

Year 9 Revision Guide

January Assessment

Unseen Poetry Analysis

Key Information

- You will complete an extended piece of poetry analysis – you will be given a poem which you have not studied in class and you will have to respond to a question about the poem. You will have 45 minutes to read the poem and complete your analysis.
- You will complete a multiple-choice assessment – this will be on your understanding of poetic techniques and vocabulary from the list we used in lessons. You will have 15 minutes to complete this in your exam.

What should I revise?

1. **Language/structural techniques** – you should be able to confidently identify and explore the use of these in your writing and link them to what the question is asking you to focus on.

These are the ones we have been referring to in our knowledge organisers in lessons. They are also inserted below – you should ensure you are confident with your understanding of the definitions and are able to identify where they have been used.

Language Techniques	Definition	Example
Oxymoron	When a phrase is put together by two ideas which contradict one another.	'If in some smothering dreams'
Personification	Describing an inanimate object as having human feelings.	'the sun surfacing defiantly'
Metaphor	A descriptive technique that names a person, thing or action as something else.	'Sirens ripped open the warm silk of sleep'
Simile	A descriptive technique that compares one thing with another, usually using 'as' or 'like'.	'Bent double, like old beggars under sacks'
Alliteration	The occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words	'For silver-swallow swords'
Superlative	An adjective/ adverb that indicates the most of something.	'Sweetest Love! I do not go For weariness of thee.'
Intensifier	A word, especially an adverb or adjective, that has little meaning itself but is used to add emphasis to another adjective, verb, or adverb.	'My friend, you would not tell with <u>such high</u> zest'
Minimiser	A word that is used to make another adjective, verb or adverb sound lesser.	'To children ardent for <u>some</u> desperate glory'
Imperative	A sentence that is a command.	'Let faxes butter-curl on dusty shelves.'
Exclamatory	A sentence that expresses a heightened emotion. They end with an exclamation mark	'Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!'
Listing	When the writer includes several words/ phrases/ ideas, one after the other.	'And then I must scrub, and bake, and sweep.'
Repetition	When a word/ phrase is noticeably repeated throughout a sentence/ paragraph/ whole text.	'Rage, rage against the dying of the light.'
Imagery	A technique in which the author appeals to the senses i.e. seeing, hearing, touching.	'My thoughts hissed and spat on my scalp. My bride's breath soured, stank in the grey bags of my lungs.'
Extended Metaphor	A metaphor which is continued over several lines or throughout a whole poem	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.

Structural Features	Definition
Opening	The first mood/ image of the poem.
Cyclical	When end of the poem repeats an idea/ character/ setting from the opening.
Stanza	A 'paragraph' in a poem.
Enjambment	A sentence or phrase that runs onto the next line.
Rhyme	Correspondence of sound between words or the endings of words, particularly used at the ends of lines
Anaphora	The repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive lines.
Volta	A turning point in a poem.
Juxtaposition	Two ideas/ images placed together for contrasting effect.
Speaker	The narrator, or person in the poem.
Change of mood/ tone	When the writer alters the overall feeling of the poem.
Refrain	A phrase, line or group of lines which is repeated throughout a poem.
Ending	The final mood/image of the poem.

2. Revise how to approach an unseen poem. Use the checklist here to practise with some of the poems inserted at the back of the booklet.

Approaching an Unseen Poem - Step-by-Step

- Read the question and identify the key words (Tip: this will give you a big clue as to what the poem is about)
 - Read the poem (what is the theme?)
 - Read the poem for a second time (who is speaking? what is the mood/ tone?)
 - Read the poem for a third time (underline any words/ phrases/ techniques which stand out to you in relation to the question)
3. You should **re-read the model** answers that you have been given in class and write down why they are successful. Use these to **practise your own** analysis by trying to copy the style and the structure used in the model and then **compare your piece with the model** to measure how well you have done. The models are inserted below for your reference and the poems are in your poetry anthologies:

Model: In 'Give' how does Armitage present ideas about homelessness?

In 'Give' Armitage confronts the notion that homelessness is a problem which needs to be addressed and could improve if society changed their perspective and narrow-mindedness about poverty. Armitage suggests that homelessness

is an issue that society needs to take action over, instead of just ignoring— Armitage writes the poem to influence his readers to ‘change’ their attitudes towards people who are living on the streets. The speaker in the poem adopts a sarcastic and angry tone which indicates to the reader the seriousness and severity of the problem. For example, the homeless speaker says: ‘It’s not as though I’m holding out for frankincense or myrrh, just change.’ Here, the speaker suggests that he does not have high expectations of people in society and does not expect to be gifted with expensive items or a lot of money as implied through the connotations of the nouns ‘frankincense’ and ‘myrrh’, but instead he just begs for passers by to think differently about him and his situation. The dual interpretation of the phrase ‘just change’ alludes to the idea that some spare coins would be helpful, but it can also be interpreted as meaning a change in the way of thinking in society. The despondent speaker suggests that if society were more responsible for one another and altruistic in their outlook then perhaps homelessness would not be such a harrowing problem.

Model: In ‘After the Lunch’ how does Cope present feelings?

In ‘After the Lunch’, Cope suggests that it can be hard to face up to our true feelings as sometimes they can conflict with what our rational self is telling us. Cope presents a dichotomy of feelings; on the one hand, she is ecstatically in love and is ‘tempted to skip’, yet on the other hand she presents subtle feelings of fear and wants to ‘try not to notice’ she’s fallen in love. The speaker battles with these two conflicting emotions which is reflected by the juxtaposition of the trivial with the dramatic – she uses common place, everyday expressions of ‘weather conditions’ and ‘black woolly gloves’ to suppress her admission of falling in love – something quite poignant. There is a vulnerable side to the speaker, she is scared to confront her emotions and claims that it is the weather that ‘bring tears to my eyes’, yet we are much more inclined to see her high emotions as the true tear jerker. As the poem continues, so does the internal conflict between her ‘head’ and her ‘heart’, but before she can even get halfway across the bridge, her heart quickly wins as ‘boss’. The personification emphasises the idea that love has championed and the emotion is far too strong to ignore or suppress, this, coupled with the alliteration of the ‘heart’ and the ‘head’, brings the juxtaposition between the two to the forefront.

Model: In 'A Marriage' how does Blumenthal present ideas about relationships?

In 'A Marriage' Blumenthal presents the idea that relationships can provide security in life, whilst also making life easier to tackle – he suggests that having someone by your side is necessary for support and fundamental to alleviating the pressures and hardships that life can present. Blumenthal uses the extended metaphor of 'holding up a ceiling' to symbolise the weight and stresses which are posed in life, he suggests that this can be quite the task when faced alone and it can make you 'tired, terribly tired'. The use of the repetition of 'tired' emphasises the burdensome nature of such tasks when acting solo and that trying to do things alone can wear you out. Furthermore, the use of the adverb 'terribly' implies that the tiredness can become unbearable and hard to endure. However he ends the poem by suggesting that by having a relationship, we stop the 'house' from 'falling' – the fact he closes the poem with this quotation suggests he wants readers to be left with the reminder, that with the support of others, one can continue to go on. Blumenthal therefore urges the reader to reflect on the importance of having people in your life with whom you can share such difficulty or affliction, as without it can be quite the strain – therefore suggesting that relationships are intrinsic to life.

Model: In 'Do not go gentle into that good night' how does Thomas present ideas about death?

In 'Do not go gentle into that good night' Thomas suggests that death should not be something which we allow to defeat or vex us, instead we should face death head on and live each last moment to the full. Thomas presents death as something that we should try to defy for as long as possible; he implores the reader to 'Rage, rage against the dying of the light'. The use of this metaphor as a refrain emphasises Thomas' insistence that we should not succumb to death without putting up a fight. Furthermore, the repetition of the verb 'rage' highlights how impassioned the speaker feels that we should act with indignation in the face of fatality – his derisive tone reflects the hatred which he clearly feels towards death. Ultimately, by ending the poem with this quotation, Thomas is ensuring that this is the reader's lasting thought, hoping that his defiance towards death will be something which is embodied by those

who are perhaps despondently living with the threat of, or on the periphery of death.

Model: In 'The Song of the Old Mother' how does Yeats present ideas about parenthood?

In 'The Song of the Old Mother' Yeats suggests that parenthood is an exhausting task and can be unrewarding, particularly when childhood is so carefree. The reader learns of the speaker's wistful attitude towards the notion that their childhood has passed and the idea that they now have to be responsible by carrying out arduous and thankless tasks. For example, the poem ends with the rhyming couplet 'While I must work, because I am old And the seed of the fire gets feeble and cold.' Here, the mother reflects on the fact that she has to work from 'dawn' to night time when the fire goes out – all day. The use of the phrase 'must work' suggests that she has no option and that, if she doesn't do the chores, nobody else will. The modal verb 'must' implies that the mother sees doing the domestic jobs as her duty, whilst the noun 'work' conveys a sense of discipline as well as finding it mundane and tiresome. Furthermore, the adjective 'old' serves to heighten the idea that the mother is working tirelessly and she feels worn out in comparison to her children who idly 'dream in their bed' and watch the days pass them by. It can be argued that Yeats is suggesting that parenthood is emblematic of laboriousness and is urging us to resonate with the mother and consider helping parents out with their hard work.

Model: In 'In 'Island Man' how does Nichols present ideas about place?

Nichols suggests that place is something which can initiate feelings of nostalgia and it is easy to have sentimental attachment to our mother countries or cities. After leaving his home on an island of sunnier climes, the island man feels isolated and lonely and still connects the new sounds and images of London with his former island. For example, Nichols juxtaposes the opening image of 'Morning and island man wakes up to the sound of blue surf' with the final line 'Another London day'. Here, Nichols describes how the man is dreaming of the sounds of the waves on his home island, yet by the end of the poem he wakes to realise the reality that he now lives in London and the island is just a wistful memory. Nichols purposefully opens with 'Morning' to reflect the hopeful and positive attitude that the man has towards his island; the use of the phrase 'blue surf' highlights the peaceful and idyllic scenery of his home place and is crafted to give his life at home an attractive image. Nichols deliberately contrasts this with the despondent ending; the use of the word 'another'

creates a monotonous tone which reflects the notion that he is fed up with the here and now and doesn't enjoy the reality of being in London which is 'dull' and 'grey'. The matter of fact tone of the final line emphasises the idea that England is far from the exotic paradise that his island had to offer. This is further reflected through the way Nichols purposefully isolates this line, highlighting the sense of detachment and loneliness the island man feels when away from his special place. Ultimately, Nichols suggests that places can resonate with us in a poignant way and even though we may not physically be in a particular place, if it is important enough, it will remain in our thoughts and memories for a lasting time.

4. Revise how to **structure** your ideas/what to include in each paragraph – use the **success criteria below** for each paragraph.

A 'big' idea/concept – think away from the poem and focus on the issue/theme/topic.

Sentence starters: **(Insert poet's surname)** explores the idea that **(insert key focus of the question)** is...

rooted in....

Is more likely to affect....

Is shown through....

Is justified when....

Is strengthened by....

Is caused by...

Causes...

A 'juicy' quotation.

Sentence starters: This is evident in the use of the quotation...The writer suggests/explores this when...The poet deliberately...

Squeeze / zoom in at least twice.

Sentence starters: The use of the **(insert word class)** suggests/conveys/highlights...When the poet uses...

Subject terminology to identify techniques.

Sentence starters: The use of the (insert techniques) suggests/conveys/highlights...(insert poet's name) utilises the use of...the purposeful use of...

Use of key words from the vocabulary list.

Link back to your big idea.

Sentence starters: Ultimately...To conclude...It is evident that...Linking back...

5. You should **plan and complete practise tasks** using the poems/questions inserted below. For each one you could:
 - Annotate the poem with ideas about the question
 - Identify techniques used in the poems
 - Create 3 'big ideas' which you could use as your focus for each paragraph
 - Decide which words from the vocabulary list you could use
 - Write analytical paragraphs using the questions provided

What Has Happened to Lulu?

What has happened to Lulu, mother?
What has happened to Lu?
There's nothing in her bed but an old rag-doll
And by its side a shoe.

Why is her window wide, mother,
The curtain flapping free,
And only a circle on the dusty shelf
Where her money-box used to be?

Why do you turn your head, mother,
And why do tear drops fall?
And why do you crumple that note on the fire
And say it is nothing at all?

I woke to voices late last night,
I heard an engine roar.
Why do you tell me the things I heard
Were a dream and nothing more?

I heard somebody cry, mother,
In anger or in pain,
But now I ask you why, mother,
You say it was a gust of rain.

Why do you wander about as though
You don't know what to do?
What has happened to Lulu, mother?
What has happened to Lu?

Charles Causley

How does the poet explore ideas about loss?

Nettles

My son aged three fell in the nettle bed.
'Bed' seemed a curious name for those green spears,
That regiment of spite behind the shed:
It was no place for rest. With sobs and tears
The boy came seeking comfort and I saw
White blisters beaded on his tender skin.
We soothed him till his pain was not so raw.
At last he offered us a watery grin,
And then I took my hook and honed the blade
And went outside and slashed in fury with it
Till not a nettle in that fierce parade
Stood upright any more. Next task: I lit
A funeral pyre to burn the fallen dead.
But in two weeks the busy sun and rain
Had called up tall recruits behind the shed:
My son would often feel sharp wounds again.

Vernon Scannell

How does the poet explore ideas about pain?

Piano

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside
And hymns in the cosy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour
With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past.

D.H. Lawrence

How does the poet explore ideas about memories?

Desert Places

Snow falling and night falling fast, oh, fast
In a field I looked into going past,
And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,
But a few weeds and stubble showing last.

The woods around it have it - it is theirs.
All animals are smothered in their lairs.
I am too absent-spirited to count;
The loneliness includes me unawares.

And lonely as it is, that loneliness
Will be more lonely ere it will be less -
A blanker whiteness of benighted snow
With no expression, nothing to express.

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces
Between stars - on stars where no human race is.
I have it in me so much nearer home
To scare myself with my own desert places.

Robert Frost

How does the poet explore ideas about nature?

For your **multiple-choice assessment**, you should revise in the following ways:

- **Revise all of the words from the vocabulary list you have been given – you should be confident about knowing their meanings/ definitions, synonyms and how you can use them within a sentence.**
- Test yourself on your understanding of these words by using *the read, cover, write, check, correct* method. The more you repeat this, the greater impact it will have and you will be more likely to remember the words correctly.
- You could also write yourself quizzes (similar to those that we do on HW in class) to check that you know the meanings of the words. Select 10 words and then write out what they mean. Repeat this if you get any definitions incorrect.
- **Revise all of the sections on your knowledge organiser.**
- Test yourself on your understanding of each of the sections by using *the read, cover, write, check, correct* method. The more you repeat this, the greater impact it will have and you will be more likely to remember the information correctly.
- You could also make revision cards, bullet pointed notes from the information on the knowledge organiser. Try to condense each point of information down to one key word which will help you remember the rest of the fact/ information.
- You could also write yourself quizzes (similar to those that we do on HW in class) to check that you know all of the information. Select 1 section of the KO, for example 'language techniques', and write questions based on the facts given. Repeat this if you get any answers incorrect.