

CONTENTS

PART ONE: GETTING STARTED

Preparing for assessment	5
Introduction to Paper 2, Section C: Unseen poetry	7

PART TWO: READING 'UNSEEN' POEMS

Question 1 – the first unseen poem	8
Guide to poetic techniques	9
How to annotate a poem	17
How to use quotations	19
Voice and perspective	20
Form and structure	22
Language	24
Worked task	26
Progress check	28

PART THREE: COMPARING 'UNSEEN' POEMS

Question 2 – comparing the poems	29
Similarities	32
Differences	36
Worked task	40
Progress check	43

PART FOUR: SAMPLE PAPERS, ANSWERS AND PRACTICE TASKS

How to use this section	44
Sample paper, Question 1	45
Annotated sample answers	46
Sample paper, Question 2	52
Annotated sample answers	54
Assess yourself	59
Practice paper 1	60
Practice paper 2	62
Practice paper 3	64

PART FIVE: LITERARY TERMS AND ANSWERS

Literary terms	66
Answers	68

FORM AND STRUCTURE

You are now going to look at a student's annotations on the uses of **form** and **structure**, in a poem which explores ideas about art and the way we see reality. As you read the poem, consider how structural elements contribute to its effects.

Title - is each of the stanzas an 'installation'?

Effects? Couplets are separate pictures. Makes them sharper?

Nine couplets

Installations¹

A dead fox lies stretched out on the kerb
His ribcage a crimson diagram on tarmac plinth;

As if each couplet is a picture

On the prom,² a trolley is upturned
Its wheels whirling in the tunnel of air.

5 By the corner, a footway's blocked by signage,
A digger's door hangs open, framing empty seats.

An electric gate, trapped by Autumn mulch,
Buzzes and hums in suspended motion.

A leaf escapes, is caught and pressed
10 Under a wiper blade, jammed behind glass.

Now, a crumpled tank's in flames, a face in a
Creeping line of figures turns towards the lens.

As if we're looking at a war photo in a gallery now?

A mural offers bodies in a Basque city,³
Horses' heads angled, crying to the sky.

15 In the galleries of our days, we stare or walk alone,
Feel untouched, but no one's ever safe from life.

Another change here? Reference to 'our'

The pictures are silent in the dark of the night,
But in a distant town a child wakes to the thunder.

Mike Gould

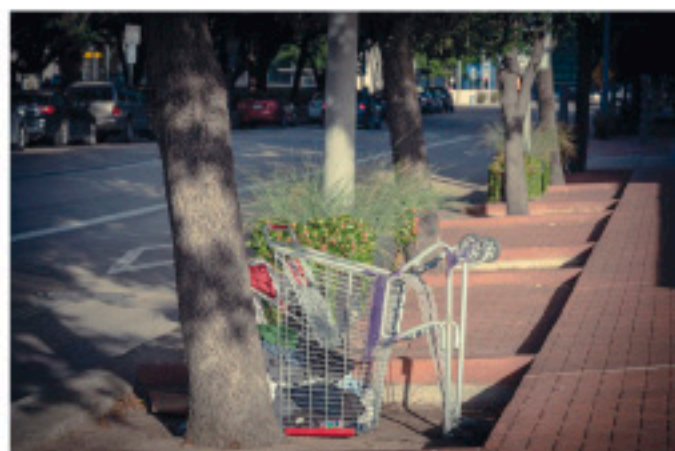
Glossary

¹ 'Installations' are modern works of art, often with several different parts to them, and are usually exhibited in a gallery space.

'Installation' can also refer to something installed or put into a space or room.

² promenade; a path, usually along a seafront

³ Reference to Picasso's painting 'Guernica' about a city bombed during the Spanish Civil War (1936-9)



WORKING FROM THE ANNOTATIONS

Form and **structure** are both important because they help signal changes in direction, or direct the reader towards particular ideas, sounds or patterns. The way a poem is divided up can also isolate particular ideas or **images**, so that they create impact and meaning.

- 1 What have you discovered about the poem from the annotations? Is there anything else you could add about the structure? Write further comments alongside the poem. You might think about whether any words or sounds are repeated or echoed, even if rhyme is not used.
- 2 What have you learned from the annotations about the structure and how it contributes to the poem's effect? Think about how it affects the:
 - meaning of the poem and how it helps the poet express himself
 - way the reader feels or thinks about the poem.

TOP TIP

Remember, as a rough guide, the **form** is the way the poem is laid out and sometimes has a name, such as 'free verse'. The **structure** is the underlying pattern and direction the poem takes.

EXAM FOCUS

A01 A02

A student has begun a response, referring to the way the poem reflects the idea of art through its structure.

Reference to form used

Explains effect

Further explanation and analysis

The writer has divided the poem into nine separate couplets. In each one of these, except the seventh, it is as if the poet has hung up an image for us to look at, like the 'dead fox' in the first and the trolley in the second. Because these images are separated like this, they are very clear - as though they are framed in a gallery. This initially creates a sense of distance, even coldness.

Close reading of stanza

Chooses appropriate quotations

YOUR TASK

- 3 Write at least two paragraphs, similar in style to the one above, on other aspects of the form or structure of the poem. You could choose to write about some or all of the following:
 - How each of the first five **couplets** reflect everyday life - and the **tone/mood** created.
 - The change in focus in the sixth **stanza**.
 - Why the eighth stanza refers to 'our' and 'we' and the change in mood this creates.
 - Anything else you can think of.

SIMILARITIES

Remember, you will have to answer a question on the first poem (24 marks) before you compare it with the second poem.

Here are the annotations a student has added to the first poem based on a question about the speaker's feelings about her mother.

Title: Magician's words before a trick

Form: free verse enjambment, no punctuation makes poem very easy to read?

Speaker: respects mother's knowledge; is proud of her. Repeated for emphasis?

Structure: shifts. Specific comic event described.

Comic image: of children like birds, curious chicks or ducklings?

Comic mood: Children watch (spellbound?) as mother performs the 'operation'?

Glossary

¹ plant used to clear the bowel
² quench
³ stomach
⁴ herons

Abra-Cadabra

My mother had more magic
 in her thumb
 than the length and breadth
 of any magician

5 Weaving incredible stories
 around the dark-green senna¹ brew
 just to make us slake²
 the ritual Sunday purgative

10 Knowing how to place a cochineal poultice
 on a fevered forehead
 Knowing how to measure a bully's symmetry
 kneading the narah³ pains away

15 Once my baby sister stuffed
 a split-pea up her nostril
 my mother got a crochet needle
 and gently tried to pry it out

We stood around her
 like inquisitive gauldings⁴

Suddenly, in surgeon's tone she ordered,
 20 'Pass the black pepper,'
 and patted a little
 under the dozing nose

My baby sister sneezed.
 The rest was history.

Speaker: adult looking back to childhood. Third person past tense helps to evoke the past

Enjambment

Mother: like a wise woman or witch? Making up stories like spells to persuade children to drink herbal remedy

Enjambment is used in six of the seven stanzas.

Mother's authority; commanding voice

Meaning the pea shot out, but also refers to the speaker's past? Strong memories?

Grace Nichols

Now read the second poem below so that you get a first impression of it. Quickly write down what you think it is about, its 'story', in a couple of sentences.

Lineage

My grandmothers were strong.
 They followed plows and bent to toil.
 They moved through fields sowing seed.
 They touched earth and grain grew.
 5 They were full of sturdiness and singing.

My grandmothers are full of memories
 Smelling of soap and onions and wet clay
 With veins rolling roughly over quick hands
 They have many clean words to say.
 10 My grandmothers were strong.
 Why am I not as they?

Margaret Walker

