

A LEVEL

Delivery Guide

H472

Accredited

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Theme:

Poetry published post-1900

April 2015

In association with The Poetry Society



We will inform centres about any changes to the specification. We will also publish changes on our website. The latest version of our specification will always be the one on our website (www.ocr.org.uk) and this may differ from printed versions.

Copyright © 2015 OCR. All rights reserved.

Copyright

OCR retains the copyright on all its publications, including the specifications. However, registered centres for OCR are permitted to copy material from this specification booklet for their own internal use.

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered company number 3484466.

Registered office: 1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR is an exempt charity.

CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 4
Curriculum Content	Page 5
Thinking Conceptually: Close reading	Page 12
Thinking Conceptually: Re-creative writing with commentary	Page 18
Thinking Conceptually: Comparative essay	Page 23
Thinking Contextually: Comparative essay	Page 25
Learner Resources	Page 27



Introduction

Delivery guides are designed to represent a body of knowledge about teaching a particular topic and contain:

- Content: a clear outline of the content covered by the delivery guide;
- Thinking Conceptually: expert guidance on the key concepts involved, common difficulties students may have, approaches to teaching that can help students understand these concepts and how this topic links conceptually to other areas of the subject;
- Thinking Contextually: a range of suggested teaching activities using a variety of themes so that different activities can be selected that best suit particular classes, learning styles or teaching approaches.

If you have any feedback on this Delivery Guide or suggestions for other resources you would like OCR to develop, please email resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk.

KEY



Click to view associated resources within this document.



Click to view external resources



Curriculum Content

A Guide to Contemporary Poetry by The Poetry Society

Introduction

As soon as children progress from rhyming picture books and start reading on their own it is most likely that their main exposure to poetry will be through their schoolwork. Exam boards throughout the years have tried to introduce variety to their set texts, but the very nature of set texts means that inevitably a canon develops. Whether it's Tennyson or Duffy, poets emerge with a perceived stamp of approval as being appropriate for a certain age range. This short-hand is, of course, incredibly useful for time-pressured teachers, pointing directly to poets whose work is rich with themes and imagery for students to get their teeth into, and with plenty of supporting resources.

For students however, the misconception develops that this is what poetry *is*: that contemporary poetry is made up of the few names that make the shortlist, rather than the plurality of exciting and varied voices being heard and published today.

In this guide we've attempted to provide the key starting points for using contemporary poetry in non-exam assessment. Each section covers a different task for the assessment, and provides examples from poets you may not have come across, or possibly not thought of in the context of A Level work.

With the freedom of non-exam assessment, however, comes anxiety about choosing the right text. In choosing the poets to feature in this pack we've attempted to represent the variety of contemporary poetry, but also include poets who come from traditions that you will be familiar with from the more established curriculum-favourites.

This guide is not an attempt to produce a new canon. Instead it aims to provide suggestions of some of the most exciting poets writing today, and for these names to be a springboard into some of the rich work you can explore with your class.








The ideas in this pack should give you the confidence to see how many contemporary poets could be something to delve into with your students. From here on, we'd urge you to follow your nose, explore your interests, and those of your class. It's through this exploration that you will challenge your class's perceptions of what contemporary poetry is, and introduce them to the varied and evolving landscape of modern poetry.

The Poetry Society, November 2014

All task summaries, activities and appendices in this guide were produced for The Poetry Society by Jane Anderson and Richard Stillman. Copyright The Poetry Society, 2014



Curriculum Content

Useful resources	Resources
The Poetry Archive http://www.poetryarchive.org/ An amazing resource with hundreds of contemporary poets reading their work. The Archive also includes a teachers section including 'classroom collections' of poems for different levels, and lesson plans.	
Poetry by Heart http://www.poetrybyheart.org.uk/anthology Poetry by Heart is the national poetry recitation competition. Its website includes a timeline of poems and poets, which provides a good overview of contemporary poets to further explore, as well as information on each poet and poem.	
The Poetry Library http://www.poetrylibrary.org.uk/ Located in the Southbank Centre, London, this is the most comprehensive collection of modern poetry books and magazines. It is free to join and has a free e-loans service for ebooks and audiobooks, downloadable from wherever you are.	
The Poetry Foundation http://www.poetryfoundation.org/ A huge selection of poems and poet biographies, including audio recordings. They also publish <i>Poetry</i> magazine, a monthly review of contemporary American poetry. http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/	 
The Poetry Society http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk/ The Poetry Society has a range of free downloadable teaching resources, as well as hundreds of poems available online. It runs a Poets in Schools service for bespoke workshops and INSET sessions across the UK and also publishes <i>The Poetry Review</i> , a quarterly review of contemporary UK poetry, available to schools through its school membership package. http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk/thepoetryreview	 



Curriculum Content

Spotlight on... five contemporary poets

Resources

Moniza Alvi

A British-Pakistani poet, Moniza Alvi's work explores issues around her dual heritage and her relationship to her place of birth. *Split World: Poems 1990–2005* (2008) provides a good overview of Alvi's work. It contains her sequence of poems 'How the Stone Found its Voice' based on Kipling's *Just So Stories*. These poems – such as 'How the World Split in Two', which reflects themes from a post September 11 world – look at parables, and are an interesting starting point for students to look into her writing.

Her most recent collection is the book-length *At the Time of Partition* (2013) which looks at the division of India and Pakistan through the experiences of her family. The narrative structure of this collection makes it accessible and despite the very sparse style in which it's written there are many thematic links to other writers and texts exploring British/Asian history and identity.

Further resources:

- A short biography with links to some of Alvi's poems:
<http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/20999/29/Moniza-Alvi>
- A biography and critical perspective: <http://literature.britishcouncil.org/moniza-alvi>
- Review of *How the Stone Found its Voice*:
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/dec/17/featuresreviews.guardianreview23>

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here



Curriculum Content

Spotlight on... five contemporary poets

Paul Farley

Paul Farley's poetry explores subjects from Buddhist monks to CCTV, punk-rocker Johnny Thunders to Google Earth, as it examines everyday life with vivid imagery. His voice is very accessible for students, despite engaging with some complex ideas. Born in Liverpool, Farley trained as an artist initially and has written extensively about film. His work contains many references to contemporary art, film and music.

His *Selected Poems* (2014) shows the range of his work, and provides many entry points for students, particularly looking at themes of youth, the city and the contemporary world. Poems such as 'Tramp in Flames', 'Treacle' and 'A Minute's Silence' are a good introduction to his style and poetics.

Further resources:

- Autobiographical essay by Paul Farley:
<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2011/aug/07/paul-farley-once-upon-a-life>
- Paul Farley on the Poetry Archive (including recordings of 'Treacle' and 'A Minute's Silence'):
<http://www.poetryarchive.org/poet/paul-farley>
- A biographical essay with links to some of Farley's poems:
<http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/17304/29/Paul-Farley>
- A biography and critical perspective:
<http://literature.britishcouncil.org/paul-farley>
- An interview with Paul Farley:
<http://www.merseysidemagazine.com/site/arts/paul-farley-interview/>
- A short biography with links to interviews and other biographical materials:
<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/english/profiles/paul-farley>

Resources

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here



Curriculum Content

Spotlight on... five contemporary poets	Resources
<p>Alice Oswald</p> <p>Oswald's writing moves from short poems to narrative book-length works, from minute observation of nature to sweeping retellings of epics. Throughout all of her work she maintains a precise and clear attention to voice, and is known for playing her poems through in her head, speaking them to herself as she walks the countryside of Devon.</p> <p><i>Woods etc.</i> (2005) and the book-length <i>Dart</i> (2002) showcase her closely-observed nature poetry and are a good choice to explore with any class. Her most recent collection however is her long poem <i>Memorial</i> (2011), an 'excavation' of Homer's <i>Iliad</i>; and is an interesting text for a group to get their teeth into. The book ignores the focus on Achilles and Agamemnon, and instead describes the many ordinary soldiers who are killed in Homer's narrative; exploring themes of war, violence and death in a way that makes it feel very relevant to contemporary conflicts.</p> <p>Further resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alice Oswald on the Poetry Archive: http://www.poetryarchive.org/poet/alice-oswald • A short overview of Oswald's work with links to some of her poems: http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/23542/29/Alice-Oswald • A biography and critical perspective: http://literature.britishcouncil.org/alice-oswald • A film-poem by Alice Oswald and filmmaker Chana Dubinki: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tjDyek-foc • Review of <i>Dart</i>: http://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/jul/13/alice-oswald-devonshire-landscape • An interview and good introduction to <i>Memorial</i>: http://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/oct/09/alice-oswald-homer-iliad-interview • Interview with Alice Oswald about <i>Memorial</i>: http://www.thewhitereview.org/interviews/interview-with-alice-oswald/ • Alice Oswald essay on Homer: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/10833515/Alice-Oswald-how-to-read-Homer.html 	<div data-bbox="1736 483 1890 576">▶ Click here</div> <div data-bbox="1736 604 1890 697">▶ Click here</div> <div data-bbox="1736 726 1890 818">▶ Click here</div> <div data-bbox="1736 847 1890 940">▶ Click here</div> <div data-bbox="1736 968 1890 1061">▶ Click here</div> <div data-bbox="1736 1090 1890 1182">▶ Click here</div> <div data-bbox="1736 1211 1890 1303">▶ Click here</div> <div data-bbox="1736 1332 1890 1425">▶ Click here</div>

Curriculum Content

Spotlight on... five contemporary poets

Matthew Sweeney

Irish poet Matthew Sweeney's work is darkly humorous, and often surrealist. Sweeney uses the term 'Alternative Realism' to describe the world that his poems inhabit where strange things happen without meaning. Sweeney is largely influenced by European writers like Beckett or Kafka, which provides a nice counter-point to the Anglo-centricity of many writers.

Sweeney has published prolifically over the last 35 years and has many collections to his name, including collections for children. His *Selected Poems* (2002) provides an excellent overview of his work up to the year 2000. Of his latter collections, *Black Moon* (2007) has many intriguing poems, with the title poem 'Black Moon' and 'The Snowy Owl', for example, showing how beguiling Sweeney's mysterious tales can be.

Further resources:

- Matthew Sweeney on the Poetry Archive:
<http://www.poetryarchive.org/poet/matthew-sweeney>
- A biography and critical perspective:
<http://literature.britishcouncil.org/matthew-sweeney>
- A short biography and links to a good selection of poems and recordings (including 'Black Moon' and 'The Snowy Owl'):
<http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/11102/30/Matthew-Sweeney>
- Review of *Black Moon*:
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/aug/04/featuresreviews.guardianreview22>
- Essay on Sweeney's poetry:
<http://www.clivejames.com/text/guest-writers/nichola-deane/sweeney>

Resources

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here



Curriculum Content

Spotlight on... five contemporary poets

Sam Willetts

Willetts' writing is precisely crafted in a formal regularity that belies the chaotic nature of its creation. The son of a Polish-Jewish refugee, Willetts was a heroin addict for nearly ten years and his work explores these disordered stories and histories with precision. The biographical details of his life may well be a way to entice a class into exploring his poetry, since it will challenge preconceptions about what kind of person writes contemporary poetry. *New Light for the Old Dark* (2010), his debut collection, was published when he was 47, and as it was being lauded and shortlisted for all 3 major poetry prizes, Willetts was still struggling with the consequences of his addiction.

As well as an intriguing biography, Willetts' poetry offers lots for students to explore. 'Small Girl in a Crowd', 'On the Smolensk Road' and 'The Jewish Section' for example explore the history of the Holocaust and, the latter poem especially, Willetts' personal reaction to his family history.

Further resources:

- Interview from the Guardian:
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/oct/04/sam-willetts-interview>
- Short biography as well as films of Willetts reading and an interview about his work:
<http://nextgenerationpoets.com/sam-willetts/>
- Selection of poems and reading group notes on Sam Willetts:
<http://www.nextgenerationpoets.com/PDF/19%20Willetts.pdf> (pdf download)
- Selection of poems and recordings from the Poetry Foundation:
<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/sam-willetts#about>
- Review of *New Light for the Old Dark*:
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/apr/18/new-light-old-dark-willetts>

Resources

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here



Thinking Conceptually Close reading

A poetry close reading is the foundation of any poetry study and criticism. It encourages students to pay close attention to the way a poet combines language with form – ‘best words, best order’ – to communicate ideas. It offers the potential to explore meaning through a whole text, by investigating a poet’s creative decisions: word choice and syntax, images, the look of the poem, its sound world; and how these work together to develop an idea across a poem.

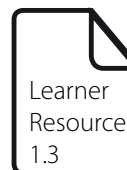
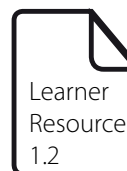
Poetry close reading also allows students to make well-supported personal responses and to use these to interpret and analyse the poet’s attitudes and values. It capitalizes on the familiarity and engagement students have with post-1900 poems from their GCSE studies.

If you are keen for your students to choose a post-2000 poem for non-examined assessment task 1, you will want to provide them with the opportunity to read, hear and see a range of post-2000 poets. Contemporary poetry can be daunting for

students, (and teachers!); Learner Resource 1.1 provides an overview of some strategies and activities that might help familiarise students with this genre based on your pre-2000 reading. All this will help them make an informed choice of poem to analyse. The ‘Common Misconceptions’ section below, may also help address some of your students’ worries.

Many of the sites in the **Useful Resources** section, The Poetry Archive in particular, have lots of contemporary poems that you can read and hear performed with your class. Reading a poem then seeing it performed connects students to the idea that poetry, like drama, has different lives on the page and stage.

This section provides activities to introduce your class to close reading and help shape their responses. Learner Resource 1.2 and 1.3 then provide a breakdown for your students, detailing how to work through their poem and begin to draw out their ideas.



Thinking Conceptually Close reading

Activities – initial approaches

Prior learning peer support

Useful to use if there is a broad mix of abilities in your group.

- 1) Pair or group students. Ask them to recall poems they enjoyed studying for GCSE. Brainstorm: what they liked about these poems; what skills and knowledge they think this gave them. What can they transfer to reading and writing about post-1900 and post-2000 poems?
- 2) Add the new reading and analysis skills they gained studying the pre-1900 poetry unit.

Starting points

For a more confident group of students.

Individual students write bullet point statements about what they like and enjoy about poetry; what they find challenging when meeting a poem for the first time; what they find most difficult when writing about a poem. Swap lists and offer solutions.

Performance

Give students copies of poems with similar themes. In groups, students experiment with making a 'prepared' or enacted reading of these poems, to discover how these themes are shown through linguistic and structural connections within the poems. Make notes on what this activity reveals about the poem. Students decide how they might apply the learning from this activity to their individual reading.

Quick Reads

Give students copies of 3 post-2000 poems that appear on the Poetry Archive. Ask them to read these quickly (2 minutes each) and to identify the themes in each poem, with a reason. They should try and identify more than one theme for each poem.

Students can then go to the Poetry Archive and listen to each poem and see how each has been 'themed' in the Archive. Students should then reflect on the themes they didn't consider themselves, reread the poem and try and find these connections.



Thinking Conceptually Close reading

Activities – initial approaches

Example poem: 'The French for Death' by Helen Mort (*Division Street*; 2013)

The French for Death

I trampled ants on the quay at Dieppe, dawdling
by the desk where they wouldn't take yes for an answer;
yes, it was our name and spelled just so –
Dad repeated it in Oldham's finest guttural,
we shook our heads at *Moor* and *Maud* and *Morden*.

Rope swung from the captain's fist
and lashed the water. I saw him shudder,
troubled by a vision of our crossing:
glower of thunder, the lurch and buckle
of the ferry. I looked him in the eye

and popped my bubblegum. Child
from the underworld in red sandals
and a Disney T-shirt, not yet ashamed
by that curt syllable, not yet the girl
who takes the worst route home, pauses

at the mouths of alleyways, or kisses
strangers on the nameless pier; eyes open,
staring out to sea, as if, in the distance
there's the spindle of a shipwreck,
prow angled to a far country.

Helen Mort



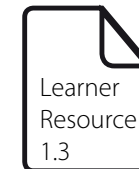
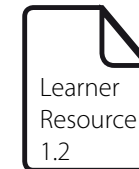
Thinking Conceptually Close reading

Activities – initial approaches

This poem is an example of how a seemingly simple poem is a rich close reading source. The language play around the poet's name, the child's eye view of the world being recalled, the shift in time in stanzas, the specific and well-chosen visual and physical images, the lovely vision of the young Helen Mort as a 'Child // from the underworld' (having newly discovered the meaning of her surname? Or just emerged on deck?). Then there's the poem's setting: a ferry, and the many levels this works on in the poem; and that's just for starters!

Use Learner Resource 1.2 and 1.3 to work through Mort's poem with your class. Use the activities below to get your students to shape their responses, either as an oral exercise, or as a written response.

Resources



Thinking Conceptually Close reading

Activities – supporting writing

Close reading models: Personal and close analysis response

Provide students with models of personal responses to poems, to show that a close reading isn't about 'naming the parts' but about making a strong personal connection with a poem.

The following links offer two very different examples of how this can be done.

Agbagi's appreciation of Jackie Kay's *Brendon Gallagher*:

<http://www.poetrystation.org.uk/poems/poet-patience-agbagi-comments-on-brendon-gallagher>

This film is aimed at a GCSE audience; however it provides a starting point for students to create their own framework or aide memoire for things to look at when 'discussing' a poem. It's an example of what you can say about a poem in less than two minutes.

This quick appreciative summary can be used by students at the stage when they know the poem, and are almost ready to start the first draft of their close reading. Set up the exercise so students prepare and present a two minute Agbagi-type presentation on their chosen poem. It can be helpful to suggest they focus on one aspect of the poem, but talk about this in the context of the whole poem.

Ask them to provide peer feedback and to use the AO1 and AO2 marking criteria to formulate a supportive response to help the students develop these ideas for their finished piece.

Anthony Wilson's blog post about the American Poet Thomas Lux:

<http://anthonywilsonpoetry.com/2014/10/05/thomas-lux-syntax>

This blog-post is a sophisticated written model, taking a close look at syntax and word choice. It will help students understand that free verse is a very carefully crafted type of writing, *and* that you can say a lot about a little. You might wish to give students the blog in an edited form, looking at the commentary on one poem only.

Give students the title Hitler's Slippers and ask for a first response. Then give students the poem and allow them 15 minutes to read and respond in note form. Afterwards, give them copies of the blog and let them make connections between their ideas and Wilson's. What can they take from his way of looking at a poem and make their own?

Resources

▶ Click here

▶ Click here



Thinking Conceptually Close reading

Common misconceptions

Post-1900 and especially post-2000 poems don't offer enough to write about, especially those written in free verse.

(The activity on 'The French for Death' can be used to tackle this.)

- All poets make some kind of stylistic decision in the way they craft their poems, even those who use 'free verse'. There are just different things to comment on to help you appreciate this type of writing, e.g. the impact of line endings and beginnings.
- Post-2000 poems are ideal for exploring the way a poet subverts a form for a particular purpose. Armitage's *Book of Matches* would make students think about the way he uses sonnet form and makes it his own.
- If students would be happier analysing a poem that uses rhyme and meter in a formal way there are a range of post-1900 poets on the selected list to choose from.

This isn't going to help my students in other areas of the course.

- Developing students' confidence in looking at modern poems and how all the elements work together will give them more analytical expertise which they can apply to the other close reading tasks such as the Shakespeare part a) question in paper one, or the unseen exam elements at both AS and A Level.

Even in poems I like there can be bits I don't understand. So, I'm safer choosing another genre.

- Recognising what you don't understand is an important part of any learning experience! Grapple this! (The last stanza of Mort's poem can be confusing until you pay close attention to the semicolon.)
- You probably have an idea, or even ideas, about what the 'difficult' bits 'might' mean. Being tentative, offering possible meanings is an important critical skill.
- This isn't a timed activity! If there's a bit you don't get, forget about the poem for a while. You'll be amazed at what a difference fresh eyes can make!



Thinking Conceptually Re-creative writing with commentary

Re-creative writing can be something that makes both teachers and students apprehensive as perhaps being less familiar than the usual tasks of close readings and comparative essays. There are many models however to demonstrate different approaches, and the inclusion of a commentary means that students can showcase their analytical skills in a similar way to the close reading task.

It might be a good idea to encourage students to use the close reading activities above to expose them to a range of contemporary poems. In choosing their poem, it can help if students find a poem they have some feeling about. It should be about something that resonates with them; it may be about something that captivates them, they may love the poem's style, or even hate it altogether! These responses however really help students to examine their relationship with the poem and inform their response.

When students have found the poem they want to use for inspiration, ask them to annotate it using the close reading approaches in Appendix 2 and 3. They should note down ideas that the poem suggests to them as they occur. This will help refine these ideas and provide them with a strong basis for their commentary.

The models below will give students ideas for where to begin in crafting their own poems, and are interesting juxtapositions, showing students what is possible in this exercise. Learner Resource 1.4 will then help with shaping their commentary. The text should be an attempt to re-create the world/concerns/style of the studied text and the commentary should engage with the style choices as well as the attempt

Learner
Resource
1.4

to mirror important themes/elements of characterization. The commentary should make reference to specifics of the text produced and the text studied.

Re-creative models

John Agard and William Wordsworth

Example poem: John Agard, 'Toussaint L'Ouverture Acknowledges Wordsworth's Sonnet 'To Toussaint L'Ouverture'' (*Alternative Anthems: Selected Poems*, 2009)

Toussaint L'Ouverture Acknowledges Wordsworth's Sonnet 'To Toussaint L'Ouverture'

I have never walked on Westminster Bridge
or had a close-up view of daffodils.
My childhood's roots are the Haitian hills
where runaway slaves made a freedom pledge
and scarlet poincianas flaunt their scent.
I have never walked on Westminster Bridge
or speak, like you, with Cumbrian accent.
My tongue bridges Europe to Dahomey.
Yet how sweet is the smell of liberty
when human beings share a common garment.
So, thanks brother, for your sonnet's tribute.
May it resound when the Thames' text stays mute.
And what better ground than a city's bridge
for my unchained ghost to trumpet love's decree.

John Agard

Thinking Conceptually

Re-creative writing with commentary

Students who are familiar with Agard's work from GCSE might be surprised at the formality of this poem, its style and language. Agard takes on L'Overture's voice, and keeps but adapts Wordsworth's sonnet form. Wordsworth didn't want this man to be forgotten, neither does Agard he has brought him back to life, and placed him on Westminster Bridge thinking of daffodils – a homage to Wordsworth.

Although students won't be responding to pre-1900 poems for this activity, ask students to look at the sonnet Agard refers to (reproduced below). Ask them to perform a 5 minute close reading on each of the two sonnets, and then on large sheets of paper, draw in the leaps and links Agard has made, as a starting point for their own writing.

To Toussaint L'Ouverture

Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den; —
O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

William Wordsworth

Ian McMillan and William Carlos Williams

Answering Back (Ed. Duffy, 2008) provides excellent examples of recreated poems opposite their source poem. It's a great resource for students to use and get an understanding of the different ways one poem can spring from another.

Ian McMillan's 'The Green Wheelbarrow', is a piece about his father in response to William Carlos Williams' 'The Red Wheelbarrow'. In contrast to the Agard piece it shows how a poet can take one idea from a poem and write a completely different one.

You may want to ask students to research William Carlos Williams' first and especially 'The Red Wheelbarrow'. Its fame means that McMillan's title is a poetry in-joke, and as McMillan is known as a humorous poet it makes us think we are going to read a funny poem. Yet McMillan's is a tender, moving, possibly sentimental piece.

Asking students if they think he knew the poem would go this way, could be a starting point for students to understand that creative choices often evolve in the writing – and that is one thing they might consider in a commentary.

Later in the same anthology Ruth Padel takes another Williams poem, a quiet poem about place, and responds with a poem full of noise. Her poem however also makes us look closely, like Williams. She uses this combination to make us experience the impact of global warming.

These examples show that the key to strong re-creative poems is that the poet says things that are important to him or her and says them in the best way they can to convey that idea.



Thinking Conceptually Re-creative writing with commentary

The Red Wheelbarrow

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens

William Carlos Williams

The Green Wheelbarrow

To be honest, not much depends on this.
My dad just left it by the side of the lawn
When he went to pick me up after I fell.

His spade and fork sat in it waiting
For him to return; like my mother
Sat looking through the window

Each night, waiting for him to come home
From the office, like she'd waited for him
To come back from the sea.

Winter nights, the rain glazed the road,
It turned to snow, flakes floating
Like the feathers of chickens.

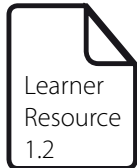
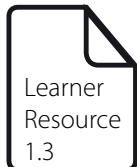

My dad picked me up and I stopped crying.
I'm crying now, dad. I wish
I could sit by the window and see you coming home.

Go on, push the wheelbarrow again!
Let me hear the music of the squeak!

Ian McMillan



Thinking Conceptually Re-creative writing with commentary

Activities	Resources
<p>First steps</p> <p>As stated above, once students have chosen a poem get them to start with a close reading, using Learner Resource 1.2 and 1.3, drawing out the elements that interest them. Get them to highlight these or jot them down and use them as a basis for their poem.</p> <p>Students, and adults too, are often self-conscious about their writing and the best way to counter this can be to provide an exercise with restrictions on their writing. Free writing is one example of this.</p> <p>In working on a re-creative piece, you could start by getting the class writing 4-minute poems, each one looking at an aspect that they have pulled out of their inspiration poem. This could be a piece of repetition they like, or a particular image; but this should be their title, and they have 4 minutes to complete their piece (suggested word count: 350 words). You should suggest that all of these will be read to the class, so that there is a desire to get <i>something</i> down on paper; but in reality excuse those students who really don't want to read out! These poems can form the building blocks of students' re-creative pieces.</p>	<div data-bbox="1742 435 1877 603">  <p>Learner Resource 1.2</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1742 643 1877 810">  <p>Learner Resource 1.3</p> </div>
<p>Longer writing exercises</p> <p>The Poetry Society's <i>Poetryclass</i> teaching resources webpage includes free downloadable resources, all of which build to a creative response and many of which can be adapted to suit almost any poem.</p> <p>http://poetryclass.poetrysociety.org.uk</p>	<div data-bbox="1736 887 1890 979">  </div>
<p>The Poem</p> <p>Once students have the bare bones of a poem ask them to write a draft and leave it for a few days.</p> <p>When they come back get them to review the poem and ask the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you need that 'and' or 'the'? Probably not. • Is that word really the one you want? (You'll have noticed in your reading that post-1900 poets mostly use very plain language, but these words work hard.) • Have you been specific and clear? Cut out abstracts – name concrete things to suggest abstract ideas. • Avoid using adjectives; replace them with verbs. • Look at where lines begin and end. Is this what you want? • If you've used rhyme, are you <i>really</i> sure that it's allowed you to say what you want to, or is it weakening your idea? • Be brave: change things! You can write about these choices in your commentary. 	



Thinking Conceptually

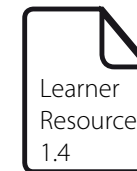
Re-creative writing with commentary

Activities

Preparing the commentary

See Learner Resource 1.4 for a sheet to support the first draft

Resources



Common misconceptions

I have to make a version of someone else's poem.

- No! You are using a poem that you find interesting as a jumping off point for your own ideas. The ideas you have should inform the style you write in, and the language you use. You can comment on your own choices and compare them to the original poet's choices in your commentary. Make something different but with connections. Look at Red Wheelbarrow and Green Wheelbarrow.

I need to cram my poem full of as many techniques as I can.

- No! Be selective. It's about choice. Think about the poems you've been reading and what you've liked and how these poets balance form and structure. The techniques you choose should go together to help your poem work the best it can. Remember you are responding to another poet's piece.

I have to decide HOW I'm going to write it before I write it.

- You might. If you decide you want to write in the voice of a person in another poem giving their view of events, you'll know that you want to use first person. But as you start to write as you might see word patterns or rhythms emerge that work for you, and you can work around these.

- You can also let the mood, or the idea of the original poem guide choices about form. If your original poem is doing something you find interesting with language, you might want to write a poem on a completely different subject but try out this linguistic or syntactical idea. Or you could write a formal iambic rhyming piece in response to a free verse poem and compare the differences this creates. These choices will inform where you start, but get refined as you work on the piece.

There's no need to draft; poets rely on inspiration.

- That's a myth! Poets, like novelists and dramatists, work on versions until they are happy with what they've got. Drafting your commentary is vital too!

Do I say what I've done in my commentary?

- Your poem will show **what** you have done. Your commentary needs to explain why you made the literary and creative decisions you did in your poem. You also need to link your comments with your analysis of the poem you took for inspiration and show your critical understanding of the original poet's literary decisions in relation to your own work.



Thinking Conceptually

Comparative essay

The suggestions earlier in this guide should help with choosing a contemporary collection that you are confident in studying with your students. As with the activities above, getting your class comfortable with contemporary poetry will help build their confidence and consequently their analytical skill.

If a student were to choose, for example, Jen Hadfield's *Nigh-No-Place*, a good place to begin is with one poem, for example 'No Snow fell on Eden', and a short analysis using some of the activities for the close reading, as outlined above. As for all literary texts, some research of contextual aspects such as Eden, Tao and the Scottish dialect words is necessary and Learner Resource 1.6 has further notes on Jen Hadfield.

It is important to note that whilst the close reading/re-creative tasks for non-examined assessment are only assessed for AO1 and AO2, the comparative essay is synoptic and therefore all assessment objectives, including demonstration of the understanding of contexts, are equally weighted.

For the comparative essay in particular, students must use a range of poems to constitute their 'text', and so need to identify a cluster of poems grouped around a similar theme. The example poem explores ideas of religion, nature and dialect amongst others.

Finding themes amongst poems can be complicated for students to get their head around, and Appendix 5 suggests

a guideline process for helping your class select their poems and develop their arguments. In this example, students might decide to write about finding beauty in the everyday, and discover this in Hadfield's poems: 'In the same way', 'Love's Dog', 'Cabbage', 'The Wren', and 'Odysseus and the Sou'wester'. These poems have similarities but there are different variations of the theme being worked through. As each of these poems explores ideas of nature, students could compare other pastoral texts such as Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*, Graham Swift's *Waterland* and Willa Cather's *My Antonia*.

A particular difficulty in using a contemporary text can be incorporating different interpretations (AO5), as there are not as many critical essays available. However, they can look at the criticism about the individual text (there are some ideas on resources about Jen Hadfield in Appendix 6). Alternatively, a solution to meeting this target can be to apply literary criticism or critical theory to the argument or theme, in this case the pastoral genre (see Learner Resource 1.7, which includes useful resources for introducing critical theory). It is worth noting that critical reading is not the only way to access AO5; indeed, the important thing is that students can demonstrate their understanding that different readers approach and interpret their set text in different ways. The awareness that there are 'different interpretations' and there isn't one 'correct way' to read a text, is most important.

Learner
Resource
1.6

Learner
Resource
1.7



Thinking Conceptually Comparative essay

Example poem: 'No Snow fell on Eden' by Jen Hadfield
(*Nigh-No-Place*, 2008)

No snow fell on Eden

There was no snow in Eden as I remember it.

There was no snow, so no thaw or tao as you say;
no snowmelt drooled down the brae,
baring what it should've left kindly hidden.

No yellow ice choked bogbean.
There were no sheepskulls in the midden.

It was no allotment, Eden -
but a hothouse, an orangery,
with maidenhair strummed
by a mumbling monkey.

There was no cabbage-patch of rich, roseate
heads.
There was no innuendo and no snow.

No footprint thawed to the sloppy paw of a yeti.

And since in Eden they were so mature,
a steaming bing of new manure was just not funny.

Eve knew no one who was dying.
Adam never sat up late, drinking and crying.

And if at four the sky split like a watermelon,
soddening the land with blue and citrine,
and the drowned ground wept smells,
no one stood stock staring still.

Black was not so sooty, as I remember it.

Green was not so greeny-browny.

No boat twirled redly
on an eyepopping sea.

(if your theory about the chakras is true,
then every blue thing's a voice -
the monologue of cracked tarmac,
the shadow in the lea of each rock
a locket of speech to be broken and heard,
the speaking sky and the speedwell sea,

and in the kitchen, in the night,
sotto voce, the pilot light)

Jen Hadfield



Thinking Contextually Comparative essay

For the comparative essay a wide range of social, historical and cultural contexts can be considered: the society in which the writer is writing (context of production); the society in which the text is read (context of reception); the literary genre or tradition; and the writer's own life. The problem with contexts is that any fact may be included for interest's sake (this is sometimes called 'bolted-on' context), and no attempt is made to evaluate the significance of the contextual detail. For details about the writer's life, students should always be aware that they must make a distinction between the writer and any narrator the writer may employ; obviously, there is not an uncomplicated correspondence between the two. It may be worth reviewing the OCR Guide to 'Using Contextual Information at A Level' for further support.

For the Comparative Essay, students need to consider the differences in historical contexts between the texts. For example, Jen Hadfield published *Nigh-No-Place* in 2008 and is very aware of contemporary environmental concerns and the fragility of local eco-systems. If students were to compare her to Willa Cather writing in America in the early 20th century, they must be aware that she saw nature in a very different way: she wrote of the great frontiers, the pioneering life, where nature was respected but its vicissitudes were feared. Her characters' cultural context is that of recent immigration from Eastern Europe. Students need to evaluate how these very different contexts influence their respective views of nature.

Activities

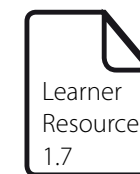
Beginning with a theme

Begin with the theme your students are looking at and have your students read around the subject a bit (in our example of the Pastoral, Learner Resource 7 has suggested sources).

Students should make notes on the major features and are asked to write their own Wikipedia entry based on their understanding. They should look at the format of a Wikipedia page and divide their findings into relevant headings and ensure that they have correctly attributed all their primary texts. When this is completed they can review their own texts in the light of their 'page' and evaluate which aspects of the theme might be relevant for their own comparative essay, and which sections of their text might come under which subheading.

A variation of this idea is to have each student pick a particular aspect (for example 'Wilderness: nature versus people') and have them research this topic before presenting their finding to the group. This can create a lot of good critical material relatively quickly.

Resources



Thinking Contextually Comparative essay

Activities

Beginning with a text

After they have read their chosen collection of poems, ask students to write a review for a broadsheet newspaper. A good model to use for this example is Frances Leviston's review of *Nigh-No-Place* for the Guardian:

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/feb/16/featuresreviews.guardianreview27>.

This activity is very good at making students take an overview of the collection and means that they can see the poetry collection as a single text in the same way that they think of a novel or a play. It also encourages a personal response, and allows them to be critical if they wish. The style of the review also requires individual examples so it can aid their thinking about which poems they feel are major and more representative. They can extend this by writing reviews for their other texts as well; evaluating these helps students compare the intentions of the different authors.

An alternative but related activity might be to write a broadsheet article on their chosen poet. For example, using Zoe Brigley's interview with Jen Hadfield as a starting point: http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/zoebrigley/entry/interview_with_the/

Pupils could combine the poet's own words with other resources (see Learner Resource 1.6) about Hadfield to write an article resembling the Guardian Review's 'Portrait of the Artist' series (here is an example, with the poet Liz Lochhead:

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/aug/21/liz-lochhead-poet-scots-makar>).

Beginning with a concept

To explore particular cultural concepts that their texts are exploring, students could create montages of images and text.

For example, the idea of Eden is very important to Hadfield's poem, 'No Snow Fell on Eden', and could be the concept that students want to explore in their essay. They could start by discussing what Eden means to them. Have them write a description of their personal Eden and compare it to the original scripture. Then using Google images, or other picture libraries, explore pictorial representations of Eden. Then extend the idea of Eden to different types of paradise in different cultures. They could even think from a psycho-analytical perspective, get other students to analyse what their description of Eden says about them!

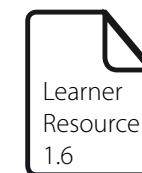
Once they have gathered different sources, have them create a montage that explores the concept in interesting and original ways. Once they are completed they can be discussed.

Finally they should consider the crucial question: what might be the problems of living in Eden? This is where the poem comes in.

Resources

▶ Click here

▶ Click here



▶ Click here



Learner Resource 1.1 Approaching modern poetry



Students can be resistant to studying poetry and this can only be overcome through increasing their familiarity with a wide range of poems. From the start of the course, consider the following strategies:

- Having one-off lessons looking at a particular poem. Follow up by setting homework that asks them to write up their thoughts on the poem. If they are comfortable with material gained from a class discussion it makes their first writing about poetry easier.
- Having a library session where students can browse through different anthologies and collections to find a poem they like. Keep the technical analysis light and concentrate on having them explore their response to meaning, sound and imagery in the first instance. It is important for a library to have a good range of anthologies, collections and magazines (especially *The Poetry Review*).
- Have a short unit on form that gives them an overview of how poetic form has changed through the centuries. Give them short excerpts to read and discuss how the form has influenced the meaning - this is also very useful for thinking about literary context. Here is a sample short course:
 1. Chaucer couplets from Prologue to Canterbury Tales
 2. Shakespeare sonnet (or Drayton, Wyatt, etc)
 3. Donne 'The Flea' metaphysical conceit
 4. Swift satirical couplets 'A Description of a City Shower'
 5. Gray 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'
 6. Wordsworth Lucy poems – simple diction
 7. Tennyson 'Lady of Shalott'
 8. Eliot 'The Hollow Men'
 9. Heaney 'Mid-term Break'
 10. Duffy 'Warming her Pearls'
- Students can be given a set of frameworks to give them a starting point: thinking about meaning, language, imagery, sound patterning (including metre and rhyme) and rhetoric can give students a way in as long as they evaluate the use of a particular device rather than merely spot features.
- Once they are more conversant with form and content, have students choose one poet they admire and have them create a powerpoint, which has a close reading of one poem and short notes on five others. This can often turn out to be the poet they choose for their coursework.



Learner Resource 1.2 Initial approaches to close reading



Part 1: First impressions – 10 minutes

Work with a partner. Read the poem twice, once in silence, once aloud.

Discuss what you think the poem is about at this point in your reading. Use the questions below to structure your conversation. **Record your ideas. Annotate or highlight things that interest you on your first reading.**

What's the subject? What themes are being explored? List the main ones.

What do you think that the poet wants you to think, feel, understand, enjoy by reading this poem? Is this poem about people, things, ideas, language? If you were putting this poem in a thematic anthology, would it fit under more than one heading?

Notice what the poem looks like on the page.

Is the poem free verse or written in a set form?

Describe it (3 six-line stanzas, one long thin stanza, couplets, no set pattern...). Are there any parts of the poem that break the pattern? Try to think of reasons for this.

Sentences. How many, length, variety, syntax? Are there any sentences that you think work in an interesting way? Why is the poet doing this? What is the effect?

Notice how this poet ends and begins lines. Are there any line particular line breaks that you find interesting or you think 'work hard' to help the poet make their point?

Suggest other ways that the organisation of the poem helps the poet express his or her ideas. What about the *title*? Think about the beginning, middle and end of the poem.

Tone/Mood

Tender, funny, angry, sad, campaigning, confessional, domestic, energetic, regretful, playful, serious, nostalgic ... the list is endless. Don't forget to say what suggests this and why!

Are there things you don't understand?

Underline these.



Learner Resource 1.2 Initial approaches to close reading

Part 2: A closer look – 20 minutes +

Make notes. Annotate/highlight the poem in a way that helps you see how it works as a whole.

Sound

What did you notice about the sound of the poem when you read it aloud? Is there a set rhyme? Any end rhyme? Internal rhyme? What about the rhythm?

Are there any obvious things you can say about how the poet's use of rhyme and rhythm adds to the poem's overall effect? Note these down. How do these link to message or mood of the poem?

Language

Formal? Informal? Mixture of the two?

First, second, third person? Why? What's the effect?

What tense is it in? Does it change? What's this saying?

Circle words that stand out. Look at pronouns, nouns and verbs.

How do these words work with the poem's ideas? Do they reflect the voice of the poet, or the voice of the poem?

What are the most interesting or key words? Why? How do they help you understand the ideas, see things, or how something is happening?

What do you like about the way the poet has made you see, hear, feel or imagine? Circle the images. Talk about them. Write these ideas down.

Are there words or lines you think might mean more than one thing? Explain why this is? How might this word or phrase connect to the possible alternative readings?

Things you still don't understand?

Look up words you don't understand. Try to look for clues from elsewhere in the poem to help with parts you don't understand. Be willing to suggest what it 'might' mean in the context of the rest of the poem. Write the questions you want answers to.

Other things you might consider:

- If there are people in the poem: who are they? How does the poet feel about them? How does the poet make you think this? What clues can you get from looking at the way the poet uses names or pronouns? Is the person there, being thought about, or directly addressed? Can you link this to the use of nouns or pronouns?
- Who or what is speaking in the poem? How do you know?
- If the poem is about place, a thing, or ideas, how does the poet make sure we see this or understand it through their language choice?



Learner Resource 1.3 Developing your close reading



First ideas

Why did this poet want to write this poem? What were they trying to achieve? What does the title suggest?

Structure and poetic techniques

Now that you have a view about what the poet is saying, look at the way they have built the poem (used rhyme, rhythm, images, word choice).

What do you notice about the way poet uses language?

Circle words/phrases that link/connect or are repeated. Explain how they build the key ideas/mood.

Look at pronouns/nouns. What do they suggest?

How does the poet use tense? Why is this important to the poem?

Look at verbs. What impact do they have? Are they connected to the ideas/title/mood /theme? How? Why?

Look at words that surprise you or delight you: these might be non-standard or foreign words, images, words with more than one meaning. What's unusual, or interesting about the vocabulary: why do you think the poet chose these words? How do they impact on your reading of the poem?

Other stylistic devices

How do these contribute to your reading of the poem?

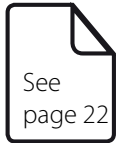
Choose the 5 words you think are KEY to what this poet is trying to say. Write a couple of sentences about each one, explaining why you've chosen it, and how it supports the poet's ideas across the poem.

What do you notice about the way this poet connects ideas within and across the poem through rhyme, or in other ways? Think: title, beginning, middle, end.

Turn your notes from this activity into a poster about this poem, include the ideas and opinions you have with quotes from the poem to support these. Think about the best way to organise your ideas. Use this poster to support your close reading.



Learner Resource 1.4 Building a commentary



Questions to build ideas

Why did you choose the poem you have responded to? What did you find interesting about the way this poet wrote their poem? (Comment on how shape/form/content/language use/theme informs meaning).

What aspects of the poem prompted or generated the idea for your poem?

What aspects of the poem were you trying to emulate, do differently, or react against?

What did you want to achieve in your poem? How have you used style/form/language to achieve this?

How has the original poet developed ideas across their poem? (Title, beginning, middle, end; and/or back and forward across the poem through linking language, rhyme/rhythms)

What are the similarities *and* differences between the way you and the original poet achieved this?

What makes your poem successful? What did you want the reader to know or understand, or to see differently? How did you try to achieve this? How have you used drafting to strengthen your poem? Why was this process important considering what you know about the differences between poetry and prose? Is there anything in your poem that you might want to change at a later date? Why?



Learner Resource 1.5 A process for using modern poetry in the comparative coursework

1. Read the collection, annotating for themes, style, form etc.
2. Talk to teacher or peers about anything they are unsure about.
3. Choose their six favourite poems and write down titles on a large sheet of paper such as clipboard paper.
4. Draw links of theme, style and form between the poems.
5. Do a further close reading of these six poems – here the students will need to do the contextual research as exemplified in the work on 'No Snow fell on Eden.'
6. Link names of other poems from the collection to substantiate ideas.
7. Circle emerging arguments.



Learner Resource 1.6 Jen Hadfield resources



Jen Hadfield's *Nigh-No-Place* won the T S Eliot Prize in 2008 and was a Poetry Book Society recommendation so there is a fair amount of coverage of her collection. Resources might include the following:

- A blog by the T S Eliot Prize judge, Tobias Hill:
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2009/jan/14/eliot-prize-hadfield>
- An excellent selection of her poetry with discussion questions:
<http://www.nextgenerationpoets.com/PDF/08%20Hadfield.pdf>
- A clip of Ian McMillan discussing her work:
<http://nextgenerationpoets.com/jen-hadfield/>
- The Poetry Archive:
<http://www.poetryarchive.org/poet/jen-hadfield>
- Her publisher's page including a film of her reading:
<http://www.bloodaxebooks.com/titlepage.asp?isbn=1852247932>
- The poet Zoë Brigley has put together an excellent links page:
http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/zoebrigley/entry/jen_hadfield_links/
- A British Council page with a short critical essay:
<http://literature.britishcouncil.org/jen-hadfield>
- The Scottish Poetry Library page:
<http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poets/jen-hadfield>
- A Guardian review by Frances Leviston, who is a poet herself:
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/feb/16/featuresreviews.guardianreview27>
- An interview with Jen Hadfield on Abe Books:
<http://www.abebooks.co.uk/books/jen-hadfield.shtml>
- An interview with Zoë Brigley:
http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/zoebrigley/entry/interview_with_the/
- The poet's most recent art project:
<http://roqueseeds.blogspot.co.uk/2013/02/the-dominant-species-is-on-this-weekend.html>
- A short biography with links to poems and reviews:
<http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/6963/29/Jen-Hadfield>

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here

▶ Click here



Learner Resource 1.7 Pastoral Resources

See
page 23

Pastoral reading list

***Pastoral* – Terry Gifford**

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415147330/>

▶ Click here

This is a terrific introduction to all things Pastoral – accessible and very informative on critical ideas and contexts.

***The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment* – Timothy Clark**

<http://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/subjects/literature/literary-theory/cambridge-introduction-literature-and-environment>

▶ Click here

This 2011 book offers an introductory overview of literary and cultural criticism that concerns environmental crisis in some form.

‘In Our Time’ Radio programme – Pastoral BBC Radio 4

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003c1cs>

▶ Click here

Melvyn Bragg leads a forty minute discussion on the history of pastoral literature from its classical origins to its contemporary relevance.

Critical interpretation reading list

***Introducing Theory* – Peter Barry**

Quite high-level but very well-written overview of major trends in literary criticism.

***Text, Reader, Critic Study Guide* – English and Media Centre**

A teacher’s resource with very useful worksheets, activities and texts.



Learner Resource 1.8 Example poem with teacher notes

***No Snow Fell on Eden* by Jen Hadfield**

There was no snow in Eden as I remember it.

This picks up the Eden allusion from the title and suggests we are going to have a personal take on the myth. It is comic as we know she is referring to her study but it could equally mean that she remembers Eden.

There was no snow, so no thaw or tao as you say;

Tao is interesting an allusion to Eastern religion. The idea is one of balance; Hadfield is suggesting already that there is a lack of balance perhaps in Eden: that it was too perfect.

no snowmelt drooled down the brae,

Use of dialect word brae roots us in the Shetland setting.

baring what it should've left kindly hidden.

There is a humour in 'kindly hidden' as if she is only too aware of the ugliness of the countryside that she goes on to detail.

No yellow ice choked bogbean.

Bogbean is a plant.

There were no sheepskins in the midden.

The anaphora no.../no... emphasises the contrast between the supposed beauty of Eden and this distinctly unbeautiful setting. The presence of death is especially important considering Eden is immortal. The repetition of 'no' is a use of litotes and is effective here because the reader carries both the idea of Eden and the reality of this world in tandem.

It was no allotment, Eden -
but a hothouse, an orangery,
with maidenhair strummed
by a mumbling monkey.

Shorter lines here; quite bizarre imagery. Eden as an orangery makes it feel as if it were an artificial environment. It is more formal, clipped here but the form (the rule of Eden?) seems banal.

There was no cabbage-patch of rich, roseate
heads.

There was no innuendo and no snow.

Nice internal rhyme here. The cabbage as opposed to the orange!

No footprint thawed to the sloppy paw of a yeti.

And since in Eden they were so mature,
a steaming bing of new manure was just not funny.

The seriousness of Eden is seen as being too angelic lacking earthy humour.



Learner Resource 1.8 Example poem with teacher notes

Eve knew no one who was dying.

Adam never sat up late, drinking and crying.

The people too were too good to be true, not the realistic flawed denizens of earth. Frances Levison feels this couplet is weak but I think it is deliberately so as this kind of sentimentality may be banal but these experiences make us who we are.

And if at four the sky split like a watermelon,
soddening the land with blue and citrine,
and the drowned ground wept smells,
no one stood stock staring still.

This is a terrific image of Scottish weather! It feels synaesthetic. There is an appreciation here of the beauty of weather, even what might be seen as terrible weather.

Black was not so sooty, as I remember it.

Another image of the way earth is flawed but more real.

Green was not so greeny-brown.

No boat twirled redly
on an eyepopping sea.

This feels like an updated kenning, a feature of Old English and Norse poetry.

(if your theory about the chakras is true,
then every blue thing's a voice –

Again, this is synaesthesia.

the monologue of cracked tarmac,
the shadow in the lea of each rock
a locket of speech to be broken and heard,
the speaking sky and the speedwell sea,

and in the kitchen, in the night,
sotto voce, the pilot light)

This list of speech and nature images is beautiful. It connects the two concepts and is unusual and nuanced, far more than life in Eden could be.





We'd like to know your view on the resources we produce. By clicking on the 'Like' or 'Dislike' button you can help us to ensure that our resources work for you. When the email template pops up please add additional comments if you wish and then just click 'Send'. Thank you.

If you do not currently offer this OCR qualification but would like to do so, please complete the Expression of Interest Form which can be found here: www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest

OCR Resources: *the small print*

OCR's resources are provided to support the teaching of OCR specifications, but in no way constitute an endorsed teaching method that is required by the Board and the decision to use them lies with the individual teacher. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the content, OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions within these resources. We update our resources on a regular basis, so please check the OCR website to ensure you have the most up to date version.

© OCR 2015 - This resource may be freely copied and distributed, as long as the OCR logo and this message remain intact and OCR is acknowledged as the originator of this work.

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content:

'The Green Wheelbarrow' by Ian McMillan, page 7 from *Answering Back* (2008) edited by Carol Ann Duffy, ISBN: 978-0-330-44824-6, published by Picador/Pan Macmillan, 20 New Wharf Road, London, N1 9RR; 'The Red Wheelbarrow' by William Carlos Williams, page 224 from *Collected Poems 1909-1939* (2000) by William Carlos Williams, ISBN: 978-1-857-54522-7, published by Carcanet, 4th Floor, Conavon Street, 12-16 Blackfriars St, Manchester, M3 5BQ; 'No Snow fell on Eden' by Jen Hadfield, *Nigh-No-Place* (2008), ISBN: 1-85224-793-2, published by Bloodaxe Books, Highgreen, Tarsset, Northumberland, NE48 1RP; 'The French for Death' by Helen Mort, page 1 from *Division Street* (2013), ISBN: 978-0-701-18684-5, published by Chatto and Windus, Random House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Rd, London, SW1V 2SA; 'Toussaint L'Ouverture Acknowledges Wordsworth's Sonnet 'To Toussaint L'Ouverture' by John Agard, *Alternative Anthem: Selected Poems* (2009), ISBN: 1-85224-823-8, published by Bloodaxe Books, Highgreen, Tarsset, Northumberland, NE48 1RP.

Please get in touch if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support delivery of our qualifications: resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk

OCR customer contact centre

General qualifications

Telephone 01223 553998

Facsimile 01223 552627

Email general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk



For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored.

©OCR 2015 Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England.

Registered office 1 Hills Road, Cambridge CB1 2EU. Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.