

AQA Literature Exam

Unseen Poetry: Independent Guided Resources

• What?

A single poem essay exploring how the writer creates meaning through their choice of language and structure

A comparison of two poems exploring how the language compares (AO2)

How?

- Use this booklet to help you and use the structures you have learnt to approach unseen poetry
- Practice reading and understanding a range of poems to help you approach these.

Contents

- Analysis reminder & comparison connectives
- Place Mats to help with planning tasks
- Two linked poems with practice questions
- Comparison questions.

Unseen Poetry Analysis Reminders

What you should/could cover in your analysis – RED – do this every time, ORANGE – do this if you know how to, GREEN – do this as much as possible. Not all of the steps need to be completed for each quote you select!

- What - Link to the question (RED)
- How - Link to the terminology/method (Lang/Structure – evaluating choice) (ORANGE)
- How - Short Quote(s) (RED)
- Why - Explain meaning and why – both obvious and hidden (explicit and implicit) (RED)
- Why - Zoom in on words/explore connotations and effect (ORANGE)
- Why - Suggest what readers might think/feel (offering an alternative opinion/effect) (GREEN)
- Why = Explore a linking quote/supporting idea (GREEN)
- Comparing – use comparison connectives to move onto the next point/idea/quotation/piece of evidence (RED)

Comparing (similarities)

Compared with...
Similarly...
In the same way...
Likewise...
Equally...
As with...
...are similar in that...

Contrasting (differences)

However...
On the other hand...
On the contrary...
Instead...
As for...
Alternatively...
Despite this...
...whereas...
...while...
...although...
...yet...

Use the Poetry Place Mat on the next page as a planning guide to help you

Timing –

Unseen Poem Single Poem Essay

Sentence starters: In the poem we see... this suggests/implies/infers/conveys...
The poet implies/shows... Linking this to the time/place/intentions

Intro – link to the question. Explain meaning of the poem briefly & three ideas you will discuss.

Paragraphs 1 – 2 – 3

Use: What? How?

Why?

To analyse the meaning in the poem exploring in as much detail the way meaning is created.

Conclude – Short summary of what you have said about both poems

Place your poems here
Plan and decide which quotes to select and which 3 pieces of context you will write about

Exploring the poem:

What? - Link to the question

How? - Link to the lang/struct

How? - Link to evidence

Why? - Meaning and why?

Why? - Zoom in on the words/connotations

Why? – Effect and why?

Why? - Writers' intentions and why?

Terminology: repetition; ideas/words phrases repeated, metaphor; comparison of something as something else, hyperbole; use of exaggeration for effect, imagery; creating a picture in the mind of the reader, simile; comparison using like or as, tone – the impression you are given of how the words sound, emotive language; appeals to reader emotions, personification; makes an object sound human, Use of complex sentences; to explore in detail emotions; pathetic fallacy; sets the tone/mood/atmosphere. End-stopping; punctuation at the end of line, caesura; punctuation in the middle of a line; enjambment; run on lines in the poem; stanza's; the verses of the poem; layout; how it appears and what effect this has, connotations; implied meanings

Timing –

Unseen Poem Comparison Paragraphs

Sentence starters: In the poem we see... this suggests/implies/infers/conveys...
The poet implies/shows... Linking this to the time/place/intentions

No Intro. Go straight in exploring how both poems compare.

Complete 2 paragraphs:

Paragraph 1: Compare what – how – why in relation to poem 1 and 2 offering detail about how they are similar or different.

Use as much evidence and terminology/methods as you can to explore the comparison

Place your poems here
Plan and decide which quotes to select and which 3 pieces of context you will write about

Exploring the poem:

What? - Explain how they compare.

How? - Link to the lang/struct in poem 1

How? - Link to evidence in poem 1

Why? - Meaning in poem 1.

Compare and repeat lang struct/evidence/meaning in poem 2

Terminology: repetition; ideas/words phrases repeated, metaphor; comparison of something as something else, hyperbole; use of exaggeration for effect, imagery; creating a picture in the mind of the reader, simile; comparison using like or as, tone – the impression you are given of how the words sound, emotive language; appeals to reader emotions, personification; makes an object sound human, Use of complex sentences; to explore in detail emotions; pathetic fallacy; sets the tone/mood/atmosphere. End-stopping; punctuation at the end of line, caesura; punctuation in the middle of a line; enjambment; run on lines in the poem; stanza's; the verses of the poem; layout; how it appears and what effect this has, connotations; implied meanings

What?

The overall meaning in the poem linked to the question.

Decide what you think the poem means and why?

Summarise this in three ideas

- 1
- 2
- 3

How?

Terminology/method and evidence

Underline evidence

Annotate or label the evidence for the terminology/method – either language or structure.

Select as many pieces of evidence as you can.

How does the poet present the oppression of women in this poem?

I Am Not That Woman

I am not that woman
selling you socks and shoes!
Remember me, I am the one you had
in your walls of stone, while you roamed
free as the breeze, not knowing
that my voice cannot be smothered by stones.

I am the one you crushed
with the weight of custom and tradition
not knowing
that light cannot be hidden in darkness.
Remember me,
I am the one in whose lap
you picked flowers
and planted thorns and embers
not knowing
that chains cannot smother my fragrance.

I am the woman
whom you bought and sold
in the name of my own chastity
not knowing
that I can walk on water
when I am drowning.

I am the one you married off
to get rid of a burden
not knowing
that a nation of captive minds
cannot be free.

I am the commodity you traded in,
my chastity, my motherhood, my loyalty.
Now it is time for me to flower free.
The woman on that poster,
half-naked, selling socks and shoes –
No, no, I am not that woman!

Kishwar Naheed

Why?

The meaning/effect/intent with detail.

What does the evidence mean and why?

What effect does the evidence have and why?

What was the writer trying to tell you or suggest about wider society?

Aiming Higher:

Can you zoom in on evidence?

Can you explore connotations of individual words?

Can you use multiple pieces of evidence or clusters of evidence to support your answer?

Can you make links across the poem?

What?

The overall meaning in the poem linked to the question.

Decide what you think the poem means and why?

Summarise this in three ideas

1

2

3

How?

Terminology/method and evidence

Underline evidence

Annotate or label the evidence for the terminology/method – either language or structure.

Select as many pieces of evidence as you can.

How does the poet present the oppression of women in this poem?

Still I Rise

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like
teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold
mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.
You may shoot me with your
words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your
hatefulness

But still, like air, I'll rise

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in
pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and
wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the
tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror
and fear

I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously
clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my
ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of
the slave.

I rise

I rise

I rise.

Maya Angelou

Why?

The meaning/effect/intent with detail.

What does the evidence mean and why?

What effect does the evidence have and why?

What was the writer trying to tell you or suggest about wider society?

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Can you zoom in on evidence?

Can you explore connotations of individual words?

Can you use multiple pieces of evidence or clusters of evidence to support your answer?

Can you make links across the poem?

What?

The overall comparison in the poems are.

Similarities:

Differences:

In 'I am not that women' and 'Still I rise' the poets describe the oppression of women.

What are the similarities and/or difference between the methods the poets use to present these ideas?

Why?

Compare the meaning/effect/intent with detail.

What does the evidence mean and why? Is it the same different in poem 2?

What effect does the evidence have and why? Is it the same different in poem 2?

What was the writer trying to tell you or suggest about wider society and is it the same or different in both poems?

How?

Compare the terminology/method and evidence

Underline evidence

Annotate or label the evidence for the terminology/method – either language or structure.

Select as many pieces of evidence as you can.

Aiming Higher:

Can you compare specific words?

Can you use multiple pieces of evidence or clusters of evidence to support your comparisons?

Can you make specific comparisons across both poems?

What?

The overall meaning in the poem linked to the question.

Decide what you think the poem means and why?

Summarise this in three ideas

- 1
- 2
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How?

Terminology/method and evidence

Underline evidence

Annotate or label the evidence for the terminology/method – either language or structure.

Select as many pieces of evidence as you can.

How does the poet present suffering in this poem?

The Manhunt

After the first phase,
after passionate nights and intimate days,

only then would he let me trace
the frozen river which ran through his face,

only then would he let me explore
the blown hinge of his lower jaw,

and handle and hold
the damaged, porcelain collar-bone,

and mind and attend
the fractured rudder of shoulder-blade,

and finger and thumb
the parachute silk of his punctured lung.

Only then could I bind the struts
and climb the rungs of his broken ribs,

and feel the hurt
of his grazed heart.

Skirting along,
only then could I picture the scan,

the foetus of metal beneath his chest
where the bullet had finally come to rest.

Then I widened the search,
traced the scarring back to its source

to a sweating, unexploded mine
buried deep in his mind, around which

every nerve in his body had tightened and closed.
Then, and only then, did I come close.

Simon Armitage

Why?

The meaning/effect/intent with detail.

What does the evidence mean and why?

What effect does the evidence have and why?

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Select as many pieces of evidence as you can.

How does the poet present suffering in this poem?

A Wife in London

I – The Tragedy

She sits in the tawny vapour
That the City lanes have uprolled,
Behind whose webby fold on fold
Like a waning taper
The street-lamp glimmers cold.

A messenger's knock cracks smartly,
Flashed news is in her hand
Of meaning it dazes to understand
Though shaped so shortly:
He – has fallen – in the far South Land ...

II – The Irony

'Tis the morrow; the fog hangs thicker,
The postman nears and goes:
A letter is brought whose lines disclose
By the firelight flicker
His hand, whom the worm now knows:

Fresh – firm – penned in highest feather –
Page-full of his hoped return,
And of home-planned jaunts by brake and burn
In the summer weather,
And of new love that they would learn.

Thomas Hardy

Why?

The meaning/effect/intent with detail.

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Annotate or label the evidence for the terminology/method – either language or structure.

Select as many pieces of evidence as you can.

In both ‘The Manhunt’ and ‘A Wife in London’ the poets present ideas about suffering.

What are the similarities and/or difference between methods the poets use to present these ideas?

Why?

Compare the meaning/effect/intent with detail.

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Select as many pieces of evidence as you can.

How does the poet present poverty in this poem?

Blessing

The skin cracks like a pod.
There never is enough water.

Imagine the drip of it,
the small splash, echo
in a tin mug,
the voice of a kindly god.

Sometimes, the sudden rush
of fortune. The municipal pipe bursts,
silver crashes to the ground
and the flow has found
a roar of tongues. From the huts,
a congregation: every man woman
child for streets around
butts in, with pots,
brass, copper, aluminium,
lastic buckets,
frantic hands,

and naked children
screaming in the liquid sun,
their highlights polished to perfection,
flashing light,
as the blessing sings
over their small bones.

By Imtiaz Dharker

Why?

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Select as many pieces of evidence as you can.

How does the poet present poverty in this poem?

Night of the Scorpion

I remember the night my mother was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours of steady rain had driven him to crawl beneath a sack of rice.

Parting with his poison - flash of diabolic tail in the dark room - he risked the rain again.

The peasants came like swarms of flies and buzzed the name of God a hundred times to paralyse the Evil One.

With candles and with lanterns throwing giant scorpion shadows on the mud-baked walls they searched for him: he was not found.

They clicked their tongues. With every movement that the scorpion made his poison moved in Mother's blood, they said.

May he sit still, they said
May the sins of your previous birth be burned away tonight, they said.
May your suffering decrease the misfortunes of your next birth, they said.
May the sum of all evil balanced in this unreal world

against the sum of good become diminished by your pain.
May the poison purify your flesh

of desire, and your spirit of ambition, they said, and they sat around on the floor with my mother in the centre, the peace of understanding on each face.

More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours, more insects, and the endless rain. My mother twisted through and through, groaning on a mat.

My father, sceptic, rationalist, trying every curse and blessing, powder, mixture, herb and hybrid. He even poured a little paraffin upon the bitten toe and put a match to it.

I watched the flame feeding on my mother.

I watched the holy man perform his rites to tame the poison with an incantation.
After twenty hours it lost its sting.

My mother only said
Thank God the scorpion picked on me
And spared my children.

By Nissim Ezekiel

Why?

The meaning/effect/intent with detail.

What does the evidence mean and why?

What effect does the evidence have and why?

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Select as many pieces of evidence as you can.

In both ‘Blessing’ and ‘Night of the Scorpion’ the poets present ideas about poverty.

What are the similarities and/or differences between the methods the poets use to present these ideas?

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Compare the meaning/effect/intent with detail.

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How?

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Annotate or label the evidence for the terminology/method – either language or structure.

Select as many pieces of evidence as you can.

How does the poet present homelessness in this poem?

The Tramp by John Clare

He eats (a moment's stoppage to his song)
The stolen turnip as he goes along;
And hops along and heeds with careless eye
The passing crowded stage coach reeling
by.
He talks to none but wends his silent way,
And finds a hovel at the close of day,
Or under any hedge his house is made.
He has no calling and he owns no trade.
An old smoaked blanket arches oer his head,
A whisp of straw or stubble makes his bed.
He knows a lawless law that claims no kin
But meet and plunder on and feel no sin--
No matter where they go or where they dwell
They dally with the winds and laugh at hell.

Why?

The meaning/effect/intent with detail.

What does the evidence mean and why?

What effect does the evidence have and why?

What was the writer trying to tell you or suggest about wider society?

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Can you zoom in on evidence?

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Select as many pieces of evidence as you can.

How does the poet present homelessness in this poem?

DECOMPOSITION By *Zulfikar Ghose*

I have a picture I took in Bombay
of a beggar asleep on the pavement:
grey-haired, wearing shorts and a dirty shirt,
his shadow thrown aside like a blanket.

His arms and legs could be cracks in the stone,
routes for the ants' journeys, the flies' descents,
Brain-washed by the sun into exhaustion,
he lies veined into stone, a fossil man.

Behind him there is a crowd passingly
bemused by a pavement trickster and quite
indifferent to this very common sight
of an old man asleep on the pavement.

I thought it then a good composition
and glibly called it "The Man in the Street,"
remarking how typical it was of
India that the man in the street lived there.

His head in the posture of one weeping
into a pillow chides me now for my
presumption at attempting to compose
art of his hunger and solitude

Why?

The meaning/effect/intent with detail.

What does the evidence mean and why?

What effect does the evidence have and why?

What was the writer trying to tell you or suggest about wider society?

Aiming Higher:

Can you zoom in on evidence?

Can you explore connotations of individual words?

Can you use multiple pieces of evidence or clusters of evidence to support your answer?

Can you make links across the poem?