

Big Questions

Our study of poetry will follow the structure below:

Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Big Lecture</u> – Why study poetry? How do I approach an unseen poem? ▪ How does Duffy present childhood in ‘In Mrs Tilscher’s Class’?
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does Blake present childhood in ‘The Schoolboy’? ▪ How does Blake present innocence and experience in ‘The Schoolboy’? ▪ How can we use images of childhood to write our own poem about childhood?
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is Romanticism? ▪ How does Wordsworth present nature in ‘I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud’?
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does Heaney present nature in ‘Death of a Naturalist’?
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does Walker explore the theme of rebellion in ‘For My People’?
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does Shelley present the theme of rebellion in ‘The Masque of Anarchy’?
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is the concept of an outsider presented in ‘The Sound of One Fork’?
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is the concept of an outsider presented in ‘Reporting from the Frontline of the Great Dictionary Disaster’?

Poems you will study during this unit

For each poem, here is a brief summary of what the poem is about:

Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘In Mrs Tilscher’s Class’ by Carol Ann Duffy <p>The poem explores a young child growing up within a nurturing primary school environment. The children grow and move towards adolescence, where they experience new feelings and sensations, and ultimately leave Mrs Tilscher behind.</p>
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘The Schoolboy’ by William Blake <p>The poet explores childhood and youth, as well as themes of education, nature, and freedom. His main character and speaker, the schoolboy, spends the poem describing the difference between freedom in the natural world and the cruel restrictions of formal education.</p>
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud’ by William Wordsworth <p>The speaker says that whilst wandering like a cloud floating above hills and valleys, he encountered a field of daffodils beside a lake. The speaker says that a poet could not help but be happy in such a joyful company of flowers. For now, whenever he feels lost or upset, he reflects on the memory.</p>
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘Death of a Naturalist’ by Seamus Heaney <p>The poem focuses on the loss of childhood innocence. Heaney looks back to a time when he was a boy initially enthralled by the local flax-dam, an area of boggy water in his native County Derry, Northern Ireland.</p>
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘For My People’ by Margaret Walker <p>Walker addresses the tragic history of African American slavery; the horrifying racism still endured by non-whites and taught to their children; the hope this group manages to keep alive despite the odds stacked against them; and the hope for a better future.</p>
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘The Masque of Anarchy’ by Percy Shelley <p>The poem was written in response to the Peterloo Massacre. Shelley explores themes of violence, rebellion and oppression through the use of imagery.</p>
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘The Sound of One Fork’ by Minnie Bruce Pratt <p>The poem details themes of loneliness and isolation. The speaker relies on mundane and simple tasks to keep going. The reliance of watching and listening to nature and the neighbours are the things the speaker focuses on to feel as though a purpose has been served and a sense of inclusion has been found.</p>
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘Reporting from the Frontline of the Great Dictionary Disaster’ by John Agard <p>The poet outlines his concerns of how language will stop relying on other languages to develop vocabulary and language itself. Agard is concerned that all borrowed words will return to their native languages and that the English language will be left to fend for itself.</p>

Key Terminology

	Term	Definition
1	Metaphor	A comparison of two things in which it is representative or symbolic of something else: 'Her eyes are the sun'.
2	Simile	A comparison of two things using the words 'like' and/or 'as': Her eyes are like the sun'.
3	Caesura	A grammatical pause in the middle of a line. It usually reflects a pause in thoughts or ideas.
4	Enjambment	A line of poetry which carries its idea or thought over to the next line without punctuation – it is often called 'run on' lines.
5	Alliteration	The repetition of the same sound between words or in a line.
6	Volta	A turn of shift in thought, idea or argument in a poem.
7	Oxymoron	Two opposite or contrasting words found closely together. Eg. Loving hate, happily haunt.
8	Juxtaposition	Placing two images or ideas close together for the purpose of comparison similarity or contrast.
9	Personification	Giving an object human characteristics.
10	Semantic field	A set of words which are related in meaning. Eg. You could have a semantic field of love.
11	Onomatopoeia	A word that imitates or suggest a sound: 'plop' or 'bang'.
12	Romanticism	A movement in the arts and literature that originated in the late 18 th Century.
13	Lyric poem	A musical verse which conveys powerful emotions.
14	Ballad	A simple narrative poem of folk origin, usually composed in short stanzas and adapted for singing.
15	Anaphora	The repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses.
16	Tone	The overall feeling, mood or atmosphere created by a writer.
17	Refrain	Repetition of a line, usually at the end of each stanza.

Additional Terminology

	Term	Definition
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Homework

The tasks below represent only part of what you can do to enhance and develop your understanding of the text. This is a challenging text and there is lots you can be doing to develop your understanding of it.

Knowledge is power, so the more you know, the more secure you will be in your learning.

Year 7: Unit 4 Homework: <i>An Introduction to Poetry</i>		
Task 1: Homework quiz will take place during Week 2.	Date:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study the key terminology page.• Learn the definitions for the key terms as well as the spellings.• You will be tested on 10 of these (of your teacher's choice) in week 2.
Task 2: Homework quiz will take place during Week 4.	Date:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the first wider reading text.• You will be tested on the content of the article.• You might like to make some key notes or highlight key parts and annotate your thoughts to help your understanding of this article.
Task 3: Homework quiz will take place during Week 7, Lesson 4	Date:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the second wider reading text.• You will be tested on the content of the article• You might like to make some key notes or highlight key parts and annotate your thoughts to help your understanding of this article.

If you have 'no homework', or you have finished all of the above, try these tasks on a weekly basis to ensure your understanding of the story is secure.

1. Research the poets and make some revision notes on the poems that you have read so far. These notes could include information about the poet, themes associated with the poems and any context linked to the poems.
2. Research other poems that the poets you have studied have written. Can you identify any similarities or differences?

Example analytical writing

How is childhood presented in 'In Mrs Tilscher's Class'?

Duffy presents childhood in 'In Mrs Tilscher's Class' as a dramatized experience from the classroom to an exposure of the outside world as the speaker generally loses her innocence. The use of sensory imagery, as well as juxtaposing subtle historical references such as "Moors Murders", highlights a whole childhood's loss of naivety.

In the first stanza, Duffy begins with a bright innocent tone, very contrary to popular belief. The second person pronoun "you" directly immerses the reader in the classroom emphasising Duffy's school nostalgia. Duffy includes the visual imagery of "your finger tracing the route" on a map followed by the list of countries "Tana. Ethiopia. Khartoum. Aswan." Duffy uses senses to vividly portray her childhood imagination and encourage the reader to do the same. Furthermore, Duffy's use of personification in "the laugh of a bell" expresses a joyful experience. This contrasts with the "chalky pyramids", emphasising life's brittle nature that is generally "rubbed into rest". This could symbolise the harsh reality of life frequently overlooked from a naïve perspective.

The second stanza shows an evolution from a child's character losing its innocence in a subtle way. The speaker infers that life at home is not as good as school, making this her escape. The speaker's love for literature and her teacher, Mrs Tilscher, comes from her exposure of "enthraling books", followed by the imagery of "sugar paper". There is reference to the Moors murderers "Brady and Hindley" which juxtaposes the vibrancy and positivity of the classroom. Nonetheless, the atmosphere and tone remains visually bright with the simile "glowed like a sweetshop". In the last line of the second stanza, the personification of the xylophone evokes joyful memories, however it is not good enough to mask the loss of childhood innocence.

The third stanza defines the real moment of physical change; arguably the volta of the poem. The "tadpoles" turn into "frogs", highlighting the process of growing up. This metaphor signals a loss of innocence and a transition of maturity. Aside to the physical growth, the speaker's intellectual growth increases as the "tadpoles" (children) change from "commas to exclamation marks". This suggests that as one grows older, the idea of time running faster is represented.

The last stanza marks the final episode of the transition into adolescence. Duffy expresses the child's confusion by demonstrating conflicting emotions – "air tasted of electricity". The thunderstorm could be a metaphor for the frustration felt by the speaker and children during the transition as the process brings with it new experiences, feelings and expectations.

Example analytical writing: commentary

- This is a strong response to the task
- There are well-selected quotations embedded in the response
- Subject terminology is used accurately
- The student carefully explores the effect of the quotations
- The character of Jack is consistently the focus

Example analytical writing: the reading mark scheme

	Response	Language/Structure analysis
Level 4 16-20 marks perceptive and detailed analysis	Shows a perceptive understanding of the text, engaging fully, perhaps with some originality. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pertinent, direct references from across the text • Sensitive and evaluative approach • Critical analysis of text 	Shows detailed and perceptive understanding of language and structure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyses the effects if the writer's choices of language • Selects a judicious range of textual detail • Makes sophisticated and accurate use of subject terminology • Analyses the effects of the writer's choice of structural features
Level 3 11-15 marks clear, relevant explanation	Shows a secure understanding of key aspects of a text, with considerable engagement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported and justified with well-chosen direct references • Thoughtful approach to the task 	Shows clear understanding of language and structure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains clearly the effects of the writer's choices of language • Selects a range of relevant textual detail • Makes clear and accurate use of subject terminology • Explains clearly the effects of the writer's choice of structural features
Level 2 6-10 marks some understanding and comment	Shows some understanding of key aspects of a text, perhaps with engagement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and justify with references to the text • Straightforward approach to the task 	Shows some understanding of language and structure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to comment on the effect of language • Selects some appropriate textual detail • Makes some use of subject terminology, mainly appropriately • Attempts to comment on the effect of structural features
Level 1 1-5 marks Simple, limited comment	Basic understanding of some key aspects of. Text, with emerging engagement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May support ideas with references to the text • Simple approach to the task 	Shows simple awareness of language and structure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers simple comment on the effect of language • Selects simple references or textual details • Makes simple use of subject terminology, not always appropriately • Offers simple comment on the effect of structure
0 marks	Nothing worthy of credit.	Nothing worthy of credit.

Wider reading 1: Four reasons to fall in love with poetry

<https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2016/jun/23/four-reasons-to-fall-in-love-with-poetry>

1 Children's books site member Safah has just discovered the fantastically varied, powerful and engaging world
2 of written and performance poetry. Here are four reasons why you should give it a chance

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4 Ever since I learned how, I've written stories. I'm pleased to say that the more I write, the less ridiculous the
5 plots get (at aged 11, I wrote a short story about magical tattoos that transport you to alternative universes,
6 but hey, anything's possible in fiction...). Five years later, I've begun to discover another literary art form –
7 poetry – and I'm absolutely in love with it. Here are four reasons why:

8 1. The choice

9 Poetry is just as wonderfully diverse as novels, with an entire scope of varying genres, viewpoints, and
10 settings. Rupi Kaur's Milk and Honey speaks out about abuse and femininity, Rachel Whitley's 'Ten Honest
11 Thoughts on Being Loved by a Skinny Boy' talks about body positivity, while Simon Armitage's 'Out of the
12 Blue' focuses on the tragic aftermath of 9/11. There's the political, the heart-breaking, the hilarious – take
13 your pick. There's something for everyone.

14 2. Slam poetry

15 If you haven't heard of slam poetry I'll assume you've taken residence in a spacious crevice on the moon
16 with awful Wi-Fi. But for those of you who are missing out on this glorious art form, slam poems are
17 essentially poetry written for performance that draw from personal experiences, and often focus on heavier
18 themes such as racial, economic and gender injustices as well current events. They tend to be more
19 engaging and easier to follow and – the good ones, at least – are incredibly powerful.

20 Some of my favourite slam platforms are Button Poetry and Poetry Slam Inc, which both have their own
21 YouTube channels – I guarantee they'll have you glued to your laptop for at least an hour.

22 3. Young people have invaded – it's a beautiful thing

23 Once upon a time poetry was an adult dominated part of the literary world; novels still are, with the
24 exception of a few teen authors, but recently poetry has increasingly become a space for young people.
25 Slam poetry and chapbooks (small self-published online anthologies that are a great project for newbie
26 poets) are some examples, but there are also a number of literary sites and competitions targeted at
27 teenagers, and they're a great place to start to develop your skills and maybe even get published.

28 The National Poetry, Foyle Young Poets and Tower Poetry competitions are some of the biggest – I had the
29 honour of winning second place in the Tower Poetry competition this year, and performing at the prize-
30 giving event in Oxford was an amazing experience. As for sites, I'd recommend [Rookiemag](#) – a teen-focused
31 online magazine that accepts submissions on a different theme each month (and submissions are paid too!).

32 4. The light in exam-induced madness

33 If you're in the middle of GCSE or A Level exams right now, you're probably too far down the growing
34 mountain of revision notes in the corner of your bedroom to pick up a 300 or so page book. (Or maybe you
35 can; if so, please teach me your ways!) You may well be yearning for something fictional that doesn't take
36 up so much time to read. Something short, but still inspiring. Something kind of like... poetry?

As part of homework task 2, you will be tested on your understanding of wider reading 1. Consider the following questions to help your knowledge of the text. Remember, these won't be the questions your teacher will ask you as part of your homework quiz.

1. How does wider reading 1 fit with the 'Introduction to Poetry' unit so far? Do you notice any overlaps or similarities to the content you have been learning in class?

2. How similar are poems and novels?

3. What is your view on 'slam poetry'?

Additional note space:

Wider reading 2: The Romantics

<https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-romantics>

1 **Dr Stephanie Forward explains the key ideas and influences of Romanticism, and considers**
2 **their place in the work of writers including Wordsworth, Blake, P B Shelley and Keats.**

3 Today the word 'romantic' evokes images of love and sentimentality, but the term 'Romanticism' has a
4 much wider meaning. It covers a range of developments in art, literature, music and philosophy, spanning
5 the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The 'Romantics' would not have used the term themselves: the label
6 was applied retrospectively, from around the middle of the 19th century.

7 In 1762 Jean-Jacques Rousseau declared in *The Social Contract*: 'Man is born free, and everywhere he is in
8 chains.' During the Romantic period major transitions took place in society, as dissatisfied intellectuals and
9 artists challenged the Establishment. In England, the Romantic poets were at the very heart of this
10 movement. They were inspired by a desire for liberty, and they denounced the exploitation of the poor.
11 There was an emphasis on the importance of the individual; a conviction that people should follow ideals
12 rather than imposed conventions and rules. The Romantics renounced the rationalism and order associated
13 with the preceding Enlightenment era, stressing the importance of expressing authentic personal feelings.
14 They had a real sense of responsibility to their fellow men: they felt it was their duty to use their poetry to
15 inform and inspire others, and to change society.

16 **Revolution**

17 When reference is made to Romantic verse, the poets who generally spring to mind are William
18 Blake (1757-1827), William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), George
19 Gordon, 6th Lord Byron (1788-1824), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) and John Keats (1795-1821). These
20 writers had an intuitive feeling that they were 'chosen' to guide others through the tempestuous period of
21 change.

22 This was a time of physical confrontation; of violent rebellion in parts of Europe and the New World.
23 Conscious of anarchy across the English Channel, the British government feared similar outbreaks. The early
24 Romantic poets tended to be supporters of the French Revolution, hoping that it would bring about political
25 change; however, the bloody Reign of Terror shocked them profoundly and affected their views. In his youth
26 William Wordsworth was drawn to the Republican cause in France, until he gradually became disenchanted
27 with the Revolutionaries.

28 **The imagination**

29 The Romantics were *not* in agreement about everything they said and did: far from it! Nevertheless, certain
30 key ideas dominated their writings. They genuinely thought that they were prophetic figures who could
31 interpret reality. The Romantics highlighted the healing power of the imagination, because they truly
32 believed that it could enable people to transcend their troubles and their circumstances. Their creative
33 talents could illuminate and transform the world into a coherent vision, to regenerate mankind spiritually.
34 In *A Defence of Poetry* (1821), Shelley elevated the status of poets: 'They measure the circumference and
35 sound the depths of human nature with a comprehensive and all-penetrating spirit...'. He declared that
36 'Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world'. This might sound somewhat pretentious, but it
37 serves to convey the faith the Romantics had in their poetry.

As part of homework task 3, you will be tested on your understanding of wider reading 1. Consider the following questions to help your knowledge of the text. Remember, these won't be the questions your teacher will ask you as part of your homework quiz.

1. How does wider reading 2 fit with the 'Introduction to Poetry' unit so far? Do you notice any overlaps or similarities to the content you have been learning in class?

2. How is a modern day understanding of the word 'romantic' different to the late 18th and 19th centuries?

3. What did revolution have to do with Romanticism?

Additional note space:



Wider reading list

Other recommended poems with suggested tasks to complete after reading each poem:

1. **'Introduction To Poetry' by Billy Collins**

What other poems have you read in the past? Have you read any independently? Whilst reading poetry, remember to analyse, break down, and decode poetry and appreciate the beauty of the words and the message.

2. **'How to Eat a Poem' by Eve Merriam**

This poem is short and is full of imagery. What do you think the poet is comparing the poem to? Draw what you imagine (many think of a fruit, there have been responses like a cheese steak). After reading the poem, write your own 'How to...' poems, either for concrete actions, i.e. how to ride a bike, or for abstract ideas, i.e. how to catch a star.

3. **'Mr. Nobody' by Anonymous**

Not all poetry has to be serious. Have some fun as you read about all the trouble that Mr. Nobody causes. Write poems about "Somebody," "Anybody," or "Everybody."

4. **'Women' by Alice Walker**

Walker's voice is commanding and fierce in this poem though the lines are short and the vocabulary simple. Poems like this one show that poetry doesn't have to be fancy or complex to carry meaning. After reading the poem, analyse the symbols in the poem (the "doors" they battered down and the "mined fields" they crossed).

5. **'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night' by Dylan Thomas**

This poem, which also deals with the themes of life and death, is good for analysing rhyme scheme and personification. Imagine that you are at the end of your days and write advice to the young about how to live their lives.

6. **'Hope is the Thing with Feathers' by Emily Dickinson**

This is such a beautiful poem; it is good for analysing metaphor and imagery. How do you describe hope?

7. **'Richard Cory' by Edwin Arlington Robinson**

The twist at the end of this poem should make you think about how we perceive others. How could a man like Richard Cory, who "we thought that he was everything / To make us wish that we were in his place," go home "one calm summer night...and put a bullet through his head?"