



# Outwood Grange Academies Trust Unseen Poetry Revision Handbook



Name:

English Teacher:

**SECTION C (Unseen Poetry)**

## WJEC Eduqas GCSE in English Literature

### Component 2, Section C: Unseen Poetry

#### Approaching Unseen Poetry:

- Students should get into the habit of reading and re-reading poems before they begin writing on them
- Students need to track the poem through units of meaning or sense, not line-by-line. They should be taught to read from punctuation mark to punctuation mark
- It is better to analyse the poems individually first, ideally through units of meaning, before beginning to compare them. This way the second poem is given equal treatment
- Acronyms to remember ways to explore the poems should not be used. Teach the students to engage with the words and their implications, rather than run through a check list of devices that may or may not be present
- Students need to spend 20 minutes on (a), worth 15 marks, and 40 minutes on (b), worth 25 marks.

Students need to:

- Take note of the title
- Focus on the use of words and their implications. Use the “suggests...” formula
- Back up their points with embedded words and phrases
- Consider the voice of the poem and who, if anyone, the poem is addressed to
- Consider the aims of the poem (a story, experience, protest?)
- Consider the organisation of the poem
- Consider the mood and atmosphere of the poem and whether it changes
- Consider their personal response to a poem
- Avoid underestimating the end of the poem
- Avoid spotting techniques. They need to use some key terms accurately (see below), but these should only be used if the student can explain the impact this device has on the reader’s understanding of the poem. **The focus is always on words and their implications, not on device spotting**
- Compare content, themes, mood, and structure – use basic comparison words such as “also” and “whereas”.

The following key terms should be sufficient when studying poetry: *image/imagery, simile and metaphor, caesura and sonnet, stanza, enjambement, pace and tone, personification, first and second person.*

Answer **both** part (a) **and** part (b)

You are advised to spend about 20 minutes on part (a) and about 40 minutes on part (b).

Read the two poems *Symptoms* by Sophie Hannah and *First Love* by Brian Patten. Both poems are about love and relationships. Write about the poem *Symptoms* by Sophie Hannah, and its effect on you.

[15]

*You may wish to consider:*

- *What the poem is about and how it is organised;*
- *The ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;*
- *The poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;*
- *How you respond to the poem.*

*Symptoms* by Sophie Hannah

Although you have given me a stomach upset,  
Weak knees, a lurching heart, a fuzzy brain,  
A high-pitched laugh, a monumental phone bill,  
A feeling of unworthiness, sharp pain  
When you are somewhere else, a guilty conscience,  
A longing, and a dread of what's in store,  
A pulse rate for the Guinness Book of Records –  
Life now is better than it was before.

Although you have given me a raging temper,  
Insomnia, a rising sense of panic,  
A hopeless challenge, bouts of introspection,  
Raw, bitten nails, a voice that's strangely manic,  
A selfish streak, a fear of isolation,  
A silly smile, lips that are chapped and sore,  
A running joke, a risk, an inspiration –  
Life now is better than it was before.

Although you have given me a premonition,  
Chattering teeth, a goal, a lot to lose,  
A granted wish, mixed motives, superstitions,  
Hang-ups and headaches, fear of awful news,  
A bubble in my throat, a dare to swallow,  
A crack of light under a closing door,  
The crude, fantastic prospect of forever –  
Life now is better than it was before.

b) Now compare *Symptoms* by Sophie Hannah and *First Love* by Brian Patten.

You should compare:

- What the poems are about and how they are organised;
- The ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- The poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- How you respond to the poems.

*First Love* by Brian Patten

Falling in love was like falling down the stairs  
Each stair had her name on it  
And he went bouncing down each one like a tongue-tied lunatic  
One day of loving her was an ordinary year  
He transformed her into what he wanted  
And the scent from her  
Was the best scent in the world  
Fifteen he was fifteen  
Each night he dreamed of her  
Each day he telephoned her  
Each day was unfamiliar  
Scary even  
And the fear of her going weighed on him like a stone  
And when he could not see her for two nights running  
It seemed a century had passed  
And meeting her and staring at her face  
He knew he would feel as he did forever  
Hopelessly in love  
Sick with it  
And not even knowing her second name yet  
It was the first time  
The best time  
A time that would last forever  
Because it was new  
Because he was ignorant it could ever end  
It was endless

Answer **both** part (a) **and** part (b)

You are advised to spend about 20 minutes on part (a) and about 40 minutes on part (b).

Read the two poems *A London Recipe* by Steve Turner and *A London Thoroughfare 2 a.m.* by Amy Lowell. Both poems are about London and the idea of living in a big city. Write about the poem *A London Recipe* by Steve Turner, and its effect on you.

[15]

*You may wish to consider:*

- *What the poem is about and how it is organised;*
- *The ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;*
- *The poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;*
- *How you respond to the poem.*

*Daily London Recipe* by Steve Turner

Take any number of them  
you can think of,  
pour into empty red bus  
                                  until full,  
and then push in  
                                  ten more.

Allow enough time  
to get hot under the collar  
before transferring into  
multi-storey building.  
Leave for eight hours,  
and pour back into same bus,  
                                  already half full.  
Scrape remainder off.

When settled down  
tip into terraced houses each  
carefully lined with copy  
of *The Standard\** and *Tit Bits.\*\**  
Place mixture before open  
television screen at 7 p.m.  
and then allow to cool  
in bed at 10.30 p.m.  
May be served with  
working overalls  
or pinstripe suit.

- b) Now compare *A London Recipe* by Steve Turner and *A London Thoroughfare 2 a.m.* by Amy Lowell.

[25]

You should compare:

- What the poems are about and how they are organised;
- The ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- The poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- How you respond to the poems.

*A London Thoroughfare 2 a.m.* by Amy Lowell

They have watered the street,  
It shines in the glare of lamps,  
Cold, white lamps,  
And lies  
Like a slow-moving river,  
Barred with silver and black.  
Cabs go down it,  
One,  
And then another.  
Between them I hear the shuffling of feet.  
Tramps doze on the window-ledges,  
Night-walkers pass along the sidewalks.  
The city is squalid and sinister,  
With the silver-barred street in the midst,  
Slow-moving,  
A river leading nowhere.

Opposite my window,  
The moon cuts,  
Clear and round,  
Through the plum-coloured night.  
She cannot light the city;  
It is too bright.  
It has white lamps,  
And glitters coldly.

I stand in the window and watch the moon.  
She is thin and lustreless,  
But I love her.  
I know the moon,  
And this is an alien city.

Answer **both** part (a) **and** part (b)

You are advised to spend about 20 minutes on part (a) and about 40 minutes on part (b).

Read the two poems *Cousin Kate* by Christina Rossetti and *A Marriage* by Michael Blumenthal. Both poems are about love and marriage. Write about the poem *Cousin Kate* by Christina Rossetti and its effect on you. [15]

### Cousin Kate by Christina Rossetti

#### Cousin Kate

I was a cottage-maiden  
Hardened by sun and air,  
Contented with my cottage-mates,  
Not mindful I was fair.  
5 Why did a great lord find me out  
And praise my flaxen hair?  
Why did a great lord find me out  
To fill my heart with care?

He lured me to his palace-home –  
10 Woe's me for joy thereof –  
To lead a shameless shameful life,  
His plaything and his love.  
He wore me like a golden knot,  
He changed me like a glove:  
15 So now I moan an unclean thing  
Who might have been a dove.

O Lady Kate, my Cousin Kate,  
You grow more fair than I:  
He saw you at your father's gate,  
20 Chose you and cast me by.  
He watched your steps along the lane,  
Your sport among the rye:  
He lifted you from mean estate  
To sit with him on high.

25 Because you were so good and pure  
He bound you with his ring:  
The neighbours call you good and pure,  
Call me an outcast thing,  
Even so I sit and howl in dust  
30 You sit in gold and sing:  
Now which of us has tenderer heart?  
You had the stronger wing.

O Cousin Kate, my love was true,  
Your love was writ in sand:  
35 If he had fooled not me but you,  
If you stood where I stand,  
He had not won me with his love  
Nor bought me with his land:  
I would have spit into his face  
40 And not have taken his hand.

Yet I've a gift you have not got  
And seem not like to get:  
For all your clothes and wedding-ring  
I've little doubt you fret.  
45 My fair-haired son, my shame, my pride,  
Cling closer, closer yet:  
Your sire would give broad lands for one  
To wear his coronet.

*Christina Rossetti*



- b) Now compare *Cousin Kate* by Christina Rossetti and *A Marriage* by Michael Blumenthal.

[25]

You should compare:

- What the poems are about and how they are organised;
- The ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- The poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- How you respond to the poems.

*A Marriage* by Michael Blumenthal.

You are holding up a ceiling  
with both arms. It is very heavy,  
but you must hold it up, or else  
it will fall down on you. Your arms are tired, terribly tired,  
and, as the day goes on, it feels  
as if either your arms or the ceiling  
will soon collapse.

But then  
unexpectedly,  
something wonderful happens:  
Someone,  
a man or a woman,  
walks into the room  
and holds their arms up  
to the ceiling beside you.

So you finally get  
to take down your arms.  
You feel the relief of respite,  
the blood flowing back  
to your fingers and arms.  
And when your partner's arms tire,  
you hold up your own  
to relieve him again.

And it can go on like this  
for many years  
without the house falling.



Answer **both** part (a) **and** part (b)

You are advised to spend about 20 minutes on part (a) and about 40 minutes on part (b).

Read the two poems *Visiting Hour* by Norman MacCaig and *Long Distance* by Tony Harrison. Both poems are about loss. Write about the poem *Visiting Hour* by Norman MacCaig and its effect on you. [15]

*Visiting Hour* by Norman MacCaig

The hospital smell  
combs my nostrils  
as they go bobbing along  
green and yellow corridors.

What seems a corpse  
is trundled into an lift and vanishes  
heavenward.

I will not feel I will not  
Feel, until  
I have to.

Nurses walk lightly, swiftly,  
here and up and down and there,  
their slender waists miraculously  
carrying their burden  
of so much pain, so  
many deaths their eyes  
still clear after  
so many farewells.

Ward 7. She lies  
in a white cave of forgetfulness.  
A withered hand  
trembles on its stalk. Eyes move  
behind eyelids too heavy  
to raise. Into an arm wasted  
of colour a glass fang is fixed,  
not guzzling but giving.

And between her and me  
distance shrinks till there is none left  
but the distance of pain that neither she nor I  
can cross

She smiles a little at this  
black figure in her white cave  
who clumsily rises  
in the round swimming waves of a bell  
and dizzily goes off, growing fainter,  
not smaller, leaving behind only  
books that will not be read  
and fruitless fruits.

- b) Now compare *Visiting Hour* by Norman MacCaig and *Long Distance* by Tony Harrison.

[25]

You should compare:

- What the poems are about and how they are organised;
- The ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- The poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- How you respond to the poems.

*Long Distance* by Tony Harrison

Though my mother was already two years dead  
Dad kept her slippers warming by the gas,  
put hot water bottles her side of the bed  
and still went to renew her transport pass.

You couldn't just drop in. You had to phone.  
He'd put you off an hour to give him time  
to clear away her things and look alone  
as though his still raw love were such a crime.

He couldn't risk my blight of disbelief  
though sure that very soon he'd hear her key  
scrape in the rusted lock and end his grief.  
He knew she'd just popped out to get the tea.

I believe life ends with death, and that is all.  
You haven't both gone shopping; just the same,  
in my new black leather phone book there's your name  
and the disconnected number I still call.

Homework/Revision Task	
Task 1: Set: Due:	Mark:
Task 2: Set: Due:	Mark:
Task 3: Set: Due:	Mark:
Task 4: Set: Due:	Mark:
Task 5: Set: Due:	Mark:
Task 6: Set: Due:	Mark:

