

## My learning objectives ▼

- to explore the themes of the poem, including love
- to develop my response to Marlowe's poem
- to assess my work on Marlowe's poem against the criteria in Assessment Objective 2 (page 134).

## GradeStudio

## Examiner tips

You can achieve a high grade if you:

- make detailed reference to the language and structure Marlowe uses to create the narrator's voice and the ways in which he tries to persuade his lover
- 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 love poem and other texts with similar themes.

## Poem Glossary

**Prove:** test or try out  
**Grove:** small group of trees  
**Madrigal:** song  
**Kirtle:** loose gown or long dress  
**Myrtle:** evergreen plant  
**Amber:** fossilised tree resin, often used in jewellery  
**Swain:** young man

# 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.

- People often dream of moving from the city to the countryside. Why? List at least five qualities that people expect from life in the countryside.
- In the poem, the shepherd is speaking to his love. What does he want?
- How would you persuade someone to do this?

## Looking more closely

- 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

- Which of the shepherd's promises would be easiest for him to keep?
  - Which would be most difficult?
  - What does this suggest about the shepherd and his promises?
- 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

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

## Activity 1

## Activity 2

## Activity 3

- What does the shepherd tell us about how he met his love, and about their past?
  - Apart from all the promises he makes, what does the shepherd say about how their relationship might develop in the future?
  - The shepherd promises 'pleasures' twice: in line 2 and line 19. What does this suggest about the relationship he is offering?
  - Look again at the poem's title. How does this add to your response to question 3c?

## 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.

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

## Peer/Self-assessment

- Read this paragraph, written in response to the task:

**How does Marlowe present love in 'The Passionate Shepherd to His Love'?**

- Write a paragraph giving your own response to the task. 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.
- Which criteria in Assessment Objective 2 on page 134 have you demonstrated in your paragraph?

A clear point

Evidence to support the point

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' 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.

An explanation of the effect of the quotation

A different possible interpretation

Close focus on particular word choice



## My learning objectives ▼

- to explore the themes of the poem, including love
- to develop my response to Donne's poem
- to assess my work on Donne's poem against the criteria in Assessment Objective 2 (page 134).

## GradeStudio

## Examiner tips

You can achieve a high grade if you:

- make detailed reference to the language and ideas Donne uses to convey the narrator's thoughts
- 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 love poem and other texts with similar themes.



## Poem Glossary

**Busy:** nosy  
**Saucy:** cheeky  
**Pedantic:** fussy  
**Chide:** tell off  
**Sour:** miserable  
**Prentice:** apprentice  
**Offices:** jobs

## 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:

## 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.

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

## Activity 2

## Looking more closely

- 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 language choice suggest about his attitude to the sun?
  - Donne tells the sun to stop bothering them, and to do some of its everyday work instead: 'chide / Late school-boys' and 'Call country ants to harvest offices' What does this suggest about the poet's view of himself and his lover?
- Donne says that he could: 'eclipse and cloud' the sun's beams 'with a wink' but he does not want to lose sight of his lover for so long.
  - What does this suggest about his relationship with his lover?
  - What does it suggest about the power that he feels love has given him?
- Donne tells the sun to look around the world, 'If her eyes have not blinded thine'. What does this suggest about his lover?

## 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.

- One technique Donne uses is **hyperbole** (exaggeration).
  - Find at least three examples of hyperbole.
  - Quote each one and write a short explanation of its effect.
- Donne also uses the technique of a **conceit** (an extended metaphor that finds a surprising resemblance between two very different things).
  - To what does Donne compare himself and his lover?
  - What is strange and surprising about this?
  - Compare this with Donne's earlier abuse and mockery of the sun. What is the effect of these contrasting attitudes?
- 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.
  - Why does Donne think the sun is 'half as happy as we'?
  - Donne says to the sun 'Thine age asks ease'. What does he mean by this?
  - What does this change in tone suggest about his attitude to the sun?

## Activity 3

## Developing a personal response

- 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.
- 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.

## Activity 4

## Peer/Self-assessment

- Answer true or false to the following statements. I can find evidence for and comment on:
  - Donne's anger at the sun
  - why Donne compares himself and his lover to the world and its rulers
  - why Donne welcomes the sun at the end of the poem
  - what this poem suggests to me about lovers and love
  - my response to the poem.
- If you answered 'false' to any statements, compare your ideas with a partner's. Look again at the poem and your answers to the questions on these pages to help you.
- Write two paragraphs responding to the task: **How is love presented in 'The Sun Rising'?**
  - Look at the grade descriptors on pages 148–155. What grade would you award your response?





## 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 134).

## GradeStudio



## Examiner tips

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.

## Poem Glossary

**Flaxen:** fair, blonde

**Mean estate:** a life of poverty

**Coronet:** small crown worn by a nobleman

## Cousin Kate

by Christina Rossetti

## First thoughts

## Activity 1

- 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

## Activity 2

- 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 shameless?
  - b In what way was it shameful?
  - 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?

## Activity 3

## Activity 4



## My learning objectives ▼

- to explore the themes of the poem, including love
- to develop my response to Shakespeare's poem
- to assess my work on Shakespeare's poem against the criteria in Assessment Objective 2 (page 134).

## GradeStudio



## Examiner tips

You can achieve a high grade if you:

- make detailed reference to the ideas, language and structure Shakespeare uses to convey the narrator's thoughts and 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 love poem and other texts with similar themes.

## Poem Glossary

**Sonnet:** poem of 14 lines with a regular rhyme pattern, often about love  
**Temperate:** gentle, moderate  
**Lease:** temporary ownership for an agreed price  
**Fair:** beauty  
**Untrimm'd:** unaltered

## Sonnet 18

by William Shakespeare

## First thoughts

- In the opening line, the narrator wonders whether to compare 'thee' (you) to a summer's day. Who do you think the narrator is talking to?
- Look at the first two lines. Which does the narrator think is better: 'a summer's day' or 'thee'?
  - In what ways is one better?

## Activity 1

## Looking more closely

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

'Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,'

  - How is summer described as less than perfect here?
  - Why does the narrator describe the buds that grow in May as 'darling'?

'And summer's lease hath all too short a date:'

  - What is the problem with the length of time that summer's 'lease' lasts?
  - 'Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,'
  - What is this metaphor referring to?
  - What is the problem with summer in this line?

'And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,'

  - Whose gold complexion is the narrator referring to?
  - Compare this with the previous line. What is the problem now?
- In lines 7–8, the narrator explores a problem with all of nature.
  - In what way is nature changing throughout the year?
  - In what way does nature never change (its 'course' is 'untrimm'd') from year to year?
  - As years go by, what happens to beautiful people and things?
- In line 9, the narrator moves back to praising his lover.
  - Which word signals this change?
  - How does the narrator suggest that his lover is different from summer and nature?

## Activity 2

- What are the 'lines' to which the narrator refers in line 12?
- Look at the final two lines of the poem. To what does the word 'this' refer?
- The poem has four sections. Match the section to the description:

Lines 1–2	explain how his poem will give his lover immortality
Lines 3–8	compare his lover to a summer's day
Lines 9–12	explore the ways in which summer and nature are not perfect
Lines 13–14	explore the ways in which his lover is above nature

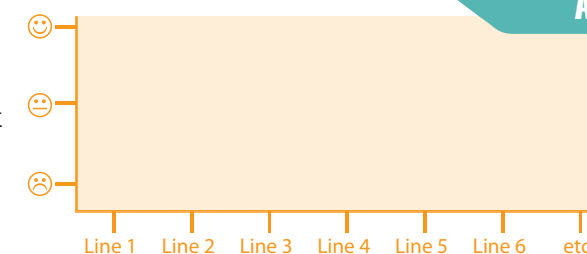
## Developing your ideas

- The narrator addresses his lover directly by using the second person – 'thee'. What effect does this have on the reader?
- Look at the nouns below. Which would complete the following sentence most accurately? 'Sonnet 18' is about ...  
 love nature summer beauty death life poetry decay  
 Rank them in order from most accurate to least accurate.

## Activity 3

## Developing a personal response

- Shakespeare ends the poem by promising that it will preserve his lover for ever. How do you think Shakespeare wants his lover to respond to this?
- Trace the mood of the poem by plotting each line on a mood graph like this one:



## Activity 4

## Peer/Self-assessment

- Read this paragraph written in response to the task:  
**How does Shakespeare present love in 'Sonnet 18'?**
- Write a paragraph giving your own response to the task. Use the same structure as the paragraph above.
- Annotate your paragraph using the same notes as the paragraph on the right. If you have forgotten to include anything, add it in.
- Which criteria in Assessment Objective 2 on page 134 have you demonstrated in your paragraph?

## A clear point

## Evidence to support the point

Shakespeare seems to praise the beauty of his lover, saying it will never fade: 'But thy eternal summer shall not fade' This metaphor suggests that his lover has all the beauty of summer but, unlike summer, it will last forever. The word 'but' signals a shift in the mood of the poem, from the negative description of summer's inevitable decay, to the positive description of his lover's beauty lasting forever. The reader might expect Shakespeare to compare his lover to the beauty of summer flowers or weather. However, by emphasising the future, he suggests how long-lasting his love will be.

An explanation of the effect of the quotation

Explores the writer's intentions

Close focus on particular word choice



## My learning objectives ▼

- to explore the themes of the poem, including love
- to develop my response to Barrett Browning's poem
- to assess my work on Barrett Browning's poem against the criteria in Assessment Objective 2 (page 134).

## GradeStudio



## Examiner tips

You can achieve a high grade if you:

- make detailed reference to the ideas, language and structure Barrett Browning uses to convey her thoughts
- 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 love poem and other texts with similar themes.

## Poem Glossary

**Sonnet:** poem of 14 lines with a regular rhyme pattern, often about love

**Breadth:** width

**Ideal Grace:** the grace of God

**Quiet need:** simple or basic need

**Turn from:** turn away from, avoid

## Sonnet 43

by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

## Activity 1

## 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.

- What is it?
- How many times is it repeated?
- What does this suggest about the poem's purpose?

## Activity 2

## Looking more closely

- Barrett Browning tries to measure her love in lines 2 and 3.
  - How does she measure it?
  - What do these measurements suggest about her love?
- 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').
  - What are the basic requirements of life?
  - If she needs his love to the same degree, what does this suggest about her love?
- In lines 7, 8 and 9, Barrett Browning describes three ways in which she loves.
  - What are they?
  - Write a short comment on each, and on their combined effect: why did Barrett Browning choose them?
- 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).
  - What effect is created by the contrast between her love now and her past experiences?
  - Barrett Browning compares her childhood feelings and thoughts with those she has now. What does this suggest about her love?
- The poem concludes with two clear declarations of love.
  - What does the triplet of 'breath, / Smiles, tears' suggest about her love?
  - According to the final line, how long does Barrett Browning hope their love will last?
  - What is the effect of this ending to the poem?

## Developing your ideas

- 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?
- How successful is Barrett Browning in counting and measuring her love?
  - What does this suggest about her love?
- 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?
- Although much of the poem's language is positive, some is not.
  - Identify at least two examples of negative language.
  - What do you notice about their position in the poem? Are they at the beginning, middle or end?
  - Why do you think Barrett Browning chooses this position to introduce negative language?
- Barrett Browning also uses alliteration throughout the poem.
  - How many examples can you spot?
  - What effect do they have?



## Activity 4

## Developing a personal response

- In one part of the poem, Barrett Browning could be suggesting that she has lost her religious faith.
  - Can you find evidence to support this statement?
  - Can you find evidence to contradict it?
- We might expect a love poem to praise its subject's beauty, kindness or other qualities.
  - What does the poem tell us about the physical appearance or positive qualities of Barrett Browning's lover?
  - Why do you think this is?
- 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

- Write two paragraphs responding to the task:  
**How is love presented in 'Sonnet 43'?**
- Look at the grade descriptors on pages 148–155. What grade would you award your response?
- 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.
- Redraft your answer, trying to make those changes.
- Look again at the grade descriptors. Have you improved your grade?





## My learning objectives ▼

- to explore the themes of the poem, including love
- to develop my response to Duffy's poem
- to assess my work on Duffy's poem against the criteria in Assessment Objective 2 (page 134).

## GradeStudio

## Examiner tips

You can achieve a high grade if you:

- make detailed reference to the ideas, language and structure Duffy uses to convey the narrator's thoughts
- 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 love poem and other texts with similar themes.



## Valentine

by Carol Ann Duffy

## First thoughts

- 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?
- Why do you think the poet has chosen to give an onion?
- In the poem, Duffy makes surprising connections between love and an onion. For example:  
*'It will blind you with tears like a lover.'*
  - In what way can an onion blind you with tears?
  - In what ways can a lover blind you with tears? Try to think of at least two.

## Activity 1

## Looking more closely

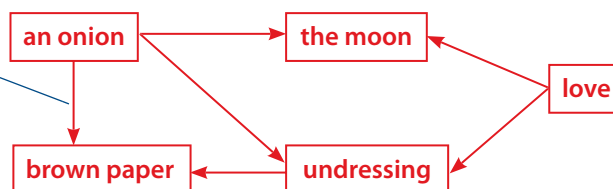
- Find at least three more connections Duffy makes between love and an onion. For each, write down:
  - a short quotation that shows the connection
  - a sentence or two explaining what it suggests about an onion and about love.
- How would you describe Duffy's attitude to love? Is it positive, negative,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

## Activity 2

## Developing your ideas

- 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'.
  - 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's outer skin is like brown paper



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

- Duffy chooses an intriguing combination of words to describe the experience of love: 'blind' 'grief' 'truthful' 'fierce' '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:

- Three of the stanzas have only one line.
  - Can you make any connection between them?
  - What effect do they have?
  - The word 'lethal' is given a line to itself. What effect does this have?
- Stanza 2 begins with a clear statement: *'I give you an onion.'*
  - Who is Duffy talking to here – and throughout the poem?
  - What kind of language does she choose – complex or simple? Why do you think this is?
- Duffy starts two stanzas with very short, blunt sentences: *'Here.'* *'Take it.'*
  - What do these lines suggest Duffy is doing?
  - What do they suggest about her lover's reaction?

Describing a kiss as 'fierce' suggests it is very passionate. However, it also makes me think the relationship may be violent and soon over.

## Developing a personal response

- 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 'fierce 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'.

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

## Peer/Self-assessment

- 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?
- 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.
- Redraft your answer, trying to make those changes.
- Look once again at the grade descriptors. Have you improved your grade?





## My learning objectives ▼

- to explore the themes of the poem, including love
- to develop my response to Graves's poem
- to assess my work on Graves's poem against the criteria in Assessment Objective 2 (page 134).

## GradeStudio

## Examiner tips

You can achieve a high grade if you:

- make detailed reference to the language and structure Graves uses to tell this narrative
- 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 love poem and other texts with similar themes.



## A Frosty Night

by Robert Graves

## Activity 1

## 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?

## Activity 2

## Looking more closely

- 1 Look again at the poem. Decide which character says which lines.
- 2 **a** Look again at the first three stanzas. In these, the mother speaks four sentences. What kind of sentences are they?  
**b** How do these sentences add to your understanding of the mother's personality?
- 3 **a** In the second line, the mother describes how Alice appears to be feeling. What does she say?  
**b** What does Alice claim has caused this?
- 4 Look again at stanza 2.  
**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?
- 5 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'.  
**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?
- 6 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!'  
Try to think of two different possible answers to this question.

## Poem Glossary

**What ails you?:** What is the matter with you?

## Developing your ideas

- 1 Just before accusing Alice of being in love, her mother compares her daughter's appearance to both a ghost and an angel. What does this contrast suggest about love?
- 2 Can you identify any other places in which the writer has chosen to use contrast? What do they suggest about the experience of being in love?
- 3 Identify all the clues that lead Alice's mother to the conclusion that someone has said 'I love you' to her daughter.
- 4 Alice's mother obviously recognises the signs of a girl in love. What does this suggest about Alice's mother?

## Activity 3

## Developing a personal response

- 1 Different people respond to poems in different ways.  
**a** Choose some words from the list on the right – and add some of your own – to describe how you respond to:  
• the mother • Alice • their relationship.  
**b** How might a parent's view differ from yours? What would they say about:  
• the mother? • Alice? • their relationship?

## Activity 4

caring	secretive
controlling	emotional
reckless	naive
romantic	interfering

## 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?**

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.

'Your feet were dancing, Alice,  
Seemed to dance on air,'

'Mother, do not hold me so,  
Let me write my letter.'

'Stars danced in the sky –  
Not all the lambs of May-day  
Skip so bold and high.'

'Alice, dear, what ails you,  
Dazed and lost and shaken?'

'You looked a ghost or angel  
In the star-light there.'

'Who was it said, "I love you"?'  
'Mother, let me go!'

- 2 Which criteria in Assessment Objective 2 on page 134 have you demonstrated in your answer?





## My learning objectives ▼

- to explore the themes of the poem, including love
- to develop my response to Donne's poem
- to assess my work on Donne's poem against the criteria in Assessment Objective 2 (page 134).

## GradeStudio



## Examiner tips

You can achieve a high grade if you:

- make detailed reference to the ideas, language and structure Donne uses to convey the narrator's thoughts and the ways in which he tries to persuade his lover
- 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 love poem and other texts with similar themes.

## Poem Glossary

**Mark:** notice, look at  
**Maidenhead:** virginity  
**Woo:** seek someone's love  
**Stay:** wait  
**Jet:** black gemstone used for jewellery, also a symbol of mourning  
**Sacrilege:** disrespect of a sacred or holy object  
**Yield:** give in

## The Flea

by John Donne

## First thoughts

- What do you think of when you think about fleas? List some words.
- '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?

## Activity 1

## Looking more closely

- 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?
- At the start of the poem, Donne asks us to look at this flea. What do you imagine him doing at this point?
- In line 2, Donne complains that the woman is denying him. What is she denying him?
- Donne compares himself, the woman and their relationship to the flea. What is he suggesting? Should he be taken seriously?
- 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?
- In stanza 3, the woman has 'Purpled' her nail. What has she done? Do you think the reader is meant to find this funny?
- 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?

## Activity 2

## Developing your ideas

- 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.

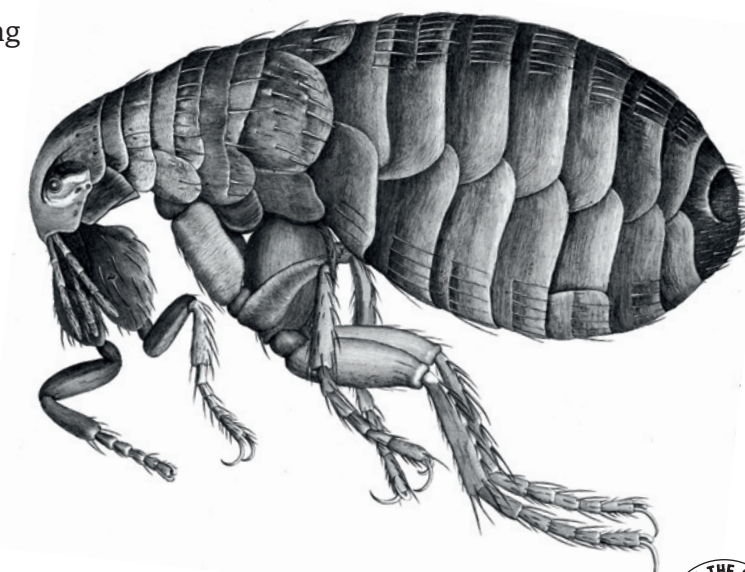
In stanza	he argues that	to make the point that
1	Their blood mingling in the flea is a kind of marriage and therefore she should not kill the flea	She will not damage anyone's honour if she has sex with him
2	Killing the flea hasn't hurt or weakened either of them	Having sex should cause no shame
3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

- What tone would you advise an actor giving a dramatic reading of the poem to use:
    - cajoling • aggressive • humorous • desperate • something else?
 You may decide that the tone changes at different points in the poem.
  - Select a short quotation to support each adjective you choose.
- Throughout the poem, Donne uses language with sexual undertones.
  - Find some examples.
  - How does this language contribute to the effect of the poem? Does it:
    - make it clear exactly what Donne wants, without having to say it directly
    - add humour • help make his argument more persuasive • something else?

## Developing a personal response

- 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?
  - 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?
- Do you think Donne's argument would persuade the woman? Why?
- What do you think of the way he reverses his argument at the end?

## Activity 4



## Peer/Self-assessment

- You are going to explore this question:  
**In 'The Flea', Donne explores his love relationship with a woman. How does he present it?**

Choose two of the quotations below and use them to write two paragraphs in which you:

- respond to the task
- comment on the effect of the writer's choices of imagery and language.

'Mark but this flea, and mark in this,  
How little that which thou deny'st me is;'

'Yet this enjoys before it woo,  
And pampered swells with one blood made of two,  
And this, alas, is more than we would do.'

'This flea is you and I, and this  
Our marriage bed,'

'Just so much honour, when thou yield'st to me,  
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.'

- Which criteria in Assessment Objective 2 on page 134 have you demonstrated in your answer?



## My learning objectives ▼

- to explore the themes of the poem, including love
- to develop my response to Donne's poem
- to assess my work on Donne's poem against the criteria in Assessment Objective 2 (page 134).

## GradeStudio

## Examiner tips

You can achieve a high grade if you:

- make detailed reference to the ideas, language and structure Donne uses to convey the narrator's thoughts and viewpoint
- 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 about love and religion and other texts with similar themes.

## Poem Glossary

**Ravish:** take by force or with violence

**Whet:** sharpen or stimulate

**Head:** head or source of a river

**Dropsy:** disease in which the body retains water and the sufferer is constantly thirsty

**Woo:** seek someone's love

## Holy Sonnet 17

by John Donne

## First thoughts

This poem was written shortly after Donne's wife died in childbirth.

- What would you expect from a poem written under these circumstances?
- Look at the language. What has his wife's death led Donne to think about? Is this a conventional love sonnet?

## Looking more closely

- 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?
- Donne tells us that his wife's 'soul' has been 'early into heaven ravishèd'. Consider the words 'early' and 'ravishèd'. What does Donne's language choice suggest about his feelings regarding her death?
- 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.
- 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).
  - Who is Donne talking to?
  - What is the problem he is trying to solve?
- 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.
  - Which three words does Donne use to sum up earthly love?
  - Which three words does he use to sum up heavenly love?
  - What effect is created by using these two 'patterns of three' to describe the two loves fighting within him?

## Activity 1

## Activity 2

## Developing your ideas

- The poem makes a number of references to water. What is Donne suggesting through the metaphor of water?
- 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?
- Now look closely at this quotation:  
'But why should I beg more love'  
  - How would you describe Donne's tone as he addresses God in the second half of the poem, and in this quotation in particular?
  - In what way has the tone changed? Why?
- Look at the language Donne uses to describe God's actions and feelings: 'ravishèd' 'woo' 'tender jealousy'  
  - Would you expect to find these words in a religious poem? Where would you expect to find them?
  - What does this suggest about Donne's relationship with God?

## Developing a personal response

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

## Peer/Self-assessment

- 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?**
- Write a paragraph giving your own response to the task. Use the same structure as the paragraph on the right.
- 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.
- Which criteria in Assessment Objective 2 on page 134 have you demonstrated in your paragraph?

Evidence to support the point

A clear point

Donne expresses his feelings at his wife's death. He says that God: 'her soul early into heaven ravishèd'. He clearly feels that his wife's life has been taken too soon. The choice of the word 'ravishèd' suggests Donne's intense anger at her death. It implies not only the violence of her death, but that Donne blames God for this brutal and intentional action. The shocking sexual overtones of the word almost suggest that Donne regards it as a crime.

An explanation of the effect of the quotation

How language reflects the poet's point of view

Close focus on particular word choice



## 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).

## GradeStudio



## 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 on theme, content, language and structure
- explore comparisons and links that you can make between this poem about parent/child relationships and other texts with similar themes.

## Long Distance II

by Tony Harrison

## First thoughts

- The poem is spoken by a narrator. Who is the narrator, and what can you detect about him?
- What is the narrator's attitude towards his father?

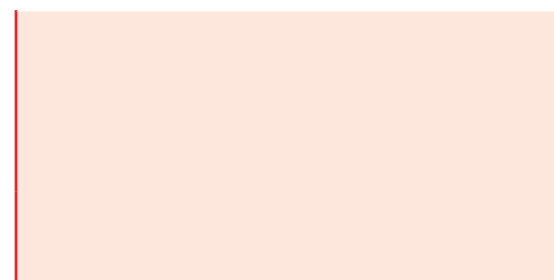
## Activity 1

## Looking more closely

- Re-read the first two stanzas and make a note of what you find out about his father and his actions.
- 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.

Strength of  
relationship



Time in the poem

- Look at the last two stanzas. Do these suggest that the relationship is stronger, weaker or the same as you previously thought? Add your ideas to the graph, and select short quotations to support them.
- Re-read the last stanza and consider why Harrison ends his poem this way. What point might he be trying to make about the son's relationship with his parents?

## Developing your ideas

## Activity 3

- 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.

The first one has been done for you:

'Dad kept her slippers warming by the gas'

What is he doing?

Here the father is pretending that the mother hasn't died; this is shown by the fact that he keeps her slippers, and that he has them warmed ready for her to put on, almost as if she has just popped out to the shops.

Why is it effective?

The fact that he keeps such everyday objects is moving because it shows he has not really come to terms with her death.

- The poem has been written from a particular viewpoint. It is almost as if the narrator is chatting with us. In which lines do you think the viewpoint is most effective? Do you notice it changing at any point?
- Many readers find the last stanza very moving. Discuss your feelings about it. Why do you think Harrison chooses to end the poem with the words: 'there's your name / and the disconnected number I still call.'

## Developing a personal response

## Activity 4

- What have you learned about the narrator of the poem? How far can we trust his comments about his feelings?
- 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?

## Peer/Self-assessment

- Read this paragraph written in response to the task:  
**How does Harrison present a parent/child relationship in 'Long Distance II'?**
- Write a paragraph giving your own response to the task. Use the same structure as the paragraph on the right.
- 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.
- 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.

Close focus on the  
writer's choice of words

The idea is developed and  
shows the poet's point of view