

English Literature GCSE

Poetry

(AQA exam board)

What do you need to know about each poem?

- **Subject** - what is it about?
- **How is the subject presented**, e.g. story (narrative), descriptive, conversational tone, reflective/thinking etc.
- **Form/structure** - what it looks like on the page - stanzas, rhyme scheme etc), perspective, sentence length, temporal (time) changes etc.
- **How is language used** to affect the reader or help them to imagine what the poet is writing about?
- **How does the poem affect you?** What does it make you think?

Your Poetry Analysis 101 sheet has a detailed guide about what to look for in a poem.

Poetry Analysis 101

What do you need to know about each poem?

Subject

- what is it about?

How is the subject presented?

- tells a story (narrative)
- descriptive - lots of imagery
- conversational tone, as if talking to someone
- reflective - thinking about someone/something

Form/structure - what does it look like on the page? How does it flow?

- Stanzas - how many? Length of each? Are any different and, if so, why?
- Is there a rhyme scheme in each stanza? Describe it with letters if possible. Perfect rhymes? Near rhymes? Assonance, consonance etc?
- perspective
- sentence length
- temporal (time) changes etc. See Thinking Frame for further ideas.

Language

- How is language used to affect the reader or help them to imagine what the poet is writing about?

You've probably already mentioned some literary devices but write about more of them here.

Personal response

- What do you think of the poem? How does it affect you?

Quotations

- Explain what they show/how they affect the reader/what they make you think etc.

Analysing a poem?

← Work through the sections in Poetry Analysis 101.

Ideas for learning/revising:

Use online resources such as **BBC Bitesize**.

Type in:

BBC Bitesize English Literature GCSE AQA Poetry

Youtube is also excellent – type in the title of a poem and listen instead.

Poetry Revision - what now?

Not studied as a class:
Neutral Tones
Letters From Yorkshire
The Farmer's Bride
Walking Away
Singh Song!

- You need to be familiar with all of the poems.
- Aim to *know well* a minimum of 3 of each type of relationship (**familial** and **romantic** relationships).
- Look at what these past paper questions ask you to do... have a go!
(You will find the full version of each poem in your poetry revision folder.)

2 | 5

Compare how poets present romantic love in 'Singh Song!' and in **one** other poem from 'Love and relationships'.

I run just one ov my daddy's shops
from 9 o'clock to 9 o'clock
and he vunt me not to hav a break
but ven nobody in, I do di lock –

5 cos up di stairs is my newly bride
 vee share in chapatti
 vee share in di chutney
 after vee hav made luv
 like vee rowing through Putney –

10 Ven I return vid my pinnie untied
 di shoppers always point and cry:
 Hey Singh, ver yoo bin?
 Yor lemons are limes
 yor bananas are plantain,
15 *dis dirty little floor need a little bit of mop*
 in di worst Indian shop
 on di whole Indian road –

Above my head high heel top di ground

0 1

Compare how poets present strong feelings in romantic relationships in 'The Farmer's Bride' and in **one** other poem from 'Love and relationships'.

[30 marks]

The Farmer's Bride

Three Summers since I chose a maid,
Too young maybe – but more's to do
At harvest-time than bide and woo.

5 When us was wed she turned afraid
Of love and me and all things human;
Like the shut of a winter's day
Her smile went out, and 'twasn't a woman –
More like a little frightened fay.
One night, in the Fall, she runned away.

10 'Out 'mong the sheep, her be,' they said,
Should properly have been abed;
But sure enough she wasn't there
Lying awake with her wide brown stare.
So over seven-acre field and up-along across the down

15 We chased her, flying like a hare
Before our lanterns. To Church-Town
All in a shiver and a scare
We caught her, fetched her home at last
And turned the key upon her, fast.

2 5

Compare how poets present family relationships in 'Walking Away' and in **one** other poem from 'Love and relationships'.

[30 marks]

Walking Away

It is eighteen years ago, almost to the day –
A sunny day with leaves just turning,
The touch-lines new-ruled – since I watched you play
Your first game of football, then, like a satellite
5 Wrenched from its orbit, go drifting away

Behind a scatter of boys. I can see
You walking away from me towards the school
With the pathos of a half-fledged thing set free
Into a wilderness, the gait of one
10 Who finds no path where the path should be.

That hesitant figure, eddying away
Like a winged seed loosened from its parent stem,
Has something I never quite grasp to convey
About nature's give-and-take – the small, the scorching
15 Ordeals which fire one's irresolute clay.

I have had worse partings, but none that so
Gnaws at my mind still. Perhaps it is roughly
Saying what God alone could perfectly show

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Compare how poets present romantic feelings in 'Winter Swans' and in **one** other poem from 'Love and relationships'.

[30 marks]

Winter Swans

The clouds had given their all –
two days of rain and then a break
in which we walked,

5 the waterlogged earth
gulping for breath at our feet
as we skirted the lake, silent and apart,

until the swans came and stopped us
with a show of tipping in unison.
As if rolling weights down their bodies to their heads

10 they halved themselves in the dark water,
icebergs of white feather, paused before returning again
like boats righting in rough weather.

'They mate for life' you said as they left,
porcelain over the stilling water. I didn't reply
15 but as we moved on through the afternoon light.

2 5

Compare how poets present attitudes towards a parent in 'Follower' and in **one** other poem from 'Love and relationships'.

Follower

1 My father worked with a horse-plough,
His shoulders globed like a full sail strung
Between the shafts and the furrow.
The horse strained at his clicking tongue.

5 An expert. He would set the wing
And fit the bright steel-pointed sock.
The sod rolled over without breaking.
At the headrig, with a single pluck

10 Of reins, the sweating team turned round
And back into the land. His eye
Narrowed and angled at the ground,
Mapping the furrow exactly.

I stumbled in his hob-nailed wake