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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.

FORM, STRUCTURE AND LANGUAGE PART FOUR

PROGRESS AND REVISION CHECK

SECTION ONE: CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Answer these quick questions to test your basic knowledge of the language, form and structure of the poems.

- 1 Which poem is a sonnet, and what is unusual about it?
- 2 Who speaks in a low register, and in which poem?
- 3 In which poem is a 'huge peak' personified?
- 4 In which poem does the image 'mind-forged manacles' occur and what does it refer to?
- 5 In what metre is 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' written?
- 6 What does a caesura do?
- 7 What language technique is used in 'Checking Out Me History'?
- 8 Which poem uses repetition of 'But nothing happens'?
- 9 What is a dramatic monologue?
- 10 In which poem does the image of 'paper kites' appear, and what might they represent?

SECTION TWO: CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Here is a task about a poetic techniques. This requires more thought and a longer response. Try to write at least three to four paragraphs.

Task: How does Seamus Heaney show that nature can be powerful in 'Storm on the Island'? Think about:

- What poetic techniques the poet uses
- What effects are created through these techniques

PROGRESS CHECK

GOOD PROGRESS

I can:

- Explain how the poets use key poetic techniques to shape events, show relationships and develop ideas.
- Use relevant quotations to support the points I make, and refer 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.

POWER AND CONFLICT

PART TWO PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY: 'OZYMANDIAS'

Context: A partial statue of Ramesses II (Ozymandias in Ancient Greece) was brought to London from Greece when this poem was written.

Context: The character of the 'traveller' reduces any direct criticism of monarchy/government by Shelley.

Language: Semantic field of deterioration.

Sound: Imperfect rhyme supports themes of decay and corruption.

Sound: Harsh-sounding alliteration foregrounds Pharaoh's cruelty.

Key technique: Irony through juxtaposition, showing survival of passions by being recorded on lifeless things, i.e. the parts of the statue.

Language: Ambiguous – Ozymandias mocks his people or sculptor mocks Ozymandias?

Theme: Power lifting itself up for display.

Theme: Arrogant declaration.

Language: Imperative to other rulers shows arrogance.

Language: Semantic field of deterioration.

Sound: Alliteration creates harmonious image of infinite nature contrasting with Pharaoh's brutal and short-lived regime.

Form: Shelley disrupts the sonnet form to symbolise decay by switching ideas here (line 9) while completing the rhyme pattern with 'kings' in the line below.

Form: Turning point mid-line shifts focus from statue to desert; Shelley disrupts traditional sonnet form, replicating breakdown of Ozymandias's power.

Key technique: Irony through structure – placing this immediately after grandiose claim shows its emptiness.

Form: Shelley disrupts the sonnet form to symbolise decay by switching ideas here (line 9) while completing the rhyme pattern with 'kings' in the line below.

Form: Turning point mid-line shifts focus from statue to desert; Shelley disrupts traditional sonnet form, replicating breakdown of Ozymandias's power.

Glossary

¹ trunkless = without a torso

8 POWER AND CONFLICT

Short and long questions to test your knowledge and understanding

Every poem annotated with lots of useful ideas and interpretations

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

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, does the poem seem to be 'told' to us by one specific person or speaker? Is it a conversation? Some poems have a speaker who addresses us directly, while others maintain a more neutral or authoritative voice.
- 3 **The 'message' and/or theme** of the poem – its concerns
For example, does the poem explicitly direct the reader to consider a particular issue? Are there questions that it raises? This aspect is related to the poem's topic or subject, but is a broader issue – usually something more universal.
- 4 **The poem's distinctive language features, or poetic techniques** used by the poet
For example, how is the poem written? Does it use rich **imagery**? Everyday language? Are there significant **semantic fields**, patterns of **rhyme, rhythm, alliteration**? (And, of course: what is the effect of this?)
- 5 **The poem's structure and organisation**
For example, is the poem organised into stanzas? Is there a chronological or other order to the information we are given? How are sentence and line lengths used?
- 6 **The opening and ending**
For example, what is the impact of the poem's opening? Is there repetition or some kind of balance in how the poem opens and closes? Does the ending change our understanding of earlier lines?
- 7 **Patterns of sound and rhythm**
For example, does the poet use repeated rhythms, rhyming patterns or use alliteration and **assonance** in a repeated or patterned way? What is the impact of these patterns – or lack of pattern?
- 8 **Contexts and settings**
For example, what might have been the poet's background or influences? Can you infer any influences from the time the poem was written or where the poem 'takes place' (if relevant)?

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 choices and you should find the meaning becomes clearer and you start to notice the poet's techniques and their effects.

IMAGERY

What is imagery?	Language used in a non-literal way, i.e. figurative devices such as similes , metaphors and personification .
Example	In the extract from, 'The Prelude', Wordsworth uses the simile ' went heaving through the water like a swan ' (20).
Effect	This shows how gracefully the boat moved through the water, as swans are associated with beauty and elegance. It also shows how in tune with nature the speaker was at this point.

CHECKPOINT 17 A02

What is 'This wizened earth has never troubled us / With hay' ('Storm on the Island', 3–4) an example of?

Imagery and symbolism are key to poetry and are often part of what people instinctively feel makes writing 'poetic'. Similes and metaphors are useful for drawing comparisons with familiar objects or ideas which help readers understand more complex or abstract thoughts. In the poem 'Poppies', Weir is able to convey the idea about the speaker's words being useless in just a few words through a tactile image that fits within her poem's **semantic field** of textiles. This would not be possible without imagery.

SIMILE

What is a simile?	A comparison made between two objects using 'like' or 'as'.
Example	In 'Storm on the Island', Heaney uses the simile ' spits like a tame cat / Turned savage ' (15–16) to express how the sea hits the people's windows.
Effect	This conveys how the usually mild sea transforms into something wild and violent.

'TISSUE'

This poem relies heavily on imagery, exploring what tissue and paper represent and moving from image to image. This lends the poem a dream-like quality, since it becomes far removed from reality. The image '**Fine slips from grocery shops ... might fly our lives like paper kites**' (21–4) is an interesting presentation of the importance commerce has in our lives. The simile is a tentative one, using the **modal verb 'might'**, but Dharker could be implying that material things and shopping have some kind of control over us, since she seems to be representing our lives as the kites to be flown rather than, as we might expect, the paper slips being the kites.



PERSONIFICATION

What is personification?	Presenting an inanimate object or animal as though it were human.
Example	In the extract from, 'The Prelude', Wordsworth writes that the peak ' upreared its head ' (24) and ' strode after me ' (29).
Effect	These examples demonstrate how powerless the boy feels, and how much it appears that the peak intends to pursue him.

EXTRACT FROM, 'THE PRELUDE'

Wordsworth moves from imagery to symbolism in this poem, as by the end the '**huge peak**' (22) has taken on the significance of a symbol, although it is not clear what it represents. This is part of why it is so disturbing to the speaker: as just a boy, he does not understand his experience fully. Being exposed to the power of nature without being able to comprehend it is unsettling, so the peak might symbolise the mysteries of life.



TOP TIP: BEYOND A CHILD'S COMPREHENSION

A03

As a Romantic poet, Wordsworth wanted 'The Prelude' to express how his relationship with nature grew and developed into something that was effectively spiritual. The imagery in this section of Book One shows how he, as a boy, begins to shift from noticing the beauty of tiny details to the enormity of the Lake District scenery, but is unable to cope with it at this point in his life.

KEY CONTEXT

A03

Weir's background as an artist and textiles designer has influenced her choices of imagery in 'Poppies'. She references felting techniques in lines 16–17 to show how the speaker's words become clogged up, tangled or clumped together like woollen fibres matting and turning into a new material.