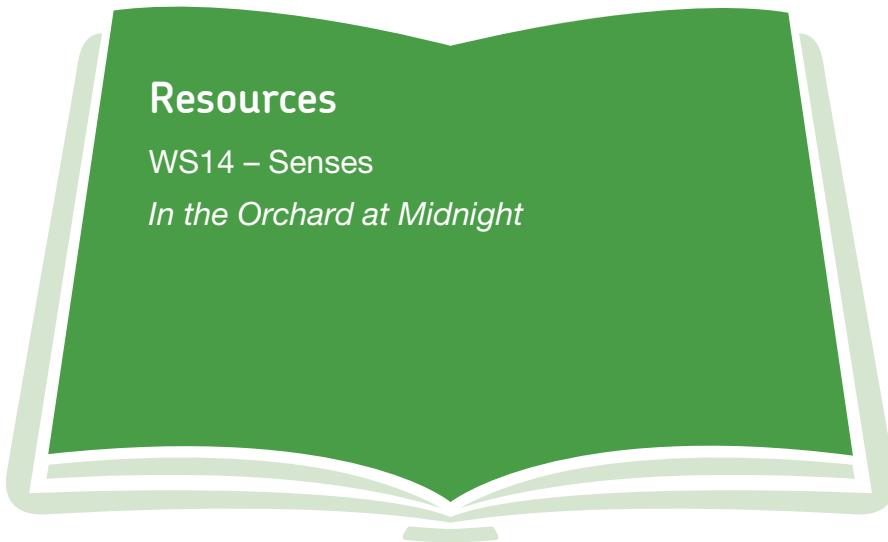
Key learning point

Students write a sentence explaining what they have learned from this lesson: they may consider...

- the importance of considering the ‘voice’ of the poem.

Lesson nine – exploring the senses

The big question: how do we experience the world around us?



Develop the learning

Read *In the Orchard After Midnight* by Brian Patten. Using WS14, see how many references to the senses they can find. NB: these can be as oblique as they like, and the same part of the poem might be used for more than one sense if necessary. For example, ‘crunchy as sugar’ might be used for sound as well as touch.

Objective

To explore the way poets use the senses to present their ideas.

Start to learning

Using either WS14 or their books, ask students to make a list of the five senses.

If a poet wanted to create a mood associated with coldness/winter /nighttime, what kind of sensory descriptions might help them? Discuss this either as a whole class or in pairs.

Taking it further

Allow students five minutes to write a timed ‘LAL’ paragraph (see Lesson Four) on how Patten uses the senses to create a mood in his poem. Encourage students to select one particular example to explore in as much detail as they can, explaining the effects of their particular choice and how this might link to the feelings and ideas in the poem.

Lesson nine

Deeper learning

Although the topic is about mourning a friend, there is arguably a tone of gentle humour being created by the poet. Ask students to suggest ways in which the poet is creating a humorous tone and the possible reasons for/effects of this tone.

Reviewing learning

Why do we think poets use the senses? What might this enable the reader to be able to do? Ask pairs to write a sentence on a sticky note explaining why they think the senses are so important in poetry. Place these around the room for students to read and select their favourite.

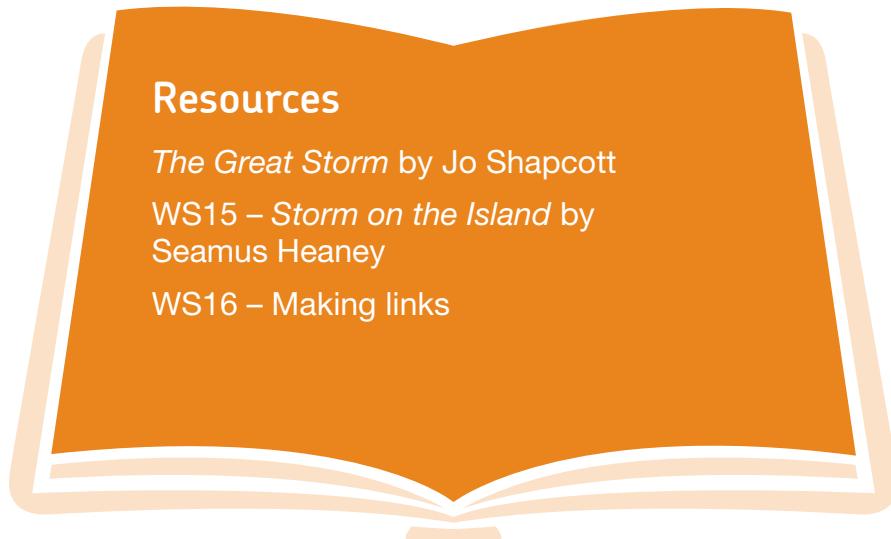
Key learning point

Students write a sentence explaining what they have learned from this lesson: they may consider...

- why poets might include reference to the senses in their poems
- how a focus on the senses enables a deeper understanding of the themes and ideas.

Lesson ten – comparing similar ideas

The big question: how do you choose what to compare?



Develop the learning

Give students a copy of WS15 *Storm on the Island* and highlight/make a list of all the words and phrases which could be linked with ‘sound/noise’.

Using a copy of *The Great Storm*, students then see how many references to ‘sound/noise’ they can identify in this poem.

Objective

To make interesting connections between parts of poems.

Start to learning

Ask students to refer back to the notes they made on the ways poets use the senses.

If a poet were going to describe ‘storm’, what kinds of sensory words might they use?

Ask students to make a list of the most likely senses and some of the words they associate with the idea of ‘storm’.

Lesson ten

Taking it further

Using WS16, ask students to spend five minutes thinking of as many points of similarity between the two phrases as they can.

These might include:

reference to savagery

abnormality (tame cat turned savage/shed flew by)

use of similes

use of alliteration.

Once some ideas have been gathered, students can then use their ideas and evidence to write a short comparison of the ways both poets describe the destructive force of a storm.

Deeper learning

Both of these poems are using metaphorical language to describe a storm. Ask students to look at both poems together and select for themselves two different phrases/lines/short extracts to compare. This could be undertaken as a group activity with different groups sharing their ideas after they have selected and compared a variety of different sections of the poems.

Reviewing learning

Do you have to cover the whole of both poems when you are making comparisons? Ask students to select one word from each poem which they feel shows a strong connection between the two.

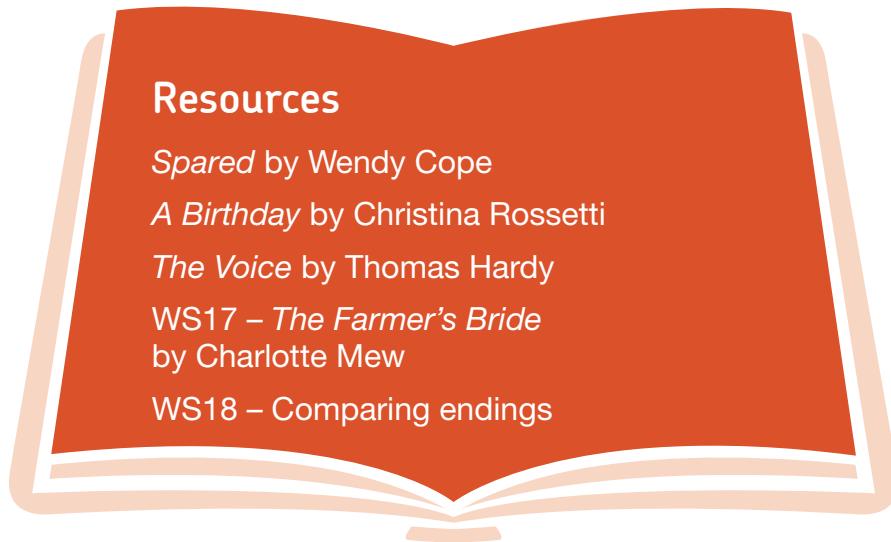
Key learning point

Students write a sentence explaining what they have learned from this lesson: they may consider...

- whether it is more important to write about as much of each poem as possible or to make useful selections of material to compare
- some of the ways poets can use similar methods to communicate similar ideas.

Lesson eleven – comparing endings

The big question: why are the endings of poems important?



Develop the learning

Using copies of *Spared* by Wendy Cope and *A Birthday* by Christina Rossetti, ask students to look at the final two lines of each poem. Their task is to write a paragraph describing the similarities between the endings of the two poems, making reference to both tone/mood and structural features.

Objective

To consider and comment on the choices poets make about the endings of their poems.

Start to learning

Ask students to look through the Unseen Resource and select the endings of three poems to comment on. At this stage they can make their selection based upon any criteria they think is relevant.

Once selections have been made, discuss and collate the ways students made their selections and draw together the variety of factors which might have informed their choices. These might include:

- use of particular techniques such as: punctuation, repetition, alliteration
- use of particular word choices
- use/effect of particular structural features.

Ask students to select two endings that they feel have something in common, or a connection. Invite students to share their reasons and collate the range of similarities that students have selected.



Lesson eleven

Taking it further

Give students copies of *The Voice* by Thomas Hardy and WS17, *The Farmer's Bride* by Charlotte Mew. Read the two poems with the students.

Ask students to summarise in one sentence the main connection between these two poems, focusing on ideas/feelings.

Give students WS18: Comparing Endings. Working in pairs, annotate the worksheet to suggest as many connections between the two endings as they can find. Allow five minutes for this.

Swap their worksheet with another pair. Look at each other's annotations and see how many new ideas they can add to each other's work.

Draw their ideas together into a short piece of LAL writing (see Lesson four) about the similarities and differences between the endings of these two poems.

Deeper learning

Focus in on the use of punctuation. If both of these poems are about a speaker who is consumed with longing for their partner, how does the punctuation help to suggest this? What effect does it have on the mood, the pace and the rhythm of each ending? What does it suggest about the speakers' state of mind?

Reviewing learning

Ask students to discuss/respond to the following question:
from the endings to these two poems, which speaker appears to be more emotionally distressed? How do you know?

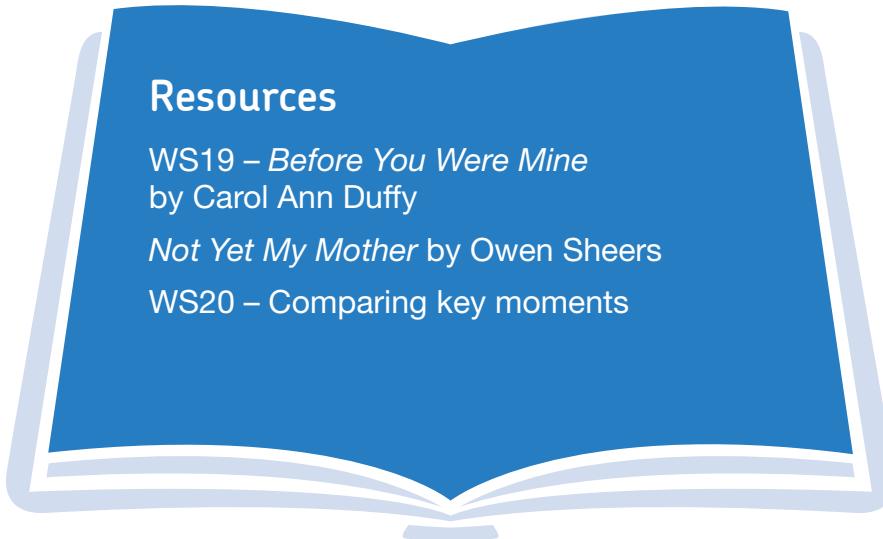
Key learning point

Students write a sentence explaining what they have learned from this lesson: they may consider...

- why endings are important to consider when comparing poems
- what the reader can learn about the ideas/feelings from considering the ways the poet has chosen to end their poem.

Lesson twelve – comparing the presentation of ideas

The big question: how do you write about similarities and differences in the ways poets have presented their ideas?



Objective

To analyse the ways a similar idea is presented in two poems.

Start to learning

Give students copies of *Before You Were Mine* and *Not Yet My Mother*. Identify the two main ways in the poems are very similar:

both about the speaker's mother

both use a photograph as the main method.

Develop the learning

Students work individually/in pairs to make a list of as many 'both' statements as they can. These could include:

- both are about the speaker's mother
- both use a photograph as the main method
- both photographs were taken when the mother was young
- both photographs were taken before the speaker was born
- both are addressed directly to the mother
- both describe the mother using youthful, happy, lively language
- both contain the idea of possession
- both use the titles of the poems to reinforce the idea of possession.

Taking it further

Using WS20, ask students to look in detail at these two key moments from both poems and annotate the similarities and differences between them. Draw out the use of ‘caught’, ‘mine’ and ‘possessive’.

Deeper learning

The tone of *Before You Were Mine* could be said to be more possessive than *Not Yet My Mother*. Ask students to identify words and phrases from *Before You Were Mine* that suggest that the tone is more possessive than *Not Yet My Mother*.

Reviewing learning

Using the formula ‘both/both/however, ask students to write one paragraph explaining two similarities and one difference between the two poems.



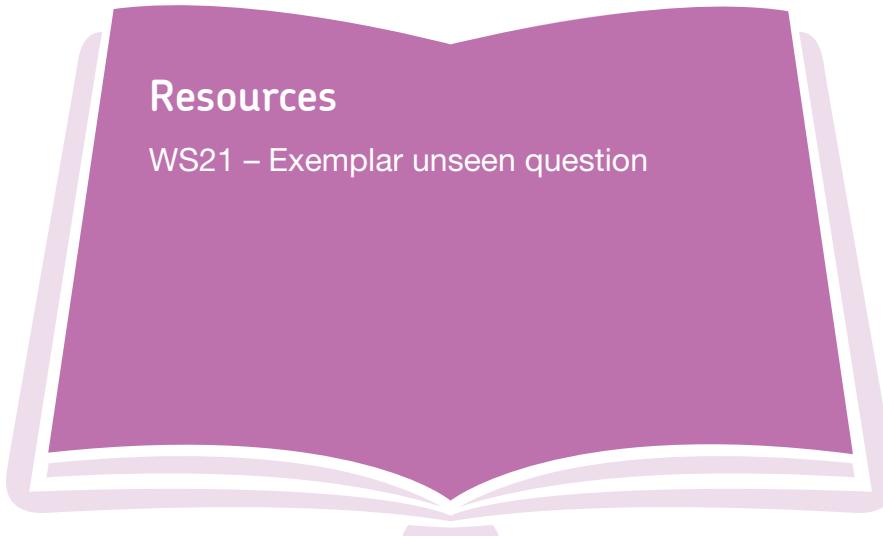
Key learning point

Students write a sentence explaining what they have learned from this lesson: they may consider...

- it is important to identify the key connection between the poems in terms of idea
- it is important to consider ideas/feelings/attitudes
- the similarities may be more easy to spot than the differences
- when you have established the connecting idea, it is easier to write about the ways the ideas are presented.

Lesson thirteen – preparing for the unseen (part one)

The big question: do you need to understand the whole poem when you are responding to it as an unseen?



Objective

To explore some strategies for the unseen poetry question.

Start to learning

Ask students to suggest, based on their learning so far, what they might consider to be the key skills they should be able to demonstrate in their response to unseen. Write these on a sticky note but don't share them at this point.

Develop the learning

Distribute the unseen exemplar poem and question on WS21. Remind students of the AOs.

Ask students to discuss what they would do first – read the question or read the poems. Discuss their ideas, guiding them towards the following model for responding to the unseen poems:

- read and think about the question, underlining/highlighting any key words
- read the title of the poem
- read the poem at least twice
- think about the title again.

Now ask students to think about some of the exploratory reading strategies from Lesson One. Select two or three and apply them to a third reading of this poem. As they read, select some elements from the poem that they might want to focus on in their response.

Now write a thirty-word summary of what you think the poem might be about. These could be shared with the class at this stage, or students could continue to work individually.

Select three moments/elements from the poem. Use these to produce a 'timed LAL' paragraph (see Lesson 4).

Select some of these responses to share with the class, either as a whole-class activity or in pairs. Display the AOs and ask students to feedback to each other on the extent to which the response they are considering:

- focuses on meaning
- uses relevant supporting evidence
- examines/considers a writer's deliberate choice.

Lesson thirteen

Taking it further

Students should now have a summary of what they think the poem means and a selection of elements that they would like to use. Give students fifteen minutes to write their response to questions 27.1.

Deeper learning

Pairs share their responses. Choose one idea from the response and extend it by around thirty words.

Reviewing learning

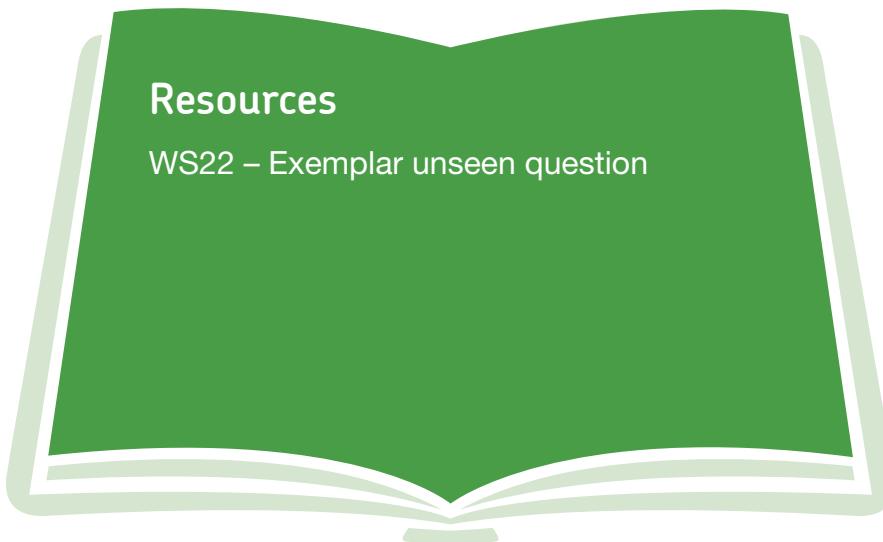
Working in pairs, read each other's work and consider:

- does the response explain some ideas about what the poem might be about?
- is there supporting evidence?
- are there comments on deliberate choices the writer has made and how these impact on meaning?

What might the response need to do in order to improve?

Lesson fourteen – preparing for the unseen (part two)

The big question: how do you compare similarities and differences with unseen poems?



Resources

WS22 – Exemplar unseen question

Develop the learning

Distribute the unseen exemplar poems and questions on WS22. Remind students of the AOs and the range of ways they may choose to deal with similarities/differences.

Firstly, write a thirty-word summary of what you think the second poem might be about. These could be shared with the class at this stage, or students could continue to work individually.

Secondly, use the ‘both/both/however’ structure to write a list of the similarities and differences between the two poems.

Students can then swap their list with a learning partner, who provides a short piece of evidence to support each point of similarity/difference from their partner’s list.

Objective

To explore some strategies for the third part of the unseen question

Start to learning

Remind students of the work they have done already on dealing with an unseen poem in isolation. Recap the key strategies:

- read and think about the question, underlining/highlighting any key words
- read the title of the poem
- read the poem at least twice
- think about the title again.



Lesson fourteen

Taking it further

Working either in pairs or individually, construct a short response to question 27.3. Aim to write no more than 200 words and include at least three pieces of direct evidence to support the points being made. Use the ‘both/both/however’ structure to scaffold the response.

Deeper learning

Swap the response with another student/pair and allow ten minutes to add/edit/adapt the response.

Reviewing learning

Working in pairs, read each other’s work and consider:

- does the response focus on what both poems are about?
- does the response focus on the connections between the meaning of both poems?
- does the response highlight the difference in meaning between both poems?
- has appropriate supporting evidence been used?
- are there comments on deliberate choices the writers have made and how these impact on meaning?

What might the response need to do in order to improve?

Worksheet 1

Reading strategies

Highlight verbs

Circle punctuation

Pick out three neon lines/vivid words/phrases

Consider meaning of title

Think about first and last lines

Highlight emotion words

Find examples of imagery

Highlight alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia

Highlight structural features

Worksheet 2

Titles

The Pen and the Gun

Anthem for Doomed Youth

A Well-Worn Story

Still I Rise

In the Orchard After Midnight

Not Yet My Mother

Ode to Autumn

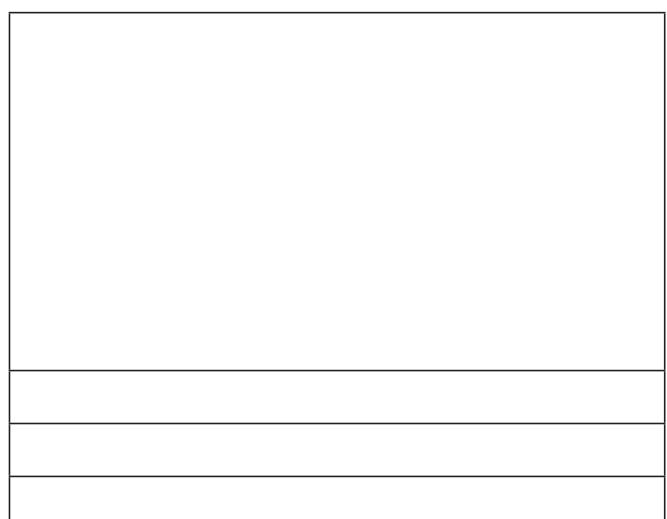
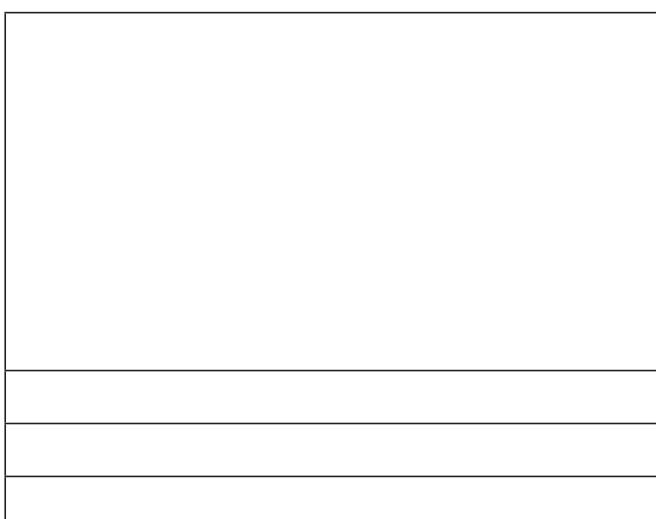
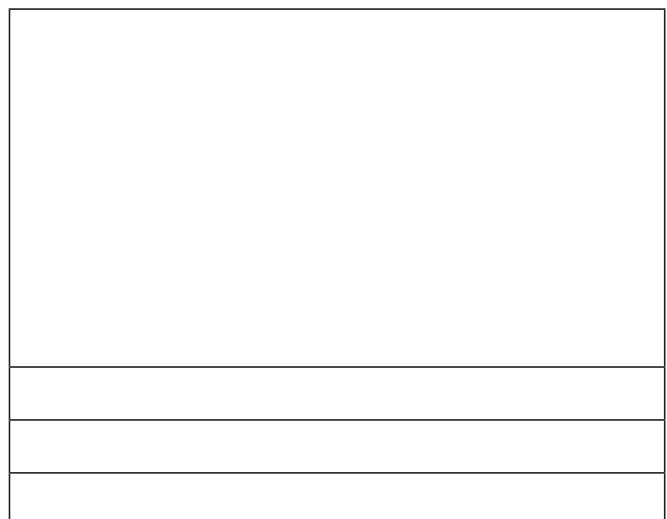
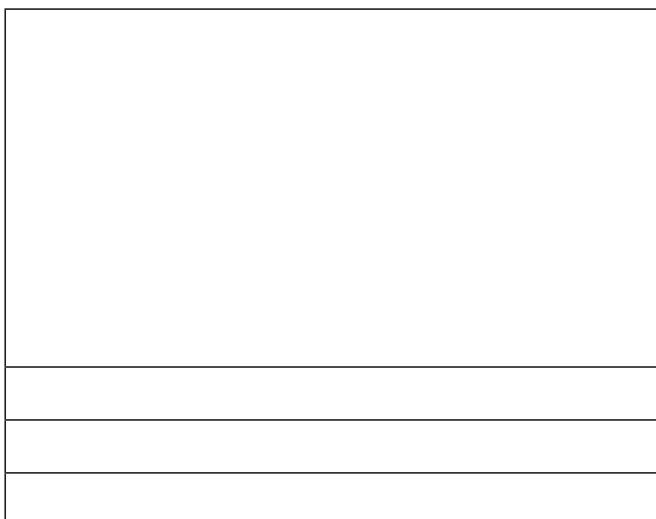
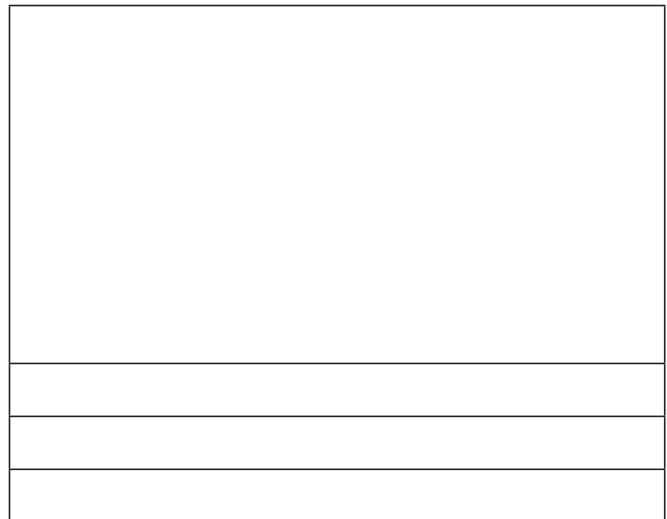
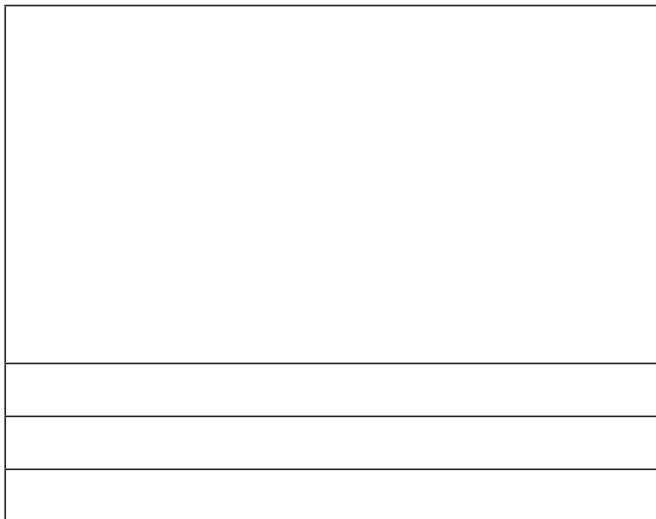
A Poison Tree

The Voice

A Birthday

Worksheet 3

Storyboarding sheet



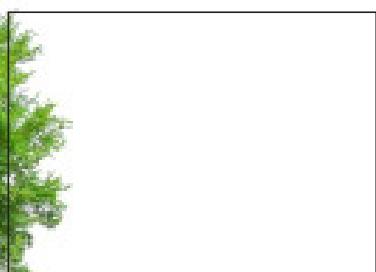
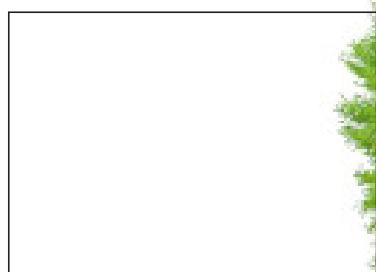
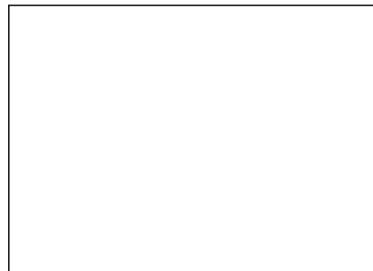
Worksheet 4

Diamond ranking

There may be more than one meaning.	Some poems have no meaning.	There are other things to appreciate besides meaning.
What you think something means today may be different to what you think next week.	The meaning may emerge later.	There may not be a meaning which can be expressed in words.
The meaning might lie in the sound of the words or the feelings evoked.	Different readers/listeners will interpret in different ways.	More information may be needed for a meaning to become clear.

Worksheet 5

Tree



Worksheet 6

Anger



Worksheet 7

Analysis vocabulary

Implies

Suggests

Shows

Demonstrates

Highlights

Also

Another

In addition

Furthermore

Taking this further

Perhaps

Maybe

Could

Might

Possibly

Worksheet 8

Exploring imagery



‘your hand
a fist under
its huge jaw’



Worksheet 9

Prose copy of *Spared* by Wendy Cope

Wendy Cope: *Spared*

It wasn't you, it wasn't me, up there, two thousand feet above a New York street. We're safe and free, a little while, to live and love, imagining what might have been – the phone call from the blazing tower, a last farewell on the machine, while someone sleeps another hour, or worse, perhaps, to say goodbye and listen to each other's pain, send helpless love across the sky, knowing we'll never meet again, or jump together, hand in hand, to certain death. Spared all of this for now, how well I understand that love is all, is all there is.

Worksheet 10

Positive/negative spidergram



Worksheet 11

Still I Rise vocabulary

bitter

twisted

dirt

dust

gloom

broken

bowed

lowered

teardrops

weakened

soulful

shoot

cut

hatefulness

shame

pain

black ocean

terror

fear

slave

moons

suns

tides

springing

laugh

gold mines

air

sexiness

surprise

diamonds

leaping

wide

swelling

daybreak

wondrously

clear

gifts

dream

hope

rise

Worksheet 12

‘the pen is
mightier than
the sword’



Worksheet 13

Role play questions

Describe the memory in a bit more detail

Why do you think this memory has stuck in your mind?

How does it make you feel?

If you could go back and change any aspect of what you remember, what might it be and why?

How do you feel about your job?

Can you describe how you feel about your father?

Worksheet 14

Exploring the senses

Sense	Example from: <i>In the Orchard After Midnight</i>

Worksheet 15

Storm on the Island

We are prepared: we build our houses squat,
Sink walls in rock and roof them with good slate.
The wizened earth has never troubled us
With hay, so, as you can see, there are no stacks
Or stooks that can be lost. Nor are there trees
Which might prove company when it blows full
Blast: you know what I mean – leaves and branches
Can raise a tragic chorus in a gale
So that you can listen to the thing you fear
Forgetting it pummels your house too.
But there are no trees, no natural shelter.
You might think that the sea is company,
Exploding comfortably down the cliffs
But no: when it begins, the flung spray hits
The very windows, spits like a tame cat
Turned savage. We just sit tight while wind dives
And strafes invisibly. Space is a salvo.
We are bombarded by the empty air.
Strange, it is a huge nothing that we fear.

Seamus Heaney

Worksheet 16

Making links

<p>the flung spray hits The very windows, spits like a tame cat Turned savage</p>	<p>Small trees scattered like matchsticks And a whole shed flew by. The world roared.</p>
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Worksheet 17

The Farmer's Bride: Charlotte Mew

Three summers since I chose a maid,
Too young maybe—but more's to do
At harvest-time than bide and woo.
When us was wed she turned afraid
Of love and me and all things human;
Like the shut of a winter's day
Her smile went out, and 'twadn't a woman—
More like a little frightened fay.
One night, in the Fall, she runned away.

"Out 'mong the sheep, her be," they said,
'Should properly have been abed;
But sure enough she wadn't there
Lying awake with her wide brown stare.
So over seven-acre field and up-along across the down
We chased her, flying like a hare
Before out lanterns. To Church-Town
All in a shiver and a scare
We caught her, fetched her home at last
And turned the key upon her, fast.

She does the work about the house
As well as most, but like a mouse:
Happy enough to chat and play
With birds and rabbits and such as they,
So long as men-folk keep away.
"Not near, not near!" her eyes beseech
When one of us comes within reach.
The women say that beasts in stall
Look round like children at her call.
I've hardly heard her speak at all.

Shy as a leveret, swift as he,
Straight and slight as a young larch tree,
Sweet as the first wild violets, she,
To her wild self. But what to me?

The short days shorten and the oaks are brown,
The blue smoke rises to the low grey sky,
One leaf in the still air falls slowly down,
A magpie's spotted feathers lie
On the black earth spread white with rime,
The berries redder up to Christmas-time.
What's Christmas-time without there be
Some other in the house than we!

She sleeps up in the attic there
Alone, poor maid. 'Tis but a stair
Betwixt us. Oh! my God! the down,
The soft young down of her, the brown,
The brown of her—her eyes, her hair, her hair!

Worksheet 18

Comparing endings

<p>Thus I; faltering forward, Leaves around me falling, Wind oozing thin through the thorn from onward, And the woman calling</p>	<p>She sleeps up in the attic there Alone, poor maid. 'Tis but a stair Betwixt us. Oh! my God! the down, The soft young down of her, the brown, The brown of her—her eyes, her hair, her hair!</p>
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Worksheet 19

Before You Were Mine: Carol Ann Duffy

I'm ten years away from the corner you laugh on
with your pals, Maggie McGeeney and Jean Duff.
The three of you bend from the waist, holding
each other, or your knees, and shriek at the pavement.
Your polka-dot dress blows round your legs. Marilyn.

I'm not here yet. The thought of me doesn't occur
in the ballrooms with the thousand eyes, the fizzy, movie tomorrows
the right walk home could bring. I knew you would dance
like that. Before you were mine, your Ma stands at the close
with a hiding for the late one. You reckon it's worth it.

The decade ahead of my loud, possessive yell was the best one, eh?
I remember my hands in those high-heeled red shoes, relics,
and now your ghost clatters towards me over George Square
Till I see you, clear as scent, under the tree,
with its lights, and whose small bites on your neck, sweetheart?

Cha cha cha! You'd teach me the steps on the way home from Mass,
stamping stars from the wrong pavement. Even then
I wanted the bold girl winking in Portobello, somewhere
in Scotland, before I was born. That glamorous love lasts
where you sparkle and waltz and laugh before you were mine

Worksheet 20

Comparing key moments

but what caught me was your face,
which was mine.

The decade ahead of my loud, possessive yell was the best one, eh

Worksheet 21

Exemplar unseen questions

Question 27.1

In *Blessing*, how does the poet present ideas about being poor?

Blessing

The skin cracks like a pod.
There never is enough water.

Imagine the drip of it,
the small splash, echo
in a tin mug,
the voice of a kindly god.

Sometimes, the sudden rush
of fortune. The municipal pipe bursts,
silver crashes to the ground
and the flow has found
a roar of tongues. From the huts,
a congregation : every man woman
child for streets around
butts in, with pots,
brass, copper, aluminium,
plastic buckets, frantic hands,

and naked children
screaming in the liquid sun,
their highlights polished to perfection,
flashing light,
as the blessing sings
over their small bones.

Imtiaz Dharker

Worksheet 22

Exemplar unseen questions

Question 27.2

In *The Rich Eat Three Full Meals*, how does the speaker present ideas about being poor?

The Rich Eat Three Full Meals

The rich eat three full meals, the poor two small bowls
But peace is what matters.
Thirsty, I drink sweet plum tea;
Warm, I lie in the shade, in the breeze;
My paintings are mountains and rivers all around me,
My damask, embroidered, the grass.
I rest at night, rest easy,
Am awake with the sun
And enjoying Heaven's heaped-up favours.

Nguyen Binh Khiem

Question 27.3

What do you think are the main similarities and differences between these two poems?

Write about:

- the ideas in the poems
- the ways the poets present these ideas.

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