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HOW TO USE YOUR YORK NOTES STUDY GUIDE

In this York Notes Study Guide you will find the text of every poem in the cluster, fully annotated, plus over 20 pages of detailed analysis of themes, contexts, structure, form and language. There are special sections on comparing poems and the 'unseen' part of your exam, three sample practice papers, and annotated sample answers at three different levels.

So how will these Notes help you study and revise? Here are some suggestions:

- **A step-by-step study and revision guide** – work through the poems in Part Two to help you study them, then use the analysis sections to focus your learning. Finally, hone your exams skills and practise for the exam.
- **A 'dip-in' support** – know the cluster quite well already but want to check your understanding and practise your skills? Look for the section you think you need most help with, and go for it!
- **A revision guide before your exam** – use Parts Two to Four to check your knowledge, then work through Parts Five to Eight as you revise for your exam.

Short and long questions to test your knowledge and understanding

Every poem annotated with lots of useful ideas and interpretations

PROGRESS AND REVISION CHECK

SECTION ONE: CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Answer these quick questions to test your basic knowledge of the themes and contexts of the poems.

- 1 What **extended metaphor** is used in 'Climbing My Grandfather'?
- 2 Who speaks in a rural **dialect**, and in which poem?
- 3 The Petrarchan sonnet has two **quatrains** (or an **octave**) and what other verse form?
- 4 In which poem does the following image occur: 'globed like a full sail strung' – and what does it refer to?
- 5 In what **metre** is 'Sonnet 29 – "I think of thee!"' written?
- 6 What does a caesura do?
- 7 Where is the **sibilant** in the following: 'we skirted the lake, silent and apart' – and where does the quotation come from?
- 8 Where does **internal rhyme** occur?
- 9 What is **cadence**?
- 10 In which poem does the image of the 'God-curst' sun appear, and what does it represent?

SECTION TWO: CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Here is a task about the imagery the poet uses. This requires more thought and a longer response. Try to write at least three to four paragraphs.

Task: How does Owen Sheers show that love can be renewed in 'Winter Swans'? Think about:

- What poetic technique the poet uses
- What effects are created through the technique

PROGRESS CHECK

GOOD PROGRESS

- I can:
- Explain how the poets use key poetic techniques to shape the poem, show relationships and develop ideas.
 - Use relevant quotations to support the points I make, and make reference to the effect of some techniques.

EXCELLENT PROGRESS

- I can:
- Analyse in detail the poets' use of particular techniques to convey ideas, create a voice or viewpoint and evoke mood or setting.
 - Select from a range of evidence, including apt quotations, to infer the effect of particular techniques and to develop wider interpretations.

Self-evaluation – so you can keep a record of your progress

ANDREW WATERHOUSE: 'CLIMBING MY GRANDFATHER' PART TWO

Viewpoint: The first person speaker, a grandson, explores the nature of his grandfather by imagining how he would climb up him.

Theme: The climb may be dangerous, bringing back upsetting memories when remembering his grandfather, suggesting memory as a theme.

Language: Suggests the grandfather worked outside or cared little about his appearance.

Key technique – metaphor: Suggests both the 'grip' on the mountain and an attempt to recover an image of the grandfather, suggesting childhood as a theme.

Language: Helps to build a picture of the grandfather as working on the land.

Language: 'gently' reveals the speaker's care and respect for his grandfather.

Key technique – extended metaphor: The grandfather is compared to a mountain and its features throughout the poem (e.g. 'scar').

Language: Suggests there are dangers in recalling memories, reinforces line 4.

Language: Reminds us of children's fascination with faces.

Theme: Conveys the strong love felt for the grandfather.

Structure: The climb/exploration of memory begins energetically, at the grandfather's feet/foot of a mountain.

Context: Waterhouse had a special knowledge of landscape, which is reflected in the landforms mentioned.

Key technique – oxymoron: The contradiction suggests that though the grandfather is dead, he is kept alive through the speaker's love.

Language: Suggests a childhood memory of the grandfather's reliability and strength.

Language: Suggests there was affection between the speaker and his grandfather.

Sound – sibilant: The soft 's' enhances the gentle exploration of the grandfather's eyes, searching for who he is.

Structure – resolution: The exhausted climber has achieved his goal, and has become closer to his grandfather through searching his memory.

Glossary

¹ overhanging = jutting rock formation
² scar = a bare, protruding rocky place
³ belt = a group of mountain ranges
⁴ screed = a level layer

Andrew Waterhouse (1958–2001)

Glossary of difficult words

PART TWO: EXPLORING THE POEMS

HOW TO READ AND STUDY A POEM

When you read and study a poem, or a set of poems, there are a number of key areas you will need to explore. These will ensure you enjoy your reading and study, and equally importantly, engage with the poem so that you can respond intelligently and thoughtfully.

KEY ASPECTS TO CONSIDER

As with any text, the secret to exploring the poem on the page in front of you is to consider its ingredients: the particular elements that create meaning or impact on you as a reader. These will include:

- 1 What the **narrative** of the poem is – its story, or the experience it describes

For example, does the poem describe something particular that happens? Is it a personal story or a public one? What actually happens? (Sometimes poems don't seem to tell a story at all, but all poems are about *something*, however small or apparently insignificant.)

- 2 The **voice** (or voices) and **viewpoint**

For example, is the poem told in the first person, and is the voice intimate or distant? Who does it address?

- 3 The '**message**' and/or **theme** of the poem – its concerns

For example, what is the main idea running through the poem? Are there other, related ideas?

- 4 The poem's distinctive **language features**, or **poetic techniques** used by the poet

What method or skills does the poet use to create effects? For example poets often use **enjambment** because it carries the thought on from one line to another.

- 5 The poem's **structure and organisation**

For example, is the poem written in a particular form, such as a **sonnet** or a **monologue**? Are the verses regular (with the same number of lines in a verse)? Is there a **rhyme scheme**?

- 6 The **openings and endings**

For example, does it provide a resolution to a problem? Or does the reader feel something is unresolved? Does the ending return to the beginning to create a circular effect? Does it change the reader's understanding of the poem?

- 7 **Patterns of sound and rhythm**

For example, what sounds are created through the repetition of letters, such as beginning letters in **alliteration**, or vowels in **assonance**? What is the movement of the poem like? For example, is it bouncy comic poem, a slow **lament** or a sad song? Does the pace change?

- 8 **Contexts and settings**

For example, what influenced the poet? Do you know the historical period in which the poem was written? Is a period referred to or expressed in the poem, such as the speaker recalling a memory from the past? Can you tell when or where the poem was set?

TOP TIP

A01

Always read a poem at least twice before you begin writing about it. On your first reading you are likely to get a general impression of the poem's tone and what it is about. On your second reading try to focus on the rhythm and language choice. You should find the meaning becomes clearer you start to notice the poet's techniques and their effects.

IMAGERY



- **Imagery** makes ideas vivid through an appeal to the senses, most frequently sight.
- It includes common techniques such as **simile** and **metaphor**.
- Characters are created through imagery. There are, in particular, two contrasting images of children. Heaney creates a boisterous, cheerful image of the speaker as a boy riding on his father's back. In 'Walking Away' a simile describes the son like 'a winged seed loosened from the parent stem' (12), so that the boy seems lost.
- Nature imagery is very common in the cluster and often conjures up place and setting, such as the rural landscape in 'The Farmer's Bride', or in 'Winter Swans'.
- The lushest use of nature imagery is the depiction of the 'wild vines' (2), 'broad leaves' (3) and 'straggling green' (4) that typify the speaker's thoughts in 'Sonnet 29 – "I think of thee!"'.

KEY QUOTATION: AUTUMN

A01

'The short days shorten and the oaks are brown,/The blue smoke rises to the low grey sky' (34, 35) are spoken by the farmer in 'The Farmer's Bride'. Autumn has arrived and the year is declining. The colours 'brown' and 'grey' are melancholy ones, reflecting the farmer's emotions. 'The short days shorten' (34) suggests that the days are drifting away like the vanishing 'blue smoke' (35). This image of the fading year is reinforced by the soft, **alliterative** 'sh' that appeals to the sense of sound. But the most important effect created is the idea that time is running out for any good to come of the farmer's marriage. You could compare the images from the natural world in 'The Farmer's Bride' with those in 'Neutral Tones'. Are their effects similar or not?

TOP TIP

A02

A **motif** is a recurring idea, object, theme (or other figure). In 'The Farmer's Bride' an animal motif continually occurs and is linked to the young bride, who is untamed, voiceless and innocent, like the animals she loves.

METAPHOR

What is metaphor?	When one thing is used to describe another (usually dissimilar), creating a striking image. An extended metaphor continues the image or an aspect of it, sometimes throughout the poem.
Example	'the line still feeding out' (7), 'Anchor. Kite' (8), 'I space-walk' (9) from 'Mother, any distance'.
Effect	The 'line' (7) is a measuring tape connecting mother to son, and represents their relationship. The metaphor of the measuring tape is an extended metaphor because it appears as the string of a kite and an astronaut tethered by a line to the spacecraft.



SYMBOLISM

What is symbolism?	When one thing represents another, usually with a meaning that is widely understood in a culture.
Example	'Eden Rock'.
Effect	The poet's choice of 'Eden' as a title cannot be by chance; it is a powerful and well-known religious symbol that in Christianity, for example, refers to the Garden of Eden, or Paradise. Eden Rock can therefore be understood as Paradise.

CONNOTATION

What is connotation?	An extra meaning or association we attach to a word or image in a specific situation (i.e. what it suggests to us).
Example	'ash' [tree] (4) from 'Neutral Tones'.
Effect	The type of tree, 'ash' (4), reminds us of the remnants of a fire, which suggests that the passion of the relationship has gone. 'ash' also reminds us of death, and the death of the relationship.

KEY CONTEXT

A02

It is important to remember that connotations occur in specific contexts. For example an ash tree ('Neutral Tones') occurs in John Clare's 'Emmonsail's Heath in Winter'. Here the ash is part of a sad winter landscape, but one that is well loved by the speaker.

EXAM FOCUS: WRITING ABOUT EFFECTS

A02

Read what one student has written about how verbs are used in 'Follower'.

A good opening sentence that illustrates a technique and its effects

Seamus Heaney presents a striking physical image of the speaker as a young boy, through using strong verbs, such as 'stumbled' and 'tripping', that seem to the reader to capture the clumsiness of a young child. These verbs are tied to other vivid images, such as 'hob-nailed wake', suggesting the footprint of sturdy farm boots on ploughed land. This means they have the effect of enhancing the comic picture of the determined child struggling, but not crying. Instead, he seemed to enjoy 'Yapping'.

Connective linking cause and effect

Quotation neatly embedded in the sentence

Now you try it:

Add a sentence to explain the effects of the verb 'Yapping' (22) and the way the reader sees the child.