The Passionate Shepherd to His Love
by Christopher Marlowe

First thoughts
Written in the late sixteenth century, this love poem presents the countryside as beautiful, romantic and peaceful.
1. People often dream of moving from the city to the countryside. Why?
2. In the poem, the shepherd is speaking to his love. What does he want?
3. How would you persuade someone to do this?

Looking more closely
1. List all the things that the shepherd offers his love. What kinds of things are they? Organise them under these headings, or choose your own:
   - The beauty of nature
   - Luxuries
   - Entertainment

2. a Which of the shepherd’s promises would be easiest for him to keep?
   b Which would be most difficult?
   c What does this suggest about the shepherd and his promises?
3. Look at the quantity of things the shepherd offers as the poem progresses. What does this suggest about his love’s response to these offers?

Developing your ideas
1. The shepherd repeats one phrase three times. What is it?
2. Do you think this suggests he is:
   - trying to be persuasive
   - desperate
   - something else?
   Explain your reasons.
3. This is a pastoral poem: one where the countryside is shown as perfect, with all the less attractive aspects left out.
   a. Identify details that suggest the shepherd is presenting an unrealistic picture of country life.
   b. Why does he do this?

Developing a personal response
Look at this range of different views about the poem.

- Marlowe presents an idealised view of the countryside and of love. He wants the reader to enjoy this romantic dream and envy this life.
- The shepherd is not interested in a long-term commitment. He wants a sexual relationship and is desperately trying to be persuasive.
- The shepherd lives a simple life in which the past and the future do not matter. He is offering all he can so that, together, he and his love can enjoy the beauty of nature.
- The shepherd makes increasingly impossible promises. This is a typical romantic gesture, which shows how much he wants to be with his love.
- Marlowe is writing ironically about the exaggerations in the shepherd’s promises, and the unrealistic dreams some town-dwellers have about life in the countryside.

1. Find evidence for each of these points of view.
2. Write a sentence or two explaining how and why your evidence supports each point of view.

Objective 2 (page 134). Include evidence to support your points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer/Self-assessment</th>
<th>Activity 4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Read this paragraph, written in response to the task:</td>
<td>A clear point Evidence to support the point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| How does Marlowe present love in ‘The Passionate Shepherd to His Love’? | The shepherd makes increasingly impossible promises. This is a typical romantic gesture, which shows how much he wants to be with his love: ‘And I will make thee beds of roses And a thousand fragrant posies’.
| 2. Write a paragraph giving your own response to the task. | By describing how he will bring the beauty of nature to his love, he is illustrating the beautiful, natural life she will enjoy if she comes to live with him. The poem is full of persuasive, romantic and often exaggerated language, such as ‘fragrant’ and ‘a thousand’, but the mention of ‘beds’ could be a clue to the shepherd’s real intentions. |
| Use the same structure as the paragraph on the right. | |
| Annotate your paragraph, using the same notes as for the paragraph on the right. | |
| If you have forgotten to include anything in your paragraph, add it in. | |
| 4. Which criteria in Assessment Objective 2 on page 134 have you demonstrated in your paragraph? | |

An explanation of the effect of the quotation A different possible interpretation Class focus on particular word choice
The Sun Rising
by John Donne

First thoughts
In ‘The Sun Rising’, Donne creates an argument about the power of love that follows three steps:

1. Identify which part of the poem presents which part of each argument.
2. Which adjectives best describe Donne’s argument in this poem?
   - romantic
   - ridiculous
   - arrogant
   - logical
   - something else?

Looking more closely
1. Donne personifies the sun (treats it as if it were a person). He calls it:
   - ‘Busy old fool’ ‘unruly’ ‘Saucy pedantic wretch’
   - What does this suggest about his attitude to the sun?
   - a) He does not want to lose sight of his lover for so long.
   - b) Donne tells the sun to stop bothering them, and to do some of its everyday work instead:
     - ‘eclipse and cloud’ the sun’s beams ‘with a wink’
     - What does this suggest about the poet’s view of himself and his lover?
   - c) Donne says that he could:
     - ‘blinded thine’
     - What does this suggest about his relationship with his lover?
   - d) What does it suggest about the power that he feels love has given him?
   - e) Donne tells the sun to look around the world, ‘If her eyes have not
     - What does this suggest about his lover?

2. Their love is like
   - but even greater
   - a) whole world.

3. Therefore by shining on
   - their bedroom, the sun is shining on the whole world.

Activity 1

1. The sun has woken Donne and his lover, and he wishes it would go away.
2. Their love is like – but even greater than – a whole world.
3. Therefore by shining on their bedroom, the sun is shining on the whole world.

Activity 2

1. Identify which part of the poem presents which part of each argument.
2. Which adjectives best describe Donne’s argument in this poem?
   - romantic
   - ridiculous
   - arrogant
   - logical
   - something else?

Activity 3

Developing your ideas
In this poem, Donne takes the poetic genre of the aubade – in which lovers who must part at dawn say a sad goodbye – and transforms it into an argument against the dawn.

1. One technique Donne uses is hyperbole (exaggeration).
   - a) Find at least three examples of hyperbole.
   - b) Quote each one and write a short explanation of its effect.

2. Donne also uses the technique of a conceit (an extended metaphor that finds a surprising resemblance between two very different things).
   - a) To what does Donne compare himself and his lover?
   - b) What is strange and surprising about this?
   - c) Compare this with Donne’s earlier abuse and mockery of the sun. What is the effect of these contrasting attitudes?

3. At the start of the poem, Donne takes an angry tone with the sun. By the end, the tone has changed: Donne is inviting the sun to shine on his world.
   - a) Why does Donne think the sun is ‘half as happy as we’?
   - b) Donne says to the sun ‘Thine age asks ease’. What does he mean by this?
   - c) What does this change in tone suggest about his attitude to the sun?

Activity 4

Developing a personal response
1. Is this poem about the arrogance and self-importance of the poet? Or the power of love? Look particularly at the last stanza. Choose at least one quotation and write a sentence or two explaining your answer.

2. What does this poem suggest to you about the power of love?
   - Love is more powerful than the world’s rulers, the sun, or anything.
   - Love makes people feel more important than they really are.
   - Love makes people feel good.
   - Lovers do not want to be disturbed in the morning.
   - Something else.

Peer/Self-assessment

1. Answer true or false to the following statements. I can find evidence for and comment on:
   - a) Donne’s anger at the sun
   - b) why Donne compares himself and his lover to the world and its rulers
   - c) why Donne welcomes the sun at the end of the poem
   - d) what this poem suggests to me about lovers and love
   - e) my response to the poem.

2. If you answered ‘false’ to any statements, compare your ideas with a partner. Look again at the poem and your answers to the questions on these pages to help you.

3. a) Write two paragraphs responding to the task: How is love presented in ‘The Sun Rising’?
   - b) Look at the grade descriptors on pages 148–155. What grade would you award your response?
Cousin Kate
by Christina Rossetti

Exploring the poems

You can achieve a high grade if you:
- make detailed reference to the ideas, language and structure Rossetti uses to convey the narrator’s thoughts and viewpoint, and to create the poem’s mood.
- use well-chosen quotations from the poem to support your points on theme, content, language and structure.
- explore comparisons and links that you can make between this poem of love and rejection and other texts with similar themes.

My learning objectives
- to explore the themes of the poem, including love.
- to develop my response to Rossetti’s poem.
- to assess my work on Rossetti’s poem against the criteria in Assessment Objective 2 (page 114).

Grade Studio
Examiner tips

Poem Glossary
Flaxen: fair, blonde
Mean estate: a life of poverty
Coronet: small crown worn by a nobleman

First thoughts
1 ‘Cousin Kate’ is a narrative poem – it tells a story. Place these key events in the order in which they appear in the poem.
   - The narrator is a naive country girl.
   - The narrator is seduced by a lord and becomes his lover.
   - The narrator has a son.
   - The narrator is rejected by the lord.
   - The lord notices the narrator’s cousin, Kate.
   - The lord marries Kate.
2 The story is told in the first person (‘I’). How might this affect the reader’s reaction?
3 ‘Cousin Kate’ was written more than 100 years ago. What does it tell you about attitudes to love, marriage and unmarried mothers at that time?

Looking more closely
1 Look at stanza 1. What evidence is there that the narrator was innocent before the lord seduced her? Why does she emphasise this at the beginning?
2 The narrator uses powerful language to describe her treatment and her reaction to it. For example: ‘unclean’ ‘outcast’ ‘howl’ ‘spit’
   a Write a sentence or two commenting on the effect of each of these words in the poem.
   b How does this language choice contribute to the tone or mood of the poem?
3 An oxymoron is where two apparently contradictory words are placed together. For example, the narrator says the lord tempted her into a ‘ Shameless shameful life ’.
   a In what way was her life shameful?
   b In what way was it shameless?
   c How does this oxymoron express the narrator’s confused feelings?
4 The narrator uses contrast throughout the poem. For example, she contrasts:
   - her cottage with the lord’s palace
   - what the neighbours call her with what they call Kate.
   a What effect does each of these contrasts have?
   b Find two more examples of contrast and write a sentence or two commenting on their effect.

Developing your ideas
1 The narrator describes her treatment by the lord using two similes: ‘He wore me like a silken knot, He changed me like a glove’
   What do these suggest about the lord’s attitude to her?
2 The narrator describes herself as ‘a cottage maiden / Hardened by sun and air’
   Similarly, Kate is from ‘mean estate’, working ‘among the rye’.
   Why does this seem to add to the narrator’s anger?
3 The narrator describes Kate’s relationship to the lord as ‘bound’ with a ring. What does this word suggest about her feelings?
4 The poem has a rigid structure. Most of its language is simple and monosyllabic (in words of one syllable). What kind of voice do you imagine the narrator using as she tells her story in this way?
5 The last stanza introduces a different kind of love.
   a How would you describe the change of mood here?
   b How does the narrator describe her son?
   c How does she think that Kate and the lord feel about her son?
   d The narrator does not tell us about her child until the very end of the poem.
   Why might the writer have decided to structure the poem in this way?

Developing a personal response
1 The narrator says that, if she were in Kate’s position, she would not have married the lord. Do you think this suggests:
   - she is jealous of Kate
   - she is glad to be rid of the lord
   - she is judging the lord in the same way that society has judged her – and making a point about the different ways society judges men and women
   - something else entirely?
2 a The lord is not named. How does this affect your response to him?
   b The narrator is not named either. How does this affect your response to her?

Peer/Self-assessment
1 Write two paragraphs responding to the task: How is the love between the narrator and the lord presented in ‘Cousin Kate’?
2 Look at the grade descriptors on pages 148–155. What grade would you award your response?
3 What could you change or add to improve your response? Use the grade descriptors to identify the two things most likely to improve your grade.
4 Redraft your answer, trying to make those changes.
5 Look again at the grade descriptors. Have you improved your grade?
Sonnet 18
by William Shakespeare

In the opening line, the narrator wonders whether to compare ‘thee’ (you) to a summer’s day. Do you think the narrator is talking to?

1. Look at the first two lines. Which does the narrator think is better: ‘a summer’s day’ or ‘thee’?
2. In what ways is one better?

The narrator goes on to list four ways in which a summer’s day is not perfect.

In the opening line, the narrator wonders whether to compare ‘thee’ (you) to a summer’s day. Do you think the narrator is talking to?

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In the opening line, the narrator wonders whether to compare ‘thee’ (you) to a summer’s day. Do you think the narrator is talking to?

1. Look at the first two lines. Which does the narrator think is better: ‘a summer’s day’ or ‘thee’?
2. In what ways is one better?
Sonnet 43
by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

First thoughts
Elizabeth Barrett married fellow poet Robert Browning (to whom this sonnet is addressed) even though her father did not want her to ever marry. The couple went to live in Italy to escape his disapproval.

One phrase is repeated throughout the poem.
1 What is it?
2 How many times is it repeated?
3 What does this suggest about the poem’s purpose?

Looking more closely
1 Barrett Browning tries to measure her love in lines 2 and 3.
   a How does she measure it?
   b What do these measurements suggest about her love?
2 Barrett Browning goes on to say her love is similar to (‘to the level of’) the basic needs of life (‘every day’s / Most quiet need’).
   a What are the basic requirements of life?
   b If she needs his love to the same degree, what does this suggest about her love?
3 In lines 7, 8 and 9, Barrett Browning describes three ways in which she loves.
   a What are they?
   b Write a short comment on each, and on their combined effect: why did Barrett Browning choose them?
4 In lines 9–12, Barrett Browning compares the passion of her love with the passion of her religious faith in childhood, and of her ‘old griefs’ (perhaps the deaths of close relatives, as well as family problems over her marriage).
   a What effect is created by the contrast between her love now and her past experiences?
   b Barrett Browning compares her childhood feelings and thoughts with those she has now. What does this suggest about her love?
5 The poem concludes with two clear declarations of love.
   a What does the triplet of ‘breath, / Smiles, tears’ suggest about her love?
   b According to the final line, how long does Barrett Browning hope their love will last?
   c What is the effect of this ending to the poem?

Developing your ideas
1 The poem starts with a question, which it goes on to answer. What effect do you think Barrett Browning intends this question to have on the reader?
   a How successful is Barrett Browning in counting and measuring her love?
   b What does this suggest about her love?
2 Some of the things to which she compares her love are simple and mundane (‘the level of every day’s / Most quiet need’) and some are complex and spiritual (‘a love I seemed to lose / With my lost saints’). What effect does this contrast have?
3 Although much of the poem’s language is positive, some is not.
   a Identify at least two examples of negative language.
   b What do you notice about their position in the poem? Are they at the beginning, middle or end?
   c Why do you think Barrett Browning chooses this position to introduce negative language?
4 Barrett Browning also uses alliteration throughout the poem.
   a How many examples can you spot?
   b What effect do they have?

Developing a personal response
1 In one part of the poem, Barrett Browning could be suggesting that she has lost her religious faith.
   a Can you find evidence to support this statement?
   b Can you find evidence to contradict it?
2 We might expect a love poem to praise its subject’s beauty, kindness or other qualities.
   a What does the poem tell us about the physical appearance or positive qualities of Barrett Browning’s lover?
   b Why do you think this is?
3 The poem explores many ways in which Barrett Browning loves. Are there any ’ways’ she does not explore? Why do you think this might be?

Peer/Self-assessment
1 Write two paragraphs responding to the task:
   a How is love presented in ‘Sonnet 43’?
   b How is love presented in ‘Sonnet 43’?
2 Look at the grade descriptors on pages 148–155. What grade would you award your response?
3 What could you change or add to improve your response? Use the grade descriptors to identify the two things most likely to improve your grade.
4 Redraft your answer, trying to make those changes.
5 Look again at the grade descriptors. Have you improved your grade?
Valentine
by Carol Ann Duffy

First thoughts
1 What would you give as a Valentine’s Day gift to someone you loved? A red rose, a satin heart, a cute card, or an onion?
2 Why do you think the poet has chosen to give an onion?
3 In the poem, Duffy makes surprising connections between love and an onion. For example: ‘It will blind you with tears like a lover.’
   a In what way can an onion blind you with tears?
   b In what ways can a lover blind you with tears? Try to think of at least two.

Looking more closely
1 Find at least three more connections Duffy makes between love and an onion. For each, write down:
   a a short quotation that shows the connection
   b a sentence or two explaining what it suggests about an onion and about love.
2 How would you describe Duffy’s attitude to love? Is it positive, negative, or both? Choose quotations to support your answer.

Developing your ideas
1 Near the beginning of the poem, Duffy compares an onion to ‘a moon wrapped in brown paper’ which ‘promises light’ and is ‘like the careful undressing of love’.
   a What connections can you see between an onion, love, the moon, brown paper and undressing? Copy the diagram below and write your ideas alongside each arrow.

   an onion
   brown paper
   the moon
   undressing
   love

   b Why do you think Duffy uses this image to introduce the idea of an onion as a symbol of love?

2 Duffy chooses an intriguing combination of words to describe the experience of love: ‘blind’ ‘grief’ ‘truthful’ ‘fierece’ ‘possessive’ ‘faithful’ ‘shrink’ ‘lethal’ ‘cling’ ‘knife’

   Look at how each of them is used. Write a sentence or two about why you think Duffy chooses each one. For example:

   3 Three of the stanzas have only one line. 
   a Can you make any connection between them?
   b What effect do they have?
   c The word ‘lethal’ is given a line to itself. What effect does this have?

4 Stanza 2 begins with a clear statement: ‘I give you an onion.’
   a Who is Duffy talking to here – and throughout the poem?
   b What kind of language does she choose – complex or simple? Why do you think this is?

5 Duffy starts two stanzas with very short, blunt sentences: ‘Here.’ ‘Take it.’
   a What do these lines suggest Duffy is doing?
   b What do they suggest about her lover’s reaction?

Developing a personal response
1 What impressions does the poem give you of the writer’s attitude to love, and to this particular relationship? Look at these different answers to the question:

   Student A
   Duffy wants to write honestly about this relationship, and this is reflected in her decision to give her lover an onion. She chooses not to give an obvious, traditional gift but something that allows her to explore her true feelings.

   Student B
   Duffy seems to have a negative attitude to love in ‘Valentine’. Although she writes about ‘fierece kisses’ and being ‘faithful’, she adds the word ‘possessive’, turning two positives into a negative. In the end, she describes the ‘platinum loops’ of the onion shrinking to a wedding ring. The word ‘shrinks’ suggests that marriage is not a happy ending. She emphasises this point by immediately adding the word ‘lethal’.

2 Which of these answers do you agree with most?
3 Look at the grade descriptors on pages 148–155. Which of these answers do you think would achieve the highest grade? Why?
4 Write a paragraph giving your own response to the question.

Peer/Self-assessment
1 Look again at the paragraph you have written in answer to the question above, and at the grade descriptors on pages 148–155. What grade would you award your answer?
2 What could you change or add to improve your answer? Use the grade descriptors to identify the two things most likely to improve your grade.
3 Redraft your answer, trying to make those changes.
4 Look once again at the grade descriptors. Have you improved your grade?
A Frosty Night

by Robert Graves

First thoughts
1. ‘A Frosty Night’ tells of a conversation between two characters. Who are they?
2. When does the conversation take place?
3. What has just happened to prompt this conversation?
4. Is the relationship between these two characters presented positively or negatively?
5. In this poem, two different kinds of love are competing for Alice’s attention and loyalty. What kinds of love are they?

Looking more closely
1. Look again at the poem. Decide which character says which lines.
2. Look again at the first three stanzas. In these, the mother speaks four sentences. What kind of sentences are they?
   a. What is the mother doing?
   b. What does this suggest about their relationship?
   c. Alice is trying to write a letter. Who do you think she is writing to?
3. Alice’s mother does not seem convinced by her explanation. She says that although it is cold outside, Alice was behaving as though birds were ‘twittering / Through green boughs of June’ and that she was skipping higher than ‘all the lambs of May-day’. What does she say?
   a. How does Alice’s mother know that she was behaving in this way?
   b. What does this suggest about Alice’s mother?
   c. What is Alice’s mother suggesting happened outside?
   d. Why has the poet chosen to make a comparison between Alice’s behaviour and things that happen in spring and summer?
4. In the final two lines of the poem, the mother confronts Alice with her final question.
   a. What does Alice mean when she replies, ‘Mother, let me go!’?
   b. Try to think of two different possible answers to this question.

Activities

Activity 2
- Choose three quotations from those given below, and use them to write three paragraphs in which you:
  - respond to the task
  - comment on the effect of the writer’s choice of language.

Activity 4
1. Different people respond to poems in different ways.
   a. Choose some words from the list on the right – careless, romantic, secretive, calculating, emotional, naive, interfering – to describe how you respond to:
      - the mother
      - Alice
      - their relationship
   b. What would they say about:
      - the mother?
      - Alice?
      - their relationship?

Peer/Self-assessment
1. You are going to explore this question:
   ‘A Frosty Night’ explores the conflict between two kinds of love: parental and romantic. How does it present them?
2. Which criteria in Assessment Objective 2 on page 134 have you demonstrated in your answer?
The Flea
by John Donne

First thoughts
1 What do you think of when you think about fleas? List some words.
2 The ‘Flea’ is a seduction poem: a man tries to persuade a woman to give up her virginity and sleep with him. Can you see any connections between the list of words you wrote and the poem’s subject?

Looking more closely
1 The poem uses the second person ‘thee’ (you) and it is written as a one-sided dialogue – we don’t hear the woman’s responses. What effect does this create?
2 At the start of the poem, Donne asks us to look at this flea. What do you imagine him doing at this point?
3 In line 2, Donne complains that the woman is denying him. What is she denying him?
4 Donne compares himself, the woman and their relationship to the flea. What is he suggesting? Should he be taken seriously?
5 In stanza 2, the woman seems to threaten to kill the flea. Look carefully at the last three lines. What kind of language does he use to try to stop her?
6 In stanza 3, the woman has ‘Purpled’ her nail. What has she done? Do you think the reader is meant to find this funny?
7 Finally, Donne agrees that killing the flea has not weakened him or the woman, so its death is unimportant. How does he use this to make one last attempt to persuade her?

Developing your ideas
1 Donne’s poem has its own strange logic. In which stanza does he present which arguments to make which points? Copy the notes below, matching the stanza numbers, arguments and points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In stanza</th>
<th>he argues that</th>
<th>to make the point that</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Their blood mingling in the flea is a kind of marriage and therefore she should not kill the flea</td>
<td>She will not damage anyone’s honour if she has sex with him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Killing the flea hasn’t hurt or weakened either of them</td>
<td>Having sex should cause no shame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Their blood mingling inside the flea is not a sin and has caused no shame</td>
<td>She should respect the ‘marriage’ they already have and show generosity to him</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity 1

Activity 2

Activity 3

Activity 4

Developing a personal response
1 a Why do you think Donne chooses something as insignificant as a flea to represent his subject, even though it is clearly important to the narrator?
b Using a flea as the central metaphor in a love poem seems extremely odd. In what ways is it an effective metaphor for a sexual relationship?
2 Do you think Donne’s argument would persuade the woman? Why?
3 What do you think of the way he reverses his argument at the end?

Peer/Self-assessment
1 You are going to explore this question: In ‘The Flea’, Donne explores his love relationship with a woman. How does he present it?


2 Which criteria in Assessment Objective 2 on page 134 have you demonstrated in your answer?
Holy Sonnet 17
by John Donne

First thoughts
This poem was written shortly after Donne's wife died in childbirth.
1. What would you expect from a poem written under these circumstances?
2. Look at the language. What has his wife's death led Donne to think about? Is this a conventional love sonnet?

Looking more closely
1. The word 'death' does not appear in the poem. Donne simply says that the woman he loved has ‘paid her last debt’. If life is a debt we must pay back, who do we owe it to?
2. Donne tells us that his wife's 'soul' has been 'early into heaven ravished'. Consider the words 'early' and 'ravished'. What does Donne's language choice suggest about his feelings regarding her death?
3. Donne says that the death of his wife, who was so close to God, has encouraged him – 'whet' his 'mind' – to seek God. He sums this up with a comparison: 'so streams do show the head'. What do you think he means? Refer to the Glossary opposite.
4. In the middle of the sonnet, in lines 7 and 8, Donne declares the problem he is wrestling with. As in the rest of the poem, he uses the second person 'thee' (you).
   a. Who is Donne talking to?
   b. What is the problem he is trying to solve?
5. In the last six lines, Donne tells God that he fears his love for his wife and for the things of this world will put God out of his mind. He says that God:
   a. Which three words does Donne use to sum up earthly love?
   b. Which three words does he use to sum up heavenly love?
   c. What effect is created by using these two ‘patterns of three’ to describe the two loves fighting within him?

Poem Glossary

Ravish: take by force or with violence
What: sharpen or stimulate
Dropsy: disease in which the body retains water and the sufferer is constantly thirsty
Woo: seek someone's love

Developing your ideas
1. The poem makes a number of references to water. What is Donne suggesting through the metaphor of water?
2. Look closely at this quotation: ‘Wholly on heavenly things my mind is set.’ How would you describe Donne's tone as he addresses God in the first half of the poem, and in this quotation in particular?
3. Now look closely at this quotation: ‘But why should I beg more love’
   a. How would you describe Donne's tone as he addresses God in the second half of the poem, and in this quotation in particular?
   b. In what way has the tone changed? Why?
4. Look at the language Donne uses to describe God's actions and feelings: ‘ravished’ ‘woo’ ‘tender jealousy’
   a. Would you expect to find these words in a religious poem? Where would you expect to find them?
   b. What does this suggest about Donne's relationship with God?

Developing a personal response
1. This poem is both a love sonnet and a religious sonnet. What is the effect of the conflict between these two subjects?
2. a. Has Donne solved his problem by the end of the sonnet?
   b. Why do you think Donne chooses to end the poem at this point?

Peer/Self-assessment
1. Read this paragraph written in response to the task:
   How does ‘Holy Sonnet 17’ explore Donne's reaction to the death of his much-loved wife?
2. Write a paragraph giving your own response to the task. Use the same structure as the paragraph on the right. If you have forgotten to include anything in your paragraph, add it in.
3. Annotate your paragraph using the same notes as the paragraph on the right. If you have forgotten to include anything in your paragraph, add it in.
4. Which criteria in Assessment Objective 2 on page 134 have you demonstrated in your paragraph?
Exploring the poems

Long Distance II

by Tony Harrison

First thoughts
1 The poem is spoken by a narrator. Who is the narrator, and what can you detect about him?
2 What is the narrator’s attitude towards his father?

Looking more closely
1 Re-read the first two stanzas and make a note of what you find out about his father and his actions.
2 What do you think the relationship is like between the father and child in the first two stanzas? Explain how strong you think the relationship is and find evidence in the poem for this.

Plot this on a graph like the one below.

Developing your ideas
1 In this poem the actions of the characters are very important; they say more about how characters are feeling than their words. List the actions that the father takes, and then the son’s, and comment on what they really mean.

Examiner tips
You can achieve a high grade if you:
● make detailed reference to the language and structure Harrison uses to convey the narrator’s thoughts
● use well-chosen quotations from the poem to support your points
● explore comparisons and links that you can make between this poem about parent/child relationships and other texts with similar themes.

Grade Studio
You can achieve a high grade if you:
● make detailed reference to the language and structure Harrison uses to convey the narrator’s thoughts
● use well-chosen quotations from the poem to support your points
● explore comparisons and links that you can make between this poem about parent/child relationships and other texts with similar themes.

Peer/Self-assessment
1 Read this paragraph written in response to the task: How does Harrison present a parent/child relationship in Long Distance II?
2 Write a paragraph giving your own response to the task. Use the same structure as the paragraph on the right.
3 Annotate your paragraph using the same notes as the paragraph on the right. If you have forgotten to include anything in your paragraph, add it in.
4 Which criteria in Assessment Objective 2 on page 134 have you demonstrated in your paragraph?

A clear point

Evidence to support the point

The poem is written from an adult’s point of view. The narrator is reflecting on his father: ‘You couldn’t just drop in. You had to phone.’ Harrison writes conversationally as if he is speaking to the reader; this is shown by the word ‘you’. He appears to show some annoyance because his father expects calls and does not like his son to visit without giving him sufficient warning. The use of short sentences appears to reflect his impatience.

Key focus on the writer’s choice of words

The idea is developed and shown the poet’s point of view

My learning objectives
● to explore the themes of the poem, including parent/child relationships
● to develop my response to Harrison’s poem
● to assess my work on Harrison’s poem against the criteria in Assessment Objective 2 (page 134).

Activity 1

Long Distance II

Activity 2

Strength of relationship

Activity 3

Activity 4

Developing a personal response
1 What have you learned about the narrator of the poem?
   How far can we trust his comments about his feelings?
2 One student said: ‘This poem shows that we are more like our parents than we like to think.’ How far do you agree that this statement is relevant to this poem?