

Five key quotations

1. Fallen statue: **'a shatter'd visage'** (l. 4). Time has destroyed the face.
2. Ozymandias's face: **'frown/And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command'** ll. 4–5). The words **'sneer'** and **'cold'** suggest a ruthless and unemotional ruler.
3. Arrogant inscription: **'Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'** (l. 11). Ozymandias seems to be taunting other kings, arrogantly boasting of his superiority.
4. Human power is temporary: **'Nothing beside remains.'** (l. 12). A short sentence emphasises that Ozymandias's power and achievements have crumbled and disappeared.
5. Power of nature: **'The lone and level sands stretch far away.'** (l. 14). The timelessness and power of nature contrast with the temporary power of kings.

Note it!

Compare Shelley's depiction of Ozymandias with Browning's presentation of the Duke in 'My Last Duchess'. What does each poet suggest about the nature of power?

Exam focus

How can I write about the theme of power? AO1 AO2

You can analyse Shelley's depiction of Ozymandias to explore his presentation of power.

Shelley describes the face of Ozymandias to imply the kind of ruler he was. For example, words such as 'sneer', 'frown' and 'cold' clearly suggest his disrespectful and ruthless attitude. However, before this, Shelley highlights that the statue's face is now 'shatter'd' and 'Half sunk' in the desert sand, suggesting how meaningless his arrogance and power are now, centuries later.

Topic sentence makes clear point

Carefully chosen words support the point

Signals a contrasting idea

Comments on the cumulative effect

Now you try!

Finish this paragraph about another **theme**. Use one of the quotations from the list.

The poet suggests that the power of nature is greater than any human power. This is shown in

SPECIAL FOCUS 1: Sound and rhythm

What are sound and rhythm?

- Poets often choose **specific words** because of the effect of **particular letter sounds**, e.g. words beginning with **plosive** 'p's or 'b's can sound harsh and aggressive.
- The **rhythm** of a poem is created by the **positioning of words** to create **stresses or beats**.

How do I identify these in a poem like 'Ozymandias'?

- Read the poem **aloud**, looking for words which are given **emphasis** by the poem's rhythm, e.g. **'vast'** in l. 2, **'lip'**, **'sneer'** and **'cold'** in l. 5.
- Think about how the poet **disrupts the rhythm** of the poem, e.g. to draw attention, and give emphasis, to the arrogant inscription on the statue in ll. 10 and 11.
- Look at the poet's use of **punctuation**, e.g. how the final sentence slows the rhythm as the empty desert sands stretch into the distance.
- Think about ways in which the **sound** of words adds to their impact, e.g. the harsh **alliteration** of **'cold command'**.

Exam focus

How can I write about sound and rhythm? AO2

You could use **verbs** and **adjectives** related to sound and rhythm: e.g. *regular, irregular, constant, disrupt, harsh, soft, rapid, slow, emphatic, dramatic*.

In the second part of the poem, Shelley disrupts its **regular** rhythm with the short sentence **'Nothing beside remains.'** creating an **emphatic** contrast to the arrogant inscription on the statue. Then, **by spreading the final long sentence over three lines**, he **slows** the poem's rhythm to suggest the endless emptiness where Ozymandias's kingdom once stood.

Evidence from the poem

Rhythm words

How rhythm changes

Now you try!

Think about the other poems in the cluster. Do any of them use sound or rhythm to add emphasis to their ideas?

Five key things about how poets explore social structure and control

1. An **individual's power and control** is explored in poems such as 'Ozymandias' and 'My Last Duchess'.
2. The **power structures of countries** are shown in the **education** choices in 'Checking Out Me History' and the **oppressive regime** in 'The Emigrée'.
3. Some poems explore the impact that **social structure** and **social attitudes** can have, such as Blake's presentation of the lower classes in 'London' or the family in 'Kamikaze'.
4. **Social hierarchies** are reflected in the Duchess's failure to give her husband adequate respect in 'My Last Duchess', and the unquestioning obedience of the soldiers in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'.
5. The **transience of power** is implied in both 'Ozymandias' and in 'Tissue'.

How are social structures and their power conveyed?

- In 'London', the suffering of the lower classes is highlighted in their **'Marks of weakness, marks of woe'** which, it is implied in **'each chartered street', 'church'** and **'palace'**, are scars caused by those in positions of power.
- In 'Checking Out Me History', Agard shows the power of education to impose an identity on individuals, and to **'Blind'** them to their own identity.
- In 'My Last Duchess', Browning depicts a Duke at the top of a social hierarchy who expects his wife to respect his position in society.



How are power and control conveyed?

- 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' implies the extent of army officers' power and control. The soldiers do not question their orders, even though they know that **'Some one had blunder'd'**.
- In 'My Last Duchess', the Duke's ruthless power is shown in his refusal to **'stoop'** to correcting his wife's behaviour; instead, he gives **'commands'** to have her killed.
- In 'Ozymandias', Shelley implies the use of intimidation to impose power through his description of Ozymandias's **'sneer of cold command'**.
- In 'The Emigrée', the speaker's perceptions of fear and intimidation are suggested as those with power in her city **'circle'** her and **'mutter death'**.

How is the fragility of power and social structure conveyed?

- 'Tissue' uses images linking the fragility of paper to the fragility of physical and social structures: sunlight shining through **'borderlines'** on thin paper maps; daylight breaking through the **'shapes that pride can make'**.
- In 'Ozymandias', his statue has fallen and his kingdom has disappeared; **'Nothing beside remains'**, despite his arrogant claims.
- 'Checking Out Me History' highlights the power of the individual to ignore imposed ideas and start **'carving out me identity'**.

Three key quotations

1. Arrogance: **'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings'** ('Ozymandias').
2. Control: **'Dem tell me/Dem tell me'** ('Checking Out Me History').
3. Authority: **'Theirs not to reason why/Theirs but to do and die'** ('The Charge of the Light Brigade').

Note it!

Some poems explore power and the attitudes of those at the top of the social structure; others show the impact of social structure on those at its lower end.

Exam focus

How can I write about the fragility of power? AO2

You can look at how Shelley uses structure to explore this idea.

Shelley draws attention to the fragility of power:

Immediately following Ozymandias's arrogant declaration of power, Shelley directs the reader to the surroundings where, other than the statue, **'Nothing beside remains'**, suggesting that Ozymandias's achievements have crumbled to dust. This short, blunt sentence gives emphasis to the emptiness of the desert, and the emptiness of Ozymandias's proud boast.

Introduces the core idea

Apt quotation

Explains clearly

Language focus develops and interprets

Now you try!

Write your own paragraph about a different aspect of social structure and control in the cluster. Use one of the given quotations.