Contents

Introduction from the Series Editor 3
Digital assets on Cambridge Elevate 4
Assess to Progress on Cambridge Elevate 5
Comparison grids 7

Cluster 1: Love and relationships
1 When We Two Parted – Lord Byron 8
2 Love’s Philosophy – Percy Bysshe Shelley 10
3 Porphyria’s Lover – Robert Browning 12
4 Sonnet 29 – ‘I think of thee!’ – Elizabeth Barrett Browning 14
5 Neutral Tones – Thomas Hardy 16
6 The Farmer’s Bride – Charlotte Mew 18
7 Walking Away – Cecil Day-Lewis 21
8 Letters from Yorkshire – Maura Dooley 23
9 Eden Rock – Charles Causley 25
10 Follower – Seamus Heaney 27
11 Mother, any distance – Simon Armitage 29
12 Before You Were Mine – Carol Ann Duffy 31
13 Winter Swans – Owen Sheers 33
14 Singh Song! – Daljit Nagra 35
15 Climbing My Grandfather – Andrew Waterhouse 37

Cluster 2: Power and conflict
1 Ozymandias – Percy Bysshe Shelley 39
2 London – William Blake 41
3 (Extract from) The Prelude – William Wordsworth 43
4 My Last Duchess – Robert Browning 45
5 The Charge of the Light Brigade – Alfred Lord Tennyson 47
6 Exposure – Wilfred Owen 49
7 Storm on the Island – Seamus Heaney 51
8 Bayonet Charge – Ted Hughes 53
9 Remains – Simon Armitage 55
10 Poppies – Jane Weir 57
11 War Photographer – Carol Ann Duffy 59
12 Tissue – Imtiaz Dharker 61
13 The Emigrée – Carol Rumens 63
14 Kamikaze – Beatrice Garland 65
15 Checking Out Me History – John Agard 67
Change and challenge in GCSE English Literature

The changes to GCSE English Literature will have a significant impact on teaching and learning, as well as on course planning and management.

- First, the curriculum will be more rigidly defined than in previous GCSEs, with limited scope for teachers’ choices of texts and tasks, as set texts are prescribed for study.
- Second, the mode of assessment will be very different; it will be based entirely on end-of-course exams, without reference to texts in the exam room. Though upcoming cohorts of students will quickly accept what will become the normal situation for them, these changes will require adjustment by teachers used to previous systems.

Some of the AQA set texts are the same as those from previous GCSE specifications, so you will be able to build on established knowledge and practice when resourcing and producing materials. Some of the new texts are well suited for engaging students at Key Stage 4. What is different, and possibly more challenging, is the emphasis upon response to unseen poetry, and comparison of the unseen poems in the exam.

As the new GCSE ‘closed-book’ conditions exclude reference to available content in the exam, it may seem as though this puts a greater premium on memory. However, in the experience of examiners over the years, it is not always the case that students produce their best work in response to previously seen texts. The new emphasis on response to unseen texts requires a greater focus on transferable skills rather than on content.

Our response to the new ‘closed-book’ GCSEs is a skills-based approach to English Literature. We focus on the assessment objectives underpinning the new GCSE: these are not fundamentally different from those that came before, with a familiar focus on personal response to texts and analysis of writers’ ideas and writers’ craft.

The student books

All the student books in this series are based on what students need to be successful in the new GCSE. They are all designed to support students in meeting the assessment objectives and succeeding under the conditions they will find in the exams. Most importantly, they are built on an understanding of what skills matter across all texts and across all exam questions: the skills of responding, interpreting, analysing, comparing, evaluating and contextualising. These core skills are systematically reinforced throughout the books by reference to authors’ ideas and their relevance to readers then and now, as well as to authors’ craft in a genre by structure and use of language.
Digital assets on Cambridge Elevate

The Cambridge Elevate-enhanced Edition of GCSE English Literature for AQA: Poetry Student Book features a voice recording of every poem, including some readings by the poets themselves.

The prime purpose of these audio clips is to bring a variety of ways to experience the poems into the classroom and into students’ individual learning. Being able to hear the poems, rather than simply seeing them written down, will aid memory and help some students note rhythm, rhyme and language devices that they might have difficulty recognising in the printed word.

The Cambridge Elevate-enhanced Edition also features additional content called ‘Textplorations’. These Textplorations help your students access certain poems in a new way; whether by creating a storyboard or editing together a short film to a specific brief. We have provided short clips and rough footage to be edited together, and encourage students to record their own reading of the poem as a soundtrack. Rather than specify particular software for the purpose, the clips are provided in downloadable zip files for your students to access on whichever program they feel most confident using. These zip files are easiest to access from a desktop or laptop. There are three poems from each cluster which feature Textplorations:

**Cluster 1**

‘Neutral Tones’: create a poem film for the Thomas Hardy Society’s YouTube account to encourage a younger audience.

‘Mother, any distance’: create a storyboard for a poem film you would contribute to a BBC Arts documentary about Simon Armitage.

‘Before You Were Mine’: create a poem film for Channel 4 on the theme of ‘memories’, to be screened before the evening news.

**Cluster 2**

‘London’: create a viral video about modern London for a charity called Crisis London.

‘Storm on the Island’: create a poem film for an exhibition at the Museum of Irish Culture.

‘Poppies’: create a Poppy Appeal advertising film for the Royal British Legion.

Media resources can be accessed from the ‘Media Library’ tab in the contents listing of the Cambridge Elevate-enhanced Edition of the Poetry Student Book, or they can be accessed directly from the page as you are reading through the units onscreen. This offers you teaching options: you can ask students to listen to clips at home or use them to inspire classroom discussion.

You might choose to set Textplorations either as group activities or homework projects.

Overall, the series aims to provide a blended resource in which print books, digital editions, video and audio combine to give a 21st-century flavour to English Literature teaching and learning.
The Cambridge Elevate-enhanced Edition of the Poetry Student Book includes built-in assessment support, ‘Assess to Progress’. For meeting the challenge of terminal GCSE exams and the requirement to report students’ progress, in the absence of controlled assessment and National Curriculum levels to act as benchmarks, this Assess to Progress can help you with:

- planning – using pre-defined assessments straight from the student books
- marking – unpacking the assessment objectives into key skills
- AfL – enabling students to see criteria against which they are assessed
- reporting – measuring and demonstrating students’ progress over time.

Unpacking the assessment objectives

At the heart of this assessment support are Ofqual’s assessment objectives (AOs), a safe benchmark against which to measure students’ progress since these AOs are what students will be tested on in their final exams. We have worked with experienced examiners and teachers to unpack these assessment objectives – to break each one down into a key criterion or skill against which a student can be assessed when they complete a piece of work. For example, AO1 for GCSE English Literature is:

Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to:

- maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response
- use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.

We have broken this down into three skills:

- response to text and activity
- comparison of texts
- use of references.

For each assessment opportunity on Cambridge Elevate we have identified all the different assessment criteria from the range of GCSE English Literature AOs – this could be all of the three criteria above for AO1 (or anything up to three), as well as other criteria we have broken down from any of the other AOs.

Planning

All assessment opportunities on Cambridge Elevate are taken directly from the Poetry Student Book. These assessment opportunities comprise Cluster 1 Unit 16 poem pairs 1, 2 and 3; Cluster 2 Unit 16 poem pairs 1, 2 and 3; Unseen poetry – improve your response: poem pair 4 (questions 1 and 2), and the questions in the ‘Preparing for your exam’ section of the book.

You can add a note to each assignment for your students with any tips or information for completing it. When your students open the link to the assignment on Cambridge Elevate they will see this note, as well as the question/s from the Student Book and the assessment criteria they will be marked against.

Students can write their responses to questions and submit them on Cambridge Elevate. Students can also link to external files, for example, on Google Drive, Dropbox or the school’s VLE.

Marking

For each student book assessment opportunity on Cambridge Elevate, we have identified the assessment criteria (see above) that the activity will be assessed against. Each of these criteria is measured in a five-stage scale:

- **Stage 5**: Sophisticated and independent
- **Stage 4**: Assured and developed
- **Stage 3**: Secure and explained
- **Stage 2**: Aware and supported
- **Stage 1**: Simple

To help you determine which stage your student is at for each assessment criteria, we include a guidance statement. This brief statement outlines, in general terms, what you could expect of a student’s performance of a particular skill at each of stages 1 to 5.
For selected student book assessment opportunities we also include example answers with examiner-style comments, at each of stages 1 to 5. Used in addition to the guidance statements for the assessment criteria, these can help you benchmark your student’s performance. For the Poetry Student Book, the assessment opportunities that include example answers are Cluster 1 Unit 16 poem pairs 1, 2 and 3; Cluster 2 Unit 16 poem pairs 1, 2 and 3; and Unseen poetry – improve your response: poem pair 4 (questions 1 and 2).

We also include the facility for you to enter an overall score for each student’s work. Cambridge Elevate will not automatically calculate this overall score – this is for you to determine based on all the assessment criteria scores (stages 1 to 5) you have assigned, your reading of example answers where these are included, and knowledge of your students.

Finally, in the ‘My response’ tab, you can include a feedback note to each of your students, accompanying the scores you have assigned them.

Assessment for Learning

We provide support for Assessment for Learning (AfL) by allowing your students to see the unpacked assessment objective criteria for themselves, and the guidance statements for stages 1 to 5, each time they undertake a student book assessment activity on Cambridge Elevate. This way, students can see the criteria against which they will be assessed, and how they can perform well, while completing their activity.

When students have submitted their work and you have marked it, they can also see – where included – example answers at stages 1 to 5 to help them understand how to improve their work and develop their skills. Using the ‘Improvement note’ tab, students can make notes to help with their consolidation and revision (for example, what they have done well and how they could improve), taking responsibility for their own learning.

Reporting

All your students’ scores – assessment objective criteria scores and overall percentage scores – can be exported for download (for example, into an Excel spreadsheet) or for upload (for example, to your VLE).

Scores can be exported both by individual student and by class; they can also be exported by activity or for activities over a period of time which you set.

This offers you flexibility of reporting – for your senior management team, for parents, for Ofsted and for Progress 8.

Watch the video walkthrough online https://vimeo.com/126470260
Comparison grids

These downloadable comparison grids are available both fully filled in with suggested comparison topics and blank for you and your students to use. Throughout this Teacher’s Resource you will find suggested activities for these comparison grids, but you may also wish to use the full versions for longer-term reference.

You may find these particularly useful when you reach ‘Unit 16: Comparing poems’ in your chosen cluster.

Please note that these comparison grids are large and designed to be printed in A3 size.

In this Teacher’s Resource:

- **Handout**: Comparison grid: Cluster 1
- **Handout**: Comparison grid: Cluster 1 (blank)
- **Handout**: Comparison grid: Cluster 2
- **Handout**: Comparison grid: Cluster 2 (blank)
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit students should:

• be able to describe the formal features of the poem and identify them
• understand the context of the poem, and the ways in which it creates a narrative voice
• be able to explain how Byron uses the conventions of romantic poetry to reproach his lover
• be able to analyse how Byron’s use of language, form and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU

The Student Book suggests that you might use social media as a comparison for the way in which Byron highlights his lover’s infidelity publicly, though without naming her. Use the starter questions here as a way of getting students to discuss how social media may have changed the ways in which we express our feelings. For example, is it now acceptable to break up with someone by text? On twitter? By email? Byron, of course, does not name Lady Frances. Elicit whether this is a more effective way of punishing her than naming her would be.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions

3 Read through the poem as a class and tease out the key ideas. For example, you could ask students to cover the poem and then try to list five things that they remember about it. A good way of doing this is to allow students to ‘relay race’, with small groups working together to take turns to run and look at a copy of the poem, then come back to add a piece of information to the group’s tally.

Students should note that the lovers had a secret relationship, that they parted long ago but presumably vowed to remain faithful, that his lover is now known to be ‘light’, perhaps promiscuous, certainly flirtatious and frivolous. Her reputation is not good, and people are talking about her, something that is painful to him, as painful as a ‘knell’ (bell signalling a death) would be. Part of his suffering is regret – he wishes that he had not cared for her, and is perhaps ashamed of the relationship. He wonders how he would feel if he were now to see her again.

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings

1 The table in the Student Book will encourage students to focus on the key areas of the poem’s ‘story’. Once they are clear on this, it is important that students move beyond it to learn how to select quotations (a key exam skill) and analyse how the story is told.

LEARNING CHECKPOINT

The ‘Reading between the lines...’ exercise is designed to ensure that students go beyond storytelling. Once they are comfortable with this idea, try to make sure that they consolidate it by making up their own phrases to replace the expression ‘reading between the lines’.

Key idea

Differentiation

When annotating the poem, ask less confident students to try and find words and phrases that are repeated. Ask them to explain why these words and phrases are important for the poem. You could also ask them to pick out all the rhyming words and try to explain why they might be words that Byron would want to stress. For example, the pairing of ‘knew thee’ and ‘rue thee’, where the strong rhyme between ‘knew’ and ‘rue’ links together the idea of knowledge and regret, while the repeated ‘thee’ emphasises how the woman is still the same, but his experience of her has changed through his emotional turmoil.

Differentiation

Ask more confident students to think about why Byron does not consider the point of view of his lover, instead simply believing all the bad things that he is hearing about her. What other inferences could you make about their relationship from the evidence in the poem? How would these support the key idea or disagree with it?
It is possible to argue that Byron’s view of women is misogynistic, and that he expects women to behave in a way that he would not consider for himself (after all, he led quite a wild life, yet he wants his lover to have a spotless reputation). Ask students to debate this idea. This also makes for a good connection with ‘My Last Duchess’.

Show students the deleted final stanza of the poem, which clarifies the position of the poet. Do they think that it adds to or detracts from the poem as it stands?

Then fare thee well Fanny*,

Thus doubly undone,

Thou frail to the many,
And false to one.

Thou art past all recalling,
e’en would I recall
For the woman once fallen
forever must fall.

* a shortening of the name Frances

Show your skills

Use this section to focus students on rhyme and metre, and encourage them to bring their comments about metre into their writing. Model for students how to make a) simple statements, then b) one word comments, then c) detailed inferences to develop their ideas in a more sophisticated way, for example:

‘The dew of the morning / Sunk chill on my brow – / It felt like the warning / Of what I feel now.’

a) This quotation supports the idea that the first parting of the lovers foreshadowed the end of their relationship.

b) The use of the word ‘sunk’ implies that the dew is an ominous sign rather than something beautiful and fresh.

c) The heavily stressed rhyme between ‘morning’ and ‘warning’ implies how the first parting foreshadowed the later one. The pun between ‘morning’ and ‘mourning’ which would exist when the poem was spoken also emphasises this connection and may further imply that the ‘dew’ he is speaking of is a metaphor for their tears.

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

A response to the question might start like the example below.

Suggested model

Although this poem initially seems to have a fairly light and quick-moving metre, the short lines and frequent repetitions seem to suggest the ways in which the speaker is hesitant and hurt. The short phrases ‘half broken-hearted’ and ‘colder thy kiss’ suggest the tone of someone who is almost overwhelmed by emotion and unable to express himself in longer or more fluent sentences.

Byron uses simple language that immediately suggests the theme of the poem, the rhyme between ‘tears’ and ‘years’, for instance, concisely expressing the link between the two ideas of length of parting and sorrow.

GETTING CREATIVE

Differentiation

For more confident students, you could expand the suggestion of using words from the poem itself to rewrite it from the women’s point of view by encouraging them to write a version in the same metre but one that changes the poem so as to tell it from her point of view.

Differentiation

For less confident students, you could ask them to write the ideas expressed by the poem in a more modern form, for example, as a series of Facebook status updates, or as an email.

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:
Audio: A reading of ‘When We Two Parted’

In this Teacher’s Resource:
Link: A detailed and engaging commentary on the poem can be found at the Poemshape website
Link: A useful short biography of Byron is available at the Poets website
2 Love’s Philosophy

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the formal features of the poem and identify them
• understand the context of the poem, and the ways in which it creates a narrative voice
• be able to explain how Shelley uses the device of comparison to persuade his lover
• be able to analyse how Shelley’s use of language, form and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU
Start by writing the title of the poem on the board. Ask students what ‘philosophy’ suggests. How does it compare with ‘love’? Are these two ideas contrasting? Ask students to write words which they associate with love and words which they associate with philosophy on different coloured sticky notes. Then draw two interlocking circles on the board and ask students to put their words into the relevant circle. Are there any words that would fit in both? These should go in the middle area created where the circles interlock, so as to create a Venn diagram showing how the associations of both words connect.

The Student Book suggests asking students how seriously they read the poem on a first look. Is their attitude to it affected by the title? Has it raised their expectations so that the poem itself seems more frivolous by comparison?

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS
First impressions
1 a The last lines of each verse are rhetorical questions. Make sure that students understand what a rhetorical question is. It is not (as is often thought) a question that does not need an answer; it is more precisely a question where the answer is implied by the way in which the question is asked.
1 b Line 8, at the end of the first verse, introduces the idea of the spirits of the two lovers ‘mingling’—a vague and romantic idea that seems to focus on their affection for each other, while line 16 is directly addressing the lover, asking her if all of nature is worthwhile if she refuses to kiss him. The very direct idea of the kiss here is in contrast to the much more formless ‘mingling’ of spirits in the first verse.

1 c These short lines create an abrupt impression, almost demanding an answer.

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings
1–3 These activities are designed to lead students towards close analysis of language. Looking closely at the natural features in the poems might lead students to list fountains, rivers, oceans, winds, mountains and other natural features, and perhaps to focus on the active verbs used to describe their movements, such as ‘mingle’, ‘mix’ and ‘meet’. Apart from noting the echoes here, they might notice that these are unusual verbs to associate with inanimate natural features such as mountains, and that they might more normally be associated with people.

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE
Key idea

Differentiation
Use the table in this section of the Student Book to help less confident students find evidence, and to model how the ideas in the poem might be criticised.

Ask students to find the parts of the poem that personify natural elements, for instance the ‘emotion’ of the winds or the ‘sister-flower’. How does this personification add to the force of Shelley’s argument?

Differentiation
Ask more confident students to think about how the argument of the poem would be strengthened or weakened if Shelley did not use personification and hyperbole. What world-view does the personification imply? How does this world-view support the key idea or disagree with it?
It is possible to argue that there are many elements of nature that suggest the opposite argument; that the cruelty of the natural world could suggest that love is meaningless. Ask students to write a response to the poem, in verse or prose, that argues the opposing view. You could ask students to imagine that they are writing the woman’s reply to the poem, or a different poem altogether.

**LEARNING CHECKPOINT**

Ask students to do this activity in pairs, with one student putting across Shelley’s argument, and the other opposing it. Alternatively, ask students to write down the arguments and counter-arguments in a grid to make sure that they have opposing points for each point raised, before writing their response out as a paragraph using linking comparative keywords such as ‘however’, ‘on the other hand’, ‘despite this’, and so on.

**Show your skills**

Model for students how to annotate a response. You could project the example in the Student Book on the whiteboard and call up four students to each focus on one aspect.

Then ask students to work in groups of four, developing their skills on the paragraph that they developed in the Learning checkpoint activity. Have students mark each other’s responses in the same way as you marked up the example on the board. There are two ways to do this: either you can ask each student to become an ‘expert’ on one aspect of marking, and mark all the responses in that group for that one aspect; or else you can ask each student to go through the criteria one by one, as they swap pieces, so that they mark each piece (including their own) for a different criterion. Having students read four examples rather than one is the key; this will focus them on the skills rather than on the individual example.

**GETTING IT INTO WRITING**

**Comparing poems**

This is a good opportunity to introduce the Comparison grid. Ask students to work either with blank grids or with grids where you have supplied some of the answers, depending on their level of ability. Have students maintain them as they work through the poems. To vary and/or differentiate this routine activity, you can add in answers to help students, or offer possible answers and ask students to decide which poems they would fit.

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**GETTING CREATIVE**

**Personification**

**Extension**

**Differentiation**

For less confident students, you could ask them to draw sketches to illustrate the ideas that they have written down in order to further bring out the nature of the personification.

**CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES**

**In the Student Book:**

Audio: A reading of ‘Love’s Philosophy’

**In this Teacher’s Resource:**

Link: A reading of the poem and a brief commentary can be found at the British Library website

Link: A useful background, a brief biography and a short bibliography of Shelley can be found at the Poets website
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the features of a dramatic monologue and identify them
• understand the story of the poem, and the ways in which it creates a narrative voice for the persona (which is not that of the poet)
• be able to explain how Browning uses the dramatic monologue form to create irony
• be able to analyse how Browning’s use of language, form and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU
As the Student Book suggests, use a recent news story in order to engage students in a discussion about why we are intrigued and fascinated by gruesome stories. However, take care about cultural sensitivities, safeguarding elements, and be sensitive to recent bereavements, for example. If you prefer, you could use a scenario from history that is gruesome and shocking.

Alternatively, introduce students to the idea of the poem’s original ‘framing’ as part of a pair entitled ‘Madhouse Cells’ and explain that people in Browning’s time and earlier used to visit madhouses in order to be entertained by the antics of the lunatics. Ask students to discuss why they would have wanted to do this. You could use statements a–f in the Student Book to help them explore this idea.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions
Ask students to put the events in order, to ensure they have the poem’s story clear in their minds. You could try storyboarding it on the whiteboard, using ‘talk for writing’ techniques, where you illustrate each section of the story with a brief but memorable symbol. Using a symbol (stick figures work well) as you talk helps students to remember more readily. For instance, you might draw trees with wavy lines to indicate wind, a little house to symbolise a cottage and so on.

The story:
• The lover waits for Porphyria in the cottage, knowing that she is at a party and wondering if she will come to see him.
• She arrives and lights a fire, cheers him up, and tells him that she loves him. He is delighted, as he is uncertain of her commitment to him.
• He decides to kill her at this perfect moment so that she can never change her mind.
• Although the poem is spoken from his madhouse cell – in his mind he is still sitting there, convinced that he did the right thing as he has seen no intervention from God. In fact he is, of course, in a cell, and does not realise his own situation.

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings

1 and 2 There are different interpretations of this poem, and different ideas have been put forward about Porphyria’s background. For instance, one reading suggests that she is a young unmarried girl, and that the ‘vainer ties’ she struggles to leave are those of her family, who would disapprove of her marrying a relatively poor man who lives in a cottage. She is ‘too weak’ to ‘give herself’ because she is not adventurous or brave enough to trust her lover’s integrity. The clue here is in her name: Porphyria means purple, a colour associated with nobility. Other readings suggest that she is in fact a married woman, and that this is an adulterous affair. In these readings, Porphyria would have already ‘given’ herself to her lover, but not ‘for ever’. Here, her failure to leave her husband would be the key element of her ‘struggle’.

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE
Ask students how the two different scenarios they considered in the previous section might affect their reading of the poem. Do they increase or decrease our sympathy for the murderer? As the Student Book suggests, there are many other interpretations to be found on the internet. Encourage students to use different ways into the poem as a springboard for their own discussions.

Key idea
**Differentiation**

Ask less confident students to imagine that they are defending the narrator of the poem, who is accused of murder. What evidence in the poem suggests that he sincerely loved Porphyria and believed that he was doing the right thing for her?

Ask students to highlight the words that suggest Porphyria’s love for the narrator. How do these words help to back up their argument?

**Differentiation**

The poem suggests that women ought to behave in a certain way, and that Porphyria has breached these norms. As a result the narrator is suspicious that she may not be trusted – even though he has encouraged her to visit him. Ask more confident students to read between the lines: can they decode the narrator’s true attitude towards women? For instance, when he calls Porphyria ‘weak’ what might this imply? How does this relate to the key idea?

It is possible to argue that Porphyria’s own reckless behaviour has brought about her murder. Imagine that you are defending the murderer and wish to take this line of argument. What about Porphyria’s behaviour suggests that she has acted improperly? To help students with this, you may need to give them some information about Victorian social norms, and the significance, for instance, of unbound hair as a sexual gesture.

**GETTING IT INTO WRITING**

**Comparing poems**

Ask students to develop their work on the Comparison grids, using the suggestions in this section to help model their comments. Ask students to work with blank grids if you are confident about their knowledge, or differentiate by offering them grids where you have provided some of the answers, depending on their level of ability. Have them maintain these grids as records of their studies as you work through the poems.

**Your response**

**Extension**

**CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES**

**In the Student Book:**

Audio: A reading of ‘Porphyria’s Lover’

**In this Teacher’s Resource:**

Link: A brief guide to the poem can be found at Shmoop

Link: A useful podcast about the poem produced by the University of Glasgow can be found on YouTube by searching for ‘Porphyria’s Lover University of Glasgow’, or downloaded free from iTunes (search ‘poetry podcasts’)

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**LEARNING CHECKPOINT**

Ask students to complete this activity twice, each time producing a different reading of the poem. Encourage them to think about how the speaker would interpret his actions, and contrast this with how the people who found him with Porphyria’s corpse might have felt.

**Show your skills**

Model for students how to annotate a response. You could project the example in the Student Book on the whiteboard and call up four students to each focus on one aspect.

**Extension**
At the end of the unit students should:

• be able to describe the features of a sonnet and identify them
• understand the story of the poem, and its purpose
• be able to explain how Barrett Browning uses the form of the sonnet to enhance her ideas
• be able to analyse how Barrett Browning’s use of language, form and structure enhances her purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU

The Student Book suggests that some songs might be linked to the poem’s ‘transparent expression of love’. You could draw students’ attention to the ideas of independence in the poem and see if they can find songs that match with this idea.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions
Make sure that students have the syntax of the poem clear in their minds so that they understand what Barrett Browning is saying in the poem.

Differentiation
Another way into this poem is to play the Simon and Garfunkel song ‘El Condor Pasa’ and ask students if they would rather be:

• a sparrow or a snail
• a hammer or a nail
• a forest or a street
• a tree or the ivy that grows on it.

This will get them to think about the choices that the metaphor may represent.

LEARNING CHECKPOINT

Try asking students to do this exercise in pairs, with one student arguing that the metaphor is effective and one arguing that it is not. Compare arguments and versions. Which view is easier and more convincing to write about?

Differentiation
You could ask more confident students to compare this sonnet to another sonnet, for example, ‘Ozymandias’ in Cluster 2, in order to bring out the formal features of the poem.

1 In Renaissance times, sonnets were often presented as poems which offered the reader a question or problem that was to be resolved by the end of the sonnet. As the Student Book outlines, typically this question might be posed in the first eight lines (octet) and resolved in the final six lines (sestet). Ask students to divide up the sonnet into two sections. What possible divisions might there be? Do they agree with the traditional octet/sestet division, with the ‘turn’ or volta between them?

2 The Student Book suggests one implicit meaning of the poem might be a sexual one. What other implications can students find in the image of the vine and the tree? What do they think it might say about the relationship between the lovers? Is it positive that Barratt Browning rejects this image? Use the table in this section of the Student Book to help students to look closely at the implications of language choice here.
**Key idea**

**Differentiation**

Ask less confident students to consider the central metaphor of the vines. How does this image suggest that the speaker is dependent on her husband? How does it suggest that these thoughts are not really good for their relationship? Then ask them to highlight the words that describe the vines. How do these words help to back up their argument?

**Differentiation**

The poem suggests that it is possible to hide from the reality of a relationship with someone by thinking about them in a particular way. The image of the vine twining round a strong tree was a popular one in Victorian times to describe the proper relationships between men and women. Ask more confident students to read between the lines: can they try to decode the narrator’s true attitude towards women? Why does she want to destroy her thoughts about him in this way? How does this relate to the key idea?

It is possible to argue that the poem is actually asserting the importance of physical relationships over ideas. What in the poem might suggest this reading? To help students with this you may need to give them some information about Victorian social norms. An obvious link would be with Porphyria's lover, and the expectations of the lover in that poem. Would he have preferred Porphyria to be a clinging vine? Would he have preferred thoughts to actions?

**GETTING IT INTO WRITING**

**Comparing poems**

Ask students to develop their work in the Comparison grids, using the suggestions in this section to help model their comments. Ask them to work with blank grids or grids where you have already given them some suggested answers to model how to fill in comments, depending on their level of ability. Have them maintain the grids as you work through the poems.

**GETTING CREATIVE**

**Writing challenge**

The Student Book asks students to write Robert Browning's response to Elizabeth.

**Differentiation**

More confident students could attempt this in the form of a sonnet to consolidate their understanding of the form. The Student Book provides two starting lines that could be used for this.

**Differentiation**

Less confident students could write a letter from Elizabeth to Robert telling him her feelings about his poem 'Porphyria's Lover' and explaining how her sonnet is a response to his ideas. It could start like this:

*Dearest Robert,*

*Your poem 'Porphyria's Lover' has fascinated me and made me wonder what it is that men really want of women. Do you really all want us to be clinging vines who do whatever you say?*

**Extension**

**CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES**

**In the Student Book:**

*Audio:* A reading of ‘Sonnet 29 – 'I think of thee!'

**In this Teacher’s Resource:**

*Link:* A biography of Elizabeth Barrett Browning with an explanation of how the sonnets came to be written can be found at the Victorian Web

*Link:* A reading of the complete *Sonnets from the Portuguese* and a film of Dame Judi Dench reading the famous Sonnet 43 – ‘How do I love thee', can both be found on YouTube on the Elizabeth Barrett Browning channel

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit students should:

- be able to describe the features of the poem that have led Hardy to give it the title ‘Neutral tones’
- understand the story of the poem, and its purpose
- be able to explain how Hardy uses the form of the poem to enhance his ideas
- be able to analyse how Hardy’s use of language, form and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
- be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
- be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU

The Student Book suggests using the poem as a starting point for students to think about their own relationships and about the loss of friendship. Another good way of introducing the theme is to ask students to think about what ‘neutral tones’ means. Then provide a range of photographs showing facial expressions (a Google-image search for ‘emotions’ is helpful here) together with a similar range of colour cards, and ask students which colour they would associate with each picture and why. This will get them to think about the choices that the metaphor may represent.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

As the Student Book points out, gaps are left in the poem which the reader has to fill in. You could ask students to create a storyboard for the poem using the facts, deductions and suggested dialogue that they have created.

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings

The poem describes a conversation, but does not give details about it. One of the things that we know the couple discussed was ‘which lost the more by our love’ – in other words, which of the two people involved in the relationship came out of it worse? Hardy characterises these words as ‘playing’ between the two of them, which suggests that they are toying with each other. Ask students if there are any other situations in which we might compete with someone to show who did worse rather than who did better.

Throughout the poem Hardy uses some powerful oppositions, for example, the juxtaposition of ‘starving sod’ where the ‘sod’ or earth is usually seen as something that provides abundance rather than something starving. Ask students to think about how these oppositions add to the power of the poem. Why might the woman have a ‘grin of bitterness’ for instance? The oxymoron here could suggest how she might have opposing or conflicted feelings or could suggest that she is taking some pleasure in the speaker’s pain.

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analysing language, form and structure

The poem seems to match up positives and negatives. Encourage students to find examples such as ‘tedious riddles’, ‘smile … deadest’, ‘alive enough … to die’, ‘grin of bitterness’, ‘God-crust sun’ to use in their analysis of the poem’s effect.

LEARNING CHECKPOINT

The use of metaphor in this poem could compare well to the extended metaphor in ‘Sonnet 29’. Ask students to make comparisons between these two poems as they are writing their sentences about word choice.

Show your skills

Key idea

Differentiation

Ask less confident students to pick out some examples of Hardy’s use of alliteration and assonance in the poem. How does this use of sound seem to reinforce the central theme of the poem?

Ask students to highlight all the negative words in the poem, then, in a different colour, all the positive words. What is the relationship between the two groups of words?

Differentiation

For more confident students, point out that the poem suggests Hardy has learned from his experience and that he is reminded of it when he has other ‘keen lessons that love deceives’. Is he referring here to his experience of betrayal by others, or of his experience in betraying? In other words, has his experience with the woman distorted his future relationships?
It is possible to suggest that the woman’s face comes back to the speaker either when he mistreats other women, or when he is mistreated by other women. Ask students to read between the lines, and try to decode the narrator’s true attitude towards this experience. How does this relate to the key idea?

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

Comparing poems
Ask students to complete the Comparison grid for this poem, and then, as the Student Book suggests, a closer comparison can be made between this poem and ‘When We Two Parted’.

Ask students to write a comparison between the state of mind of both Hardy and Byron. Which man has coped better with the experience of lost love, in their opinion? What evidence from the poems can they bring to support their ideas?

Your response

Extension

Extension

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:
Audio: A reading of ‘Neutral Tones’
Textplorations: Exploring the poem further

In this Teacher’s Resource:
Link: A helpful resource for this and other Hardy poems is the Hardy Society website
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit students should:

• be able to describe the features of the poem that might lead us to describe it as a dramatic monologue
• understand the story of the poem, and its purpose
• be able to explain how Mew uses the form of the poem to enhance her ideas
• be able to analyse how Mew’s use of language, form and structure enhances her purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU

The poem suggests that the farmer ‘chose’ his wife, but says little about her choice. You could use this as a starting point to discuss the idea of arranged marriages, and society’s ideas about marriage in Victorian times. Ask students how important they feel it is to choose the right partner. Do you need to be in love to start with, or will love follow? Is it important to marry someone of your own age, or culture? What are the difficulties in a relationship that is not founded on traditional courtship, where a man and woman get to know each other gradually and are able to choose whether or not to continue the relationship depending on what they discover about each other’s personality?

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions

Extension

Differentiation

For more confident students, it might be worth discussing the difference in gender stereotypes in the following respect: negative words for women focus on female animals, but the equivalent male animals seem to represent positive or neutral connotations for men, for example, ‘bitch’ vs ‘dog’ ‘cow’ vs ‘bull’ and ‘mare’ vs ‘stallion’.

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings

1 and 2 Before thinking about the context of Mew’s life, ask students to theorise about the writer of the poem. Do they think that she was married or unmarried? Did she live in the country or a town? Then read through the biographical information in the Contexts box in the Student Book. How much does the poet’s life help us when it comes to understanding the poem? Students might consider whether Mew’s experience of mental illness would have led her to be more or less sympathetic to the ‘bride’. Perhaps she would feel that she should not be married at all – as Mew was not – because she was not able to cope with marriage. Alternatively, she might have felt that the farmer’s treatment was something that drove his wife mad. Or could she be saying that what is perceived to be ‘normal’ in terms of marriage is something that is actually brutal, even if it is condoned by society?

Offer students the following information about Victorian laws concerning marriage:

By marriage the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during her marriage, or at least is incorporated or consolidated into that of her husband, under whose wing, protection and cover, she performs everything.


How does this help us interpret the poem? It might be thought, for example, that the farmer is simply considering his serious responsibility for his wife when he goes out to capture her after she has run away, and is worrying about her wellbeing. Or is he thinking of her as being as much a part of him as a limb – something that has no independence – and so not thinking of her feelings at all?
PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analysing language, form and structure

1 and 2 The use of images to describe the bride in the poem could compare well to the use of images in ‘Sonnet 29’. Ask students to make comparisons between these two poems as they are writing their sentences about word choice.

LEARNING CHECKPOINT

Ensure that when students are working on finding out details about the farmer and his bride that they look carefully at the underlying meaning of the words used. For example, when the farmer describes the bride as a ‘fay’ or fairy, is he suggesting that she is in some way less than human? What might that mean about her power over him, or conversely, what might it say about what he can do to her?

Similarly, encourage them to consider different possible interpretations for the farmer’s behaviour. For example, his chasing of his bride with lanterns might suggest that he is worried about her safety, or that he is determined not to let her escape him. Which interpretation is more convincing?

Show your skills

Key idea

Differentiation

For more confident students, point out that the farmer often uses ‘we’ rather than ‘I’ to describe what he has done for his wife. Ask them how important they think this sense of unified action or community is to the farmer. What in the poem might suggest that the wife is isolated? The imagery that the farmer uses to describe the change of seasons also suggests that now winter is coming, his bride should sleep with him again. How does this idea of the natural order relate to the key idea? For example, the marriage is at harvest time, suggesting fruitfulness, but it is rushed. The wintertime reflects the farmer’s frustration, but also brings forward the idea of children at Christmas (the ‘other in the house’ that the farmer craves). The girl is seen as spring-like (compared to the ‘first wild violets’) with regard to herself alone, suggesting that she might ‘bloom’ if given time and peace.

Point out also, that the farmer can be seen in different ways: either he is brutal, has scared his wife and locked her up, and is now threatening to invade her hiding-place in the attic, or else he is loving and sad, faced with the evidence of his wife’s mental instability. Ask students to decide which reading they favour, and what evidence there is for each.

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

Comparing poems

What does this poem suggest about the nature of love and relationships between men and women? The example analysis given in the Student Book could be used as a starting point for a longer response to this question. Ask students to use their detailed notes from the Learning checkpoint activity on what the poem tells us about the farmer, to help them begin their response.

Have students complete the Comparison grid for this poem. They should be starting to develop a keener sense of how the poems in this cluster focus on certain key aspects of relationships between men and women.

GETTING CREATIVE

Extension

Differentiation

Ask less confident students to identify the uses of natural imagery to describe the bride. For each image, ask them to write down a sentence or two explaining its connotations, and evaluate if these are positive or negative. Do these change throughout the poem? For example, they might identify how, to begin with, she is described as a ‘hare’ running swiftly and powerfully, but as the poem goes on she becomes a ‘mouse’ and a ‘leveret’ (baby hare), suggesting that she is losing her power.

Ask students to highlight all the alliteration that they can find in the poem. What effect does this poetic device have on the tone of the farmer’s voice, and when is it used?
CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:

Link: A biography of Charlotte Mew can be found on the Poetry Foundation website

Audio: A reading of ‘The Farmer’s Bride’

In this Teacher’s Resource:

Link: Information about Mew’s life and works can be found at the Studymore website

Link: An interesting and individual reading of the poem stanza by stanza can be found at the Tusitala website

Link: An interesting article on Mew, ‘Mary Magdalene and the Bride’, can be found at the Poetry Magazines website
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit students should:

• be able to describe the theme and topic of the poem
• understand the story of the poem, and its purpose
• be able to explain how Day-Lewis uses the form of the poem to enhance his ideas
• be able to analyse how Day-Lewis’s use of language, form and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU

1 Ask students to remember their first day at school or, if they can’t, their earliest memory. Ask them to think about why this memory is significant. What has made it stick in their minds?

As a good pre-reading homework activity for this poem, ask students to bring in a picture of themselves when they were young – this can really loosen up discussion. School photos are good, but holiday snaps can be just as useful.

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

1 and 2 You could ask students to use the summaries they produce for these activities to create a storyboard, perhaps using images that they have brought in from home. Ask them to investigate the images in their storyboards, for example, what does it mean to be a satellite wrenched from its orbit? What is the child circling before he moves away into an independent life?

The poet uses three striking images to describe the child: a satellite wrenched from its orbit; a half-fledged bird in a wilderness; and a winged seed (like a sycamore seed) drifting from a tree. Ask students to find images for each simile on the internet. How do these images help us to explore the poet’s feelings?

Learning checkpoint

To enhance this activity, ask students to attach their comments to quotations that reinforce their ideas. Rather than using the simplistic PEE (Point, Example, Explanation) formula, one way of doing this effectively is to model for students the mnemonic SPEED: Signpost, Point, Example, Explanation, Discussion. This forces students to make a point that is separate from a piece of signposting, and encourages them to develop their explanation into a discussion, investigating implied meanings, for example:

Signpost: In the second stanza
Point: the poet describes his son as a bird about to fly the nest.
Example: The word ‘half-fledged’ suggests how vulnerable the child is,
Explanation: the emphasis on ‘half’ suggesting how incompletely prepared he is for independence, like a bird without all its feathers, and how he might therefore fail.
Discussion: Furthermore, the mention of the ‘wilderness’ that awaits suggests how hostile the world could be for the child.

This would become:

In the second stanza, the poet describes his son as a bird about to fly the nest. The word ‘half-fledged’ suggests how vulnerable the child is, the emphasis on ‘half’ suggesting how incompletely prepared he is for independence, like a bird without all its feathers, and how he might therefore fail. Furthermore, the mention of the ‘wilderness’ that awaits suggests how hostile the world could be for the child.

Show your skills

Key idea

Differentiation

Ask less confident students to examine closely the three central images in the poem: the satellite, the bird, and the seed. For each image ask them to write down a sentence or two explaining its connotations, then evaluate which of the three images is the most powerful, and why.
Ask students to highlight all the words that they can find in the poem that suggest the child is uncertain about leaving his father and going to school. How do these words relate to the images that they have explored?

Differentiation
Ask more confident students to look closely at stanza 3 of the poem. What is Day-Lewis trying to say in the final lines of this stanza? Is his attempt to make this experience more widely significant successful? How does this stanza of the poem relate to the key idea?

Is the ‘walking away’ of the title and the final stanza the action of the son or the father? How do we know? Does it make a difference?

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

Comparing poems
Ask students to consider what this poem suggests about the nature of love. So far, the poems they have looked at have been about adult love and relationships. How does this poem fit into this cluster? Are a parent’s feelings comparable to the strength of feeling you might feel for a lover or are they completely different things?

The examples of analysis given in the Student Book could be used as a starting point for a longer response to this question. Ask students to use their detailed notes from the Learning checkpoint and their SPEED paragraphs to help them begin their response.

Have students complete the Comparison grid for this poem. This poem should challenge students trying to find links between the poems.

Differentiation
Ask less confident students to consider how this poem about parents and children might reflect other poems about relationships between partners. For example, the idea of parting and separation is a powerful link.

Your response

Extension

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES
In the Student Book:
Audio: A reading of ‘Walking Away’

In this Teacher’s Resource:
Link: An article from The Daily Telegraph about Sean Day-Lewis provides interesting additional background to the poem
Link: The Cecil Day-Lewis website provides information about Day-Lewis’s life and includes some critical articles as well as a reading of the poem by Day-Lewis’s wife, the actress Jill Balcon
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the theme and topic of the poem
• understand the story of the poem, and its purpose
• be able to explain how Dooley uses the form of the poem to enhance her ideas
• be able to analyse how Dooley’s use of language, form and structure enhances her purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU
Ask students to remember the last time that they sent or received a letter. Then ask them to remember the last time they sent or received a text. Briefly discuss the differences between the two. Are the people they correspond with via letters different from the people they correspond with via texts?

What is the difference in effort between an electronic communication, such as a text, and a letter? What about getting birthday cards or presents electronically or by post?

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS
First impressions

2 The mention of ‘romance’ may have given students the idea that the relationship is one between lovers – why is this? Ask them to analyse the implications of these words, and the context that they imply of expectation and familiarity.

What impels the letters from Yorkshire? Ask students to look at the natural details listed in the letter. You might use a resource such as ‘nature notes’ from a newspaper to compare with the poem. What is the implied difference between a bare recording of natural events and the way in which the letter writer in the poem communicates?

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analysing language, form and structure

LEARNING CHECKPOINT
Point out for students the shift between ‘he’ and ‘you’ in the second stanza of the poem. Ask them to think about why there is this shift, and how it changes the tone of the poem. The move from the third person to the second suggests an immediate increase in intimacy. Suddenly, we have the impression that the poem changes from a descriptive, abstract piece – perhaps like the speaker’s journalism – to something deeply intimate. The subsequent addresses to ‘you’ then become like a part of a conversation on which the reader eavesdrops.

Show your skills

Key idea

Differentiation
For less confident students, provide the poem as prose, with the lines closed up so that it forms a continual piece of writing. Ask them if they can work out where the line-breaks should come. How can they tell and how does this affect how they read the poem?

Point out the enjambment in the poem (where the sense runs on from line to line). Ask students to consider why the poet chooses to do this rather than using end-stopped lines.

Differentiation
Ask more confident students to highlight all the verbs they can find in the poem. How many of them are present participles (with an –ing ending) and what would be the difference if they were not? How does this use of verbs relate to the key idea?

What does the speaker in the poem offer to the letter writer? Do they communicate and, if so, how? The communication is partly through the poem itself because it offers an appreciation of the value of rural life and what it signifies. The poem assumes that the letter writer understands that they are equal, and this in itself is a tribute.
GETTING IT INTO WRITING

As an initial exercise, ask students to imagine that the poet has told them definitively that this poem is about her father writing to her. Now ask them to imagine that it is definitively about her lover. How would the different readings change the ways in which we read the poem? Ask them to find evidence for each view. Can the same evidence be used to support different readings?

Comparing poems

Have students complete the Comparison grid for this poem. This poem should allow students to consider how to broaden out links, as it connects to the idea of powerful emotions being about more than romantic relationships.

GETTING CREATIVE

Before students write one of the letters from Yorkshire, ask them to think about where the letters are being sent. What tone should they have?

Differentiation

Less confident students could simply rehearse the ideas from the poem, whereas more confident students could try to bring in further details that they think will sit well with the mood of the poem.

Extension

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:

Audio: A reading of ‘Letters from Yorkshire’

In this Teacher’s Resource:

Link: Dooley’s other poem ‘History’ can be found at the Poetry Station website

Link: A brief biography and bibliography of Dooley can be found at the British Council website

Link: An interview with Dooley can be found at the Scriptmania website
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the theme and topic of the poem
• understand the story of the poem, and its purpose
• be able to explain how Causley uses the form of the poem to enhance his ideas
• be able to analyse how Causley’s use of language, form and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem
GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU
1 A good resource to stimulate this activity is the weekly article ‘Snapshot’ in the ‘Family’ section of The Guardian newspaper. This presents an old photograph – a different one each week – which readers have sent in, with an accompanying explanation of why it is important.

Give students two or three of these short articles to look at, and then ask them to read through ‘Eden Rock’. How does it compare? Is the picture Causley creates like a photograph?

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS
First impressions
2 Encourage students to discuss the details of the poem. If we are to take a symbolic reading of the poem to be the best reading, then each detail may prove significant. What would the description of his mother’s hair suggest, for instance? Might it connote ripeness and fertility?

When students are annotating the poem, you could ask them to use the internet to find images that would support their annotations. How does this help with building up a picture of the poem?

4 When considering responses, start by encouraging students to think about why Causley might refer to something as ‘it’. What things do we not want to name directly? Why is it that, for example, we use euphemisms for things that interest us and affect us deeply, such as sex, war, or intense experiences such as death? Discuss with students the different euphemisms used for death on tombstones, such as ‘passed away’, ‘fell asleep’ and ‘rest in peace’. Why is it hard to talk directly about death? Is it because it is frightening, too real, or is it because it seems as though it might be bad luck to speak directly about it? This kind of discussion can then generate a more mature response to the question of why Causley refers to ‘it’ in the final stanza.

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE
Analysing language, form and structure
Key idea

Differentiation
Ask less confident students to look closely at the words in the poem that suggest patience. Now ask them to make these words sound more active, by replacing the original words, or adding words to change the meaning, for example, ‘impatiently’, ‘briskly’, ‘rushing’, ‘hurls’ or ‘hurriedly’. What difference does this make and why? Have students use these notes as a basis for writing up a detailed SPEED paragraph that analyses some of these words.

The description of Causley’s parents is in the present tense. Ask students to change all the verbs into the past tense, and then discuss in pairs what effect this has on the poem.

Differentiation
Ask more confident students to look closely at the enjambment in the poem (where the sense runs on from line to line). How does the effect caused by this relate to the key idea? For example, you might suggest that the enjambment creates a dream-like atmosphere, as though Causley is carried away by his own memories.

You might also look at points at which the enjambment begins. In lines 2 and 3, the enjambment becomes evident as the description continues on the next line, almost spilling over as the bare statement elicits a flood of memory that adds in crucial detail. Again, students should use these notes as a basis for writing up a detailed SPEED paragraph analysing the effect of enjambment at one point in the poem.
Why might the sky lighten like this (line 13)? Does this connect to the **key idea** and, if so, how? Is Causley hesitating about responding to his parents’ invitation and, if so, why might this be? Ask students to consider the symbolism of the number three, and the ways in which near-death experiences often feature a bright white light. Does line 13 suggest an intensity of light, or three light sources, perhaps? The number three could relate to the formal Christian idea of the Trinity, or just to the more secular ‘trinity’ of mother, father and pet dog, beckoning Causley onwards. Causley’s hesitation may stem from a sense that this is definitely his parents’ world – the world of their early marriage – and that if he enters this fantasy of heaven it will be to be infantilised; to take his place there not as an adult but as a child. Or it could be a natural hesitation in the face of death; to follow that bright white light, no matter how attractive, is a formidable decision to take.

**LEARNING CHECKPOINT**

Students might want to consider how these final lines suggest a less literal reading of the poem. The use of ‘it’ in the last line is deliberately ambivalent. Does ‘it’ represent memory? Death? Regret? Nostalgia? Life? Does the final statement suggest a regret, or happiness and relief? Why is the line separated from the rest of the stanza?

**GETTING IT INTO WRITING**

**Show your skills**

The example sentences provided in the table in the Student Book could be used as a starting point for a longer response. Ask students to use their detailed notes from the Learning checkpoint activity and their SPEED paragraphs from analysing the **key idea** as a starting point for writing a response to the final stanza of the poem.

**Comparing poems**

Have students complete the Comparison grid for this poem. This poem should allow students to find links with ‘Letters from Yorkshire’.

**Differentiation**

Ask more confident students to find links between ‘Eden Rock’ and one of the other poems that they have studied, encouraging them to widen their sense of comparison. They could use the examples in their Comparison grid to help them.

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**GETTING CREATIVE**

1. Ask students to use a photograph to help them with this activity. This could be brought in as a homework activity or ask them to re-use one of the ‘Snapshot’ photos from the Getting started activity and pretend that they are a different person in the photograph, writing the account from their perspective.

**Differentiation**

Less confident students could write the ideas conversationally, as suggested in the Student Book, whereas more confident students could try to imitate the form of Causley’s verse.

**CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES**

**In the Student Book:**

**Audio:** A reading of ‘Eden Rock’

**In this Teacher’s Resource:**

**Link:** A recording of Causley himself reading the poem can be found at the Poetry Archive website; he makes the comment about Eden Rock being imaginary at the end of the poem

**Link:** A review of Secret Destinations, the volume from which the poem is taken, can be found at the New Criterion website

**Link:** Dana Gioia’s interesting essay on Causley, originally published in The Dark Horse, can be found on her website
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the themes of the poem
• understand the context of the poem
• be able to explain how Heaney develops his ideas as the poem progresses
• be able to analyse how Heaney’s use of language, form and structure enhances his purpose
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU

Extension

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions

When students have completed activities 1–3 in Getting Started, introduce the idea of how childhood experiences can form our adult expectations, and of how powerful memory can be. Ask students to think of their earliest memories and share them with the class. Ask them what these memories have in common (they are likely to be linked to sensory impressions or to strong emotion, or both). How do these memories relate to Heaney’s poem?

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings

When students have completed activities 1–3, re-read the first three stanzas of the poem and discuss the impression that Heaney gives of his father. Which words suggest his father’s power and status? As you read further in the poem, ask students to pick out words and phrases which contrast the child with his father.

Key idea

Differentiation

Ask less confident students to find quotation evidence for the following ideas about the poem:

1. The poet’s father was a strong man.
2. The poet’s father was good at what he did.
3. The poet’s father was patient with his son.
4. The position of father and son has been reversed.

How do these ideas connect to the key idea? Which words in particular make a difference?

Differentiation

Ask more confident students to make other statements about Heaney and his relationship with his father. What evidence can they find to support their statements? How would this evidence support the key idea or disagree with it?

LEARNING CHECKPOINT

In the last lines of the poem, Heaney is playing on different senses of the word ‘stumbling’. Here, rather than the literal sense of the small child trying to walk across a ploughed field, we have the more metaphorical sense of the father making mistakes, trying to ‘follow’ or understand his child. Heaney now seems to find his father more of an encumbrance, or something that he can’t quite shake off even though he would like to. Does he feel that he has let his father down in some way? Or is it just that he has been a profound influence on him that he will never be rid of?

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

Encourage students to pay attention to language, structure and form in their responses, as follows:

Language: Ask students to select individual words and explore how they have a particular resonance. Model how to make a) simple statements, then b) one-word comments then c) detailed inferences, to develop their ideas in a more sophisticated way. For example, lines 2–3:

a) These lines show that the poet’s father was a strong man.

b) The size and shape of his father’s muscles are vividly described.
c) The lines imply that his father is powerful, a force of nature, like the wind that fills a ‘sail’. Additionally they may suggest how he is metaphorically ‘tied’ to the land.

**Structure:** Encourage students to think about how the poem is organised, and how the image of the father is first set up and then demolished by the few lines at the end of the poem where he seems to be transformed into the child. The use of *enjambment* in lines 22–23, for example, encourages this sense of *bathos*.

**Form:** Have students consider how the use of rhyme and half-rhyme, to create an informal feel to the quatrains and maintain the conversational tone, moves the poem forward. The formality and simplicity of the quatrains imitates the regular movement of the plough back and forth across the land, and the generally steady *tetrameter* metre imitates the beat of the horse’s hooves.

**GETTING CREATIVE**

Ask students to write their own version of the poem as suggested.

**Differentiation**

Ask less confident students to write the ideas of the poem out in prose, as a letter from Heaney to his father starting:

‘Dear Dad, I remember how when I was little I used to watch you working …’

**Differentiation**

More confident students could rewrite the ideas as though from Heaney’s father’s perspective. How would he feel about his son’s admiration and how he has changed? It could start like this:

‘Dear Son, I saw your poem “Follower” published in that magazine you sent us. It upset your mother for some reason, but immediately I felt …’

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**CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES**

**In the Student Book:**

- **Audio:** A reading of ‘Follower’

**In this Teacher’s Resource:**

- **Link:** A brief but helpful commentary on the poem can be found at the Universal Teacher website
- **Link:** A more detailed commentary of the poem can be found at the Sheer Poetry website
- **Link:** A short video exposition and commentary by John Hegley can be found at the BBC website
- **Link:** A variety of links to useful articles and biographical information about the poem can be found at the Literary History website
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the theme and topic of the poem
• understand the story of the poem, and its purpose
• be able to explain how Armitage uses the sonnet form to enhance his ideas
• be able to analyse how Armitage’s use of language, form and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU
1 Ask students what they call their parents: mother, mum, mummy? Do they call them different things at different times or in different contexts? The formality of Armitage’s use of ‘mother’ makes the poem seem more like a valediction – perhaps a farewell to his childhood and to that relationship. It also works better with the metre.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS
First impressions

3 Encourage students to discuss the four alternative readings in the Student Book, and ask them if they can come up with a fifth that describes the movement of the poem even more accurately.

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE
Analysing language, form and structure

Differentiation
Ask less confident students to put the words of the poem into categories by highlighting them in different colours (or writing them in groups), for example: words to do with measuring; words to do with space travel. What do they notice about the poet’s word choice? Which words can fit into more than one category? You could also usefully link this approach to the activities in the Poetry Scene Investigation section.

Differentiation
Ask more confident students to look closely at the metre of the poem. A normal sonnet would have ten syllables in each line, usually in iambic pentameter. Where would this pattern break the poem’s lines, and how would that change it? How does the effect caused by the poem’s metre relate to the key idea?

LEARNING CHECKPOINT
Ask students to write their paragraphs in response to the statement: ‘metaphor is a key part of Armitage’s writing – he extends it until it almost breaks under the pressure’. How effective do they think Armitage’s use of extended metaphor is in the poem?

GETTING IT INTO WRITING
Review the structure of SPEED paragraphs to help students consolidate the work that they have done on this poem. Remind them to anchor their points with ‘signposts’ and ‘points’ that clearly respond to the following question: How does Armitage portray his relationship with his mother in ‘Mother, any distance’?

Your response
1 Before students attempt to write their responses as though from Armitage’s mother about her feelings when she went to help her son measure up his new home, ask them to consider the following questions: Did she feel the same way as him? Was she glad or sorry that he was leaving home?

Their responses could start like this:

Son, I know you needed more than one pair of hands, but I was busy …

Extension
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the theme and topic of the poem
• understand the story of the poem, and its purpose
• be able to explain how Duffy uses the form of the poem to enhance her ideas
• be able to analyse how Duffy’s use of language, form and structure enhances her purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU

1. A good source to stimulate this activity is the weekly ‘Snapshot’ article in the ‘Family’ section of The Guardian newspaper, which you may have used for ‘Eden Rock’. These two poems could profitably be taught as a pair.

Give students two or three of the short ‘Snapshot’ articles to look at, and then ask them to read through ‘Before You Were Mine’. How does it compare? Is the picture Duffy creates like a photograph?

Asking students what they know about their parents, and then what they know is fact and what they have only supposed or imagined, can be an engaging exercise, but be aware that this can take over the whole lesson! You could take this idea further by asking students if they would have wanted to be friends with their parents if they had been the same age as them. Referencing the popular film Back to the Future works well here: the idea that you could ‘time travel’ and talk to your parents before they had you is an intriguing one. For instance, you could show a clip of the famous scene where Marty Mcfly goes into the diner and sees his teenage father being bullied.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions
You could ask students to come up with their own adjectives to describe themselves, and then choose the most appropriate nine to see if these map onto a description of Duffy’s mother. How far is Duffy’s mother representative of all teenagers, and all their hopes for the future?

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings
You might want to clarify that Duffy’s mother was not called Marilyn, but May. By calling her ‘Marilyn’, Duffy is briefly indicating her glamour; signposting her connection with Marilyn Monroe through the way in which her skirt blows round her legs, as in the famous picture of the Hollywood movie star.

Key idea

Differentiation
Ask less confident students to select the words in the poem that have positive connotations, for example, ‘fizzy’, and replace them with alternative words with similar meanings, for example, ‘bubbly’. What is the effect of changing these words? How far is Duffy creating a semantic field that suggests a whole range of connotations through her word choice?

Differentiation
Ask more confident students to look closely at the title of the poem. It could be said that it sounds more like the comment of a lover than of a child. Why is this? Is Duffy deliberately imagining what it would be like to love her mother as a contemporary rather than a child? Is she saying that children are as possessive as lovers? What other readings might the poem support? How do these ideas relate to the key idea?

LEARNING CHECKPOINT
Use Duffy’s own analysis of the poem (see the Cambridge Elevate Resources section) to clarify which elements of the poem are based on fact, and where she got the different details from.

Differentiation
You could use Duffy’s own reading to support less confident students to help them with the activity.
Differentiation
Ask more confident students to challenge this reading. Is there more in the poem than Duffy indicates?

GETTING IT INTO WRITING
Use the structure of SPEED paragraphs to encourage students to consolidate the work that they have done on this poem. Model this writing for them, writing the SPEED prompts in the margin, for example:

Signpost: In the third stanza,
Point: Duffy uses a rhetorical question to suggest that her mother was happier before she was born than afterwards.
Example: The description of her cry as a new-born baby
Explanation: suggests how a baby, even though innocent, can restrict the parent’s life.
Discussion: Moreover, the tag question at the end of the line implies that this is the truth and that both Duffy and her mother know it, even if her mother doesn’t want to admit it.

When you remove the SPEED scaffolding, the paragraph should read like this:

In the third stanza, Duffy uses a rhetorical question to suggest that her mother was happier before she was born than afterwards. The description of her cry as a new-born baby suggests how a baby, even though innocent, can restrict the parent’s life. Moreover, the tag question at the end of the line implies that this is the truth and that both Duffy and her mother know it, even if her mother doesn’t want to admit it.

This poem can be usefully compared with other poems that re-evaluate the relationship between parent and child, for example, ‘Follower’, or ‘Mother, any distance’. The link with the picture may make for an interesting comparison with ‘Eden Rock’.

Your response

Extension
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the theme and topic of the poem
• understand the story of the poem, and its purpose
• be able to explain how Sheers uses the form of the poem to enhance his ideas
• be able to analyse how Sheers uses language, form and structure to enhance his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem
GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS
First impressions

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE
Analysing language, form and structure

Differentiation

Extension

Comparing poems
The poem could be compared with other poems in the cluster which are about failures in communication, for example, ‘Porphyria’s Lover’ or ‘Neutral Tones’. Could the couple described in ‘Winter Swans’ be like Hardy’s couple, but saved by the intrusion of nature into their solitary thoughts?

Your response

Extension

Differentiation
Give more confident students the poem written out as prose, with no punctuation. Ask them to try and reconstruct the poem with line-breaks in the correct places, and appropriate punctuation. How difficult do they find this? Did they notice that only the final stanza has two lines? Why is this, and how might the structure of the poem relate to the key idea? The short phrases, for instance, could be said to mimic the brief exchanges of the couple, as though they are too weary to be interested in more involved conversation. The brief phrases seem to almost mimic the ‘gulping’ of the earth. Though there is enjambment, lines often appear end-stopped initially, as though the poem – or the conversation – could stop at any moment. The final, truncated stanza may suggest what is left unsaid or unfinished.

Extension

LEARNING CHECKPOINT
After students have compared the two responses in the Student Book, ask them to write a third version which is better than either response, using the work that they have done on the form and structure of the poem. It could start like this:

‘The central lines describing the swans are the longest in the poem …’

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

Extension

Differentiation
For less confident students, copy the poem, cut it into lines, and mix it up. Ask them, in pairs or small groups, to try and rearrange the poem into the correct order. How difficult do they find this? Does the poem tell a clear story that is easy to reconstruct?

This is an excellent activity for focusing students on details of syntax, and so is a good complement to activity 2.

Extension

13 Winter Swans
In the Student Book:
Audio: A reading of ‘Winter Swans’

In this Teacher’s Resource:
Link: A selection of love poems can be found on the Poetry Foundation website
**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the unit students should:

- be able to describe the theme and topic of the poem
- understand the story of the poem, and its purpose
- be able to explain how Nagra uses the form of the poem to enhance his ideas
- be able to analyse how Nagra uses language, form and structure to enhance his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
- be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
- be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

**Key ideas and keywords for this poem**

**GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU**

1 and 2 When discussing the ideas in activity 1, you might ask students to debate if the poem’s use of imitative speech can be considered to be offensive. The poet (who is Indian) encourages people to try out the sounds of dialect, but some people have found it to be an uncomfortable poem, and dislike the fact that it seems to reinforce clichés about race. How do students respond to these contrasting views?

**GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS**

First impressions

1 For the class reading of the poem, try dividing the class into three: the speaker, the shoppers and the bride. Ask each group to read only the lines that they think belong to them.

Ask students to pick out the words and images that they find most puzzling in the poem. For example:

- Why do the couple make love as described in line 9? ‘Putney’ means ‘wife’ in Punjabi, but that is not the only resonance; the comical image of the rowing boat suggests the movements of lovemaking, and the use of ‘Putney’ as a popular riverside location for rowing suggests how the couple are open and unashamed about their lovemaking.

When students have chosen a selection, write each phrase on separate pieces of A3 paper, and place them in different locations around the room. Then ask students to move around the classroom and write down their ideas about the meaning of each phrase on its piece of paper. Once the activity is completed, draw together the students in a plenary where they discuss and share the different meanings and ideas that they have come up with as a class.

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings

**Key idea**

**Differentiation**

Ask less confident students to select as many stereotypes from the poem as they can, using the suggestions in the Student Book to help them. When they have done this, ask them to try and find matching examples of how the speaker rejects the stereotype, with quotations to illustrate each pair of answers.

For more confident students, provide the poem written out as prose, with no punctuation. Ask them to reconstruct the poem with line-breaks in the correct places, and with appropriate punctuation. How difficult do they find this? You might, for example, point out the repetitions of ‘my bride’, with the descriptions that follow them; does the way this is set out enhance the effect of these descriptions? Did they notice how the final stanzas change in tone, and move towards briefer and more thoughtful reflections, imitated by the two-line structure? Why is this, and how might the structure of the poem relate to the *key idea*? For example, you might suggest that at the start of the poem the speaker is implicitly defending his lifestyle and choices to his parents as well as to his customers, and so writes more at length, whereas at the end the shorter exchanges are more intimate pieces of dialogue with his wife.

**LEARNING CHECKPOINT**

After students have written their sentences, ask them to swap with a partner and check that they have tried to move beyond the first ‘storytelling’ response to inferring meaning. You could ask them to write in SPEED
paragraphs and have them peer review each other’s work, marking out the SPEED structure.

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

Before attempting the activities in this section, ask students to reflect on their first activities on the poem, and to theorise more confidently about Nagra’s purpose in writing the poem. They should try, in pairs, to come up with two possible reasons. Then ask them to discuss these with another pair and decide on the two best reasons. Continue in this way, with the groups of four becoming groups of eight, and so on, until you have a whole-class agreement about the two best suggestions.

Discuss the two best suggestions as a class, then ask students to vote for the one they think is most convincing, and to explain why. It may be useful to watch the poet’s own comments on the poem at this point (see the link to BBC Education in the Cambridge Elevate Resources section).

Use this as the basis of the writing task in activity 3.

Your response

**Extension**

**CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES**

**In the Student Book:**

**Audio:** A reading of ‘Singh Song!’

**In this Teacher’s Resource:**

**Link:** A critical reading of the poem by Daljit Nagra can be found at the Sheer Poetry website

**Link:** A reading and discussion of the poem by Nagra on video can be found at the BBC Education (class clips) website

**Link:** A clip of the poet discussing aspects of the language of the poem can be found at the Poetry Station website
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the theme and topic of the poem
• understand the story of the poem, and its purpose
• be able to explain how Waterhouse uses the form of the poem to enhance his ideas
• be able to analyse how Waterhouse uses language, form and structure to enhance his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU
You could provide students with pictures of Mount Rushmore and the Crazy Horse Memorial carving as stimulus for the poem. When discussing their recollection of an older person, they could use these as points of reference.

Extension

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions
After students have completed the activity in this section, draw their attention to the first line of the poem. Discuss with students what this line might signify. What is the difference between so-called ‘free’ climbing and climbing with a rope? Free climbing, of course, means that the climber has nothing to rely on except their own strength – no ropes and pitons to hold on to – and it is associated with considerable risk, as well as being seen as less of a team sport than conventional climbing. It is also associated with trying out new methods and new routes, rather than following conventional paths. How does this connect to the idea of the poet looking closely at his grandfather? For example, does it mean that he feels that he is stepping outside his comfort zone? That he does not want to be tied down to conventional ways of looking at his grandfather but wants to do it with fresh eyes?

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings

Key idea

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Differentiation
1 and 2 Ask students to rewrite the poem using the person they described in the Getting Started activity, substituting their physical details and clothes for the grandfather’s. You could provide students with photographs of people if you prefer, especially if you think this activity might lead to uncomfortable personal references to the appearance of others. This will depend a great deal on the maturity of your students.

Differentiation
Ask more confident students to consider how different the poem might be if it used ‘driving’ or ‘walking’ words instead. How does this help them to develop the key idea?

LEARNING CHECKPOINT
A good way to enliven the discussion about verse form is to cut the poem into lines and ask students to reconstruct it. This tells them a great deal about form, and why lineation works as it does.

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

Comparing poems
Ask the students, for each comparative point that they make, to try and think of at least one technical term, such as simile, metaphor, alliteration, assonance and so on, that they can use in order to differentiate between and/or compare the poems. This will allow them to focus much more precisely on detail.

Your response

Extension
CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:
Audio: A reading of ‘Climbing My Grandfather’

In this Teacher’s Resource:
Link: A selection of free-climbing videos can be found at the Top Freeclimb website
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
- be able to describe the features of the poem that allow us to classify it as a sonnet
- understand the story of the poem, and its main purpose
- be able to explain how Shelley uses the sonnet form to enhance his ideas
- be able to analyse how Shelley’s use of language, form and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
- be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
- be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU
The Student Book suggests using images as a way of considering the idea of ruins. Another good way into the poem is to ask students to consider what a statue represents. If the headteacher decided to build a representation of him/herself as a 50 foot bronze statue in the school entrance, what would this say about their attitude towards the school and its students? Another good starting point might be to watch the first few minutes of the film Prince of Egypt, which dramatically represents the smallness of the Israelites against the vast statues they are forced to construct. The film is also, of course, a good way of checking that students are aware of the story of Moses, as the pharaoh Rameses II is often said to be the pharaoh in the story who refuses to let the slaves go from Egypt. For Shelley, brought up as a Christian, this would have added an extra resonance to the poem.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions
1 and 2 Ask students to think beyond the statements in activity 1. Why are each of them unsatisfying on their own? You could ask students to write their own one-line interpretation of the poem on sticky notes, and then work in pairs, then groups of four, then groups of eight, and so on, until the class has agreed on the best version. They could then write a short paragraph to explain how their understanding of the poem has developed.

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings
3 The poem describes the statue at second-hand. Ask students how far it matters that there is this distance between the original description and the final poem. Why does Shelley wish to preserve this distance and not write directly: ‘I saw’? Part of the answer to this may be that he wants to keep the layers of mystery between the readers and the poem, part of it may be that he wishes to take us, in our imaginations, beyond the present through the gradual process of imagining a traveller telling his tale. In Shelley’s time, and before, poets sometimes pretended that their ideas had come from ancient sources so as to give them greater authority. Does the poem gain authority from being told in this way?

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analysing language, form and structure
2 and 3 The poem uses the sonnet form – a form which often introduces a question or problem and then finds a solution. In what ways can it be said that this poem does this? How can Shelley be seen to introduce a ‘problem’ in the opening of the poem which is ‘solved’ or answered in the second part of the poem? How does this view of the sonnet’s structure change the ways in which we might look at the poem? For example, the poem’s introduction of the statue could be seen as a problem in itself: what is the purpose of this traveller’s tale? The traveller is presumably telling it for a purpose, but what is it – to show off, to impress, or for some deeper reason? You could even theorise that the warning against hubris in the poem is aimed directly at the speaker/poet.

Show your skills
Ask students to look closely at the example in the Student Book and to consider where the writer could add more detail, or be more sophisticated in their analysis. For example, the writer describes the sneer and frown as ‘not very nice’. What words could be used which would make this a more sophisticated point? Ask students to rewrite this response, making a conscious attempt to raise the level of sophistication in their language so as to improve their analysis.

Key idea
Differentiation

Ask less confident students to pick out some examples of Shelley’s use of alliteration and sibilants in the poem. How does this use of sound reinforce the central theme of the poem? You might point out, for example, that the sibilant sounds echo the noise of the shifting sands and the blowing wind that wears away the stone.

Ask students to highlight all the negative words in the poem. Then, in another colour, ask them to highlight any positive words they can find. What is the relationship between the two groups of words?

Differentiation

For more confident students, point out that the poem suggests that humankind’s attempts to defeat time are always going to be doomed to failure, and, as such, can be related to a number of other poems, including some of Shakespeare’s sonnets, and Horace’s ode *Exegi Monumentum* which reflects on the ways in which poetry will ‘outlast the tombs of kings … the Pyramids’. How does this idea relate to Shelley’s role as a poet? Does he feel that his words will be more permanent than the boast of the pharaoh? How does this relate to the key idea? For example, you could draw out the idea of words lasting longer than anything else that Horace introduces. Poems which use this trope become self-referential, so that when Shakespeare says to his lover ‘so long lasts this [i.e. the words of the poem] and this brings life to thee’, the very reading of the words makes them come true. The lover is remembered when the words are read, but unless you read the words you don’t know about the ‘boast’ of immortality. Shelley, by commenting on the hubris of Ozymandias, is implicitly suggesting that his own words in the poem are more powerful than those written in stone, and again this is true, whenever they are read. If the poem is not read, there is no partial carving remaining, as with the statue, to reveal Shelley’s purpose.

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

Comparing poems

Ask students to complete the Comparison grid for this poem, and then, as the Student Book suggests, a closer comparison can be made between this poem and Horace Smith’s.

When writing their comparison of the two poems, ask students to think about the ways in which Smith and Shelley express a very similar idea. Which man has coped better with the task, in their opinion? What evidence from the poems can they bring to support their ideas?

Your response

The poem might still be seen as relevant because it discusses all forms of hubris and power. Shelley was effectively criticising the power structures of his time by pointing out the defeat of former power. In the same way, we might say that the poem is an effective commentary on anyone who seeks to make statements about themselves as all-powerful. You could reference, for example, the huge statues of Saddam Hussein that he himself erected and which have now been destroyed, or discuss the building of taller and taller towers in the capital cities of the world. What do buildings like the Shard in London or the Burj Khalifa in Dubai seek to say about the people who own them? If they were to be destroyed, would this make a comment on the power wielded by these people?

Extension

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:

Audio: A reading of ‘Ozymandias’

Slideshow: Places of power

In this Teacher’s Resource:

Link: An explanation of the poem and its context, reproduced from *The Art of the Sonnet* by Stephen Burt and David Mikics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010, pages 125–129) can be found at the Poetry Foundation website

Link: Readings of the poem can be found at the BBC website

Link: A reading of the poem and a reproduction of the first edition can be found at the British Library website
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the key features of the poem’s form
• understand the story of the poem, and its main purpose
• be able to explain how Blake uses the simple form of the poem to enhance his ideas
• be able to analyse how Blake’s use of language, form and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU
Ask students to consider the title of the poem, and to predict what the poem will be about. Why should a poem entitled ‘London’ appear in the ‘Power and Conflict’ section?

Explain that Blake lived in the 18th century. Ask students to consider the differences between London in the 18th century and London today. You could ask them to work in groups, circulating large sheets of paper with a 21st-century side and an 18th-century side, labelled, for example, ‘transport’, ‘work’, ‘sightseeing’, ‘children’, ‘adults’, etc. in order to get them to think about the differences in each area.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings
You may wish to draw students’ attention to the fact that the poem is written in the present tense, and that this is important in giving a sense of immediacy to Blake’s warnings about London’s state. Ask students to change the tense of the poem to the past tense, and then discuss how this changes the impression of the poem as a whole.

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analysing language, form and structure

1 Blake’s language is generally very simple and direct, as befits the message that he is trying to convey. However, at points he does use more complex language, such as ‘chartered’ and ‘manacles’. How do these words affect the poem? Ask students to highlight the words that they consider to be the key words in the poem – either because they are repeated or because of their meaning – and to consider synonyms for them. How do these synonyms change the impact of the poem? Model this by changing ‘wander’ to ‘walk’. How would this change affect the first line? You might discuss the sense of directness and purpose implied in ‘walk’, or even how the shorter vowel suggests a more decisive mood.

2 The poem is generally in iambic tetrameter with eight syllables in each line. However, there is some variation, and in the penultimate stanza, the lines are seven syllables each, creating a faster pace and greater tension. Though the first and last lines of the final stanza are longer than in the stanza preceding it, and seem to be conventional eight-syllable lines, the middle two lines are again shorter and faster, accentuating the ways in which the conclusion, ‘but most ...’, prepares us for the final, devastating assertion of the last line, with the long assonantal vowel sounds emphasising the oxymoronic contrast between ‘marriage’ and ‘hearse’.

LEARNING CHECKPOINT

When looking at the examples which sum up the poem in the Student Book, ask students to consider where the writer could add in detail, or quotation, that would underpin each point about the poem’s ‘story’. For example, the use of ‘every’ may be hyperbolic, but it suggests that Blake feels the misery of London to be universal. Ask students to rewrite each comment so as to include quotation and analysis in this way.

Key idea
Differentiation
Ask less confident students to work in pairs to pick out examples of poetic techniques in each verse, for example, alliteration or metaphor. Ask students to take it in turns to select and identify a technique, with the other member of the pair making a comment about how the technique creates an effect.

Differentiation
Ask more confident students to work in pairs to identify examples of poetic techniques, but instead of commenting on the effect of each device, ask them to change the poem so that the device vanishes. This should allow them to think more deeply about the effect of the device and how closely it is woven into the poem’s structure.

Differentiation
Another interesting activity for more confident students is to look at Blake’s two ‘Chimney-Sweeper’ poems in Songs of Innocence and Experience and to compare them. Does this help to explain the lines about the Church in the poem? How does this relate to the key idea? For example, students might pick up from these poems Blake’s anger about the ways in which the establishment seems to ignore the plight of the poor and does not criticise child labour. The idea that the church could ignore child labour, and simply encourage people to pray for their souls, is bitterly criticised in the ‘Experience’ version where the child’s parents abandon him in order to go to Church. Even in the ‘Innocence’ poem, the vision of heaven is seen as an ironic counterpart to the boys’ daily lives. The poem implies that there is nothing positive about London, and that there is no way in which to change the current state of affairs. It is often said that the final verse is somewhat inconclusive and offers no hope for the future. Ask students to compose an extra stanza or two for the poem that resolves the issues, or offers a way forward.

GETTING CREATIVE
Your response

Extension

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES
In the Student Book:
Audio: A reading of ‘London’
Textplorations: Exploring the poem further

In this Teacher’s Resource:
Link: A facsimile edition of Songs of Innocence and Experience can be found at the British Library website where the images that Blake chose to put with each poem may be easily seen – this may also be useful for comparing the poems in each section
Link: A free app from the Tate that will take you around Blake’s London for a real-life tour, including music and commentary on his key works, can be found at the Tate website
Link: A brief and clear guide to the poem can be found at the Sparknotes website
Link: A brief video of the poem and some short quizzes, which may be helpful for revision, can be found at the BBC website
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the key features of the poem
• understand the story of the poem, and its main purpose
• be able to explain how Wordsworth uses blank verse to enhance his ideas
• be able to analyse how Wordsworth’s use of language, form and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU
Ask students to share their earliest memory, or the memory that they consider most significant from their early life. You could ask them to share a memory of their first day at school to start things off.

Studies of memory suggest that the stronger the emotional arousal – whether this be pleasure, pain or fear – the stronger the memory that results. Ask students if they think this is true from their own experiences. Why might it be that we remember frightening things more clearly than ordinary happy experiences?

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions
1–3 A good way to approach these activities would be to ask students to imagine that they are Coleridge and have been sent the poem to edit. Wordsworth wants to cut it down and remove anything that is not essential for the story. Ask them to go through the poem in pairs and highlight the key words that tell the story, so as to produce a shortened version. Then compare versions across the class, and discuss similarities and differences.

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings
Once students have completed the activity in this section, point out that the poem is about the power of nature. The image of the rocky peak is an obvious sign of this power, but what other indications are there in the poem that nature is a powerful or magical force? Ask students to select words and phrases that seem to suggest that nature is powerful but not necessarily frightening.

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analysing language, form and structure
4 As suggested, try looking at the positive and negative words in the extract, and track how the distribution of these words changes throughout the poem. Look more closely and see where these words are also interplaying with techniques such as alliteration and assonance.

To do this more effectively, ask students to pick out a line from the poem (or two half-lines, given the amount of enjambment) to ‘mine’ for details. Ask them, either individually or in pairs, to concentrate on details of language so as to see how many comments they can extract from their chosen line. You could offer rewards for each new idea or comment that students can make for a given line.

Differentiation
You could assign specific lines for less confident students to analyse. For example:
• ‘It was an act of stealth / And troubled pleasure’
• ‘my boat / Went heaving through the water like a swan’
• ‘the grim shape / Towered up between me and the stars’

This could be done as a class exercise by having students move around the room to comment on lines written up on large sheets of paper, thus ensuring a whole-class perspective.

LEARNING CHECKPOINT
Look at the ways in which Wordsworth uses description in the poem. He often uses pairs of words to create a particular effect, for example, ‘troubled pleasure’, ‘sparkling light’, ‘unswerving line’ and ‘craggy ridge’. Ask students to pick out other examples of such pairings, and then write a paragraph that argues the value of using both words in each pair. For example, what does ‘glittering idly’ convey that ‘glittering’ alone does not?

Key idea
Differentiation

Ask less confident students to pick out examples of ‘poetic pairings’ in the extract, where Wordsworth uses two words to create a layered effect, for example, ‘grim shape’, ‘living thing’, ‘silent water’ and ‘blank desertion’, and to identify any patterns in the kind of words used to match each other (for example, positive/negative, weak/strong, everyday/unusual)?

Differentiation

Ask more confident students to try and rewrite a section of the extract in prose, cutting out all of the poetic features. How short does it become, and what is lost in the process?

Another interesting activity for more confident students is to look at the other drafts of The Prelude (see the Cambridge Elevate Resources section). Ask them to write a commentary on Wordsworth’s revisions of a short section. For example, some equivalent sections are much longer in certain drafts than in others. Examine closely Wordsworth’s inclusion of extra details and consider why he decides to include or exclude particular details about his life. Similarly, see how his use of metaphor and simile varies between drafts, as he perhaps becomes more confident about the purpose of this section of his story.

Extension

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:

Audio: A reading of the extract from ‘The Prelude’: ‘The Prelude: stealing the boat’

In this Teacher’s Resource:

Link: A reading of the two-part Prelude can be found on YouTube by searching for ‘two part Prelude’

Link: A reading of the poem that explains the lines of sight with a diagram can be found at the University of Alabama Romantics blog – it is especially useful for explaining why the larger peak becomes visible the more Wordsworth rows

Link: Detailed instructions for creating an electronic scrapbook can be found at the Readwritethink website
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:

• be able to describe the features of a dramatic monologue and identify them in this poem
• be able to understand the context of the poem, and the story that Browning is telling through the Duke’s voice
• be able to explain how Browning uses irony to distance the persona of the speaker from the author, and to distinguish the poet’s purpose from the speaker’s
• be able to analyse how Browning’s use of language, form and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU
As a starter activity, you could project a photo onto the board, as in a Facebook post, with the following ‘status update’:

Here’s my last wife, in this picture, looking as though she was alive. I think it’s an amazing piece of art. I rarely show it to anyone, but I’ve changed my privacy settings so that you can see it. She was very beautiful. P.S. Looking for new partner.

Ask students if they would ‘friend’ this person and to explain why/why not.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions

Extension

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings
As a preparatory activity for going through the poem in detail, you could ask students to compare the information that they can get from a Facebook post with the information that they can get from the poem. For example, from the ‘status update’ in the Getting started activity, students might deduce:

• that the poster was married
• that he is no longer married
• that his partner is dead
• his feelings about his partner’s death
• his sense of privacy
• his expertise in using Facebook
• his motivations.

What equivalent ideas can they find in the poem about the duke, and what evidence is there?

Further questions could include:

• Why show something so personal on Facebook?
• Why is this man showing the photo off if he is looking for a new partner? Will this strategy work?
• Does it tell you more about his wife or about him?
• Why does the man mention the worth of the photograph he has shared as a work of art? What does that suggest about his set of values?

Key idea

Differentiation
Ask less confident students to find quotation evidence for the following ideas about the poem:

1 The Duchess blushed when people paid her compliments.
2 The Duke thought she paid too much attention to unimportant people.
3 The Duke found his wife hard to talk to.
4 The Duke makes generalisations about his wife’s behaviour.

How do these ideas connect to the proposition in the key idea? Which words in particular make a difference? For example, students might notice his use of ‘all and each’ to suggest that she is unselective, his dismissive reference to compliments as ‘stuff’, his noticing that ‘her looks went everywhere’ as though they should be confined, and so on.

Ask students to make a list of the complaints that the Duke has against his wife, for him to take to a marriage-guidance meeting. Then ask them to list what she might say about him, or how she might answer each of the complaints.
Differentiation

Ask more confident students what other statements they could make about the Duke and his relationship with the Duchess. How could they evidence these? Would this evidence support the key idea or disagree with it?

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analysing language, form and structure

To supplement activities 1 and 2, draw students’ attention to the use of language, form and structure in the following ways.

Language: The quotations that students selected to illustrate their ideas about the duke’s relationship with his wife can be used to help them develop their analytical skills. Once students have selected quotations to illustrate their ideas, first model how to develop these into comments on a single word, for example:

‘The use of the word “only” implies that it should have been only her husband she responded to.’

Then model how to develop the quotations into examples of detailed inference, to develop their ideas in a more sophisticated way, for example:

‘The use of the words “spot of joy” to describe her blush suggests that it was not appealing to him. The blush is described as a “spot” or blemish on her skin, rather than as something natural and attractive.’

Structure: Ask students to think about how the poem is organised here, for example, how we only find out the envoy’s purpose at the end of the poem. How does this affect our response? Might we, for example, be surprised that the Duke is so frank, or disgusted at his implied threatening of his next wife through the story he tells?

You might also wish to introduce the idea of foreshadowing, where the duke’s early words suggest the more sinister details later. As a creative activity, ask students to write a monologue which tells the story of the poem from the point of view of the envoy, the Duchess, or perhaps one of the servants.

Form: Draw students’ attention to how the use of the dramatic monologue form, and the heroic couplets, affects the poem. Ask them to consider, for example, how the speaking voice ‘runs over’ the end of lines. What does this suggest about the speaker’s tone? Is he perhaps taking control of the conversation (which is entirely one-sided) as he takes control of the lineation? We usually expect a pause at the end of a line. His continuation may suggest that he does not want to pause or be interrupted.

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

Ask students to use the SPEED structure to help them with their paragraphs. Remind them that each paragraph has a different focus, so they might start, for example, by thinking about the Duke’s love of control:

**Signpost:** In the first lines of ‘My Last Duchess’,

**Point:** the Duke demonstrates his controlling nature immediately.

**Example:** When, for example, he uses the imperative ‘sit’, despite his polite use of ‘will you please you’,

**Explanation:** it suggests that the envoy has little choice but to do as the Duke says. This suggests the ways in which he is used to being obeyed without question, and to some extent prepares us for his attitude towards his wife.

Comparing poems

Ask students to consider how ‘My Last Duchess’ links to poems about power and control. ‘Ozymandias’ is an obvious link to a poem about hubris, but you might also ask students to think about how it links to the blighted marriages characterised in ‘London’.

GETTING CREATIVE

1 You could present the following scenario to students: the Count is eager to continue with the match between the Duke and his daughter. How might the envoy argue in favour of, or against, the match when reporting back to the Count? Students could begin their dialogues like this:

**Count:** So, all is set for the betrothal?

**Envoy:** Well, my lord, there is one slight problem …

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:

Audio: A reading of ‘My Last Duchess’

In this Teacher’s Resource:

Link: A commentary on the poem, which has some suggestions for teaching, can be found on the University of Buckingham website

Link: A reproduction of ‘Browning’s My Last Duchess’, by George Monteiro (Victorian Poetry 1 (1963): pages 235–37), can be found at the Victorian Web
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
- be able to describe the key features of the poem’s form, including dactylic metre
- understand the story of the poem, and its main purpose
- be able to explain how Tennyson uses the form of the poem to enhance his ideas
- be able to analyse how Tennyson’s use of language, form and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
- be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
- be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem
GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS
Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings
The poem has become a by-word for patriotism, and has, by some, been seen to praise unthinking obedience at the cost of common sense and justice. It was partly the reporting by William Howard Russell in *The Times* that made the charge sound as though it was a victory, or at least as though the men involved in it were noble rather than suicidal. Many of the words and phrases that he used in his article were picked up by Tennyson, and used in the poem. Ask students to consider this extract from near the beginning of Russell’s article, and to compare it with the language used in the poem.

‘They swept proudly past, glittering in the morning sun in all the pride and splendour of war. We could scarcely believe the evidence of our senses! Surely that handful of men are not going to charge an army in position? Alas! it was but too true – their desperate valour knew no bounds.’

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE
Analysing language, form and structure
The semantic field of the poem is similar to *The Times* article, not just in the fact that both pieces use similar words, but also in terms of structure. Russell uses words such as ‘heroic’, ‘noble’, ‘valour’, ‘splendour’ and so on at the start of his account, but contrasts this at the end of the article with the effect created by ‘wounded’, ‘sad’, ‘dead and dying’ instead, something that we also see in the poem. Individual examples of influence are present in the poem with the idea of the sabres flashing in the air, an image most likely drawn from the article: ‘Through the clouds of smoke we could see their sabres flashing as they rode up to the guns’.

Give students the following extract from the article, and ask them if they can find in it any precise verbal echoes of the poem. They should be able to discover the images of the ‘mouth of Hell’ and the ‘jaws of Death’.

‘A more fearful spectacle was never witnessed than by those who, without the power to aid, beheld their heroic countrymen rushing to the arms of death. At the distance of 1200 yards the whole line of the enemy belched forth, from thirty iron mouths, a flood of smoke and flame.’

LEARNING CHECKPOINT
When selecting words from the poem which suggest glory and honour, and words which suggest horror, ask students to look at the ways in which Tennyson uses juxtaposition – placing these powerful words close to each other – to emphasise the confusion of thought and feeling about the poem’s events.

Key idea

Differentiation
Ask less confident students to identify examples of repetition in the poem by highlighting all the repeated words that they can find, and then explaining why they are important in the poem, and how the repetition helps to emphasise their importance.

Differentiation
In stanza 4, the poem shifts into the present tense to describe the events; using the participles ‘sabring’ and ‘charging’. Ask students to explain the effect of this change in tense, and how it adds to the impact of the poem.
The stanzas are of different lengths, consisting of the following number of lines (in order): 8, 9, 9, 12, 11, 6. Give students these numbers and ask them to try and remember which order the stanza-lengths are in, without looking at the poem. Why do they think Tennyson used this pattern? Could it be, for example, that he was imitating the movement of the cavalry charge, and that the poem’s stanzas in effect ‘speed up’ and ‘slow down’, growing longer towards the climax of the poem where the action is most intense?

GETTING CREATIVE

Extension

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:
Audio: A reading of ‘The Charge of the Light Brigade’

In this Teacher’s Resource:
Link: A discussion about the charge from In Our Time can be found on the BBC’s iPlayer Radio website
Link: Russell’s original newspaper report can be found at the Eyewitness to History website
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the key features of the poem’s form and context
• understand the story of the poem, and its major themes
• be able to explain how Owen uses the form of the poem to enhance his ideas
• be able to analyse how Owen’s use of language and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem
GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions

Extension

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings

Extension

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analysing language, form and structure

Ask students to look closely at the rhyming scheme of the poem. Owen is famous for his ability to use half-rhyme, or pararhyme (a good comparison is his poem ‘Strange Meeting’). Divide the class into pairs or small groups. Assign one verse to each pair or group and ask them to analyse the effect of rhymes such as ‘silence/nonchalance’, ‘faces/fusses’ and ‘knive us/nervous’. What is the effect of this technique? For example, the fact that we are expecting end-rhyme can make the reader more attentive to the words that we expect to rhyme, and then more alert to their meaning. The half-rhymed words often seem to have a shared significance, even as they pull apart from each other in terms of sound. Can ‘grow/grey’ even count as a rhyme? Is there any change in the quality of rhymes throughout the poem? Which stanzas have the most rhyme in them, and does this seem deliberate? Why did Owen not choose to use ‘full’ rhymes? For example, you might consider the ways in which the use of half-rhyme makes the poem deliberately ‘unpoetic’ and incomplete, as opposed to the clear full rhymes of the kind of poetry that Owen would have been used to.

An interesting exercise is to ask students to try and create full rhymes that will work in the poem, or to create more regular stanzas, for example:

Watching the mad gusts tugging on the wire,
Like twitching agonies of men in thorns,
Northward, we hear the sound of guns that fire
It seems as though of other wars it warns,
But nothing happens.

Ask students to compare this version of stanza 2 with the original, and to explain why Owen’s verse form works more effectively.

Key idea

Differentiation

Ask less confident students to identify all the examples of personification in the poem. Once they have highlighted all the words that suggest personification, ask them to explain how this technique is important in the poem.

Differentiation

Give more confident students a copy of ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ and ask them to compare Owen’s feelings about his encounter with death to the experience described by Keats. Can they see any points of comparison when it comes to a belief in God, for example?

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

You could ask students to compose a diary entry or a letter home as though it was written by Owen, describing his night in the cold trenches waiting for battle. How might he change what he says in a diary or in a letter? What can be done in a poem that can’t be done in these other forms of writing?

Comparing poems

Ask students to compare Owen’s attitude to war with Tennyson’s in ‘The Charge of the Light Brigade’. Do the two poets have anything in common when it comes to their view of warfare? Have students focus on the key words of power and conflict. If ‘The Charge of the
Light Brigade’ says that power lies in the hands of the generals, and that there is a conflict in the ways in which the soldiers feel about responding to their orders, for example, then where does power lie in ‘Exposure’, and where can we locate feelings of conflict? You might, for example, explore the idea that the soldiers are intensely frustrated by the fact that they are not able to express feelings of aggression as Tennyson’s soldiers can, but are kept in a state of artificial tension in the trenches. The power of the order to stay where they are is just as cruel as the power of the order to charge to the guns; one set of men is killed through action, one through inaction.

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:
Audio: A reading of ‘Exposure’

In this Teacher’s Resource:
Link: An account of the poem can be found at the Wilfred Owen society website
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the key features of the poem’s form and the poetic voice
• understand the major themes of the poem
• be able to explain how Heaney uses the form of the poem to enhance his ideas
• be able to analyse how Heaney’s use of language and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU
Show some films of stormy weather (there are many available on YouTube), especially those which show large waves and the destructive force of the sea on the shore. How does a storm connote power and conflict? You could ask students to discuss the power of wind and waves, and the conflict between natural forces and man’s constructions, or between sea and shore.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings
The poem is an interesting mixture of pride in the stoicism that resists the storm, and negativity about the island. It is almost as though the speaker is proud of how difficult it is to survive on the island. Ask students to look at the positives and the negatives in the poem and to list quotations that illustrate both side by side. Which do they think form the most powerful set of quotations, and what is it about the language used that makes them powerful?

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analysing language, form and structure

Extension

Differentiation
For less confident students, supply groups of nouns, verbs and adjectives and let them decide, in groups, which word class is most effective, before presenting their reasoning back to the class.

Key idea

Differentiation
Ask less confident students to pick out all the negative words in the poem and to explain how these words add to the overall effect of the poem. Then ask students to select one phrase each to discuss or write about, before sharing their ideas with the class.

Alternatively, give students a copy of ‘The Sea is a Hungry Dog’ by James Reeves. How does Reeves use personification compared to the way in which Heaney uses it? What is more sophisticated about Heaney’s poem? Reeves’s poem works especially well because the fairly unsophisticated nature of the metaphor progresses through a number of features of the animal in logical order. Heaney, by contrast, is much more wide-ranging in his description, and brings in the semantic field of warfare. The reference to the cat is almost an aside; one of a range of ways in which he compares the sea to human things.

Differentiation
Give more confident students a copy of ‘The Sea is a Hungry Dog’ by James Reeves. Once they have read it, ask them to look closely again at the different uses of personification in ‘Storm on the Island’. Have them compare this to the use of personification in the extract from Wordsworth’s ‘The Prelude’. You may find it helpful to make sure that they focus on the personification of nature and not just the personification of the mountain.
GETTING IT INTO WRITING

Comparing poems

Ask students to compare the attitude to the power of nature in ‘Storm on the Island’ with that in the extract from ‘The Prelude’. Both poems personify nature, but they do it very differently. What differences can they see, and how do these affect the impact of each poem? For example, you might want to compare the speaking voices in the poem: Wordsworth’s remembered childhood means that his impression of the power of nature is in some ways more awe-inspiring. It is also a single, singular event, though one that has had an impact on the rest of his life. The speaker in ‘Storm on the Island’ is talking about something that is a regular occurrence, that perhaps also makes him feel closer to the landscape, but in a more intimate way.

Differentiation

Ask more confident students to compare the use of the speaking voice in ‘Storm on the Island’ with, either ‘My Last Duchess’, or the extract from ‘The Prelude’.

Your response

Extension

Extension

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:

Audio: A reading of ‘Storm on the Island’

Textplorations: Exploring the poem further

In this Teacher’s Resource:

Link: Find the Scottish archive films, ‘St Kilda: Scotland’s Loneliest Isle’ and ‘The Evacuation of St Kilda’ at the Scottish Screen Archive website

Link: Notes on the poem can be found at the Sheer Poetry website
**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the unit students should:

- be able to describe the key features of the poem’s form
- understand the story of the poem and its major themes
- be able to explain how Hughes uses the form of the poem to enhance his ideas
- be able to analyse how Hughes’s use of language and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
- be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
- be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

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**Key ideas and keywords for this poem**

**GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU**

A training video of a bayonet charge is a useful introduction to a lesson on the poem. Various videos are available on YouTube.

**GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS**

First impressions

**PUTTING DETAILS TO USE**

Analysing language, form and structure

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**Differentiation**

This poem uses a range of different semantic fields to create its effect. For less confident students, explain the concept of a semantic field then ask them to highlight groups of words in the poem that seem linked, for example, the semantic field of the human body in stanza 1. Then ask them to select one semantic field and to write a paragraph about how Hughes uses this technique to achieve a particular effect.

**Differentiation**

Ask more confident students to focus on the idea that Hughes is essentially imitating previous war poets. Ask them to look at Owen’s ‘Spring Offensive’ and to compare the two poems. What words and phrases can they find in Hughes which echo Owen? Can they link this to the idea of semantic fields?

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**GETTING IT INTO WRITING**

Comparing poems

Owen’s poem ‘Spring Offensive’ makes for an illuminating comparison to ‘Bayonet Charge’. A link can be found in the Cambridge Elevate Resources section.
CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:

Audio: A reading of ‘Bayonet Charge’

In this Teacher’s Resource:

Link: Comments about the poem by Professor Tim Kendall can be found at the War Poets blog

Link: Owen’s poem ‘Spring Offensive’ can be found at the Classiclit website

Link: Search for ‘bayonet lessons’ and ‘hunting hares with golden eagles’ on YouTube

Link: A discussion about the poem by teachers at secondary schools can be found by searching for ‘teacher’s discuss Bayonet Charge’ on YouTube
9 Remains

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the key features of the poem's form
• understand the story of the poem and its major themes
• be able to explain how Armitage uses the form of the poem to enhance his ideas
• be able to analyse how Armitage's use of language and structure enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem's effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU
Ask students to consider what the title 'Remains' might suggest that the poem is about. You could ask them to create a spider diagram exploring various possibilities. Encourage them to think about how the title could fit the other poems that they have studied, for example, could 'Ozymandias' have been called 'Remains' and why? What about 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', 'Storm on the Island' or 'My Last Duchess'? Or, indeed, any of the poems in Cluster 2.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions
1 and 2 In Armitage's poetry collection, The Not Dead, he discusses the fact that while people were prepared for going to war they had given little thought to coming home. This idea sums up some of Armitage's themes. Ask students how they think it might relate to a poem with the title 'Remains'. For example, what do we normally associate with 'remains'? Perhaps Roman remains? Does it imply destruction, that something has been lost that was valuable? Coming home from war is not something that has been written about as often as people write about going to war. Do the soldiers feel that they have not been prepared for coming home because they were not expected to come home? That their role was to go into battle, and that was their importance? There are some interesting links here to 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'.

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings
1 and 2 The poem tries to recreate the experience of a soldier in a recent war. Ask students to consider how successfully Armitage manages this. What aspects of the soldier’s experience does he emphasise? Is the poem about more than the simple action performed by the soldier and, if so, what other aspects of war does it touch upon? You might, for example, ask students to consider how the soldier’s experience has affected him emotionally, as opposed to a physical injury. Is the mental ‘injury’ less serious than someone who has lost a limb, for instance? The poem is about the emotional damage done by war; damage that was often not recorded formally in previous conflicts. It could be helpful to draw comparisons with ‘Bayonet Charge’ as well as ‘The Charge of the Light Brigade’, which both focus on the experience of ordinary soldiers as opposed to those in command.

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analysing language, form and structure
1 The poem uses many features which imitate the natural speaking voice. Once students have identified words and phrases which are colloquial, or which suggest the speaking voice, ask them to replace them with more formal alternatives. How does this change the quality of the poem?
2 Once students have identified words and phrases that seem to be more formal or ‘poetic’ in tone, ask them to decide which words and phrases are in the soldier’s voice and which represent Armitage’s understanding of the soldier’s experience. How did they decide which is which?

Differentiation
When students have completed activities 1–4, point out that the poem uses the present tense, and ask students to consider how this affects the tone of the poem, and its quality as a record of a memory. Then ask students to select a stanza and put it into the past tense. How does this change the way in which we view the experience?
Another useful activity is to print out the poem, divide it into stanzas and ask students to reconstruct it. How difficult or easy do they find this? How is the poem structured, and what elements in it are repetitive? Look at the words and phrases which are repeated, and which therefore focus on the key ideas. Repeating the idea forces its reconsideration, so that it seems to have more importance.

Key idea

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

Comparing poems
Ask students to compare the portrayal of the soldier’s experience to that of the soldier in ‘Bayonet Charge’. Both poets are seeking to create a sense of real, lived experience, without having had their own experience of war. Which is the more successful and why? What similarities can they find, and how would they explain these?

GETTING CREATIVE

Extension

Extension

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:
Audio: A reading of ‘Remains’

In this Teacher’s Resource:
Link: The documentary from which the poem arose can be found on Simon Armitage’s YouTube channel – search for ‘Armitage The Not Dead’
Link: An engaging review of the poetry collection The Not Dead illuminates some of the references in other poems in the collection – it can be found at the John Field website
Link: Helpful biographical detail can be found at Simon Armitage’s own website
10 Poppies

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit students should:

• be able to describe the key features of the poem’s form
• understand the story of the poem and its major themes
• be able to explain how Weir uses the form and structure of the poem to enhance her ideas
• be able to analyse how Weir’s use of language enhances her purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU

Another good way to begin the lesson, is to brainstorm the associations that students have with the poem’s title, ‘Poppies’. The image of this flower immediately summons up one of the most potent symbols of warfare in the 20th century; the poppies worn on Remembrance Day as a symbol of the fallen.

It is a brutal fact that poppies grow most readily on freshly turned earth – thus they grow in wheat fields, where the earth is ploughed each year, and they grew profusely on the graves of men who died in Flanders, the Belgian part of the Allied front lines, who were buried near the battlefields there in the First World War. After the huge losses at battlefields such as Ypres in this area, the poppy became a powerful symbol for the fallen, encouraged by the popularisation of the poem ‘In Flanders Fields’. Be aware that students may not know this, and may not have the associations of poppies and ploughed fields that people of an earlier generation would have. Explain this to them, and then ask them how the knowledge changes their sense of poppies as a symbol.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions

The poem is precisely placed in time from the first line. ‘Armistice Sunday’ is actually something of a misnomer, conflating ‘Remembrance Sunday’ and ‘Armistice day’. The Armistice was the formal ending of the First World War, on the ‘eleventh day of the eleventh month at the eleventh hour’, and in 1919 the date of November 11th was declared an official day of commemoration as a result. As time went on, this was replaced, for practical purposes, with the Sunday nearest to November 11th, which became known as ‘Remembrance Sunday’.

Ask students what their associations are with the idea of Remembrance Sunday and encourage them to talk about local celebrations and customs, parades and so on. What happens in your school? Is there a local memorial, or even one in your school building? Why might it be an especially poignant time for a mother?

Differentiation

For more confident students, point out how the omission of the word ‘Remembrance’, and its replacement with the more formal term ‘Armistice’, brings the omitted word to the reader’s mind. Explain that this is a form of litotes – a rhetorical figure where you describe something through its opposite or its omission, for example, ‘he’s not all bad’.

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analyzing language, form and structure

Differentiation

It is also useful to ask students to analyse the semantic field of the poem, which is interesting because it is strongly reflective of the writer’s interest in textiles. Images throughout focus on clothing, sewing, or material of one kind or another.

Initially, these are literal – it might be significant that the speaker notices the binding on the blazer, but it is not symbolic in itself – however, as the poem progresses, the language transforms into the metaphorical. Even her action of walking along the edge of the wall in line 27 is turned into a word associated with clothing.

Ask students to identify the words in the poem that are associated with sewing or textiles, and then to choose one section of the poem to write about in detail. They should aim to get as much analysis out of a single word or phrase as possible.
The speaker addresses the reader directly, using 'you', but it is clear that this is an address to her son, and references to him occur throughout the poem to establish the relationship. Ask students, perhaps in pairs, to look closely at the use of the first and the second person in the poem. What do they think is the effect of this direct address and how would using different pronouns change the effect of the poem?

There are a series of possessive phrases which knit together the general second person possessive pronoun 'your' to particularise it and make it reference the speaker’s son. These references also paradoxically make 'you' into an everyman figure; in some ways this could be anyone's son. They are also opposed and matched by a similar number of references to the first person possessive pronoun, which, similarly, both particularise the speaker and make her into a symbol of mothers everywhere.

Key idea

Differentiation

Ask less confident students to look back at the words they identified in the poem which are associated with textiles. Ask them to replace these words with words associated with a different kind of art or craft, for example, ‘the dove flew freely in the sky / like a picture’. How do the original words add to the effect of the poem, and what is the effect of replacing them?

Differentiation

Behind this poem lie many others with a similar theme, in particular the poem ‘In Flanders Fields’ by John McCrae, which is credited with first associating the idea of poppies with the fallen, and ultimately for starting the Royal British Legion Campaign, through the work of Moina Belle Michael.

Ask more confident students to look at ‘In Flanders Fields’ and to compare the symbolism used in it with the ways in which the image of poppies are used in Weir’s poem. What similarities and differences can they see, and how does reading ‘In Flanders Fields’ enhance the experience of reading ‘Poppies’? The key difference is that ‘In Flanders Fields’ is written from the perspective of someone urging people to keep fighting, using ‘the argument of Minerva’; that is, the argument that because so many people have died it is a waste to stop fighting, and does dishonour to their memory. It urges those who read it to ‘take up our quarrel with the foe’ and threatens that if they do not ‘we shall not sleep’; that is, the dead will not rest in peace. ‘Poppies’ on the other hand, clearly does not celebrate war, even while it remembers it. There is little sense that the poet honours the sacrifice of life. It is seen as almost inevitable, and the woman appears helpless in the face of the male world of war, which is powerfully distanced from her world of textiles and domesticity.

Comparing poems

This poem can be compared with Armitage’s ‘Remains’ or Duffy’s ‘War Photographer’ as it is by a non-combatant – someone not directly connected to the war – seeking to understand someone else’s experience. Ask students if they feel that Weir’s lack of direct experience of war makes a difference to the effectiveness of the poem. If so, where do they see this?

Your response

Extension

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:
Audio: A reading of ‘Poppies’ (read by Jane Weir)
Textplorations: Exploring the poem further

In this Teacher’s Resource:
Link: The text of ‘In Flanders Fields’ by John McCrae can be found at the Great War website
Link: Information explaining the work done by Moina Belle Michael in popularising the symbol of the poppy can be found at the Great War website
11 War Photographer

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the key features of the poem’s form
• understand the story of the poem and its major themes
• be able to explain how Duffy uses the form and structure of the poem to enhance her ideas
• be able to analyse how Duffy’s use of language enhances her purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU
Ask students to look at a selection of war photos to help focus them on the statements in the Student Book. Good examples can be found on The Daily Telegraph website (see the Cambridge Elevate Resources section). What do they think is the purpose of war photographs? Are they simply a way of generating excitement and horror, in order to sell newspapers, or do they have a wider moral purpose? You could also show students a clip from the film War Photographer (see the Cambridge Elevate Resources section) as a way of starting off the discussion.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions
When students have completed the activities in this section, ask them to look again at the photographs from The Daily Telegraph website (provide them with as many as possible). Ask them to imagine they are the editor in the poem and must choose just three photographs to illustrate a story about the War Photographer’s experience, thinking carefully about which images would go best with the description in the poem.

Then ask students to write a headline for the story that would match and enhance the photographs.

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings
You could show students a video clip of photographs being developed (readily available on YouTube) so that they can understand the idea of images being processed in this way. What connections can they make between this process and the photographer’s experience? They could put these into a table, for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The film needs to be processed before it can be seen.</td>
<td>The photographer’s thoughts need to be processed before he can understand them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The images slowly appear as they are placed in the developing solution.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The images need to be ‘fixed’ once they are developed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures can sometimes be overexposed and spoilt.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The photos need to be dried before they can be handled.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analysing language, form and structure
Ask students to re-read the poem, and then put the following statements into the correct order. The correct order is: g, e, a, c, d, b, f, i, h.

a Although he is safe now, his hands shake as he remembers the trauma he has experienced.

b He feels that he had a moral duty to record the suffering of the dying man.

c He reflects on how problems in England are easily solved, and ones in war zones remain.

d He remembers wanting to ask if he could take a photograph of a dying man, and communicating with the man’s wife silently.

e The photographer feels that in all the warzones that he has visited the message is the same: people die.

f The photographer feels that the complexity of his experience will be reduced by his editor’s selection of only a few pictures.

g The photographer finds his darkroom a place of peace and solitude.

h The photographer goes out again to another war zone, reflecting that perhaps no-one cares about his work.

i The readers of the newspaper will be briefly moved by the photos that he has brought back.

Ask students to think about how the structure of the poem relates to the process of developing photographs, and to the pattern of the photographer’s life. Students should pick out the way in which the narrative of the
The poem is circular, and how the slow development of the photo mirrors the slow realisation by the photographer that his work may be wasted.

**Key idea**

**Differentiation**

Ask more confident students to select all the adjectives and adverbs in the poem. Ask them to think about what they have in common, and why they are particularly important. What other word classes are important, and why? Students should consider, for example, the impact of the word used to describe the heat in line 12, and how this affects the image of the children.

**GETTING IT INTO WRITING**

**Comparing poems**

This poem is about war, but it is also about another kind of conflict. Ask students to consider the internal conflict of the photographer, and to compare this to Tennyson’s account of ‘The Charge of the Light Brigade’, and the conflict of feelings that the soldiers have there. There is also an interesting comparison to be made between these two poems when it comes to the nature of reportage and propaganda. Do beautiful photos or beautiful words glamorise war?

**Extension**

**CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES**

**In the Student Book:**

**Audio:** A reading of ‘War Photographer’

**In this Teacher’s Resource:**

**Link:** A video which annotates the poem and talks through some of the background can be found on YouTube by searching ‘Duffy War Photographer’

**Link:** A collection of iconic war photographs can be found on The Daily Telegraph website

**Link:** A film showing how traditional photographic film is processed in a darkroom can be found on YouTube by searching ‘darkroom in use’

**Link:** A brief reflection from War Photographer on the purposes of war photography by James Nachtwey can be found on YouTube by searching ‘War Photographer James Nachtwey’

**Link:** A film providing excellent context for the poem can be found on YouTube by searching ‘Higher and Nat 5 English Carol Ann Duffy’
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit students should:

• be able to describe the key features of the poem’s form
• understand the story of the poem and its major themes
• be able to explain how Dharker uses the form and structure of the poem to enhance her ideas
• be able to analyse how Dharker’s use of language enhances her purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem with another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU

1 and 2 Students may come up with a number of possible associations for the word ‘tissue’. Try using dictionary definitions to help those who are uncertain. Possible associations include:

• paper handkerchief
• fragile paper, used in craft work
• paper used as wiping material (as in toilet tissue)
• flesh of different kinds (as in skin tissue, scar tissue)
• specific body materials (as in muscle tissue, nerve tissue)
• donor body materials (as in tissue bank)
• loosely woven thin material, such as gauze
• metaphorical uses (as in ‘a tissue of lies’).

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions

Extension

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings

Differentiation

When students have completed the activity in the Student Book, ask them to write down six questions that they would like to have answered about the poem. These could range from queries about language to wider questions about the images that Dharker introduces. Have them work in pairs and then fours to see if they can answer each other’s questions. Only when they have questions that they cannot answer should they feed back as part of a whole-class discussion.

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analysing language, form and structure

LEARNING CHECKPOINT

Before students attempt the activity, point out that the phrase in lines 1–2 is a literal description of tissue paper. In what ways can it be read as a metaphorical description, and what does this add to our understanding of the whole poem? For example, if it is a metaphor, what ‘light’ might we be talking about? The light of knowledge perhaps? Inspiration? In that way, paper lets the ‘light’ of another mind through when words are written on it.

Key idea

Differentiation

The poem lists a number of possible uses for paper. Ask less confident students to highlight or underline each one – for example, maps, receipts – and decide what the connotations are in each case. Is there a sense of progression or development in this use throughout the poem?
Differentiation

The poem can be divided, structurally, into three sections. Ask more confident students where they think these sections are, and what divides them. Ask students to justify their choices for dividing the poem. The poet also uses the conditional four times throughout the poem (lines 3, 13–14, 24 and 25). How does this sense of tentativeness, of possibility, affect the ways in which we read the poem? For example, in lines 2–3 and 25, is Dharker making a suggestion, offering a possibility, instructing, or defining?

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

Your response

Extension

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:

Audio: A reading of ‘Tissue’

In this Teacher’s Resource:

Link: An informative biography of Dharker can be found at the Poetry Archive website

Link: Related information can be found on Dharker’s own website

Link: An online definition of ‘tissue’ can be used as a starting point for student discussion
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the key features of the poem’s form
• understand the major themes and ideas presented in the poem
• be able to explain how Rumens uses the form and structure of the poem to enhance her ideas
• be able to analyse how Rumen’s use of language enhances her purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS
First impressions
Ask students to underline each appearance of first person pronouns in the poem. Ask them to note their frequency and pattern, and use this to inform the Student Book activity. Develop this by asking them to highlight all the third person pronouns, first singular, and then plural in a different colour. What patterns can they discern, and why is this significant when it comes to understanding the poem’s depiction of childhood memory? For example, you might notice the shift from ‘I’ (where the speaker is the subject) to ‘me’ (where the speaker is the object), mirroring a shift from adult memory to childhood. Initially, the speaker is in control, she remembers, but as the poem goes on, it seems to be the city that is in control, the city that does things to her instead. How would the poem be different if the pronouns were plural when they are single, and vice-versa? If it was ‘we’ instead of ‘I’? The individuality of the personal voice is very striking and may make the speaker seem more isolated.

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings
1 Ask students to also highlight words which create contrasts or suggest ambivalence. How many can they find? Are the contrasts bridged, linked, or simply laid against each other? Again, examining language in this kind of detail can allow students to think carefully about language choice. For example, the speaker’s choice of words in line 4 suggest that she is not in control of the information, and is perhaps uncertain of its validity.

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE
Analysing language, form and structure
Key idea

Differentiation
For less confident students, look closely at the poem and after reading it through, ask them to pick out the verbs which are in the first person. What does the speaker, ‘I’, actually do?
In what ways do the verbs attached to the ‘I’ tell the story of the poem and highlight personal experience, and how is their effect diluted by the other images that are scattered throughout the poem?
Differentiation

Ask more confident students to pick out the similes and metaphors in the poem, highlighting each in a different colour. What do they notice? They should see that the poem has almost no similes, it’s all metaphor. What is the difference in effect between similes and metaphors, and why might the poet choose one rather than the other?

Ask them to write a paragraph about the difference between similes and metaphors, using words such as ‘however’ to show the contrast between the effect of each kind of image.

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

Your response

Extension

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:
Audio: A reading of ‘The Emigrée’

In this Teacher’s Resource:
Link: Information about the poet can be found at Carol Rumens’ own website
Link: A biography of the poet, and a reading of some of her other work, can be found at the Poetry Archive website
Link: ‘The Emigrée’ was a poem chosen for the project Poetry by Heart; the Poetry by Heart website has some additional information about the language of the poem
Link: An interview with Rumens investigating some of the contexts of her poetry, including ‘The Emigrée’, can be found at the Scriptmania website
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit students should:

• be able to describe the key features of the poem’s form
• understand the story of the poem and its major themes
• be able to explain how Garland uses the form and structure of the poem to enhance her ideas
• be able to analyse how Garland’s use of language enhances her purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU

A good way to approach the discussion in the Student Book is to show students the interview with the kamikaze warrior who never got to fly his mission (see the Cambridge Elevate Resources section). How does he feel about missing his chance to fly the mission? How do you think his feelings might relate to the feelings of the man in the poem who chose not to complete his mission?

There are also a number of videos available on YouTube (see the Cambridge Elevate Resources section) that can help put the poem into context. A search for ‘WW2 Kamikaze’ will locate an informational video about Kamikaze fighters, while one for ‘USS John Burke Kamikaze’ finds a clip of a Kamikaze fighter hitting an ammunition ship, giving some idea of the scale of the possible damage caused by these missions, and perhaps a sense of why the fighter in the poem thinks twice.

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions

1 When students have completed this activity, ask them to match each of the words to quotations from the poem.

2 Before they begin this activity, ask students to consider how many of the quotations they identified in activity 1 link to men, and how many to women or children.

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings

It is useful to explore how the poem powerfully describes two very different attitudes towards life and death. One suggests that honour is the most important thing, the other suggests that survival is the most important. Ask students to write these two words as headings on a piece of paper. Which words and phrases in the poem celebrate life, and which celebrate honour? Ask students to write them under each heading. Which set of words is most powerful, and why?

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analysing language, form and structure

Key idea

Differentiation

For less confident students, point out that within the poem there are a number of powerful symbolic images. For example, in stanza 1 they might identify the sword, in stanza 2 the bunting, in stanza 3 the flag, in stanza 4 the cairns of stones, and so on. Ask students to explain why each of these images are important in the poem, and in what ways they might be connected. For example, ‘bunting’ links to ‘flag’ because bunting is made out of small flags; ‘flag’ links to ‘cairn’ because sometimes explorers put flags on top of cairns to mark them, and so on.

Differentiation

Ask more confident students to highlight the last word of each stanza:

1 history
2 sea
3 sun
4 safe
5 dangerous
6 laughed
7 die

It could be argued that these words are especially significant for the poem, and that each represents their stanza particularly powerfully. Ask students to write a sentence for each word explaining why the poet has chosen to end the stanza with it, and what this suggests. You could model the first word as an example:
In stanza 1, the final word reminds us of the ways in which the story that we are telling is a part of history. The pilot may not have written himself into the kind of history that he imagined, but he has written himself into a family history – or even ‘herstory’ – a history told by women. The placing of the word at the end of the line emphasises its finality.

GETTING CREATIVE

Putting yourself into an unfamiliar situation

It can be difficult for people to imagine the strength of feeling that would accompany a failure of honour in the context that the poem suggests. It may help students to investigate some of the ways in which non-combatants in World War 1 and World War 2 were similarly marginalised and shamed by their families and communities.

Extension

CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:

Audio: A reading of ‘Kamikaze’ (read by Beatrice Garland)

In this Teacher’s Resource:

Link: Garland’s own website gives information about her other works, as well as ‘Kamikaze’

Link: An interview with a Kamikaze pilot who never got to fly his mission can be found at Bloomberg’s website – it can be used as an engaging introduction to the poem

Link: Footage from 1945 (in colour) showing Kamikaze pilots involved in a naval battle can be found on YouTube by searching for ‘1945 Kamikaze’

Link: The film The Pacifist Who Went to War offers an interesting account of the problems facing both conscientious objectors and those who chose to reject this stance in the Mennonite church – it can be found at the National Film Board of Canada’s website.
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
At the end of the unit students should:
• be able to describe the key features of the poem’s form
• understand the story of the poem and its major themes
• be able to explain how Agard uses the form and structure of the poem to enhance his ideas
• be able to analyse how Agard’s use of language enhances his purpose, using selected details from the poem to support each point
• be able to compare the key themes in this poem to another poem or poems
• be able to write a concise and focussed response to a question that makes a judgement as to the poem’s effectiveness.

Key ideas and keywords for this poem

GETTING STARTED – THE POEM AND YOU

Extension

GETTING CLOSER – FOCUS ON DETAILS

First impressions
Give students a section of the poem and ask them to recreate it using their own ideas about what they should be taught in school. As a model you can explain that the first lines would be ‘They tell me / They tell me / The things that they want to tell me’. What do students think that they are being told, and what would they like to learn about? They should try to connect these two things, for example, they might say ‘They tell me about learning times tables / but not about how to make a table’ or ‘They tell me about how to speak Spanish / but not about how to catch a fish’.

Interpreting themes, ideas, attitudes and feelings
Ask students to imagine that they are trying to defend the Eurocentric type of history described by Agard in the poem. How would they justify teaching an Afro-Caribbean child about Dick Whittington or 1066? What could they say to justify the choice of teaching about Napoleon and not about Toussaint?

Then ask them to reflect on the history that they have been taught at school. What is the first kind of history that they can remember being taught? Was it relevant and important to them on a personal level? Why/why not?

Contrast this with the ‘family history’ that they may know. Who are their personal heroes and why? How does this connect to Agard’s themes and ideas about the important things left out of the history that he has been told?

PUTTING DETAILS TO USE

Analysing language, form and structure

Key idea

Differentiation
For less confident students, point out that repetition is an important feature of the poem. Ask them to mark out the repeated words and phrases, and to consider why they are repeated. What does this emphasis do to the poem?

Is there a sense of progression in the poem, or are all the people mentioned of equal importance?

Differentiation
Ask more confident students what we can infer about the speaker of the poem from his protests about history. For each point that he makes in the poem, ask students to note down an equivalent character trait. For example, the title of the poem ‘Checking Out Me History’ might suggest that he does not trust what he is told. As well as the informal sense of the phrase ‘checking out’, the word ‘checking’ implies that he is not going to take anything for granted.

GETTING IT INTO WRITING

Extension

15 Checking Out Me History
CAMBRIDGE ELEVATE RESOURCES

In the Student Book:

Audio: A reading of ‘Checking Out Me History’

In this Teacher’s Resource:

Link: Another outlook on the telling of history, which can be used to add perspective to Agard’s views, can be found at the History to Herstory website

Link: The John Agard page on the Poetry Archive website has a biography and details of his other poems, as well as recordings of him reading from his work