

# EDUQAS

## GCE ENGLISH LITERATURE

### POETRY CPD AUTUMN 2019

### DELEGATE BOOKLET

Contents	
Teaching Poetry for the Examination	Page 1
Component 1	Page 2
Section A(i) Distracted by Context	Page 7
Section A (ii) Effective Openings: Establishing a Line of Argument	Page 8
Section A (ii): Balancing AOs Effectively	Page 10
Section B AO4: Progressing from Superficial to Illuminating Connections	Page 13
Section B: AO3 Supportive Context	Page 14
Section B: Balancing AOs	Page 15
Component 3: Unseen Poetry	Page 20
A Few Things to do with a Poem	Page 24



## **GCE ENGLISH LITERATURE**

### **POETRY**

<b>Teaching Poetry for the Examination</b>
--

What are candidates being asked to do differently across these questions?

Component 1 Section A part (i)	Component 1 Section A part (ii)
Component 1 Section B	Component 3 Section B

## Component 1

### John Keats: *Selected Poems*

- (i) Re-read stanzas IX and X of 'Isabella; or The Pot of Basil' on page 12. Analyse the ways in which Keats engages the reader's senses in these lines. [20]
- (ii) How far would you agree with the view that "though written in an age of intellectual enlightenment, Keats' poetry appeals strongly to the emotions but is surprisingly lacking in ideas"? [40]

#### IX

Love! thou art leading me from wintry cold,  
     Lady, thou leadest me to summer clime  
 And I must taste the blossoms that unfold,  
     In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time."  
 So said, his erstwhile timid lips grew bold,  
     And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme:  
 Great bliss was with them, and great happiness  
 Grew like a lusty flower in June's caress.

#### X

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,  
     Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart  
 Only to meet again more close, and share  
     The inward fragrance of each other's heart.  
 She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair  
 Sang, of delicious and honey'd dart;  
 He with light steps went up a western hill,  
 And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his fill.

Read the two responses to the Keats question below.

Use the mark scheme for Section A (i) to discuss which is better and why.

4. (i) Re-read stanzas IX and X of 'Isabella; or The Pot of Basil' on page 12. Analyse the ways in which Keats engages the reader's senses in these lines. [20]

### Candidate A

Keats clearly engages the reader's senses in these stanzas though his lexical field of **warmth**. The poet achieves this with descriptions such as '*summer clime*', '*June's caress*' as well as '*leading me from wintry cold*'. Through this Keats perhaps suggests that the experience of love can lead us out of the lonely, cold state of isolation and into a sense of security. Therefore, through his sensuous imagery, readers are invited to feel the warm emotions of love with a positive outlook. The juxtaposition of '*wintry cold*' and '*June's caress*' highlights the stark contrast in experience. The Summer month is personified in order to provide comfort which thus suggests love and warmth are associated with care.

In addition, Keats appeals to the reader's sense of **smell** through '*the inward fragrance of each other's heart*'. This image creates the sense that love can spread and is something to be shared. The use of '*heart*' is effective due to the connotations of love as well as the fact emotions are personal. The image creates a peaceful and innocent tone. Keats also makes reference to the effect love can have on the sense of **taste**. He engages with this idea through '*ditty fair sang, of delicious love and honey'd dart*'. Here, taste coincides with the sense of sound which effectively links love to having a lyrical quality. The use of '*delicious love*' as well as '*honeyed*' creates the concept that their emotions have a sweetness to them, again alluding to the purity of love. The enjambment may reflect the fact that they feel their love is timeless.

(263 words)

### Candidate B

Keats' references to flowers not only appeal to our sense of **sight**, as the rose is traditionally linked with natural beauty, but also **taste** as Lorenzo '*must taste the blossoms*' which is very sensual and emphasises his passionate desire to experience this new love. This appeal to taste also occurs later in Isabella's song about love being '*delicious*' and a '*honey'd dart*' which perhaps suggests the intense sweetness but also the almost painful stab of passionate love. The lovers are so united they are compared to '*twin roses*' and their happiness is '*a lusty flower*', giving connotations of rebirth and growth, and also appealing to the sense of **smell** as roses are famed for their scent. This bond between them is later emphasised with the reference to the way the lovers can even smell the '*inward fragrance*' of the other's heart, like a secret perfume or essence from their inner beings.

When they kiss, Keats compares their intense pleasure to '*dewy rhyme*' as if their moist lips are so in harmony they make music or '*poesy*'. This is perhaps linked with the **sound** of the soft '*Zephyr*' blowing them, which is almost onomatopoeic so the reader can actually hear it.

Overall, Keats seems to be conveying how alive the lovers' feelings have made them, which has a physical effect rather than just an emotional one. He then reproduces this hyper-awareness by appealing to the readers' senses so they can almost share in this intense experience. (245 words)

### Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Merchant's Prologue and Tale*

- (i) Reread lines 559-582 from 'And ful of joye...' to '...in thy presence'. Analyse Chaucer's use of imagery in these lines.
- (ii) 'Beneath the surface of this entertaining and bawdy tale we find a serious examination of obligation and loyalty.' Explore this view of *The Merchant's Prologue and Tale*.

And ful of joye and blisse is every man,  
 Al but a squyer, highte Damyan,  
 Which carf biforn the knyght ful many a day.  
 He was so ravysshed on his lady May  
 That for the verray peyne he was ny wood.  
 Almoost he swelte and swowned ther he stood,  
So soore hath Venus hurt hym with hire brond,  
As that she bar it daunsynge in hire hond;  
 And to his bed he wente hym hastily.  
 Namooore of hym as at this tyme speke I,  
 But there I lete hym wepe ynogh and pleyne,  
 Til fresshe May wol rewen on his peyne.  
O perilous fyr, that in the bedstraw bredeth!  
 O famulier foo, that his servyce bedeth!  
 O servant traytour, false hoomly hewe,  
Lyk to the naddre in bosom sly untrew,  
 God shilde us alle from youre aqueyntaunce!  
 O Januarie, dronken in plesaunce  
 In mariage, se how thy Damyan,  
 Thyn owene squier and thy borne man,  
 Entendeth for to do thee vileynye.  
 God graunte thee thyn hoomly fo t'espys!  
For in this world nys worse pestilence  
 Than hoomly foo al day in thy presence.

Read the response to the Chaucer question below.

Using the mark scheme for Section A(i), and with particular focus on AO2, discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of this response.

Is it better or worse than Candidates A and B?

1. (ii) Re-read lines 559-582 from 'And ful of joye...' to '...in thy presence'. Analyse Chaucer's use of imagery in this extract. [20]

### Candidate C

This extract takes place just after the wedding between May and January and for the first time Chaucer focuses the imagery on the third member of the traditional courtly love triangle, the squire Damyan. Chaucer includes lots of detail about the festivities and how '*ful of joy and blisse is every man*' but we are told that Damyan is in such '*verray payne*' that he is almost '*wood*' or mad. This sets Damyan apart from all the other guests as unhappy, although it might also link him with May, who Chaucer later makes clear in the bedroom scene is less than delighted at the prospect of her wedding night as she is brought to bed '*as stille as a stoon*'.

Chaucer emphasises Damyan's unhappiness by using a semantic field of pain, with verbs such as '*swelte*', '*swowned*' and the adverb '*soore*'. Even the intervention of the goddess of love has left him '*hurt*' by the fire of '*hire brond*' in Chaucer's metaphorical description of Venus. Chaucer insists he will say no more of Damyan once he has retired in misery to his bed, but he nevertheless goes on to give a detailed description of his suffering as he is pictured crying and moaning: '*I lete him wepe ynough and pleyne*'.

Any sympathy Chaucer seems to have for Damyan quickly evaporates, however, as he uses lots of very emotive language, repetition and apostrophe to describe the squire in negative terms;

*'O famulier foo, that his service bedeth:  
O servant traitor, false hoomly hewe'.*

Damyan is linked in this image to the serpent in the Garden of Eden that tempted Eve to betray Adam when Chaucer uses the metaphor '*the naddre in bosom sly untrew*'. The writer even seems to wish he could wake Januarie to warn him about Damyan's '*vileyne*' and calls on God's help to let the old master '*espye*' the '*fo*' in his home. Finally, the writer's negative view of Damyan seems all too obvious in the declarative that there is no plague or '*pestilence*' worse '*for al this world*' than a treacherous servant. To conclude, Chaucer uses imagery to present Damyan as initially pitiful but increasingly as a threat. (360 words)

Read the response to the same Chaucer question below, focusing especially on the highlighted sections. Using the mark scheme for Section A(i), discuss:

- which band you would place this response in for AO1 and AO2?
- the value of the unhighlighted sections.

### Candidate D

The extract is found after the wedding ceremony has taken place, describing the end of the feast.

At the beginning of the extract, Chaucer presents the image of desire and the pain which it causes. This idea is articulated by the employment of the verb '*ravished*' which connotes passion to be overwhelming Damyan and reducing him to thoughts of sexual enjoyment with May as a result of her beauty. Chaucer emphasises that the power of Damyan's attraction to May is so consuming that he is in pain, as demonstrated when he writes '*very peyne he was ny wood*', the noun '*wood*' here referring to madness to accentuate the loss of coherence and intelligence as a result of being entranced by May's beauty, subsequently conveying to the reader the power of desire and beauty as it dominates a '*squire, highte Damyan*' who is a respectable servant in January's establishment reduced '*to his bed*' to rest and hide. This is further accentuated by Chaucer's employment of intertextuality by introducing '*Venus*' who '*hurt him with hire brond*', the verb '*hurt*' connoting a wound to reinforce the concept of desire becoming a physical ache due to intense yearning. Moreover, the image of a Goddess of desire burning Damyan with fire reiterates that lust is a burning passion and subsequently Venus becomes a metaphor for the ease in which humans can fall in desire and become enticed. Thus, the hyperbolic image of pain and desire is employed to convey the dangers of desire to the reader and to articulate violent passions.

Chaucer also employs a merchant narrator who interrupts the narrative of the tale in order to present Damyan as treacherous for falling in love and lust with his superior's new wife. This idea is articulated when it is written '*O perilous fyr; O familier foo... O servant traitour*'. The poet's utilisation of the lexis '*O*' is significant as it mimics the format of a prayer or outcry to articulate the narrator's outrage and shock at Damyan's actions in order to accentuate the theme of betrayal here. This is reinforced by the image of a '*perilous fyr*' as the image of fire is perhaps reminiscent of hell to present the idea of sin and the devil to reinforce a sense of corruption and betrayal, as Damyan is in lust with another man's wife. The use of repetition ensures that the reader is aware of the betrayal as the imagery of '*familier foo*', a false friend, clearly depicts sin and corruption. Moreover, Chaucer has employed alliteration here to ensure that the reader perceives the hyperbolic image of a traitor to understand the narrator's sense of wrong at Damyan's actions. Furthermore, Chaucer additionally employs rhyming couplets here to interrupt the heroic couplet structure as '*I*', '*pleyne*', '*peyne*' and '*hastily*' all rhyme, thus reinforcing the significance of the deceit and betrayal here to convey the image of treachery to the reader.

Towards the end of the extract, Chaucer presents January as '*dronken in pleasaunce*', the verb '*dronken*' articulating that January is so happy in love and with his new wife that he is intoxicated, in order to contrast the image of deception which is heavily conveyed beforehand. The authorial intention of this contrast between imagery of bliss and euphoria, and the imagery of hellish betrayal is perhaps employed to reinforce a sense of wrong, to present January as wronged. This notion is consolidated when Chaucer writes '*Thyn owne squier*', the possessive pronoun '*Thyn*' emphasising the patriarchal order in which Damyan is a trusted confidante to January, making the overwhelming lust he feels towards May more shocking to the reader in both a modern and Chaucerian audience. This is summarised by the merchant narrator when Chaucer writes '*no worse pestilence*', the noun pestilence connoting the plague to present Damyan and desire as an infectious disease which is a destructive force, creating the image of future peril and anguish as this foreshadows that January will be cuckolded.

(658 words)



### Section A(i) Distracted by Context

It is true that context can never be entirely absent from a reading of poetry so it is a matter of discriminating between what **supports an analysis** of the ways in which meaning is made and what **distracts from or derails the process of analysis** – what is “**supportive**” and what is “**unhelpful**” in Section A (i) responses.

- Look at **extracts A and B** taken from candidate responses to Section A(i). Discuss the differences between the ways the candidates have used their **contextual knowledge to support AO2 analysis** rather than including **unhelpful contextual material** which will take up valuable time, gain no credit and take candidates away from focus on the AOs rewarded in this section.
- Look at the ‘**unhelpful**’ contextual material in extract C and discuss how that contextual knowledge could be used to **support AO2 analysis** of the Keats extract.
- Use the other rows to draft other examples to use with your candidates.

	Focused on AO1/AO2	Distracted by context
<b>A</b>	In order to emphasise this dangerous flaunting of medieval values, Chaucer uses repeated oxymoronic images of “ <i>false hoomly hewe</i> ” and “ <i>servant traitour</i> ” .....	Damyant is shown to be a traitor to his master, Januarie, undermining the understood relationship between master and servant. This was at the core of medieval society and the feudal system which had prevailed for centuries but was waning at the time Chaucer was writing, an era of political change and uncertainty.
<b>B</b>	“ <i>burn me, O Lord, with a fiery zeal</i> ” is a powerful image which depends upon Catholic ideas of purgatory and purification through suffering.....	Donne’s life as a minister of the Anglican Church (even rising to be Dean of St Paul’s), and before that as a Roman Catholic, made him familiar with the images in this poem which are concerned with suffering in order to be worthy of God’s rewards.

## Section A (ii) Effective Openings: Establishing a Line of Argument

### Task 1

Read the three openings to candidates' responses to Section A (ii) questions on Donne, Keats and Rossetti.

Consider how effectively each candidate has engaged with the view to outline a clear line of argument for the essay

#### **Donne:**

'Passionate feelings, whether sacred or otherwise, are the driving force of poetry'. In the light of this remark, examine Donne's presentation of passion.

Passionate feelings can be seen throughout the poetry associated with all stages of Donne's life. As a Renaissance man his poems were often passionate as they were risky and pushed the boundaries for the time period of Elizabethan England. However, the poems associated with Donne's youth tend to have a more physically passionate focus, whilst those associated with his wife Anne are viewed more as profoundly passionate love lyrics. Donne also appears to have passionate feelings spiritually in his conflicting relationship with God, associated with his Holy Sonnets.

#### **Keats:**

How far would you agree with the view that 'though written in an age of intellectual enlightenment, Keats' poetry appeals strongly to the emotions but is surprisingly lacking in ideas'?

One poem of Keats where he arguably lacks originality is 'Imitation of Spenser' due to the fact the poem is greatly inspired by another work. This is shown through extensive descriptive language such as '*seemed an emerald in the silver sheen of the bright waters*'. This arguable lack of ideas is shown here due to the fact Keats is imitating the language Spenser would typically use. This relates to the fact Keats' works were heavily criticised in his lifetime and often as a result of unoriginal ideas. However, some critics may argue that his working class background was also a factor in his lack of credibility.

#### **Rossetti:**

Examine the view that 'as a devoted Christian, Rossetti's primary intention in her poetry is to instruct or persuade her readers'.

In many ways, Rossetti's poetry was intended as a moral guide for the readers, often prescribing religious beliefs as instructions, such as the binary view of life in "Amor Mundi". But, Rossetti also conveys, as a devout Christian who rejected men based on their religion, that the primary intention of her poetry is to remain personally close to God, not to persuade others of virtues. Rossetti gives the reader both a sense of moral persuasion, but also that being close to God is her main intention of her works.

## Task 2

Compare these two openings to the Chaucer questions.

Discuss which opening, X or Y, is more effective and why?

**Chaucer:** ‘Beneath the surface of this entertaining and bawdy tale we find a serious examination of obligation and loyalty.’ Explore this view of The Merchant’s Prologue and Tale

### Candidate X

Within The Merchant’s Tale “obligation and loyalty” are shown through each character in a way that changes reader’s interpretation of them. Damyan is one of the characters who primarily conveys the “examination of loyalty and obligation” because he breaks his loyalty towards Januarie by being deceitful. This is shown through him communicating with May in secrecy to organise May and his lust-based affair. We are told that they write “to and fro” which illustrates how May and Damyan are not loyal to Januarie and how neither seem to care about how their actions may affect others. However, May seems to be pursuing Damyan for entirely lustful reasons as she casts his heartfelt note down the ‘privee’. This could be interpreted as May just trying to be secretive or her disregarding the emotional side and focusing on the lust side.

### Candidate Y

Chaucer’s ‘The Merchant’s Tale’, written as a part of The Canterbury Tales which depict 29 pilgrims travelling to St Thomas a Becket’s shrine, can be described as presenting a serious examination of obligation and loyalty. For example, the issues of the loyalty of women in marriage, the loyalty of social inferiors and loyalty to God are strongly presented throughout the tale under the satirical and humorous tone, evidencing that Chaucer ‘provides malicious amusement at the expense of society’, claims critic Burnley.

### Section A (ii): Balancing AOs Effectively

- Discuss how effectively this candidate has applied the view in the question (AO5) to engage creatively with the text and structure a relevant line of argument (AO1).
- Consider how effectively the contextual information is integrated into relevant discussion of the text (AO3) and used to support analysis and enhance a critical appreciation of the poetry (AO2).

Chaucer's 'The Merchant's Tale', written as a part of The Canterbury Tales which depict 29 pilgrims travelling to St Thomas a Becket's shrine, can be described as presenting a serious examination of obligation and loyalty. For example, the issues of the loyalty of women in marriage, the loyalty of social inferiors and loyalty to God are strongly presented throughout the tale under the satirical and humorous tone, evidencing that Chaucer 'provides malicious amusement at the expense of society', claims critic Burnley.

Firstly, throughout the poem there is a heavy theme of female betrayal and adultery. The critic Schleusener claims that 'May's fall takes us by surprise and yet confirms our worst suspicions'. Indeed, from the first page of the tale Chaucer's employment of a Merchant narrator who has a tragic marriage taints the tale with images of women as a 'shrew', the noun reducing women to a rodent and pest to reflect the misogyny prevalent in the Chaucerian period as female sexuality and power was frowned upon and condemned as a result of distrust justified by the Book of Genesis and the story of Eve as Eve eats the forbidden fruit and subsequently condemns man to an existence of pain and disgrace. This concept is reiterated when Chaucer employs the rhetorical question '*hir hye malice?*', the rhetorical question used possibly to create a dramatic pause to reinforce the line to the reader. The use of the adjective '*hye*' presents women's capability for treachery and betrayal as overwhelming and dominating, condemning all female characters to this standard that women are sinful and hellish and thus should not be trusted. Thus, as the critic suggests when Chaucer writes that May '*harde him twiste*' and '*warm wex emprented*' as she makes a copy of the key to the garden to allow Damayan to enter, the reader, while slightly shocked as the epithet '*fresshe*' is continuously used to describe May as tender and innocent, is not outright shocked as the Merchant narrator's misogynistic attitude dominates the tale from the beginning. The adjective '*harde*' is significant as it connotes strength and power which subsequently presents May as dominant and perhaps desperate for Damyan's affection and physical love, thus depicting women as adulterous and betraying to their vows of loyalty and fidelity. Moreover, the verb '*emprented*' is significant as it reflects May copying the key which is emblematic of a phallus, showing her to challenge her loyalty to January as she allows Damyan to '*throng*' inside her, Chaucer's utilisation of the explicit verb here perhaps used to show the audience the violent passions that women will go to to betray their husbands and fulfil their desires.

However, as May is left without consequence we see that Chaucer himself is not a misogynist who is complicit in this idea as he presents January and the Merchant who have been cuckolded as weak and sinful for viewing marriage as a transaction, and therefore it is apparent that the fabliau mocks those of a high social status for failing to be loyal to the Bible's desire of marriage for procreation rather than lust. This idea is articulated when Chaucer writes that January would '*lede my lyf in avountrye*' if his wife was not young and beautiful, the noun '*avountrye*' referring to adultery which subsequently depicts that January is marrying to have recreational sex frequently without sin rather than because it is a '*hooly sacrament*'. Therefore, this presents January as loyal only to his desires rather than the Christian morals of the time. This confirms the critic Tatlock who claims that 'religion itself is bemocked' as the sanctity of marriage to please God is subverted for indulgence in 'appetit'. This is strengthened by the fact that the poem is a fabliau with bawdy themes and sexually explicit language which is in contrast

to the pilgrims who are narrating these tales on their journey, subsequently evidencing that Chaucer is highlighting the lack of loyalty to Christianity and to morals as pilgrimages themselves became viewed as a method of cleaning sin easily without dedication, highlighting the deterioration of faith in Chaucerian society. This notion is finally seen at the end of the poem via the setting of the 'garden' as this edenic in description, subsequently reminding the reader of innocence and purity before the fall of mankind. However, this image is tainted by the presence of Pluto and Proserpina who are classical gods, and thus they challenge Christianity and loyalty to God and the Church as they are infiltrating the image of Eden. This further confirms Tatlock's statement and also validates the critic Jenny Steens who claims that Chaucer 'weaves the biblical and classical' as the loyalty to one religion and to the confessional state within England, tarnished by the use of classical gods. Subsequently, there is no loyalty to God or Christianity in the humorous tale.

Finally, Chaucer presents a lack of loyalty within the patriarchal system via Damyan and May's affair. As the critic Zeaslin suggests when he declares that 'Damyan places the old man in a figurative enclosure', Damayan challenges the social hierarchy by cuckolding January the 'knight' when he is only a 'squier'. This presents a challenge of the Chain of Being and social order in which social inferiors are loyal to their superiors as the worst insult for a man in Chaucer's times was to be cuckolded, as this implied that he could not satisfy his wife. As Damyan actively sought May out with a 'bille' as he 'dieth for desire' and has sex with her in that tree, Damyan is depicted by Chaucer to be treacherous as he betrays his superior and elder in advocacy of indulging his own desires. Thus January is figuratively enclosed as he is trapped in a marriage with an adulterous woman whilst also being locked in the garden where the affair was committed.

This focus on patriarchy may have been inspired by Chaucer's own life as he was made controller of the customs on hides, skins and wool in 1374 alongside having a role as a diplomat, and thus he was exposed to high members of society regularly. The fact that the tale is written in English instead of the typical French of the court, or Latin as favoured by the Church, is also significant as it illustrates Chaucer himself challenging the patriarchal system by writing for the middle class instead of the upper class as would have been typical of the time, thus his heroic couplet poem is defiant both in its themes and its format to perhaps advocate a weakening of the social hierarchy which demands strict loyalty.

To conclude, Chaucer humorously mocks the patriarchal system, religion and marriage to articulate a lack of loyalty in society to morals and superiors. Chaucer emphasises the increasing decadence of society in his fabliau to allow for entertainment but also perhaps to advocate a change in ideas, such as his opposition to unsuitable marriages and the patriarchal system.

### Disgrace

But one day we woke to our disgrace; our house  
a coldness of rooms, each nursing  
a thickening cyst of dust and gloom.  
We had not been home in our hearts for months.

And how our words changed. Dead flies in a web.  
How they stiffened and blackened. Cherished italics  
suddenly sour on our tongues, obscenities  
spraying themselves on the wall in my head.

Woke to your clothes like a corpse on the floor,  
the small deaths of lightbulbs pining all day  
in my ears, their echoes audible tears;  
nothing we would not do to make it worse

and worse. Into the night with the wrong language,  
waving and pointing, the shadows of hands  
huge in the bedroom. Dreamed of a naked crawl  
from a dead place over the other; both of us. Woke.

Woke to an absence of grace; the still-life  
of a meal, untouched, wine-bottle, empty, ashtray,  
full. In our sullen kitchen, the fridge  
hardened its cool heart, selfish as art, hummed.

To a bowl of apples rotten to the core. Lame shoes  
empty in the hall where our voices asked  
for a message after the tone, the telephone  
pressing its ear to distant, invisible lips.

And our garden bowing its head, vulnerable flowers  
unseen in the dusk as we shouted in silhouette.  
Woke to the screaming alarm, the banging door,  
the house-plants trembling in their brittle soil. Total

disgrace. Up in the dark to stand at the window,  
counting the years to arrive there, faithless,  
unpenitent. Woke to the meaningless stars, you  
And me both, lost. Inconsolable vowels from the next room.

### Talking in Bed

Talking in bed ought to be easiest,  
Lying together there goes back so far,  
An emblem of two people being honest.

Yet more and more time passes silently.  
Outside, the wind's incomplete unrest  
Builds and disperses clouds in the sky,

And dark towns heap up on the horizon.  
None of this cares for us. Nothing shows why  
At this unique distance from isolation

It becomes still more difficult to find  
Words at once true and kind,  
Or not untrue and not unkind.

### Pain/unfulfilled relationships connections:

- Metaphorical setting: whole house/bedroom
- Symbolism: domestic details inside house/view through window
- Language/lack of communication: angry/silence
- Mood: resentful; sad; bereavement/despairing; resigned

### Section B AO4: Progressing from Superficial to Illuminating Connections

Connects <b>lives of poets</b> rather than their <b>poems</b>	Both poets had negative relationships which ended in failure, as reflected in these poems about the pain of unfulfilled affairs. Duffy was in a long-term lesbian relationship with Jackie Kay, a fellow poet. Their 15 years relationship ended when Duffy told Kay she was no longer in love with her. Larkin also had many unsuccessful relationships with women, the most long-lasting being with Monica Jones, his lover for more than 30 years although they never married.
Makes <b>clear, appropriate</b> connection between <b>ideas</b> in poems with <b>relevant support</b>	In both poems, the narrators describe the end of relationships and the sad feelings which accompany a break-up. The lack of communication is a problem in both poems. Duffy refers to ' <i>the wrong language</i> ' and ' <i>how our words had changed</i> '. Similarly, Larkin observes that ' <i>talking in bed ought to be easiest</i> ' but instead the couple are struggling to ' <i>find/Words at once true and kind</i> ', showing the relationships have broken down.
Makes <b>purposeful, developed</b> connection between <b>poets' language and technique</b>	Both poets set the poems in the bedroom, making use of it as a traditional emblem of romantic unity. Duffy depicts angry words and gestures in ' <i>waving and pointing</i> ' and the image of ' <i>shadows of hands/huge in the bedroom</i> ' suggests only the dark, ominous outline of their once loving relationship is left. This is echoed in Larkin's poem where the couple sit without talking, just ' <i>lying together</i> ' which is ambiguous as it could refer to their passive acceptance of their empty relationship or to the lack of honesty between them.
<b>Productive</b> connection between poets' <b>language choices</b> <b>developed</b> to make <b>illuminating</b> comparison <b>supported</b> by relevant AO3 and AO5	Both poets use the surroundings as metaphors for the failed relationship, but whereas Duffy focuses on the interior of the home, Larkin widens the image to include the world outside to reflect the sterility of the couple's feelings at this point. Duffy uses accumulated domestic detail linked with funereal imagery to symbolise the death of the affair. The room itself is ' <i>cold</i> ' and the narrator notices ' <i>dead flies in a web</i> ', suggestive of the trap the relationship has now become. Even the lover's clothes lie ' <i>like a corpse</i> ' and in a disturbing image of sickness and burnt out passion the couple's resentments are compared to a ' <i>thickening cyst of dust and gloom</i> '. Larkin's imagery is perhaps more ambiguous and universal, as the ' <i>wind's incomplete unrest</i> ' and ' <i>clouds in the sky</i> ' suggest even the weather outside echoes the lovers' stale relationship as if this unhappiness is shared by countless other couples in ' <i>dark towns</i> ' which ' <i>heap up on the horizon</i> '. Duffy's late 20 <sup>th</sup> Century emphasis on dissecting the intensely personal and intimate details, perhaps highlights what some critics see as Larkin's expression of the disappointment of a wider post-war generation, or the 'missing centre of Englishness' (Tom Paulin).



### Section B: AO3 Supportive Context

Compare the different approach to making use of biographical data in these extracts from candidate responses to questions in 2019.

	Descriptive	Productive
<b>Q6.</b> <b>Hardy / Eliot</b>	Thomas Hardy was unhappily married for many years and although he shared a house with Emma at Max Gate they lived their lives separately and it took her sudden death to remind him of the affection he had once had for her.	At the core of Hardy's guilt and self-accusation recorded in poems such as "The Going" is the fading of love for his wife, Emma when in lines such as " <i>latterly did we not speak...of those days long dead</i> " present grief is intensified with images of past joy when " <i>Life unrolled us its very best.</i> "
<b>Q10.</b> <b>Plath / Hughes</b>	Plath's father died when she was a child and her husband, Ted Hughes deserted her when she was a young mother so it is not surprising that these traumas provide her with much of the material for her poetry which is almost always focused upon her personal life and struggle.	The " <i>Panzer man</i> " and the " <i>man in black with a Meinkampf look</i> " in Plath's poem, "Daddy" are potent presentations of the men who brought unhappiness and grief to Plath's personal life but the choice of imagery gives the figures a scale and significance beyond the simply personal so that father and husband become more universal representations of oppression.
<b>Q13.</b> <b>Duffy / Larkin</b>	Larkin's parents were unhappily married and this left him with a lack of faith in marriage and relationships which would tie him down. Although he did have relationships with a number of women his poems such as "Talking in Bed" show that he does not really believe that happiness can last and that, as his parents did, married couples lose interest in each other and eventually have nothing to say.	When it comes to the pain or pleasure of twentieth century relationships, "The Whitsun Weddings", "Self's The Man" and "Afternoons" provide a full account of Larkin's famously cynical rejection of the potential joys of marriage where the ceremonies in " <i>banquet-halls up yards</i> " turn into the frustration and tedium of " <i>put a screw in this wall</i> " and the ruined " <i>courting places</i> " and " <i>thickened</i> " beauty of the mothers in "Afternoons".

**"Candidates should use biographical data as the touchstone for broader contextual issues and not an end in itself."**

Principal Examiner



## Section B: Balancing AOs

Consider how effectively this candidate has addressed and balanced all five AOs in this response:

- Coherence of expression, organisation of material and quality of creative engagement with question: AO1
- Depth of analysis and critical appreciation of writers' use of language and poetic technique to create meaning: AO2 (double weighting)
- Use of relevant contextual knowledge to support analysis and critical appreciation: AO3
- Relevant, developed connections between poems selected: AO4
- Engagement with range of perspectives and readings, including critical view in question: AO5

'For both poets, relationships seem to be exclusively about pain rather than pleasure or fulfilment.'

Explore connections between the ways in which Larkin and Duffy present human relationships, showing how far you agree with this comment. You must analyse in detail at least two poems from each of your set texts.

### CANDIDATE F (\* See end for opening paragraph)

Carol Ann Duffy's 'Havisham' supports the idea that relationships revolve around pain. The oxymoronic opening to the poem "*Beloved sweetheart bastard*" indicates the persona's negative association with their past lover. Plosive sounds are used to suggest the anger the persona feels, to portray their feelings of sorrow and pain. The juxtaposition between the nouns 'beloved' and 'bastard' signify the attitudes of the persona towards their lover; it suggests how their emotions have dramatically altered. The poem is based on Dicken's character Miss Havisham from his novel 'Great Expectations'; it portrays the perspective of the woman - this supports the poetry foundations claim that Duffy's work has a "strong feminist edge". Despite Duffy's feministic outlook to the poem, it is titled 'Havisham', removing her title. This suggests how the characters relationship with her past lover, who abandoned her on her wedding day in the novel, has dehumanised her. The pain she has suffered from this relationship is also suggested by the adjective "*puce*", which creates imagery of a brown and red colour. This contradicts with the stereotypical white imagery of a wedding and instead demonstrates the anger Miss Havisham feels. The poem is written in a dramatic monologue, this supports O'Reilly's claim that Duffy "uses dramatic monologue in her exploration of different voices". Duffy's poems are usually optimistic, therefore, her exploration of pain suggests how not all human relationships seem to be exclusively about pleasure.

The idea that pain and unfulfillment overrules pleasure in human relationships can also be observed in Larkin's 'Wild Oats'. The persona suggests how he is restricted to the "*friend in specs*", as he is unable to pursue a pleasurable relationship with the "*bosomy English rose*". The contrast between the colloquial language of "specs" and the use of descriptive adjectives such as "bosomy" suggests the persona's unfulfillment with his choice. The persona describes the unreachable woman as a "*rose*". The noun is often associated with romantic notions, along with the flower suggesting life and hope. This contrasts with the lack of description and dehumanisation of the other woman, as she is merely described as a "*friend*". This dehumanisation can be compared with Miss Havisham not referring to her lover by name - she refers to him with personal pronouns such as "*him*". It can also be observed how colour imagery is used in both poems to express how pleasure isn't achieved in either relationship. In 'Havisham' the persona has '*dark green pebbles for eyes*', suggesting their negative feelings

towards their relationship. This can be compared to the imagery of the 'rose', and how red represents the romance and pleasure the persona is never able to achieve. The "friend in specs" represents Larkin's past lover Ruth Bowman, whom he came close to marriage with. However, due to Larkin's pessimistic view on all concepts of domestic life (including marriage), he expresses his hatred through the poem. Larkin valued the physical aspects of love, as suggested by his attraction towards the "bosomy" rose. This was Ruth's friend Jane, who Larkin felt he could never approach. Despite this, he had many affairs throughout his life, such as Ruth and his secretary Betty Mackeneth. His pessimistic outlook on marriage and human relationships can be seen throughout the poem, supporting Appleyard's claim that Larkin is "a hopeless and inflexible pessimist".

In contrast with the previous poems that suggest the pain and unfulfilment of relationships, Duffy's 'First Love' suggests the pleasure and optimism of human relationships. Firstly, a sense of closeness between two people is demonstrated. The imagery of being "*close to my lips as lipstick*" suggests a sense of oneness. Romantic associations are also made with the noun 'lips', similarly to the imagery of a 'rose' in 'Wild Oats'. Additionally, the noun 'lipstick' has feminine imagery. Duffy could be describing her relationships with women, due to her homosexuality. Duffy had a relationship with Jackie Kay for around fifteen years, therefore, she could be describing the intimate nature of their homosexual relationship. The idea that relationships are exclusively about pleasure can be supported by Duffy's use of the imagery of flowers. The noun 'flowers' can be associated with female genitalia, again supporting that the poem is about her relationship with Jackie Kay. The imagery that the flowers 'pierce' and 'sweeten' the air perhaps suggests a sense of pleasure that Duffy associates with the relationship.

Some would argue the structure of the poem suggests the positivity of the relationship. It consists of three stanzas each with five lines, suggesting a sense of stability. This contrasts with the instability of structure in 'Wild Oats', as enjambment is used throughout stanzas. This suggests the stability of Duffy's relationships in comparison to the fragmentation of Larkin's. Duffy's exploration and expression of her homosexuality supports O'Riordan's claim that she "examines love in many forms". Furthermore, this poem opposes the statement that relationships are exclusively about pain.

Larkin's 'Talking in Bed' opposes with the suggestions made by Duffy's 'First Love'. Although both compare sexual relationships, as the imagery of the noun 'bed' has sexual connotations, like the bed imagery in 'First Love'. However, Larkin's imagery of the "*wind's incomplete unrest*" suggests his unfulfilment with this relationship with his lover. The verb 'unrest' signifies how the persona is unable to commit to a relationship, much like Larkin himself, who was unable to live a domesticated life. This idea of unrest and dissatisfaction contrasts with the peaceful imagery of the noun "*garden*" in 'First Love'. The fact that Duffy reminiscing about her love brings her to the garden suggests how she associates it with paradise; this, perhaps, is a link to the Garden of Eden in Genesis, as that too is an emblem of paradise. This suggests how Duffy, according to Allen Randolph, has an "optimistic" outlook on relationships, whereas, Larkin has a pessimistic view that relationships cannot be pleasurable, unless they are physical.

To conclude, Duffy's 'Havisham' and Larkin's 'Wild Oats' and 'Talking in Bed' all support the claim that relationships are exclusively about pain and unfulfilment. However, they all express this through different perspectives and outlooks, with Duffy having her stereotypical feminine outlook. Therefore, as only one of the four compared poems suggests the pleasurable aspect of human relationships, I would argue that the statement is agreeable.

(\*opening paragraph added at end of response) Both poets will likely differ in their approaches to human relationships, as Larkin has a "pessimistic" view towards the concept of domestic life, including relationships. He has a cynical outlook on remaining committed, a view which is often reflected through his poetry. Duffy, on the other hand, expresses a more optimistic outlook on romance in her poetry, yet she has been described (by O'Riordan) to "examine love in many forms", such as her expression of her homosexuality.

## CANDIDATE G

Despite Duffy's poetry being published in the later 20<sup>th</sup> Century and Larkin's 'The Whitsun Weddings' anthology being written in a post-war, post-industrialisation Britain, the two poets convey a sense of pain in a relationship despite the large time gap and the largely different societies. For example, in 'Talking in Bed' and 'Disgrace' a sense of pain in relationships is conveyed by the slow deterioration of a relationship emphasised by an emotional distance. Moreover, in the poems 'Stuffed' and 'Sunny Prestatyn' there is a sense of female pain as a result of domestic abuse and domination, but an idea of male pleasure in this. As the critic Jones claims, Larkin 'embraces the purely personal' by engaging in his own relationships, as does Duffy.

Firstly, in the poems 'Talking in Bed' and 'Disgrace' there is a stronger sense of pain articulated as the poems focus on a sense of distance between the two lovers despite a physical closeness. This idea is articulated when Larkin writes '*lying together*', the word 'together' creating a sense of physical closeness and intimacy as the two lovers are '*in bed*'. However, the narrator emphasises that communication '*ought to be easiest*', the word 'ought' emphasising a sense of difficulty in talking and opening up emotionally as the hard sounds conveyed articulate a lack of connection. This concept thus suggests that the verb 'lying' could also be perceived as a pun, referring to deceit and a lack of honesty instead of physically lying down. This would disprove the critic Navemore who claims that 'Larkin seldom presents himself as anything but the onlooker' as although the poem is not a dramatic monologue, the strong sense of a person struggling with coming to terms with a failing relationship is conveyed to the reader. The poem is also autobiographical as it was written about Larkin's relationship with Monica Jones, re-suggesting the reading of 'lying' as deceit as Larkin had an affair with Betty Mackereth, his secretary, and Maeve Brennan his colleague at Hull University where he was librarian for 30 years, and thus the theme of deceit reflects his own romance.

Similarly, Duffy's poem 'Disgrace' is also presenting an idea of distance in a relationship. This occurs despite the frequent use of the pronoun 'we' which suggests a couple as it is apparent that the two lovers are no longer a united force, as they '*had not been home in our hearts for months*.' The metaphor here employed by Duffy is significant as the noun 'home' connotes a place of comfort, love and security thus elucidating that their 'hearts' are no longer full of love as the relationship has deteriorated. The disappointed tone of this declarative sentence articulates the persona of the dramatic monologue's pain and sorrow that the relationship which was previously full of love and light has disintegrated. This also demonstrates that Navemore's statement cannot be applied to Duffy's poem as the monologue creates a strong sense of voice and involvement which enables the reader to experience the pain and anguish of lost love with the person, discrediting the idea of an 'onlooker'.

Both Larkin and Duffy create a sense of a failed and unpleasurable relationship when the imagery of darkness is employed. The critic Watts claims that Duffy utilises 'tightly coiled images and precision wording' and indeed there is an overwhelming sense of pain and sorrow evoked in the reader via Duffy's personification of the house as '*nursing/a thickening cyst of dust and gloom*', the use of enjambment creating a sinister tone as the maternal image of the verb 'nursing' contrasts the darkness and desolation of the nouns 'dust and gloom' which articulate the idea that the house represents the coldness of the relationship, this adjective evoking a sense of the forlorn and dark. This imagery of darkness is further seen when Duffy writes '*small deaths of lightbulbs*', the noun 'lightbulbs' symbolic of light and warmth which subsequently creates the image of lost passion and correction. Similarly, the critic can also be applied to Larkin's poem, as evidenced when he writes '*dark towns heap up on the horizon*'. The adjective 'dark' depicts the image of a silhouette of a town in the sunset, however it could alternatively be argued to present the domestic and everyday as gloomy and unforgiving as

there is no warmth or sign of welcoming here, this suggesting that the poet's intention is to present everyday life as dull as a result of the lack of passion in the relationship. Moreover, the image of a 'horizon' being 'heap[ed] up' shows that light from the sun is being blocked, creating a sense of entrapment which presents an emotional darkness due to the relationship being dead yet the two lovers are still 'together'. Furthermore, Larkin also employs pathetic fallacy when he writes '*wind's incomplete unrest*' as the noun 'unrest' creates the image of constant wind which subsequently creates a rapidly hostile environment which is perhaps a metaphor for the hostility in the relationship and the narrator's whirring thoughts as he tries to find words that are '*not untrue*'. Likewise, Duffy also creates a sense of a hostile environment via the semantic field of violence, as seen when it is written '*Dead flies*', '*stiffened*', '*blackened*', '*rotten*' and '*screaming*', creating an atmosphere of decay and anguish to reflect the persona's pain in the relationship. This is most evident by the image of rotten apples which reflects the original sin as it refers to Eve eating the forbidden fruit, suggesting adultery and betrayal. This may be influenced by Duffy's Roman Catholic background despite the fact that she was atheist as it is her sexuality was condemned by the church and her indulgence in pre-marital sex with Adrian Henri shunned by the church. Overall both poets show no sense of love or pleasure as the persona and narrator describe the failing relationships which they are in.

On the other hand, in the poems 'Stuffed' and 'Sunny Prestatyn' there is a sense that relationships are painful only to women as a sense of domination is conveyed to elicit male pleasure. This is seen in 'Sunny Prestatyn' as the '*girl on the poster*' is argued to be an extended metaphor for a woman in real life who is domestically abused and violated, turning the compound adjective 'boss-eyed' from the image of graffiti to the image of someone who has a damaged tale as she has been attacked. Similarly, in 'Stuffed' Duffy creates a disturbing idea of sexual domination and abuse as in the final stanza it is revealed that the person '*like[s] her not to tell*' the pronoun '*she*' suggesting that the '*owl*' and '*crocodile*' animals are in fact an extended metaphor for women who are victims of sexual abuse. The critic Mendelson argues that 'Duffy's talent... is her ventriloquism' and indeed she creates a strong sense of a dominant persona via her utilisation of a strict structure, as each of the first three stanzas begins with the personal pronoun '*I*' and a verb, followed by the two lines beginning with a monosyllabic adjective. This creates the sense of a dominant person who enjoys submission, reinforced by the perverse image of '*my living doll*' as the noun 'doll' evokes the image of an inanimate object which is meant to be played with, however the oxymoronic adjective 'living' suggests that the doll is actually alive and this presents it to be a woman. Duffy has said she writes for the everyday, and in modern society domestic violence is now as common as one in five women will be harassed in their lifetime, and thus Duffy uses this dominant twisted person to perhaps advocate a change in outlook of society as it was not illegal for marital rape to occur when Duffy wrote the poem. Moreover, the evident misogyny is highlighted perhaps due to Duffy's own life as a female poet as she was overlooked for many awards due to her sexuality, as she was passed over for Poet Laureate in 1999 due to her gender. She is the only female to have received Poet Laureate, emphasising how misogyny is still prevalent today.

On the contrary, Mendelson's comment cannot be used to describe Larkin's poem as the poem is observational in nature. As the critic Navemore says, Larkin 'seldom presents himself as anything but the onlooker'. The narrator of the poem is perhaps purposefully distant to accentuate how society did not pay attention to domestic violence and instead looked away, opposing Duffy's style of explicit violence to frighten the reader in advocating change. However, both poets employ a semantic field of violence, as evident when Larkin writes '*stab*' and '*snaggle-toothed*', the verb 'stab' perhaps symbolic of penetration to relate to when the 'fissured crotch' is '*well scored*' in suggesting the woman has been repeatedly dominated by men for their own pleasure and ignoring the pleasure of the female.

Moreover, both poets employ sexual innuendo to create the sense of male enjoyment at the expense of female pain, as suggested when Larkin writes '*Behind her, a hunk of coat*', the

adjective 'hunk' being used to perhaps pun the coast with a large muscular man to create the idea of domination. Similarly, the verb '*I screw*' is a sexual colloquialism which presents the person of Duffy's poem to be sexually abusive and dominant despite a '*snarl*' to reiterate no consent.

To conclude, the poems 'Stuffed' and 'Sunny Prestatyn' present pleasure to disprove the hypothesis, however this is exclusive to men who dominate and abuse women. Relationships here are presented to be painful due to failed love and violence, articulating a lack of pleasure in replacement of pain and anguish.

### Component 3: Unseen Poetry

<p>“A Lady” written by Amy Lowell is an attempt to give the reader a picture of a woman, or lady, who has grown old but still seems able to attract the attention of the observer.</p>	<p>The poem, “A Lady” is written in free verse and is presented in two uneven stanzas which firstly give a detailed picture of the lady herself and then in the second stanza offers hints at the strong feelings inspired by the subject.</p>	<p>A “beautiful and faded” lady is the first in a series of sensual (sometimes oxymoronic) images designed to explore the qualities and attractions of an older lady who, despite the effects of age, has the power to make the observer “mad with gazing”.</p>
--	--	---

Reading	Understanding 1-10	Notes or Questions
First Reading Focus		
Second Reading Focus		
Third Reading Focus		



### Candidate A (Q3)

This poem presents the subjects loss whilst confronting the grief which merges the lines between illusion and reality.

The unreferenced pronoun 'her' suggests a degree of distance in the order to manage with the loss of the subjects loved one. The title of the poem adds to the intimacy as 'Celandine' relates to an emotional memory depicted in stanza 2 this builds the significance of nature to the process of life as well as grief. Nature is used to demonstrate the cycle of life and this is reflected in the structure as stanza one suggests that she 'stood up like a flame' which might suggest rebirth as it connotes the Phoenix.

The second stanza portrays life as well as being the longest stanza the use of the organic semantic field such as 'bloom' and 'blossoms' suggest life at its peak. Therefore the third stanza resembles the gradual death and realisation which is emphasised by the petal 'plucked' from the grass as well as characterising her as 'like a never perfectly recalled air' This simile compares her life to the transient fluidity of air. This reduces her to an elemental form whilst the 'pluck' suggests an almost normality of upbeat ending. The three stanzas therefore shape the reader's response to the grief of the subject as the graphology appears to simplify and break the complex process of grief into manageable chunks.

Time is used in order to guide the loss of the subject. For example the significance of 'February' is the end of winter and beginning of spring it connotes new life. Yet although the seasons seem to be changing the subjects focus remains on the past for example the use of past tense memorialises her memory such as 'she found the celandines...always before us all' this brings her into the moment. Similarly this comparison to the flowers regenerates her as 'for a short swift eternity back she came'. The use of oxymoronic 'swift eternity' suggests the loss of reality which the speaker is confronting whilst adding to a sense of static time which grief may be described as. However after the line 'once lost' the first stanza is endstopped which has the effect of separating time and adds finality to the loss.

Thomas uses illusion and reality to portray the speakers state of mind. For example 'she stood up like a flame' this simile adds elemental force as well as danger connoted by the 'flame'. This might suggest the dangers of submitting to illusion. Furthermore she is compared to 'what before I nursed' and 'a shadow'. The image of a shadow presents an ominous absence of light associated with death. This is intensified by the escalation of her to a 'phantom' which adds a supernatural significance to this illusion. Ultimately however despite her image making the subject 'happy' he rejects the illusion with the monosyllabic definitive 'But this was a dream'. This outright rejects the fantasy whilst embracing reality for example he 'smelt the juice' this engagement of the senses adds reality to the poem.

This poem builds up the memory of the subjects loved one whilst analysing the embracement of illusion as a relief from reality through the experience of the celandines. However such as the graphology and irregular rhyming pattern suggest grief is portrayed as an inconsistent process and the poet leaves it open to interpretation of the reader.

### Candidate B (Q4)

In 'The Poplar Field', William Cowper presents the reader with a distinct impression of the inevitability of death and a fascination with mortality. His apparent serene resignation to the natural progression of the world imbues the poem with an overall atmosphere of peace and acceptance, with the morbid subject lightened by the regular rhyme scheme and rhythmically loose iambic pentameter. Cowper's awareness of the passage of time extends to an acknowledgement of life's most simplistic pleasures – nature and the subsequent destruction of it, reinforcing the certainty of death and the ambiguous relationship between humanity and nature.

Cowper's preoccupation with mortality is made evident from the start, where the use of 'poplars' connotes an automatic association with death. Poplar trees are classically linked to the fields of Asphodel in the mythological Greek underworld, where the 'shades' (ghosts) of those who die would reside. By choosing a morbid symbol of death and the title of 'The Poplar Field' as a potential allusion to Asphodel, Cowper evokes the image of death and nature as being intrinsically linked. The prominence of sound in this extract, detailing the 'whispering sound' of the leaves and how the 'wind' would 'sing', Cowper both personifies the woods and thus emphasises the silence of the space following the destruction of the forest, making the setting seem eerie and empty due to the resulting lack of sensory stimulus. This apparent obsession with death also continues in the last two stanzas, where the unnamed speaker unites himself with the 'fell'd' trees using the image of 'lie as lonely as they', suggesting an equality between man and nature in the grave. Cowper also avoids explicitly referencing the idea of man-made graves, instead favouring 'a turf on my breast and a stone at my head' to reassert this unity and suggest the modesty that lies in death. The idea that man's pleasures 'die sooner than we' shows both the fascination with death and Cowper's reverence for the spectacle of nature, which seems both fragile and all the more special for its temporary, transient beauty.

Cowper shows a distinct awareness of the passage of time in this poem, coupled with the notion of the transient nature of human life. This leads to the conclusion that you should take joy in the 'persisting pleasures of man' whilst alive, once again showing the speaker's acceptance of their death and their serene appreciation for the simplistic joy of life. Cowper utilises natural imagery in stanza three to represent the 'twelve years' that has passed for the speaker, the image of the 'blackbird' seemingly embodying all the animal life of the wood, leaving the field vacant of the sweet flowing ditty' of his 'melody' (as emphasised by the lyrical flow of Cowper's meter and rhyme). The hazels around him 'a screen from the heat' suggests both the cycle of nature in that other trees arise as the poplars fall and that the speaker is left vulnerable to the heat in the poplar field (perhaps a metaphor for the destruction of nature as committed by humanity, or for the speaker's uncomfortable awareness of the fleeting nature of life). This unending cycle that will outlive the speaker is also referenced in the fourth stanza where Cowper recalls how 'another ash grove shall arise in its stead'. This not only suggests the consistency and regularity of nature but also its power, in that it has existed without interference long before the speaker and it will continue to flourish after his death, perhaps consuming him in death. This cycle of trees 'fell'd' only for more to 'arise' establishes the theme of regeneration and new life that provides an otherwise morbid poem with a distinctly hopeful tone.

The idea of heat and cool is evident throughout the poem, with the 'shade' representing the respite and comfortable refuge of nature and the 'heat' representing the uncomfortable destruction and thus absence of it. The 'shade' and 'cool colonnade' in stanza one suggests the almost architectural majesty of the poplar grove, once again showing Cowper's reverence for nature. The discomfort of its loss is presented in stanza two, where the speaker recalls how the tree that his 'seat' 'once lent me a shade' personifying the tree as a philanthropic entity to magnify the melancholy of its destruction. The image of the forest as a 'screen from the heat' reiterates its position as a refuge for the speaker and serves to imply his unhappiness and



vulnerability now it is 'fell'd', once again showing the ambiguous reverent/destructive relationship between man and nature.

To conclude, William Cowper presents the reader with a morbidly-centred poem that shows a distinct resignation to the immortality of nature's power and an appreciation for its contrastingly fleeting beauty. The speaker's acceptance of death seems serene when faced with the hope that nature will ultimately prevail when the speaker's body returns to the earth to lie with its beloved poplars – a love letter to nature from a man evidently saddened by its destruction.

## A few things to do with a poem

Activities to promote playfulness	Activities to promote autonomy	Activities to develop critical thinking, understanding and knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dropped tray</li> <li>• Sequence lines</li> <li>• Sequence cut up lines.</li> <li>• Cloze procedure</li> <li>• Set it to a tune</li> <li>• Perform it with drama</li> <li>• Storyboard it</li> <li>• Use lines from it to write</li> <li>• Use lines from it to explore imagery</li> <li>• Give the poem as prose and ask them to find line breaks</li> <li>• Dropped tray exercises</li> <li>• Give answers and get the class to come up with questions</li> <li>• Put post-it notes on foreheads and learners ask questions to find out what is written there.</li> <li>• Imperfect definitions</li> <li>• Say the poem in different voices and styles</li> <li>• Hot seat the poet</li> <li>• Imaginary show and tell based on the poem</li> <li>• Use shapes of poems to fill in</li> <li>• Give end words of poems and work in pairs</li> <li>• Take a poem and write every other line leaving a space between. Now add your own lines.</li> <li>• change all nouns beginning with a random letter for another using a dictionary to help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil led starter or plenary</li> <li>• Post it activities on theme and opinion</li> <li>• Set creative tasks to be done at home</li> <li>• Get students to 'teach' a poem</li> <li>• Get learners to research background material and act as pioneers</li> <li>• Consciously teach how to debate, discuss and talk meaningfully</li> <li>• Give plenty of opportunities for purposeful talk</li> <li>• Organise learning partners so that work is read by the partner before it comes to you</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to use past knowledge to explain and read poems</li> <li>• Write in silence</li> <li>• Key concept cards to make a model</li> <li>• Edit and add to someone else's work</li> <li>• Circle time</li> <li>• Market place</li> <li>• Do you agree with a statement? Stand on a line to show your strength of feeling.</li> <li>• Would it change the meaning to alter gender, race or setting? Experiment and then find out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KWL grids</li> <li>• Quiz set by teacher or pupils</li> <li>• True/false statements</li> <li>• Play Taboo</li> <li>• Diamond ranking effective images and lines</li> <li>• Provide learners with suitable web addresses</li> <li>• Encourage question-setting and have a question wall or box</li> <li>• Encourage journal writing, list-making</li> <li>• Mind-map and graphic organisers</li> <li>• Write what you know for ten minutes and share</li> <li>• Use pictures to practise reading inference</li> <li>• Teach line-marking for different purposes</li> <li>• Play Pictionary using terms introduced in the lesson</li> <li>• Question, feeling, thought. Ask learners to choose a category and stand in different parts of the room. Then learners speak and explain choices</li> <li>• Write about the poem [content or imagery or a particular technique] in 40 words – not 41 and not 39</li> </ul>