

Unseen Poetry Revision Booklet

My progress record of the unseen poetry questions

FIRST TASK:

Date:

HOW TO IMPROVE:

SECOND TASK:

Date:

HOW TO IMPROVE:

THIRD TASK:

Date:

HOW TO IMPROVE:

ASSESSMENT PIECE:

Date:

TEACHER FEEDBACK:

Grade:

Index Page

1. Purpose of this booklet.
2. What the exam looks like
3. Understanding the assessment objectives
4. Differences between language, structure and form
5. The Poetry Moves
6. Annotation of a poem
7. Converting notes into an essay
8. Practice poems for Section C Question 1
9. Section C Question 2: The unseen comparison
10. Practice poems for Section C Question 2
11. Mark Scheme
12. Sentence starters
13. Core knowledge
14. Other links and resources

The purpose of this booklet.

- This homework booklet has been designed as a revision guide. It will help you to practise the skills you will need to answer the unseen poetry questions.
- There are six sample questions which you can work your way through as either timed or untimed tasks.
- The last task is a formal assessment which you can give to your teacher for written feedback and a grade.
- Sample answers have been provided so that you may check your responses against them to see where your current standard rests.
- There are links to online resources which may help to strengthen your understanding of the unseen poetry questions.

FAQs

- What is the unseen poetry question about?
It is about comparing the poets' ideas and language in two short modern poems you haven't seen before. Examiners are interested in what you make of the poems and how they affect you. You can revise this question by reading through class notes and practising past questions. This is where this booklet will help you.
- When will I be tested on unseen poetry?
The unseen poetry assessment appears on the English Literature exam on paper 2 section C.
- How much is the unseen poetry worth?

It is worth 32 marks in total, which is around 25% of the total English Literature GCSE.

What do I need to do?

- You will read a modern poem and write an essay on how the poet presents their ideas and which methods they use to show these ideas. It is marked equally for AO1 and AO2. It is worth 24 marks.
- Next, you will be asked to read a second, shorter modern poem. You will compare the poets' attitudes and how they use language to suggest these. This piece is only marked for AO2 and is worth 8 marks. Aim for 1-2 SWAn paragraphs.

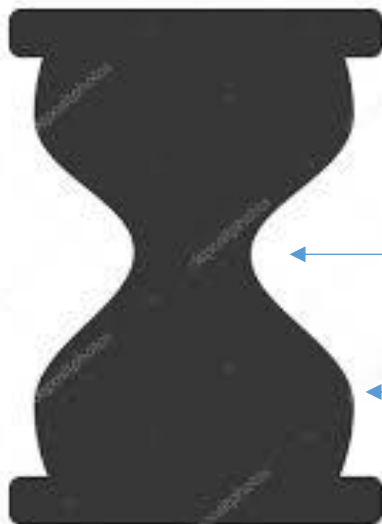
feelings about her daughter? (24 marks)

Part b) In both 'Poem for My Sister' and 'To a Daughter Leaving Home' the speakers describe feelings about watching someone they love grow up. What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways the poets present those feelings? (8 marks)

Notice, there are two tasks. The first task is an essay on one unseen modern poem. It will be about familiar topics like family relationships, nature and experiences. Here, you will be assessed for AO1 (understanding) and AO2 (understanding). The second task is a short comparison with another poem, which is linked by theme. This task is an extended SWAn, which will assess AO2 only. Students usually pick out one image and one element of the form or structure to compare in both poems e.g. compare the use of the metaphor and the rhyme in both poems.

It is worth noting at this stage that it is *your* interpretation of the poem which is important, rather than *knowing the right answer*. The unseen poetry section is about giving students a poem they haven't had a chance to prepare and seeing what you make of it. The examiners want you to know that they "are looking to reward a candidate for their comments" and praise the overall quality of the response. This means you will receive the most marks for engaging with the poem's ideas and forming a clear, critical argument on how the poet presents the speaker's feelings about it. Marks will be awarded for understanding the poet's ideas and how the poet uses language, form and structural choices reinforce those ideas.

Follow this format and you will automatically cover both assessment objectives: AO1 (understanding) and AO2 (language).



Q1) AO1 What the poem is ABOUT: speaker, form, overall purpose.

Q1 and Q2) AO2. For Q2 Compare **one** image and one aspect of form or structure. TECHNIQUE

Q1) AO2 Analyse the MOOD and IDEAS through the language choices.

Q1 & 2) AO1 Give YOUR VIEW on the effectiveness of the poem.

Understanding the Assessment Objectives.

You know already that you will be assessed for showing an understanding the poet's ideas (AO1) and how the poet uses language, form and structural choices reinforce those ideas (AO2).

The emphasis of this exam is on how the writer creates meaning through their choices rather than on how the reader might feel sympathetic towards the character in the poem.

AO1 – Inferences.

AO1 is simply shorthand for providing inferences into why the poet may have chosen to show this particular aspect of human nature or nature. An inference is the reader's way of explaining what they understand about the poet's ideas, from the words the poet has used. The deeper and more developed your explanations are, the more interesting and personal your response becomes, the more marks you are likely to gain. Questions you could ask are;

- What is this text trying to say?
- Why might it have been written?
- What is it encouraging the reader to think/feel?
- What ideas is it presenting/exploring?

AO1 – The Speaker.

What is interesting when we read a poem for the first time is not only what the speaker of the poem is thinking but also why they might be feeling this way. It is always a good idea to explore what motivates a character to talk in the way they do. Questions the reader could ask are:

- What might someone who talks like *this* be thinking?
- Given this, what does the speaker reveal?
- What is it about the speaker's experience that makes it interesting to me?

It is almost as if the reader is playing the role of the psychologist to uncover the truths that the poet gradually reveals as the poem progresses. Don't expect to find the 'answer' of the poem in the first line: poetry is a gradual experience, you need to work through the whole poem to see how the speaker's mood changes throughout.

AO1 Linking the poet's ideas to the big ideas about life.

Stepping outside of the text. This is where you will be rewarded for saying something about what it is to be human. Poets use their poems as a way of expressing something about the human experience. If you understand that poetry is only a construct (something created on purpose), you will be able to look at the deeper, broader picture. The best responses are likely to fully develop their explanations then step out of the poem to link the poet's ideas to the big ideas we all experiences as humans: love, loss, anger, innocence, truth, lies etc.... Poets, just like the rest of us,

want to share their thoughts on these experiences and emotions. The more you look beyond the story of poem and connect the poem to the world in which it was written, the more marks you can achieve.

Questions you could ask to help you look beyond the content of the poem.

- How does someone, coming from this perspective, present the big ideas in the poem?
- What is the speaker's strongest opinion on this particular theme?
- What is the speaker experiencing?
- Is the poet right to share these ideas?
- What is your stance in this debate?

What does an AO1 response to a poem look like?

In this narrative poem, which works well as it allows the speaker, the voice of a parent, to describe a memory of watching her daughter learn to ride a bike. The mother describes her fear of her daughter coming to harm with the use of 'loping along beside you', as if she is terrified of letting go and letting her daughter move away from her. This is then reinforced with the verb 'wobbled' to suggest the daughter's vulnerability and fear that she may come to harm. However, the daughter is confident and shows this through the dramatic verbs 'pulled away' and 'screaming with laughter' – she doesn't appear to have any fear of her new skill and is excited by the ability to 'pull ahead' The contrast between the parent and the child is shown through the language used to describe them; the mother's mouth 'rounds in surprise' whereas the daughter is 'pumping, pumping for your life'

Notice how the student's interpretation comes first, then it is supported by the quotes and techniques. The highlighted blue sections would achieve the AO1 marks for showing an understanding of the speaker's ideas, thoughts and feelings.

A 'response' in its broadest sense refers to your ability to understand what the text might mean – to you, possibly, and to other readers. A response refers to:

What is this text trying to say?

Why might it have been written?

What is it encouraging the reader to think/feel?

What ideas is it presenting/exploring?

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

What does an AO1 response to a poem look like?

In this narrative poem, which works well as it allows the speaker, the voice of a parent, to describe a memory of watching her daughter learn to ride a bike. The mother describes her fear of her daughter coming to harm with the use of the phrase 'loping along beside you', as if she is terrified

of letting go and letting her daughter move away from her. This is then reinforced with the verb 'wobbled' to suggest the daughter's vulnerability and fear that she may come to harm. However, the daughter is confident and shows this through the dramatic verbs of 'pulled away' and 'screaming with laughter' – she doesn't appear to have any fear of her new skill and is excited by the ability to 'pull ahead' The contrast between the parent and the child is shown through the language used to describe them; the mother's mouth 'rounds in surprise' whereas the daughter is 'pumping, pumping for your life'

The highlighted yellow sections would achieve the AO2 marks for showing an understanding of how the writer has deliberately chosen language, form and structure to share the key ideas.

AO2 – Commenting on language. AO2 means explaining the poets' use of language/structure/form and it refers to how the text has been constructed; in other words, the deliberate decisions the writer has made in order to get their meanings across to the reader. Students working at the highest level would be expected to consider all three aspects of writer's craft: language and structure and form. However in most cases, students will be selecting the most relevant area: language or structure or form. If you go to the glossary at end of this booklet, you will find explanations and examples of all three areas of the writer's craft.

AO2 – The Writer. Less successful students tend to leave out the writer in their analysis, using phrases like 'it' and 'we know this because...'. More successful students tend to use sentence starters like 'the poet chooses..' and 'the poet portrays/show/suggests this by...' if you learn the core knowledge of subject terminology you have given yourself a shorthand for explaining the ways in which a writer uses language, structure and form to communicate meaning to the reader. This in turn will give you more time to comment on the effect of the writer's choices rather than describing them, which will allow you to gain extra marks.

This assessment objective asks you to explain the writers' use of language/structure/form and how the text has been constructed; in other words, the deliberate decisions the writer has made in order to get their meanings across to the reader. This might, in some cases, include aspects of language and structure and form. Students working at the highest level **would be expected to consider all three aspects of writer's craft**; however in most cases, candidates will be selecting the most relevant aspect either language or structure or form.

What is the difference between language, structure and form?

AO2 – Language

Language analysis will require zooming in closer to look at sentences, phrases and words – essentially this is the SWAn part. It is not important that you identify the writer's words but rather that you talk about them to explain their impact on the reader.

Some areas you could look at are:

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

AO2 – Structure

The structure is the framework which holds the whole poem together; it is like the scaffolding that supports a building as it is being built. Poetry is designed to be heard and the structural features help the reader to naturally pause at the important parts of the poem, which carry the meaning. The writer plays with the way they organise their ideas in order to make the reader land on important words which highlight the precise meaning the writer wants to convey. Ideas can be repeated, echoed, separated into chunks of meaning, made faster or slower with punctuation marks, continued over several lines or just stopped - dead. These are the names of the structural features which do all these things:

- beginnings/endings – echoed meaning
- repetition – if it is repeated, the writer intends to emphasise something important
- use of white space – gaps in sentences encourage the reader to pause and reflect.
- pace - created by punctuation, lots of full stops slow down the pace, commas speed it up.
- enjambment – a run on line to carry meaning over several lines.
- Plot – how the story of the poem gradually or suddenly unfolds
- caesura - deliberate stop in the middle of an idea
- rhythm – a regular or irregular pattern to the sounds of words.

Structure can be as complicated as analysing caesura and enjambment or as simple as looking at how the plot unfolds or the character develops. All of these areas will help you to achieve good marks. As students of structure, it is our job to ask why the poet may have chosen to use this particular structural technique at this point in the poem. We need to ask ourselves how it improves the meaning of the poem.

If you look at the opening lines of 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' by Wilfred Owen, you will notice that the poet opens with a question, as if he is questioning how hopeless a situation it is when people die as animals. The hyphen to separate the 'passing-bells' emphasises how the church bells, which once sounded out joyful occasions of births and marriages, are relegated to 'passing' the men by, as if the church no-longer provides the answers to life. What possible reasons could there be for the use of hyphen at the beginning of line two? Why choose enjambment for the last two lines of the stanza?

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.

AO2 – Form

The form is the overall shape of the poem. If we use the building metaphor again, it would be whether the building is an office, a tower block or a stadium. The writer chooses the form which best fits the speaker's views on the topic the poet has chosen to share. For example, a personal account would be best shared as a monologue as it offers only one point of view. However, a shared personal account might come across better as a conversation, as if the speaker is inviting the reader into the conversation. A philosophical idea like the wonder of nature might be more effectively presented as a rational argument in a sonnet form. The most common poetic forms are:

- Sonnet
- Monologue
- Dialogue
- Free verse
- Lyric
- Apostrophe

It all boils down to:

WHAT? What is the writer writing about?

HOW? How do they choose words to show it?

WHY? Why has the writer written this text?

Hitting the language marks (AO2)

You may have noticed in the exam question, that you asked to comment on 'how' the poet present their ideas, thoughts and feelings.

Part a) In 'To a Daughter Leaving Home', how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about her daughter? (24 marks)

From our lessons we have learned that the word 'how' generates ideas about the structure, language and form of the poem. If you look in the appendix, you will see a list of techniques which can be revised. Whilst it helps to have a range of techniques under your belt, it is more important to explain what the writer is doing with these techniques, rather than to learn their names.

Take it from the perspective that you need to explain your interpretation of the speaker's feelings first (AO1). To give a clear interpretation, you will need to comment on how the poet's choices (AO2) reinforce your interpretation. If you take this approach, you are looking for things that mean something to you, the reader, rather than searching for that illusive right answer, which doesn't exist. Poetry is a writerly text, where the reader needs to construct their own narrative in order to make sense of the poem. Make up your own interpretation of the poem. Look at the example below:

*My Grandmother
She kept an antique shop – or it kept her.
Among Apostle spoons and Bristol glass,
The faded silk, the heavy furniture,
She watched her own reflection in the brass
Salvers and silver bowls, as if to prove
Polish was all, there was no need of love.*

Example response:

The speaker describes the cold relationship her grandmother has with her antique shop, as if she doesn't care about her work. The dismal mood may reflect the grandmother's feelings of disinterest or tiredness. Maybe the 'faded silks' and 'heavy furniture' are metaphors for her own life; things of the past which no longer seem cared for. The phrase 'no need of love' reflects this sentiment, suggesting the speaker feels her grandmother could feel neglected.

Make a game out of the poem: see how many different interpretations you can find. Ultimately, this will help you to achieve higher marks because you will be 'exploring' the poem, rather than trying to find a right answer which doesn't exist.

The Poetry Moves

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: Read the question. This will give you important clues as to what the poem is about.

First, read it

Second, start to ask questions: **ABOUT** who is speaking? Who to? Where are we? When? Why do you think the writer has written the poem? What 'snapshot' of human experience are they trying to capture?

Third - Reread slowly, line by line, stanza by stanza – each stanza offers a 'picture'. How does the poet 'unfold' his or her **IDEAS**?

Fourth – revisit second step, adding in more details as the poem starts to relinquish its secrets....

Fifth - **MOOD** – revisit the structure/stanzas in turn, and decide the speaker's thoughts and feelings, 'tarot cards'. Wistful/angry – how does the change in mood add to the message/theme of the poem?

Sixth – **TECHNIQUES** – which techniques does the writer use to paint their picture/create the mood/effect the reader?

Seventh – What is **YOUR RESPONSE** to the poem? How does it change your ideas about the subject/mood that is presented?

These moves can be condensed down to AMITY: A = about M = mood, I = ideas T = techniques Y = your view.

Phenomenal Woman by Maya Angelou

*Pretty women wonder where my secret lies·
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size
But when I start to tell them,
They think I'm telling lies·
I say,
It's in the reach of my arms,
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips·
I'm a woman
Phenomenally·
Phenomenal woman,
That's me·*

*I walk into a room
Just as cool as you please,
And to a man,
The fellows stand or
Fall down on their knees·
Then they swarm around me,
A hive of honey bees·
I say,
It's the fire in my eyes,
And the flash of my teeth,
The swing in my waist,
And the joy in my feet·
I'm a woman
Phenomenally·*

*Phenomenal woman,
That's me·*

Men themselves have wondered

*What they see in me·
They try so much
But they can't touch
My inner mystery·
When I try to show them,
They say they still can't see·
I say,
It's in the arch of my back,
The sun of my smile,
The ride of my breasts,
The grace of my style·
I'm a woman
Phenomenally·
Phenomenal woman,
That's me·*

*Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed·
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud·
When you see me passing,
It ought to make you proud·
I say,
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
the palm of my hand,
The need for my care·
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally·
Phenomenal woman,
That's me·*

Take time to practise the poetry moves with this poem.

THE POETRY MOVES.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: Read the question. This will give you important clues as to what the poem is about.

First, read it

Second, start to ask questions: About. Who is speaking? Who to? Where are we? When in their lives is it taking place? Why do you think the writer has written the poem? What 'snapshot' of human experience are they trying to capture? (**ABOUT = A**)

Third - Reread slowly, line by line, stanza by stanza – each stanza offers a 'picture'. How does the poem 'unfold' its ideas? (**IDEAS = I**)

Fourth – revisit second step, adding in more details as the poem starts to relinquish its secrets.... (**IDEAS = I**)

Fifth - Mood (**MOOD = M**)– revisit the structure/stanzas in turn, and decide the mood, 'tarot cards'. Wistful/angry – how does the change in mood add to the message/theme of the poem.

Sixth – techniques (**TECHNIQUE = T**)– which techniques does the writer use to paint their picture/create the mood/effect the reader?

Seventh – What is your response to the poem? How does it change your ideas about the subject/mood that is presented? (**YOUR VIEW = Y**)

The poetry moves can remembered with the acronym AMITY.

A = about

M = mood

I = ideas

T = techniques

Y = your view

Annotation of a poem: a student model

This is what it looks like on paper. A previous student has read the unseen poem and showed their thinking on the poem.

Who? Mother (talking to daughter) What? Surprised, delighted, abandoned
 How? A conversation. Why? Realise daughter can survive

To a Daughter Leaving Home

Mother gives her skills. In charges > feeling in control.
 MEMORY.

Idea 1: Memory of child needing mother.

Mother's delight.
 Reinforced by metaphor.
 Lovely picture of joy.

Proud. Innocence is sweet. Verb = still needs her mother.

Expectation child will fail. Mother always needed.

Verb emphasises the pace as the mother tries to keep up with her child

Idea 2: Gradual hint child no longer needs her.

Ideas of vulnerability. Reflected in comparatives.

Idea 3: Mother's loss at child's growing independence.

Handkerchief used as a symbol of tears. Is mother in grief? Juxtaposition of daughter's joy and mother's loss.

Continuous verbs increase pace. Represent daughter moving away from mother into independence. Feelings of regret.

When I taught you at eight to ride a bicycle, loping along beside you as you wobbled away on two round wheels, my own mouth rounding in surprise when you pulled ahead down the curved path of the park, I kept waiting for the thud of your crash as I sprinted to catch up, while you grew smaller, more breakable with distance, pumping, pumping for your life, screaming with laughter, the hair flapping behind you like a handkerchief waving goodbye.

By Linda Pastan

Teacher's comments:

Notice how the student has looked for the initial idea, the change and which idea we are left with at the end. Each section has been ruled off to signal the poem's structure. This is then supported by one-word comments on the mood, which are written in red. Looking closer, the student has given their comment in blue. Then, in green, look at how the language reinforces their personal interpretation. At the very first stage, the annotation stage, the student is forming a clear, coherent argument.

Read through the poem below and practise going through the poetry moves: read, question, re-read, re-read, mood, technique, your view. **The poetry moves can remembered with the acronym AMITY.** This time, make notes on the poem to keep a record of your thoughts as they come to you. Expect your understanding and response to change as the poem progresses.

In 'Poem for My Sister', how does the speaker describes her attitudes to being an older sister?

Poem for My Sister by Liz Lohead

My little sister likes to try my shoes,
to strut in them,
admire her spindle thin twelve year old legs
in this season's styles.
She says they fit her perfectly,
but wobbles
on their high heels, they're
hard to balance.

I like to watch my little sister
playing hopscotch,
admire the neat hops and skips of her,
their quick peck,
never missing their mark, not
overstepping the line.
She is competent at *peever.

I try to warn my little sister
about unsuitable shoes,
point out my own distorted feet, the callouses,
odd patches of hard skin.
I should not like to see her
in my shoes.
I wish she could stay
sure footed,
sensibly shod.

- Peever is a game of hopscotch

Converting notes into an essay: the note stage

Poem for My Sister by Liz Lohead

Possessive pronoun: responsible for sister? Older child.

Structure: begins description memory. Dressing up.

Perspective: distance. Onlooker.

Older sister. Look after. Responsible. Experienced.

My little sister likes to try my shoes, to strut in them, admire her **spindle thin** twelve year - old legs

in this season's styles.

She says they fit her perfectly, but wobbles on their high heels, they're hard to balance.

I like to watch my little sister playing hopscotch, admire the neat hops and skips of her,

their quick peck, never missing their mark, not overstepping the line. She is competent at peever.

I try to warn my little sister about **unsuitable** shoes, point out my **own distorted feet,** the callouses, odd patches of hard skin.

I should not like to see her in my shoes.

I **wish** she could **stay** **sure** footed, **sensibly** shod.

Metaphor 'spindle' = stair rods. Homely image. Endearing. Loving. Vulnerability.

Idea: innocence. Speaker = thinks cute.

Onomatopoeia: pace = fast. Admiration. Expert. Skill. Confidence.

Ends in wistful, reflective tone: sibilance Fear of harm.

Converting notes into an essay: the essay stage.

In this poem, the speaker is the voice of an older sister, describing a memory of watching her sister dress up in adult's shoes. The fact that she begins with the possessive pronoun 'my' indicates how she feels responsible for her younger sister and wants to look out for her. The older sister describes her fear of her sister coming to harm, which is reflected in the ending with the wistful tone in the sibilance of 'wish' and 'sure-footed' demonstrating her hope that her sister will not come to harm as she grows into an adult. The fearful mood is foreshadowed by the word 'wobbles' when the sister was walking in ill-fitting shoes, emphasising her vulnerability. However, the sister is expert in 'hop-scotch' highlighted in the onomatopoeia of 'their quick peck' – she doesn't appear to have any fear of life as her footsteps are never 'missing their mark'. The contrast of the mood between the older sister and the younger sister is shown through the language used to describe their actions: the younger sister is 'playing' whereas the older sister can only 'watch' and 'warn'.

There is a tension between the sister's idea of the world and the younger child's innocent idea of life. The main metaphor which stands out to suggest this is her 'spindle thin' legs, described by the speaker in an endearing image but also highlighting the girl's vulnerability. The poet contrasts this with the image of the 'neat hops and skips' of the younger sister: even though her legs are 'spindle thin', she doesn't seem to let that prevent her from enjoying life to the full. Instead, she enjoys the independence and freedom of life, whereas her older sister is waiting for the snap of her weak and vulnerable limbs.

Overall, the poem uses this event, often seen as a staging post in childhood, as an extended metaphor to explore attitudes about growing up. It is effective at showing a contrast between the speaker's anxiety and the younger sister's confidence because of the language it chooses to show each sister's different perspective on life.

Go back to the annotated poem on the previous page. Re-read the student annotations in the boxes. Highlight in this student response where the annotations have been used.

You will notice that the notes have been written up almost word-for-word into full sentences. The only things linking the ideas are connectives like however, the contrast and overall.

Next, highlight where AMITY has been used. How does the student use AMITY as a framework?

TASK ONE Write your own interpretation of the poem 'Poem for my Sister' by Liz Lohead using the model as a guide. Self-assess your response using the mark scheme on pages 32-33. Write your mark and comment on the front cover.

Read through the poem below and practise going through the poetry moves and using your notes to complete the essay a student has started on this poem. Self-assess your response using the mark scheme on pages 32-33. Write your mark and comment on the front cover.

In 'Power', how does the speaker describes his attitudes to the effects of darkness on a community?

Power by Andrew Forster

The last time the electricity failed,
we watched through the window in settling dusk
as vans rumbled into the field next door
and workers in yellow tunics gathered by
the telegraph pole like pilgrims. Floodlights,
like artificial moons, cast the grass
in a white sheen. One worker shimmied up, others
rapt beneath, mumbling what looked like prayers.
No sudden blaze, but as they pulled away
we felt the certainty of returning light.

Back in Yorkshire, during the strikes,
powercuts were balanced around districts.
With no television, we were forced
to talk to each other, while we played Scrabble
in the glow of candles, ignoring shadows
flickering around us, and when light
returned everything to its proper place
I ran to the window to watch
the small miracle of darkness
as it took over the estate below us.

In this poem, the speaker is the voice of a young person, describing a memory of the black outs during their childhood. He begins by describing 'the last time' it happened, as if it is a common occurrence. The reader gets the impression the speaker is a family house, watching the effects of the power cut as he uses the pronoun 'we' to suggest it is a shared experience. The poem begins by describing the repairmen as miracle workers by emphasising how they mumbling 'prayers' and the heavenly imagery of 'rapt' and 'light' reinforce the faith the young man has in their ability to reconnect them to the electric supply. However, as the poem reveals itself, the mood changes Add your ideas here. Remember to use your annotations to help you.

Further Practice Poems for Section C Question 1

Walking Away by C Day-Lewis

It is eighteen years ago, almost to the day –
A sunny day with leaves just turning,
The touch-lines new-ruled – since I watched you play
Your first game of football, then, like a satellite
Wrenched from its orbit, go drifting away
Behind a scatter of boys. I can see
You walking away from me towards the school
With the pathos of a half-fledged thing set free
Into a wilderness, the gait of one
Who finds no path where the path should be.
That hesitant figure, eddying away
Like a winged seed loosened from its parent stem,
Has something I never quite grasp to convey
About nature's give-and-take – the small, the scorching
Ordeals which fire one's irresolute clay.
I have had worse partings, but none that so
Gnaws at my mind still. Perhaps it is roughly
Saying what God alone could perfectly show –
How selfhood begins with a walking away,
And love is proved in the letting go.

Part a) In 'Walking Away' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about his child? (24 marks)

Catrin by Gillian Clarke

I can remember you, child,
As I stood in a hot, white
Room at the window watching
The people and cars taking
Turn at the traffic lights.
I can remember you, our first
Fierce confrontation, the tight
Red rope of love which we both
Fought over. It was a square
Environmental blank, disinfected
Of paintings or toys. I wrote
All over the walls with my
Words, coloured the clean squares
With the wild, tender circles
Of our struggle to become
Separate. We want, we shouted,
To be two, to be ourselves.
Neither won nor lost the struggle
In the glass tank clouded with feelings
Which changed us both. Still I am fighting
You off, as you stand there
With your straight, strong, long
Brown hair and your rosy,
Defiant glare, bringing up
From the heart's pool that old rope,
Tightening about my life,
Trailing love and conflict,
As you ask may you skate
In the dark, for one more hour.

Part a) In 'Catrin' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about motherhood? (24 marks)

This is Task 2. Write your response. Use the mark schemes on pages 32-33. Record your comments on the front cover.

Eating Poetry

Ink runs from the corners of my mouth.
There is no happiness like mine.
I have been eating poetry.

The librarian does not believe what she sees.
Her eyes are sad
and she walks with her hands in her dress.

The poems are gone.
The light is dim.
The dogs are on the basement stairs and coming up.

Their eyeballs roll,
their blond legs burn like brush.
The poor librarian begins to stamp her feet and weep.

She does not understand.
When I get on my knees and lick her hand,
she screams.

I am a new man.
I snarl at her and bark.
I romp with joy in the bookish dark.

Mark Strand

***Part a) In 'Eating Poetry' how does the poet ideas about imagination and reality?
(24 marks)***

Winter Night: Edinburgh

Night falls quickly as turning back a clock
But the City is alive with night.
Shops and cafes deny the darkness,
Throw light at the street like baited hooks.
Offices spill workers onto pavements,
The yellow drip of lamps washing colour
From their faces as they pass beneath.
Cars, trapped in a magnetic flow, controlled
By coloured lights, thrust beams at the blackness.

It can be seen for miles, this metropolis:
Glowing orange like a prehistoric fire.

Andrew Forster

Part a) In 'Winter Night: Edinburgh' how does the poet present ideas about living in a city? (24 marks)

Section C Question 2: The unseen comparison

Now that you have written an essay on the first unseen poem, you have done the hardest and longest unseen task. The final question on the exam paper asks you to make links between a poem that you have written about already, with a second modern poem: it is a comparison. It is worth only 8 mark and therefore will be assessed for language analysis only (AO2). You will have time to write a one-sentence introduction, an extended SWAn and a one-sentence conclusion. Limit the poem titles e.g. 'the Rich eat Three Full meals' would be reduced down to 'The Rich...' in order to save time. Keep it concise.

Introduction

Write about both poems at once. Start with a single-sentence introduction that explains what the message of the two poems is about and make a link between them. This could be a similarity or a difference. Your first sentence should start with the word **both**. Typical sentence starters you could use are:

- Both speakers feel... however,....
- Both poets suggest
- Both poets present ideas on....., whereas the first poet....
- Both poems include ideas of...

Full comparative SWAn paragraph

Next, most students will choose one image which stands out as being interesting in both poems as the basis for their SWAn. Students who wish to aim higher however, will want to discuss a structural feature or an element of the form as well.

A model comparative Swan may look like this:

In 'The Rich...' the poet uses positive natural images to show the beauty of the world; 'my paintings are mountains and rivers' which gives the sense that he sees the world as a work of art and something precious to be admired. Although the poet in 'How to' also uses positive imagery, she uses it to show the power and size of the natural world as 'immense and wordless', as if the natural world is bigger and much more important than the human world. This suggests that Barber sees the natural world as something bigger that we can't own, whereas the poet in 'The Rich' seems to suggest something different, as if the natural world belongs to humans. This is reinforced by the ways both poets position the idea of 'peace'. In 'The Rich' it is in the opening section of the poem to introduce it as an important idea, however Barber puts the verb 'breathe' right at the end of the poem as a lasting thought.

Conclusion

Finish with a one-sentence conclusion which explains the effect of the poets' message.

Overall, Forster celebrates the beauty of nature whilst Barber emphasises the freedom of nature.

Practice Poems for Section C Question 2

To a Daughter Leaving Home

When I taught you
at eight to ride
a bicycle, loping along
beside you
as you wobbled away
on two round wheels,
my own mouth rounding
in surprise when you pulled
ahead down the curved
path of the park,
I kept waiting
for the thud
of your crash as I
sprinted to catch up,
while you grew
smaller, more breakable
with distance,
pumping, pumping
for your life, screaming
with laughter,
the hair flapping
behind you like a
handkerchief waving
goodbye.

—Linda Pastan

Poem for My Sister by Liz Lohead

My little sister likes to try my shoes,
to strut in them,
admire her spindle thin twelve year old legs
in this season's styles.
She says they fit her perfectly,
but wobbles
on their high heels, they're
hard to balance.

I like to watch my little sister
playing hopscotch,
admire the neat hops and skips of her,
their quick peck,
never missing their mark, not
overstepping the line.
She is competent at *peeever.

I try to warn my little sister
about unsuitable shoes,
point out my own distorted feet, the callouses,
odd patches of hard skin.
I should not like to see her
in my shoes.
I wish she could stay
sure footed,
sensibly shod.

In Poem for My Sister, and 'To a Daughter Leaving Home', the speakers describe watching someone they love grow up.

What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways the poets describe these feelings?

[8 marks]

The Rich Eat Three Full Meals

The rich eat three full meals, the poor two small bowls
But peace is what matters.

Thirsty, I drink sweet plum tea;

Warm, I lie in the shade, in the breeze;

My paintings are mountains and rivers all around me,

My damask, embroidered, the grass.

I rest at night, rest easy,

Am awake with the sun

And enjoying Heaven's heaped-up favours.

Nguyen Binh Khiem

How to Leave the World that worships *Should*

Let faxes butter-curl on dusty shelves.
Let junkmail build its castles in the hush
Of other people's halls. Let deadlines burst
And flash like glorious fireworks somewhere else.
As hours go softly by, let others curse
The roads where distant drivers queue like sheep.
Let e-mails fly like panicked, tiny birds.
Let phones, unanswered, ring themselves to sleep.

Above, the sky unrolls its telegram,
Immense and wordless, simply understood:
You've made your mark like birdtracks in the sand –
Now make the air in your lungs your livelihood.
See how each wave arrives at last to heave
Itself upon the beach and vanish. Breathe.

Ros Barber

In both 'The Rich eat Three Full Meals' and 'How to Leave the World that Worships Should', the speakers describe attitudes towards the world around us.

What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways poets present these attitudes?

[8 marks]

This is Task 3. Write your response. You may wish to ask your teacher to mark it as a formal assessment piece.

Autumn

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

Alan Bold

Today

If ever there were a spring day so perfect,
so uplifted by a warm intermittent breeze
that it made you want to throw
open all the windows in the house
and unlatch the door to the canary's cage,
indeed, rip the little door from its jamb*,
a day when the cool brick paths
and the garden bursting with peonies**
seemed so etched in sunlight
that you felt like taking
a hammer to the glass paperweight
on the living room end table,
releasing the inhabitants
from their snow-covered cottage
so they could walk out,
holding hands and squinting
into this larger dome of blue and white,
well, today is just that kind of day.

Billy Collins

* jamb – the sides of a doorway or opening

** peonies – flowers

In both 'Today' and 'Autumn' the speakers describe attitudes towards the seasons.

What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways the poets present these attitudes? [8 marks]

Mark Scheme

Mark	AO	Typical features of response
Level 4 7–8 marks	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploratory comparison of writers' use of language, structure and form with subject terminology used judiciously • Convincing comparison of effects of writers' methods on reader
Level 3 5–6 marks	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughtful comparison of writers' use of language and/or structure and/or form with subject terminology used effectively to support consideration of methods • Comparative examination of effects of writers' methods on reader
Level 2 3–4 marks	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant comparison of writers' use of language and/or structure and/or form with some relevant use of subject terminology • Some comparison of effects of writers' methods on reader
Level 1 1–2 marks	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some links between writers' use of language or structure or form • Some links between effects of writers' methods on reader
0 marks	Nothing worthy of credit/nothing written	

What went well:	Comments for improvement:
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Areas for improvement (tick the most relevant one):

- Make sure that you quote more frequently in your response.
- Refer to more language features in your response.
- Refer to aspects of form and structure (rhyme, rhythm, sentence length / structure, enjambment etc)
- Refer to writer's intentions.
- Consider the effects on the reader.
- Make your comparisons between poems more detailed and specific.
- Make multiple interpretations in your response.

Poetry unseen (non-comparison task)

Mark	A.O.	Typical features	Tick
Level 6 21-24 marks <i>Convincing critical analysis and exploration</i>	A01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical, exploratory, conceptualise response to task and whole text. • Judicious use of precise references to support interpretation(s). 	
	Ao2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of writer's methods with subject terminology used judiciously. • Exploration of effects of writer's methods on reader. 	
Level 5 17-20 marks <i>Thoughtful, developed, considered.</i>	A01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughtful, developed response to task and whole text. • Apt references integrated into interpretation(s). 	
	A02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination of writer's methods with subject terminology used effectively to support consideration of methods. • Examination of effects of writer's methods on reader 	
Level 4 13-16 marks <i>Clear understanding</i>	A01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, explained response to task and whole text. • Effective use of references to support explanation. 	
	A02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear explanation of writer's methods with appropriate use of relevant subject terminology. • Understanding of effects of writer's methods on reader. 	
Level 3 9-12 marks <i>Explained, structured comments</i>	A01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some explained response to task and whole text. • References used to support relevant explanation. 	
	A02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explained / relevant comments of writer's methods with some relevant use of subject terminology. • Identification of effects of writer's methods on reader. 	
Level 2 5-8 marks <i>Supported relevant comments.</i>	Ao1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported response to task and text. • Comments on references. 	
	A02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of writers' methods. • Some reference to subject terminology. 	
Level 1 1-4 marks <i>Simple, explicit comments</i>	A01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple comments relevant to task and text. • References to relevant details. 	
	A02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of writer making deliberate choices. • Possible reference to subject terminology. 	

comments:

Sentence starters to encourage a personal and critical response

The poet might be suggesting...

Alternatively, the poet may be ...

The speaker could be expressing opinions of...

Maybe the poet wants the reader to realise...

Perhaps this phrase could raise issues of....

Sentence starters to encourage a discussion of the writer at work

The poet has chosen the simile.....

They both use metaphors to show this,

The poet describes his/her feelings

The use of repetition suggests

Overall, the poet uses this event to

Core Knowledge (terminology)

- Green = expected knowledge (Levels 1-4)
- Amber = strong knowledge (Levels 5-6)
- Red = advanced knowledge (levels 7-9)

Form – whole text level	Structure – Stanza and sentence level	Language – word level
Monologue – a poem in the form of a speech, which presents one side of a conversation.	Stanza – a unit of poetry, like a paragraph in a story.	Verb – an action word or a being word.
Dialogue – a poem which acts as a conversation between two speakers.	Chronological order – told in order of time.	Adjective – a word which describes a noun.
Narrative – a poem which tells a story. Often in metred verse.	Flashback – looking back to the past.	Simile – a comparison of an idea to an object using like or as.
Sonnet – a 14 line poem set out as an argument, with the final clincher in the last rhyming couplet.	Memory – a thought about the past.	Metaphor a direct comparison of two ideas.
Lyric – a non-narrative poem with strong emotion.	Change – a change in viewpoint, perspective, tone or mood.	Personification – giving human qualities to something which does not live.
Apostrophe – a poet directly addresses a specific person.	Juxtaposition – two ideas side by side which contradict one another.	Imagery e.g. religious, warlike, domestic, light...
Free verse – no rules in rhythm, rhyme or stanza length. It mirrors the natural speech.	Enjambment – lines which run on to the next line.	Alliteration – the repetition of a consonant sound.
First person – the poem is told from the speaker's point of view. Using I, me, my or mine.	Repetition – say the same thing again.	Assonance – the repetition of a vowel sound.
Third person – the poem is told about another person. Using he, she, we, they etc...	Rhythm – the pattern of beats in a poem. Sometimes, it is regular, sometimes irregular.	Emotive language – words which convey feeling.
Conversation – an informal, colloquial style of writing.	Rhyme – words which share the same sounds. Usually at the ends of lines.	Mood – the feelings the readers gain from the poem.
Quatrain – 4 line stanza.	Direct speech – conversation in speech marks.	Tone - the poet's attitude e.g. heroic, violent, awestruck
Blank verse – a regular poem written in unrhymed lines, which has a regular metre.	Contrasts – ideas or images which present the opposite side of something.	Atmosphere – the feeling of the place.
Monosyllabic language – one beat words to create a blunt, childlike feel.	Caesura – a deliberate break in a sentence.	Visceral language – words which rely on instinct, often describing traumatic events.

Dramatic Monologue – The speaker reveals aspects of their character to the reader in a one-sided conversation.	Refrain – a repeated line, like the chorus in a song.	Colloquialisms – informal, everyday language.
Petrarchan Sonnet – a sonnet named after the poet Petrarch. A poem of two halves: 8 lines to question, 6 lines to resolve an argument.	Anaphora - the use of a word referring back to a word used earlier in the poem.	Irony – words which convey the opposite meaning to the ones they state.
Iambic pentameter – five stressed beats in a line of poetry.	Monosyllabic phrase – a group of words, all of which have one beat in them.	Anthropomorphism – human characteristics given to a god, animal or object.
Iambic tetrameter – four stressed beats in a line of poetry.	In medias res – starts in the middle of the action.	Ambiguity – the poet creates meanings which are open to more than one interpretation.
Natural speech – the rhythms of everyday speech.	Internal rhyme – words within a line which share the same sounds.	Ambivalence – having mixed feelings or contradictory ideas about something or someone.
	Regular rhyme – a regular pattern of rhyme. E.g. ABAB or AABB	Cognitive dissonance – the clash of thoughts/feelings.
	Irregular rhyme – words which rhyme unevenly across the poem.	Dissonance – the clash of two sounds.
	Half rhyme – half of the sounds rhyme, the other half doesn't.	

Other Links and Resources

These online resources your teachers recommend you visit to clarify and deepen your knowledge.

All Poetry Classics

Poetry Out Loud

Scottish Poetry Library

The Poetry Foundation

GCSE Bitesize

AQA website for sample and past papers:

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/AQA-87022-SQP.PDF>

The Student Room

TES: a free resource is <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/year-11-unseen-poetry-example-questions-for-8702-11498914>