

GCSE Essential Quotes Booklet



Macbeth

An Inspector Call

A Christmas Carol

Poetry Anthology

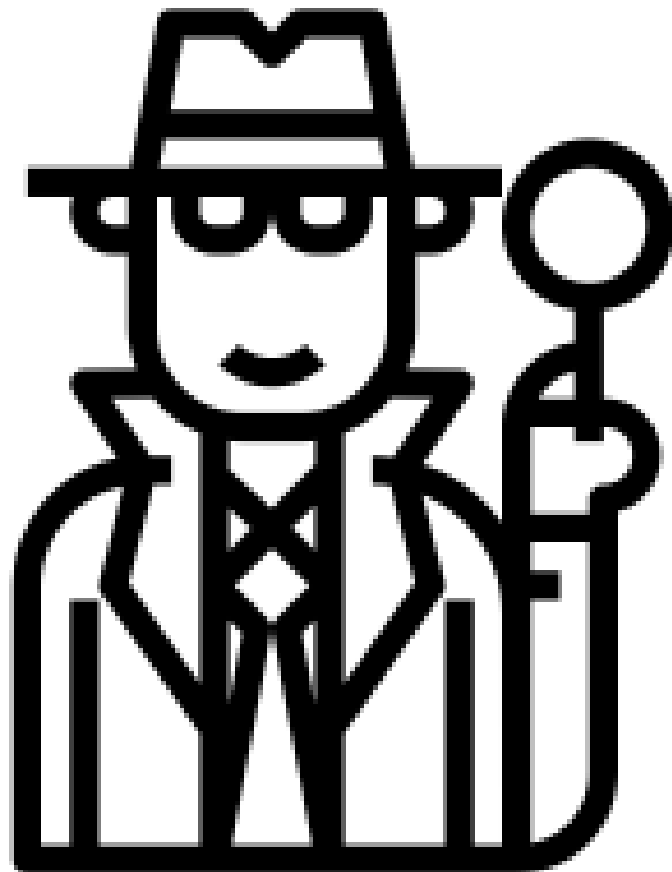
Macbeth



Quote	Who? When?	Ideas and themes
'Fair is foul and foul is fair'	Witches Act 1 Sc1	Shakespeare shows us that the Witches are frightening and speak in riddling incantations. The language here is paradoxical – both things cannot be true – but it also hints that they know Macbeth is seen as fair (good on the battlefield) but they know he can be corrupted and therefore is 'foul'.
'Carved out his passage....unseamed him from the navel to the chops'	The injured Captain talking about Macbeth Act 1 Sc 2	Shakespeare has the Captain from the battlefield report how brave a soldier Macbeth is to King Duncan. 'Carved' suggests that Macbeth is a skilled swordsman – he can slice his way through the battlefield with skill and precision. 'Unseamed' suggests he easily slices his enemy open – like a scissor blade through a thread of cotton. 'nave to the chops' tells us he stabbed his sword in at the person's navel (belly button) and sliced up to his chin (chops). This implies that Macbeth is very strong, skilled and brutal on the battlefield.
'My noble partner seems rapt withal....speak then to me who neither begs nor fears your favour nor your hate'	Banquo to the Witches Act 1 Sc3	Banquo describes that Macbeth is 'rapt' by the Witches predictions for him – meaning Macbeth is engrossed or lost in imagining what they have told him he will become. Banquo is not drawn in by the Witches in the same way and challenges them to 'speak then to me' stating that he neither 'begs' for favours from them nor 'fears' anything bad. Banquo is a dramatic foil to Macbeth – he is not scared or engrossed in what the Witches tell him compared to Macbeth.
'Stars hide your fires, let not light see my black and deep desires'	Macbeth ASIDE Act 1 Sc 4	Macbeth mutters to himself that he has 'black and deep desires' just after hearing Duncan announce that Malcolm will be the next King of Scotland. Shakespeare uses light and dark imagery throughout the play to show the fight between good and evil taking place within Macbeth. He wants to be King but knows how he and Lady Macbeth are going about it is wrong.
'I fear thy nature, it is too full of the milk of human kindness' 'Unsex me here.'	Lady Macbeth Act 1 Sc 5	Lady Macbeth has received Macbeth's letter about the Witches and doubts his ability to act brutally and kill King Duncan. She thinks he is too full of 'milk' – white, pure, innocent, childlike. She then summons up demons to 'unsex' her – to remove feminine aspects from her personality so that she can be the brutal one in her relationship with Macbeth and they can both attain more power.
'Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it'	Lady Macbeth Act 1 Sc5	Lady Macbeth directs Macbeth to greet Duncan with an innocent and kind face but be prepared to kill him. 'Flower' would be stereotypically feminine so we can see how Lady Macbeth is taking the more masculine, commanding role in the relationship here and emasculating Macbeth. 'Serpent' has connotations or links to Adam and Eve – Eve following the snake's direction to bite the apple and thus humans being thrown out of paradise forever according to the Christian tale.
'Is this a dagger I see before me?'	Macbeth Soliloquy Act 2 Sc1	This is when Macbeth is hallucinating a dagger as he heads towards Duncan's room to murder him. The rhetorical question shows his confusion and his indecision about whether he should be murdering the King or not. He wonders whether the dagger is from his 'heat oppressed brain' or whether it is a signal from the supernatural leading him in the right direction. Shakespeare uses the soliloquys from Macbeth throughout the play so that we can see his struggle with his own conscience about the decisions he needs to make.
'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean?' 'A little water clears us of this deed.'	Macbeth and Lady Macbeth Act 2 Sc2	Macbeth returns from murdering Duncan and is terrified by what he has done. He believes that not even all the water in the ocean will clear the blood from his hand and instead will turn the ocean red. Obviously, he could wash the blood away with some water, he is more focused on the idea that he can never wash the memory away from his mind. Lady Macbeth dismisses his fears and tells him only 'a little' water will clean it away. Notice how she says 'us' – she too wants the blood/guilt to be washed away even though she couldn't face the thought of actually murdering Duncan.

'A falcon...by a mousing owl was killed'	Old Man Act 2 Sc4	Shakespeare uses animal imagery throughout the play to show us the effect on the rest of the kingdom of Macbeth breaking the Great Chain of Being by killing Duncan. The world has gone wild and the food chain has been turned upside down. A falcon has been hunted by an owl who would usually only prey on mice. This could also be a metaphor for Macbeth the Thane killing Duncan the King.
'O full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!'	Macbeth Act 3 Sc2	Macbeth is deeply distressed with guilt and worry that he has killed the King and now as King someone may try and kill him. He cannot confide in Banquo, only his wife and she keeps telling him to behave more like a man. The 'O' and the exclamation mark show us that Shakespeare wanted us to see how upset and disturbed Macbeth has become.
'All my pretty ones?...I must also feel it as a man' 'Not in the legions of horrid hell can come a devil more damned'	Macduff Act 4 Sc3	Macduff reacts to the news of his murdered wife and children. The question showing his utter confusion and shock at the brutal murder of his defenceless family. He is encouraged to fight like a man by Malcolm and replies that he must 'feel it like a man' meaning he is a rounded figure of masculinity – he is a father and a soldier: he has emotions as well as the capacity to fight for revenge and he must experience his loss not just charge ahead with his sword. However, the next quote here shows he is ready to go and seek revenge on Macbeth – look at the alliteration of 'horrid hell' and 'devil more damned' – Shakespeare is using this to show the sheer fury and anger with which Macduff is ready to attack Macbeth with.
'Out damned spot' 'All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand'	Lady Macbeth Act 5 Sc1	Lady Macbeth after being isolated by Macbeth, who no longer confides in her and instead seeks out the Witches, starts to go mad with the guilt and sleepwalks confessing to their murderous actions. Ironically, after telling Macbeth earlier that a 'little water clears us of this deed' is now continually washing imaginary spots of blood from her hands. She also complains that the best perfumes in the world will not take away the smell of blood. Notice the words 'sweeten' and 'little' suggesting that she would now like to be feminine again and be protected and cleansed from her brutal actions earlier in the play.
'Out, out brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow...It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing'	Macbeth Act 5 Sc5	Macbeth mourns the loss of Lady Macbeth and accepts that she would have died soon when the English army invaded the castle. Perhaps the use of 'candle' shows that he still had fond feelings for her – she was his only source of light. He then talks about life and discusses it as a metaphor. Firstly, depicting it as a 'walking shadow' – a darkness that follows you about and inevitably dies out when there is no more light. He then describes it as a tale – a story which is told by an idiot (perhaps meaning himself – he has carved out his own life choices) and ultimately though full of 'sound and fury' will lead to nothing. He realises he has wasted his life in pursuit of power and his ambition has led to his own disgraceful and inevitable death.

An Inspector Calls



Quote	Who? When?	Ideas and themes
'A man has to make his own way-has to look after himself.'	Mr Birling in Act 1 to Gerald and Eric.	Mr. Birling is promoting a selfish, Capitalist worldview . He believes: Success comes from looking after yourself; People should be independent , not rely on others and helping the wider community isn't your responsibility. He adds "and his family too, of course," almost as an afterthought — which shows where his priorities lie: self first, others (including family) second (if at all). This line is directly challenged by the Inspector later on, who argues that we are " members of one body ." <u>Authorial intent:</u> Priestley uses Mr. Birling as a symbol of old-fashioned, Capitalist, selfish thinking , and through the Inspector (and the consequences of the Birlings' actions), he exposes the flaws and dangers of that mindset .
'But these girls aren't cheap labour-they're people.'	Sheila Birling In Act 1 , shortly after the Inspector reveals that Eva Smith was fired from Mr. Birling's factory .	Sheila is challenging her father's Capitalist attitude . Mr. Birling talks about the strike and dismisses the girls' value but Sheila humanises them . This is a key turning point in her character arc. It shows that she's developing a sense of empathy : she's starting to understand the Inspector's message and she's rejecting her family's cold, profit-driven mindset . This quote represents the younger generation's openness to change . Sheila becomes one of the most morally aware characters, contrasting strongly with her parents, who cling to status and power. <u>Authorial Intent:</u> Priestley uses this quote to challenge Capitalist views that treat workers as disposable. Through Sheila, he shows that the younger generation is capable of empathy and change. Sheila recognises the humanity of the working class, suggesting she sees individuals rather than whole groups, contrasting with her father's selfish outlook. Priestley uses her response to promote social responsibility and suggest hope for a fairer, more compassionate society.
'You mustn't try to build up a kind of wall between us and that girl.'	Sheila Birling in Act 2 , during a conversation with her mother and the Inspector, after it becomes clear that the family is all connected to Eva Smith's story.	Sheila uses the metaphor of a "wall" to represent the social and emotional divide between the upper and working classes. She is criticising her mother for trying to separate their comfortable lives from Eva Smith's suffering , as if the Birlings are somehow morally or socially superior . The wall also symbolises ignorance and denial , and Sheila warns that the Inspector will break it down — exposing the truth regardless of their efforts to hide. Mrs Birling's refusal to listen to her daughter highlights her arrogance. <u>Authorial intent:</u> This reflects Priestley's message that social class should not excuse people from responsibility or compassion .
'I didn't feel about her as she felt about me.'	Gerald Croft in Act 2 , when Gerald is confessing to his affair with Daisy Renton (Eva Smith) the previous summer.	This quote reveals the emotional imbalance in Gerald and Eva's relationship. While Eva clearly developed genuine feelings , Gerald admits he did not feel the same — suggesting his involvement was more about convenience or pleasure than love. It highlights how the upper-class men exploited vulnerable women , even if unintentionally. Gerald tries to be honest, but his detachment shows a lack of emotional responsibility . <u>Authorial Intent:</u> Priestley uses this to criticise how people in power can hurt others without fully realising (or simply having no regard for) the consequences .

'Public men, Mr Birling, have responsibilities as well as privileges.'	Inspector Goole in Act 2, during a heated exchange with Mr. Birling, who is trying to defend his actions by focusing on status and reputation.	This quote is a direct challenge to Mr. Birling's self-serving mindset. The Inspector reminds him that those in positions of power — especially public figures — must use that power responsibly, not just for personal gain. "Public men" Suggests people in positions of power and influence and implies a duty to society. "Privileges" refers to the benefits and advantages that come with status. The Inspector reminds Birling that privilege isn't earned without accountability. It highlights the imbalance between the lives of the rich and poor.
'She was claiming elaborate fine feelings and scruples that were simply absurd in a girl in her position.'	Mrs. Birling in Act 2, after the Inspector reveals that Eva Smith had gone to Mrs. Birling's charity for help and was turned away.	Authorial Intent - Priestley uses this to underline one of the play's core messages: with power comes moral duty . The quote criticises the idea that wealth and status excuse selfish behaviour, promoting instead a vision of society where leaders are accountable for how their actions affect others , especially the vulnerable. This quote reveals Mrs. Birling's dismissive and classist attitude toward Eva Smith, who, according to Mrs. Birling, should not have had the moral standards that she did, simply because of her working-class status. The words "elaborate fine feelings" and "scruples" suggest that Mrs. Birling sees Eva's responses as inappropriate for someone of her social class, reinforcing the way in which the lower classes were viewed as, almost, less human than the wealthy. It also serves to highlight the class divide that runs throughout the play.
'I accept no blame for it at all.'	Mrs. Birling in Act 2, when the Inspector confronts her about Eva Smith's death and her role in turning Eva away from the charity.	Authorial Intent- Priestley uses Mrs. Birling's statement as a clear example of prejudice and reflects the social attitudes of the time, where the working class were expected to know their "place" and not aspire to higher standards of morality or dignity. Priestley uses this quote to criticise the ignorance and insensitivity of the upper class, highlighting their inability to empathise with the struggles of the lower classes. Mrs. Birling's statement reflects her stubborn refusal to take responsibility for the consequences of her actions. She rejects any guilt or accountability, despite her direct involvement in turning away Eva when she sought help, which ultimately contributed to Eva's downfall. "At all": The finality of the statement highlights her uncompromising stance (she will not change her opinion), reinforcing her arrogance.
'I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty.'	Eric Birling in Act 3, during his confession to the Inspector about his involvement with Eva Smith (Daisy Renton). He says this after admitting he had been drunk when he took advantage of Eva.	Authorial Intent- This moment also underlines Priestley's critique of the upper class, showing how they often evade responsibility for their actions and lack empathy for those less fortunate. Mrs. Birling's failure to see her part in Eva's tragic story emphasises her lack of understanding of her moral responsibilities and class prejudice. In this quote, Eric tries to explain his actions by attributing his behaviour to being drunk — suggesting that in that state, he lost control and did something terrible. The phrase "a chap easily turns nasty" downplays the severity of what he did, implying it was an accidental loss of self-control rather than a conscious decision. However, this justification is problematic, as it shifts the blame to external factors (like alcohol) rather than taking full responsibility for his actions.
		Authorial intent- Priestley uses this to critique the lack of accountability in the upper class, where individuals like Eric often avoid facing the consequences of their own behaviour.

<p>'We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other.'</p>	<p>Inspector Goole near the end of Act 3, during his final speech before leaving the Birlings.</p>	<p>This quote is the moral heart of <i>An Inspector Calls</i>. The Inspector sums up Priestley's core message: that society should be built on community, compassion, and shared responsibility. "We don't live alone" rejects the idea that you can simply only look after yourself. "We are members of one body" uses a metaphor of the body to suggest that everyone in society is interconnected — harm to one part affects the whole. It also echoes Christian values and the idea of unity. "We are responsible for each other" is a direct call for social responsibility. Priestley believed that a fair society depends on people caring for one another, especially the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Priestley wrote the play in 1945, just after WWII, when society was rethinking inequality and the welfare of all. He wanted the audience to see the dangers of ignoring others' suffering and to embrace Socialist ideas.</p>
<p>'men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish.'</p>	<p>Inspector Goole at the end of Act 3, in his final speech before he leaves the Birlings.</p>	<p>This is a warning and a prophetic statement. The "lesson" is that we are all responsible for one another — a key message of the play. If people ignore their social duties, the consequences will be severe. "Fire and blood and anguish" symbolises the destructive results of selfishness, likely referring to the World Wars, social unrest, and suffering that Priestley believed came from inequality and lack of compassion. The words evoke hellish imagery, reinforcing the idea that ignoring social responsibility leads to pain and chaos on a massive scale which will affect everyone regardless of class.</p> <p><u>Authorial Intent</u> - Priestley is warning his audience (in post-WWII Britain) that if society fails to change, history will repeat itself. This quote is a powerful call for social reform, urging people to adopt empathy and collective responsibility to avoid future tragedy.</p>
<p>'I suppose we're all nice people now.'</p>	<p>Sheila Birling in Act 3, after the Inspector has left and the older Birlings begin shrugging off their guilt, trying to pretend nothing serious happened.</p>	<p>Sheila says this sarcastically to highlight the hypocrisy of her family. Although they were all exposed as having hurt Eva Smith, her parents and Gerald are acting like it no longer matters now that the Inspector is gone. The use of "nice" is ironic — Sheila knows they are not "nice" just because they weren't legally punished. Her tone shows her growth and moral awareness, contrasting with her parents' lack of change and understanding. Priestley uses her sarcasm to criticise how the upper classes often avoid real accountability and only care about appearances.</p> <p><u>Authorial Intent</u>- Priestley uses this line to show the difference between generations — younger characters like Sheila learn and feel guilt, while the older ones cling to their status and denial. It reinforces his message that real change requires self-awareness and honesty, not just avoiding consequences.</p>
<p>'Now look at the pair of them — the famous younger generation who know it all. And they can't even take a joke'</p>	<p>Arthur Birling at the end of Act 3, after the Inspector has left and the Birlings believe the visit was a hoax.</p>	<p>This quote shows Mr. Birling's mocking and dismissive attitude toward Sheila and Eric, who are visibly shaken and still feeling guilty for their roles in Eva Smith's death. The phrase "famous younger generation" is sarcastic — Birling is criticising how the young challenge the old and show moral independence. "Can't even take a joke" trivialises everything that has happened, suggesting that for Birling, the real concern isn't morality, but reputation and social comfort. This moment highlights the generational divide: while the younger generation accept responsibility and want change, the older generation are quick to forget, dismiss, and mock.</p> <p><u>Authorial Intent</u>- Priestley uses Birling's tone to show how the older generation refuse to learn, even when faced with evidence of suffering caused by their actions. This quote contrasts with the younger characters' guilt and growth, supporting Priestley's message that hope for the future lies with the younger generation, who are more open to change, accountability, and social responsibility.</p>

A Christmas Carol



Quote	Who? When?	Ideas and themes
"Secret, self-contained and solitary as an oyster"	Narrator in Stave 1 about Scrooge.	<p>This simile occurs early in the novella, establishing Scrooge as a cold, closed-off character. It sets the stage for his transformation, emphasizing how distant he is from the warmth and generosity of the Christmas spirit. By the end of the story, Scrooge metaphorically "opens up," allowing his inner goodness to emerge, much like the pearl inside an oyster.</p> <p>"self-contained" implies Scrooge relies only on himself and believes (incorrectly) that he has no need for others.</p> <p>"solitary" re-enforces his choice to isolate himself from society. Perhaps he is protecting himself from emotional pain (in Stave 2 we gain some understanding of WHY he became closed off). However, as we know that some oysters contain pearls, there is a hint that there is something precious and valuable within him.</p> <p><u>Authorial Intent</u> – Scrooge has no meaningful human connection, and Dickens implies that this is unnatural and harmful, not just for Scrooge, but for society as a whole.</p>
"Are there no prisons?...And the Union workhouses?" demanded Scrooge. "Are they still in operation?"	Stave 1 Scrooge to the charity collectors.	<p>When asked to make a charitable donation to help the poor, Dickens has Scrooge voice the opinions of wealthy Victorians towards the poor. It was commonly felt that the poor were lazy, drinkers, morally corrupt and trouble-makers and so it was their own fault they were poor (and it was God's will!)</p> <p>Dickens uses rhetorical questions here to highlight that as far as Scrooge and those like him are concerned, these institutions are the answer to poverty.</p> <p><u>Authorial Intent</u> – Dickens is directly criticising the Poor Law 1834, which offered workhouses as a deterrent to being poor. These institutions were seen as the only recourse for the needy—no charity, no compassion, just punishment.</p>
"I wear the chains I forged in life"	Stave 1 Marley to Scrooge.	<p>Jacob Marley's ghost (Scrooge's old business partner) has returned to warn Scrooge that he must change if he is to avoid Marley's fate. Marley's chain isn't literal—it's a metaphor for the burden (guilt) of his past actions. Each "link" represents a selfish decision, a missed act of kindness, or a sin of greed. Dickens turns this moral feeling (guilt) into a an image that the reader can imagine.</p> <p>The repetition of "I" emphasises that Marley accepts responsibility for these sins. The verb "forged" also acknowledges that Marley worked hard to create this chain during his lifetime (acting in a way that was unnatural). This quote is a turning point, as Dickens begins to offer the chance of redemption to Scrooge and the readers rather than just highlighting how badly he behaves.</p> <p><u>Authorial Intent</u> – Is Dickens trying to warn his reader that their actions have consequences but suggest everyone has the chance to change.</p>
"Mankind was my Business"	Stave 1 Marley to Scrooge	<p>Scrooge has been surprised by Marley's message and claims to not understand, describing Marley as "a good man of business". Dickens flips the meaning of "business."</p> <p>For Marley, "business" used to mean money, now, he realizes it <i>should have meant compassion, justice, and community (prioritising people not profit)</i>. Marley and Scrooge are not evil, they are indifferent. They do wrong by doing nothing to help and profiting of those who are in need.</p> <p><u>Authorial Intent</u> – This is a criticism of Capitalism, where people like Marley and Scrooge measure their worth by wealth, not by goodness.</p>

<p>"A solitary child neglected by his friends is left there still."</p>	<p>Stave 2 the Ghost of Christmas Past to Scrooge.</p>	<p>The Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge back to see himself as a child left alone in school over the Christmas holiday. "Solitary child" echoes the earlier phrase describing Scrooge as "solitary as an oyster." It creates a parallel between who he was and who he became.</p> <p>"Neglected" is key—this isn't just loneliness, it's abandonment. The child (Scrooge) didn't choose to be alone; he was left behind by his friends and his family. This suggests that Scrooge's background has shaped who he is as an adult (he wasn't born wanting to be alone). This moment is important, although it doesn't excuse Scrooge's later cruelty it <i>explains</i> it. Dickens invites us to empathise with Scrooge not just judge him.</p> <p>Authorial Intent - Dickens, who experienced poverty and neglect himself, is shining a light on how society fails its children—especially those from broken homes or poor families. He's suggesting that emotional neglect can be just as damaging as poverty. He also highlights how important childhood is in shaping who a person becomes.</p>
<p>"Another idol has displaced me...A golden one."</p>	<p>Stave 2 Belle to Scrooge</p>	<p>In this scene from his past, Scrooge is reminded of why his fiancée (Belle) broke off their engagement. The word "idol" is powerful—it carries a religious weight. Belle isn't just saying Scrooge loves money—she's accusing him of worshipping it, of treating gold as a god. This shows that Scrooge's pursuit of wealth has corrupted his sense of morality (what he knows to be right and wrong). This moment shows the cost of Scrooge's choices: Belle isn't leaving because she no longer loves Scrooge but because he no longer values what is important. When she leaves he loses his chance at love and having a family.</p> <p>Authorial Intent - Dickens critiques the societal belief (especially strong in Victorian England) that success equals money and happiness comes from financial success. Belle proves otherwise.</p>
<p>"If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, the child will die."</p>	<p>Stave 3 The Ghost of Christmas Present to Scrooge</p>	<p>Scrooge has been taken to the Cratchit's Christmas 'celebration' and for the first time he sees Tiny Tim. Here Scrooge is shown what his "surplus population" actually looks like: an innocent child. The use of the word "shadows" is important. It suggests that these are not fixed events—they are possibilities. A Dickens is exploring the idea that the future is changeable, depending on our present actions.</p> <p>Tiny Tim isn't just one character—he symbolises every vulnerable, innocent person suffering in silence. His fragile body and joyful spirit make his possible death <i>heartbreaking</i>.</p> <p>Dickens uses Tim to personify poverty.</p> <p>Authorial Intent - Tim's potential death is the direct result of inequality in society. Dickens is highlighting how the most innocent suffer most in Capitalist societies. This is a challenge to wealthy Victorians who believed poverty was a moral failing and also a result of personal choices. He is showing how innocents like Tiny Tim can be saved if society changes.</p>
<p>"God bless us every one!" said Tiny Tim, the last of all."</p>	<p>Stave 3 Tiny Tim to his family</p>	<p>Tiny Tim joins in making toasts to his family at Christmas time. Tiny Tim says it with warmth and sincerity—right in the heart of the Ghost of Christmas Present's visit. It's in that moment that we first truly understand Tim's character: physically fragile, but spiritually strong. He is full of hope despite his hardships challenging Victorian views of the poor.</p> <p>Dickens' repetition of this line at the end of the novella shows that Scrooge's redemption has real-world consequences.</p>
<p>"This boy is ignorance. This girl is want. Beware them both."</p>	<p>Stave 3 the Ghost of Christmas Present to Scrooge.</p>	<p>At the end of the stave, the Ghost reveals two children hidden under its robe. Dickens literally gives human form to two major problems in Victorian society: Ignorance = lack of education, understanding, and awareness, Want = poverty, deprivation, hunger, greed. They're not abstract ideas here—they're living, suffering children, hidden beneath the robes of the spirit. This personification makes them impossible for Scrooge to ignore.</p> <p>Dickens warns to beware Ignorance the most because ignorance leads to fear, prejudice, and injustice. Dickens is saying a society that keeps its people uneducated will doom itself.</p> <p>Authorial Intent - This moment is the moral core of the novella. It ties everything together: It summarises the root of society's problems and shows the reader that this story isn't just about Scrooge. It's about us.</p>

<p>“bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man.”</p> <p>Compared to,</p> <p>‘My little, little child!’ (Bob talking about Tiny Tim)</p>	<p>Stave 4 the narrator describes the dead man's body (Scrooge's body)</p>	<p>In this stave the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come reveals Scrooge's own death. It is cold and brutal. “Unwatched” — no one was there as he died, “Unwept” — no one mourned him, “Uncared for” — no one loved him, “Bereft” — empty of everything that gives life meaning. Each word strips away any human connection. This is a warning to rich Victorians like Scrooge that if they continue to only care for themselves this fate could be theirs.</p> <p><u>Authorial Intent</u> - Victorian society often equated wealth with success and status. But here, Dickens flips that: Scrooge dies rich—but utterly unloved. What kind of success is that? This contrasts with Tiny Tim's death where we see grief and compassion.</p>
<p>“I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy.”</p>	<p>Stave 5 Scrooge to himself!</p>	<p>Having seen his future death, Scrooge awakes at the start of Stave 5 to find himself alive and well on Christmas morning. The three similes come one after another showing the extent of his relief. Each image is chosen for a reason:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light as a feather → free from burden, guilt, and greed. • Happy as an angel → purity, grace, appreciation for faith. • Merry as a schoolboy → youthful joy, innocence, playfulness. <p>He's gone from old and bitter to young in spirit.</p> <p>Here we see a complete contrast with his former self.</p> <p>It shows us that redemption isn't just possible—it's transformational.</p> <p><u>Authorial Intent</u> - Dickens is revealing that real joy is not found in money or possessions but in having a clear conscience and connections with others. Also, no matter how far gone you are, change is always possible!</p>
<p>“To Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father.”</p>	<p>Stave 5 Narrator about Scrooge</p>	<p>Right at the end of the novella, we see the outcome of Scrooge's redemption. The all-caps “NOT” is rare in Dickens's style—it leaps off the page. Why? It shows that, by changing his ways Scrooge has changed the 'shadows' that the Ghost of Christmas Present warned about. It's Dickens showing us that redemption has real-world consequences, not just good feelings.</p> <p>“second Father” = Calling Scrooge a second father is powerful as it implies not just affection, but active care and responsibility. It shows that Scrooge has embraced the idea of family and taken a moral responsibility to help someone (others) even if he has no obligation to do so. He is the exact opposite of how we met him.</p>

Poetry Anthology



Poetry Anthology

On the next few pages, you will find quotes and information for pairs of poems which have been selected to cover a range of themes.

You will notice that there are more nature poems than any of the other themes this is because this is the main theme that has not yet been covered. *However, this does not mean that this is guaranteed to be the theme it can be others.*

While we have narrowed down the poems you should know in detail, you should now something about as many poems as possible.

Use these pages in the following way:

1. Look at the key information you have about each poem.
2. Annotate 4-5 of the key quotes for each poem and turn them into flashcards to test yourself with.

Themes

- The power of nature and the natural world.
- The insignificance of human power.

The poems:

Hawk Roosting – Ted Hughes

Ozymandias – Percy Bysshe Shelley

Hawk Roosting

Context

Ted Hughes was Poet Laureate until his death in 1984 and wrote many poems about the natural world. Hughes said the poem wasn't about cruelty – he just wanted to show a hawk's 'natural way of thinking'. However, lots of people have interpreted the poem as an allegory about dictators.

What Happens

- The speaker of the poem is a hawk who is looking down on the earth beneath him.
- He begins the poem perched at the top of a tree, waiting to swoop on his next pray.
- His attitude and tone are very arrogant and he compares himself to God.
- He is very proud of his place in the food chain and the fact he can choose who lives and who dies. He doesn't want the natural order of things to be disrupted.

Message

Power in nature is accepted – we accept and even admire powerful predators for the way they think, act and live. However, this thought and behaviour in humans is despised and fought against.

Language and Structure

- The clearly organised structure of the six stanzas reflects the hawk's control over his life and land.
- The steady and calm pace to the poem again mirrors the hawk's measured control over the woodland – he will not be rushed by anyone.
- The use of 1st person pronouns is evident throughout the poem to generate the ego of the hawk.
- Natural imagery is used to juxtapose the power of the hawk against elements of the natural world, even the universe.
- Verbs are used to show how powerful and assertive the hawk is.

Key Quotes

I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.

Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat.

And the earth's face upward for my inspection.

It took the whole of Creation
To produce my foot, my each feather:
Now I hold Creation in my foot

My manners are tearing off heads –

Nothing has changed since I began.
My eye has permitted no change.
I am going to keep things like this.

Ozymandias

Context

Percy Bysshe Shelley was a Romantic poet. He was a radical thinker for his time and thrown out of Cambridge for refusing to follow the rules. Romantic poets were concerned with humans' feelings being valued, seeing the beauty in everyday surroundings, governments being too strict and oppressive and, as humans, recognising our own place in the world. They were influenced by their dislike of the Industrial Revolution and its negative impact on the lives and environment of people living through it. They were also influenced by the French Revolution, where working class people rioted and fought for more equality from the rich upper classes who ruled their country.

What Happens

- The speaker meets an unknown 'traveller' who has journeyed from a land far away and tells the speaker his story.
- On his travels he came across a ruined and broken statue in the desert. The statue was once a huge monument to Ozymandias (Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II) who was a tyrannical and harsh ruler. .
- The traveller implies that Ozymandias has the statue made of himself and the sculptor made it deliberately look cold and sneering.
- The traveller tells the speaker that, as well as there being not much left of the statue, there is also now nothing left surrounding it. The statue now stands alone as the 'sands stretch far away.

Message

No matter how powerful an individual human may feel they are, nature and time will always outweigh and outlive them. Power is transient.

Language and Structure

- There is lots of imagery of nature to reflect how powerful this is compared to Ozymandias.
- The poem is a sonnet, although it mixes the two main types of sonnet forms. This could show the broken nature of the statue and Ozymandias' rule.
- We hear three speakers in the poem: The narrator, the traveller, the voice of Ozymandias on the pedestal of the statue.
- This story wrapped inside a story is called *mise en abyme*. This is a technique from art of placing a copy of an image within itself, often in a way that suggests an infinitely recurring sequence. This could represent how power will keep transferring from one person or people to others.

Key Quotes

I met a traveller from an antique land

Two vast and trunkless legs of stone

Stand in the desert

Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,

yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,

The hand that mocked them

'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:

Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'

... Round the decay

Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Themes

- The wonder of nature.
- The connection between humans and the natural world.
- Childhood and innocence.
- Loss of innocence.
- Memories.
- Change.

The poems:

Death of a Naturalist – Seamus Heaney

The Prelude – William Wordsworth

Death of a Naturalist

Context

Seamus Heaney is a famous Irish poet who grew up on a farm. Lots of poetry contains imagery of nature and the countryside. Seamus Heaney's four year old brother died in a car accident when Heaney was a young boy. The death affected him badly and many of his poems are about loss of innocence.

What Happens

- The poem opens with description of a swampy area where flax (a kind of plant) grows
- Heaney describes the flies buzzing, and how the sun beats down on the mucky soil.
- He pays particular attention to the slimy frogspawn (what eventually becomes tadpoles, then frogs). This sparks a memory for the speaker, and he begins to talk about how in school, his teacher had students collect the gooey frogspawn in jars to watch it turn to tadpoles as part of a science lesson about frogs.
- The speaker returns to the present day where one day he follows the sound of croaking frogs to its source. . He sees more frogs than he's ever seen amongst the frogspawn (no, this is not a scene from a horror movie). They're croaking and slapping in the flax dam.
- He is horrified by the scene and turns and runs away. Something he cherished as a child is now repulsive to him.

Message

Childhood innocence is something to be treasured. The joy and fun you find in life as a child is lost once you realise that the world around you contains dangers.

Language and Structure

- In the first stanza, the speaker in the poem is full of enthusiasm and enjoys nature.
- In the last stanza, this changes as he becomes more aware of the dangers of the world around him.
- The poem has lots of language in the first stanza to reflect the age and innocence of the child.
- The verbs in this poem are worth exploring. They start with a tone of enthusiasm and finish with a sense of danger as the poem progresses.

Key Quotes

All year the flax-dam festered in the heart
Of the townland; green and heavy headed

But best of all was the warm thick slobber
Of frogspawn that grew like clotted water

I would fill jamptotfuls of the jellied
Specks to range on window sills at home,
On shelves at school, and wait and watch until
The fattening dots burst, into nimble
Swimming tadpoles.

Then one hot day when fields were rank
With cowdung in the grass the angry frogs
Invaded the flax-dam;

The slap and plop were obscene threats. Some sat
Poised like mud grenades,

The great slime kings
Were gathered there for vengeance and I knew
That if I dipped my hand the spawn would clutch it.

The Prelude

Context

William Wordsworth was one of the first and most influential of the Romantic era. Romantic poets were concerned with humans' feelings being valued, seeing the beauty in everyday surroundings, governments being too strict and oppressive and, as humans, recognising our own place in the world. They were influenced by their dislike of the Industrial Revolution and its negative impact on the lives and environment of people living through it.

The Prelude is nostalgic in its thoughts about his childhood and the intense feelings of delight he experienced when he was walked or, as a child, played in the countryside. The poem describes the sheer thrill and exultation of children as they skate in the gathering darkness of a frosty day. Wordsworth uses imagery of sound, sight and the natural world to bring alive the vivid and joyous experience.

What Happens

- The poem begins with the end of the day and the warm light of the setting sun reflecting in the cottage windows
- In the middle of the poem, the young Wordsworth ignores his mother's calls to come in for his tea and instead delights at skating with the other boys from the village. They are playing tag and chasing each other across the ice and this reminds Wordsworth of a pack of hounds hunting a fox.
- The end of the poem reflects the end of the day as the sun sets and the stars appear.

Message

Childhood is a time of innocent joy where simple things can make us happy. We should remember that these simple things can make us happy as adults too – we should value our feelings and the environment around us.

Language and Structure

- The poem uses sensory imagery to immerse the reader in the natural surroundings being described.
- Imagery of light is used to represent happiness and energy.
- The poem is written in iambic pentameter which is used to replicate a heartbeat or the flow of normal conversation.
- Wordsworth wanted to write poetry in everyday language to make it accessible.²³

Key Quotes

The cottage windows through the twilight blaz'd,
I heeded not the summons: – happy time

I wheel'd about,
Proud and exulting, like an untir'd horse,

So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle

Meanwhile, the precipices rang aloud,
The leafless trees, and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron

while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

Themes

- The impact of war on others.
- Grief and loss.
- Wasted youth/potential.

The poems:

A Wife in London – Thomas Hardy

The Manhunt – Simon Armitage

A Wife In London

Context

A Wife in Lond was written in 1899 during the Boer War. Hardy was a pacifist and believed that war was pointless and destructive. During this time, most communication was done via telegram which would take time to get through.

What Happens

- A wife is sat at home on a foggy London day waiting to hear from her husband who is at war.
- There is a knock on the door and she is informed that he has been killed.
- The next day she receives a letter from her husband that was written before his death. He talks about his hopes for the future.

Message

Loss in war is inevitable. The wife's grief is almost expected and reflected in the setting. War wastes youth and potential. Hope can be found even in dire circumstances like war.

Language and Structure

- The poem is divided into two parts: The Tragedy – where the wife learns of her husband's death and The Irony – where she receives the letter full of hope after her husband's death.
- The title is anonymous so as to allow the poem to apply to any wife in London showing how war impacts countless people in this way. Emphasises how pointless and destructive it is.
- The voice of the poem is an observer (not personally involved) which makes them detached from the woman's feelings of grief. It presents grief as an inevitable fact of war.
- The setting is used to foreshadow the wife's sadness. It is ominous. The scene is described as lacking warmth and hope. This could also be seen as foreshadowing the soldier's death.
- The description of the man's hopes in the letter contrast strongly with the otherwise bleak tone. Hope can appear in the darkest of places and times.

Key Quotes

She sits in the tawny vaour

The street-lamp glimmers cold.

The messenger's knock crack smartly,
Flashed news in her hand

He – has fallen – in the far South Land

The fog hangs thicker,

His hand whom the worm now knows

Page-full of his hoped return

In the summer weather,
And of new love that they would learn.

The Manhunt

Context

Eddie Beddow's was a member of the army and served as a Peacekeeper in Bosnia. During his time in Bosnia, he was shot, and he suffered PTSD (among other injuries as a result). This poem is told from his wife's Laura's perspective as she traces the injuries and impact of the war. The poem came from a number of interviews Armitage completed for his document 'The Not Dead' about how war affects ex-soldiers.

What Happens

- The wife of a soldier gets to know her husband again after he returns from war. It is clear that he has been affected physically and mentally by his experiences.
- She traces his injuries using the physical scars as almost a route around his body but constantly refers back to the metaphorical distance between her and her husband and how close she is to "finding" the old him.
- Despite the physical injuries it becomes clear the psychological injuries are just as, if not more devastating.
- At the end of the poem, Eddie closes off from his wife and we realise her search will have to continue.

Message

War affects not only soldiers but those who love them. The effects of war can be physical and psychological and are long lasting. Patience in relationships is required to help someone heal – patience is an act of deep love.

Language and Structure

- The poem is written in couplets which initially rhyme but this fades as the poem progresses. It gives the sense that the poem is disjointed and reflects how broken Eddie and their relationship is.
- The couplets introduce new injuries moving into the soldier's body, allowing the reader to experience Laura's journey.
- Language used to describe the injuries emphasise how 'broken' he is and how fragile the human body and mind are.
- Verbs emphasising the level of care and patience Laura has to approach Eddie with create the sense of a loving bond between them and reinforce the fragility.
- The poem is in 1st person which makes it highly personal and intimate.

Key Quotes

Only then would he let me trace

The frozen river which ran through his face.

Only then would he let me explore

The blown-hinge of his lower jaw

And handle and hold

The damaged porcelain collar-bone

Feel the hurt

Of his grazed heart.

Traced the scarring back to its source

A sweating unexploded mine

Buried deep in his mind.

Then, and only then, did I come close.

Themes

- The experience of war.
- Devotion/patriotism.

The poems:

Dulce et Decorum est – Wilfred Owen

The Soldier – Rupert Brooke

Dulce et Decorum Est

Context

Wilfred Owen was a soldier on the front line in World War One. He initially was keen to enlist but soon realised that what had been portrayed to him about the war by government was not the reality of the war. He was angry that people were being deceived about war. He suffered from shell shock during the war and had the opportunity to leave but he felt it was his duty to return and support his fellow soldiers. Tragically, he died days before the war ended.

What Happens

- The poem begins with a description of the exhausted soldiers marching away from battle.
- The soldiers are suddenly hit with a chlorine gas attack. The struggle to fit their gas masks but one soldier does not manage to do so in time. The voice describes the man's desperation.
- The voice then describes the man's injuries in graphic detail and how the men treat him with little care. They are desensitised to death and violence because of how frequently it happens.
- He talks about replaying the sight in his dreams and warns the reader to be careful about spreading false propaganda.

Message

War is futile. War is brutal. Death in war is not glorious. The effects of war are many and long lasting. War wastes youth.

Language and Structure

- The use of enjambment and caesura create a disjointed rhythm reflecting the chaotic and unpredictable nature of war.
- The poem uses graphic imagery to show the reader the violent reality of war. It removes the idea that there is any sense of honour in war.
- The use of sound adds realism to the images being described adding to the shock value.
- He ends up addressing his readers directly at the end rather than describing the scene to them.

Key Quotes

Coughing like hags

Towards our distant rest began to trudge
Men marched asleep

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!

Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;

Under a green sea I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

Behind the wagon that we flung him in

At every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from his froth corrupted lungs

You would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory
The old lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

The Soldier

Context

'The Soldier' was written in 1914 at the outbreak of war. During this time, there was a sense of optimism around the war and many men were keen to enlist (also prompted by propaganda of the time). Brooke enlisted in the Royal Navy but did not serve on the front line. He died in 1915 before the reality of war began to be revealed.

What Happens

- The voice, presumably a soldier, is discussing the possibility of dying in battle in another country and proudly declares that place will be English forever.
- He personifies England as a mother who gave birth to him and shaped him into the person that he has become.
- He believes that death will be comforting and fitting as it allows him to give back to the country that has given him so much. It is a worthy sacrifice.

Message

Patriotism – Brooke's love and appreciation for his country is clear. He is proud to be English and to sacrifice for his country as we should all be. Dying in battle is a noble and glorious death.

Language and Structure

- The poem is a sonnet (a traditional love poem) consisting of 14 lines. It is split into two sections: the octave (first 8 lines) and the sestet (final six lines). In the octave the soldier lists everything that England has given him. In the sestet, he discusses how he can give back to England in death and what his afterlife may be.
- Throughout the poem England is personified as a mother that has given birth to and raised the soldier.
- The poem uses a lot of natural imagery. He makes England sound picturesque, peaceful and idyllic.
- The poem uses religious imagery to link being English to almost a religious experience. He also links the idea of 'heaven' to being English. This gives him comfort in death.³³

Key Quotes

I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.

Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat.

And the earth's face upward for my inspection.

It took the whole of Creation
To produce my foot, my each feather:
Now I hold Creation in my foot

My manners are tearing off heads –

Nothing has changed since I began.
My eye has permitted no change.
I am going to keep things like this.