



English

Y10 Summer 1: Power and Conflict Poems

Poetry Features and Explanations

LANGUAGE:

| Poetic Feature | Possible Explanation |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Word associations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you associate with the word – what does it make you think of? This reveals the way the poet feels about... |
| Emotive language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes the reader feel... Underlines the poet's feelings (go on to state what they are). |
| Positive/negative connotations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make the theme/subject matter appear positive or negative. Explain the reasons why the poet feels positive/negative. |
| Assonance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draws attention to a key word(s)/phrase (go on to explain why that word/phrase is key to the poem). |
| Alliteration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasises a key word(s)/phrase (go on to explain why that word/phrase is key to the poem). |
| Repetition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draws attention to a key word(s)/phrase (go on to explain why that word/phrase is key to the poem). |
| Fricative (k;f) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a harsh/uncomfortable/brutal/awkward atmosphere. |
| Plosive (b;p) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a sense of power/energy/anger. |
| Oxymoron | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlights a key phrase/idea (go on to explain why that phrase/idea is key to the poem). Highlights/creates a sense of confusion. |

LANGUAGE (IMAGERY):

| Poetic Feature | Possible Explanation |
|-----------------|---|
| Simile | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates an image in the reader's mind by comparing it to something else (go on to describe what aspect is similar and why it is key to the poem). |
| Metaphor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates an image in the reader's mind by relating it to something else (go on to describe what aspect is similar and why it is key to the poem). |
| Personification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives something human characteristics and emotion – explain why. Like a simile, can be used to create an image in the reader's mind. |

STRUCTURE:

| Poetic Feature | Possible Explanation |
|--|---|
| 1 st person narrative voice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We see the issue/themes from one person's point of view – biased? |
| 2 nd person narrative voice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks directly to the audience – can put a point/feeling across forcefully. Can be used to challenge the audience or plead with the reader. |
| Short sentences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds drama/tension. Highlights a key phrase (explain why it is key to the poem). If repeated, adds pace/excitement to the poem. |
| Enjambment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resembles spontaneous, unplanned, instinctive thoughts. Adds pace/excitement to the poem. |
| Opening and ending | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the poem begin? What impact does it try to create? How does the poem end? What impact does it try to create? Does it link to the opening? |
| Rhyme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can emphasise a key word (explain why that word is key to the poem). |
| Rhythm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the rhythm (pace?) What impact does it have? |



Year 10 Key Poems:

'Ozymandias' by Percy Bysshe Shelley

'London' by William Blake

'The Charge of The Light Brigade' by Alfred Lord Tennyson

'Exposure' by Wilfred Owen

'Storm on The Island' by Seamus Heaney

'Bayonet Charge' by Ted Hughes

'Remains' by Simon Armitage

'Poppies' by Jane Weir

'War Photographer' by Carol Ann Duffy

'Kamikaze' by Beatrice Garland





English

Y10 Summer 1: Power and Conflict Poems

'Ozymandias'

By Percy Bysshe Shelley



Themes: Power of humans; Power of nature; Negative Emotions – Pride/Hubris; Empire and Establishment.

Tone: Critical, Ironic

Content, Meaning and Purpose

-The narrator meets a traveller who tells him about a decayed stature that he saw in a desert.
-The statue was of a long forgotten ancient King: the arrogant Ozymandias, 'king of kings.'
-The poem is ironic and one big metaphor: Human power is only temporary – the statue now lays crumbled in the sand, and even the most powerful human creations cannot resist the power of nature.

Context

-Shelley was a poet of the 'Romantic period' (late 1700s and early 1800s). Romantic poets were interested in emotion and the power of nature.
-Shelley also disliked the concept of a monarchy and the oppression of ordinary people.
-He had been inspired by the French revolution – when the French monarchy was overthrown.

Language

-‘sneer of cold command’: the king was arrogant, this has been recognised by the sculptor, the traveller and then the narrator.
-‘Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair.’: ‘Look’ = imperative, stressed syllable highlights commanding tone; ironic – he is telling other ‘mighty’ kings to admire the size of his statue and ‘despair’, however they should really despair because power is only temporary.
‘The lone and level sands stretch far away.’: the desert is vast, lonely, and lasts far longer than a statue – emphasising the insignificance of Ozymandias.

Form and Structure

-A sonnet (14 lines) but with an unconventional structure... the structure is normal until a turning point (a volta) at Line 9 (...these words appear). This reflects how human structures can be destroyed.
-The iambic pentameter rhyme scheme is also disrupted or decayed.
-First eight lines (the octave) of the sonnet: the statue is described in parts to show its destruction.
-Final two lines: the huge and immortal desert is described to emphasise the insignificance of human power and pride

'London'

By William Blake



Themes: Power of Humans; Empire and Establishment; Loss and Absence; Negative Emotions – Anger; Individual Experience.

Tone: Critical, Angry

Content, Meaning and Purpose

-The narrator is describing a walk around London and how he is saddened by the sights and sounds of poverty.
-The poem also addresses the loss of innocence and the determinism of inequality: how new-born infants are born into poverty.
-The poem uses rhetoric (persuasive techniques) to convince the reader that the people in power (landowners, Church, Government) are to blame for this inequality

Context

-The poem was published in 1794, and time of great poverty in many parts of London.
-William Blake was an English poet and artist. Much of his work was influenced by his radical political views: he believed in social and racial equality.
-This poem is part of the 'Songs of Experience' collection, which focuses on how innocence is lost and society is corrupt.
-He also questioned the teachings of the Church and the decisions of Government

Language -Sensory language creates an immersive effect: visual imagery ('Marks of weakness, marks of woe') and aural imagery ('cry of every man') -'mind-forged manacles': they are trapped in poverty. -Rhetorical devices to persuade: repetition ('In every..'); emotive language ('infant's cry of fear'). -Criticises the powerful: 'each chartered street' – everything is owned by the rich; 'Every black'ning church appals' - the church is corrupt; 'the hapless soldier's sigh / Runs in blood down palace walls' – soldier's suffer and die due to the decisions of those in power, who themselves live in palaces.

Form and Structure

-A dramatic monologue, there is a first-person narrator ('I') who speaks passionately about what he sees.
-Simple ABAB rhyme scheme: reflects the unrelenting misery of the city, and perhaps the rhythm of his feet as he trudges around the city.
-First two stanzas focus on people; third stanza focuses on the institutions he holds responsible; fourth stanza returns to the people – they are the central focus.



English

Y10 Summer 1: Power and Conflict Poems

The Charge of the Light Brigade By Alfred Lord Tennyson



Themes: Effects of Conflict; Reality of Conflict; Identity; Commemoration; Bravery/Cowardice.

Tone: Patriotic, Commemorative

Content, Meaning and Purpose

-- Published six weeks after a disastrous battle against the Russians in the (unpopular) Crimean War
-Describes a cavalry charge against Russians who shoot at the lightly-armed British with cannon from three sides of a long valley.
-Of the 600 hundred who started the charge, over half were killed, injured or taken prisoner.
-It is a celebration of the men's courage and devotion to their country, symbols of the might of the British Empire.

Context

-As Poet Laureate, he had a responsibility to inspire the nation and portray the war in a positive light: propaganda.
-Although Tennyson glorifies the soldiers who took part, he also draws attention to the fact that a commander had made a mistake: "Someone had blunder'd".
-This was a controversial point to make in Victorian times when blind devotion to power was expected: "Theirs not to reason why/Theirs but to do or die".

Language

-“Into the valley of Death”: foreshadows the tragedy of the poem; this Biblical imagery portrays war as a supremely powerful, or even spiritual, experience.
-“jaws of Death” and “mouth of Hell”: presents the horror of conflict and war as a force that consumes its victims.
-“Honour the Light Brigade/Noble six hundred”: language glorifies the soldiers, even in death. The ‘six hundred’ become a celebrated and prestigious group.
-“shot and shell”: sibilance creates the sounds of artillery firing in the battle

Form and Structure

-This is a ballad, a form of poetry to remember historical events – we should remember their courage.
-6 verses, each representing 100 men who took part.
-First stanza tightly structured, mirroring the cavalry formation. Structure becomes awkward to reflect the chaos of battle and the fewer men returning alive.
-Dactylic dimeter (HALF-a league / DUM-de-de) mirrors the sound of horses galloping and increases the poem's pace.
-Repetition of ‘the six hundred’ at the end of each stanza (epistrophe) emphasises huge loss

Exposure By Wilfred Owen



Themes: Power of Nature; Effects of Conflict; Reality of Conflict; Loss and Absence.

Tone: Melancholic, Hopeless, Tragic.

Content, Meaning and Purpose

Speaker describes war as a battle against the weather and conditions.
-Imagery of cold and warm reflect the delusional mind of a man dying from hypothermia.
-Owen wanted to draw attention to the suffering, monotony and futility of war.

Context

-Written in 1917 before Owen went on to win the Military Cross for bravery, and was then killed in battle in 1918: the poem has authenticity as it is written by an actual soldier.
- Of his work, Owen said: “My theme is war and the pity of war”.

Language

-“Our brains ache” physical suffering and mental (emotional trauma or shell shock) suffering.
-Semantic field of weather: weather is the enemy.
-“the merciless iced east winds that knife us...” – personification (cruel and murderous wind); sibilance (cutting/slicing sound of wind); ellipsis (never-ending).
-Repetition of pronouns ‘we’ and ‘our’ – conveys togetherness and collective suffering of soldiers.
-‘mad gusts tugging on the wire’ – personification used to portray the weather as the enemy.
- ‘All their eyes are ice’ – metaphor shows how they're overpowered by the cold, but also how war means they no longer can feel emotion.

Form and Structure

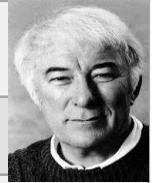
-Contrast of Cold>Warm>Cold imagery conveys Suffering>Delusions>Death of the hypothermic soldier.
-Repetition of “but nothing happens” creates circular structure implying never ending suffering of the soldiers
-Rhyme scheme ABBA and hexameter gives the poem structure and emphasises the monotony the soldiers' feel as they sit in the trenches.
-Pararhymes (half rhymes) (“nervous / knife us”) only barely hold the poem together, the rhyme scheme is fractured like the men.



English

Y10 Summer 1: Power and Conflict Poems

Storm on The Island By Seamus Heaney



Themes: Power of Humans; Power of Nature; Negative Emotions – Fear; Places.

Tone: Conversational

Content, Meaning and Purpose

- The narrator describes how a rural island community prepared for a coming storm, and how they were confident in their preparations.
- When the storm hits, they are shocked by its power: its violent sights and sounds are described, using the metaphor of war.
- The final line of the poem reveals their fear of nature's power

Context

- Seamus Heaney was Northern Irish, he died in 2013.
- This poem was published in 1966 at the start of 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland: a period of deep unrest and violence between those who wanted to remain part of the UK and those who wanted to become part of Ireland.
- The first eight letters of the title spell 'Stormont': this is the name of Northern Ireland's parliament. The poem might be a metaphor for the political storm that was building in the country at the time.

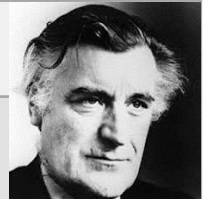
Language

- ‘Nor are there trees which might prove company’: the island is a lonely, barren place.
- Violent verbs are used to describe the storm: ‘pummels’, ‘exploding’, ‘spits’.
- Semantic field of war: ‘Exploding comfortably’ (also an oxymoron to contrast fear/safety); ‘wind dives and strafes invisibly’ (the wind is a fighter plane); ‘We are bombarded by the empty air’ (under ceaseless attack).
- This also reinforces the metaphor of war / troubles.
- ‘spits like a tame cat turned savage’: simile compares the nature to an animal that has turned on its owner.

Form and Structure

- Written in blank verse and with lots of enjambment: this creates a conversational and anecdotal tone.
- ‘We’ (first person plural) creates a sense of community, and ‘You’ (direct address) makes the reader feel immersed in the experience.
- The poem can split into three sections:
 - Confidence: ‘We are prepared.’ (ironic)
 - The violence of the storm: ‘It pummels your house’
 - Fear: ‘it is a huge nothing that we fear.’
- There is a turning point (a volta) in Line 14: ‘But no.’.
- This monosyllabic phrase, and the caesura, reflects the final calm before the storm

Bayonet Charge By Ted Hughes



Themes: Effects of Conflict; Reality of Conflict; Negative Emotions – Fear; Patriotism; Bravery/Cowardice; Individual Experience.

Tone: Urgent, Bewildered

Content, Meaning and Purpose

- Describes the terrifying experience of ‘going over the top’: fixing bayonets (long knives) to the end of rifles and leaving a trench to charge directly at the enemy.
- Steps inside the body and mind of the speaker to show how this act transforms a soldier from a living thinking person into a dangerous weapon of war.
- Hughes dramatises the struggle between a man's thoughts and actions.

Context

- Published in 1957, but most-likely set in World War 1.
- Hughes' father had survived the battle of Gallipoli in World War 1, and so he may have wished to draw attention to the hardships of trench warfare.
- He draws a contrast between the idealism of patriotism and the reality of fighting and killing. (“King, honour, human dignity, etcetera”)

Language

- “The patriotic tear that brimmed in his eye Sweating like molten iron”: his sense of duty (tear) has now turned into the hot sweat of fear and pain.
- “cold clockwork of the stars and nations”: the soldiers are part of a cold and uncaring machine of war.
- “his foot hung like statuary in midstride.”: he is frozen with fear/bewilderment. The caesura (full stop) jolts him back to reality.
- “a yellow hare that rolled like a flame And crawled in a threshing circle”: impact of war on nature – the hare is distressed, just like the soldiers

Form and Structure

- The poem starts ‘in medias res’: in the middle of the action, to convey shock and pace.
- Enjambment maintains the momentum of the charge.
- Time stands still in the second stanza to convey the soldier's bewilderment and reflective thoughts.
- Contrasts the visual and aural imagery of battle with the internal thoughts of the soldier = adds to the confusion.



English

Y10 Summer 1: Power and Conflict Poems

Remains

By Simon Armitage



Themes: Effects of Conflict; Reality of Conflict; Memories, Negative Emotions – Guilt; Individual Experience.

Tone: Colloquial, Haunting

Content, Meaning and Purpose

- Written to coincide with a TV documentary about those returning from war with PTSD. Based on Guardsman Tromans, who fought in Iraq in 2003.
- Speaker describes shooting a looter dead in Iraq and how it has affected him.
- To show the reader that mental suffering can persist long after physical conflict is over.

Context

- “These are poems of survivors – the damaged, exhausted men who return from war in body but never, wholly, in mind.” Simon Armitage
- Poem coincided with increased awareness of PTSD amongst the military, and aroused sympathy amongst the public – many of whom were opposed to the war.

Language

- “Remains” - the images and suffering remain.
- “Legs it up the road” - colloquial language = authentic voice
- “Then he's carted off in the back of a lorry” – reduction of humanity to waste or cattle
- “he's here in my head when I close my eyes / dug in behind enemy lines” – metaphor for a war in his head; The memory is entrenched.
- “his bloody life in my bloody hands” – an image of guilt alludes to Macbeth: Macbeth the warrior and Lady Macbeth's bloody hands.

Form and Structure

- Monologue, told in the present tense to convey a flashback (a symptom of PTSD).
- First four stanzas are set in Iraq; last three are at home, showing the aftermath.
- Enjambment between lines and stanzas conveys his conversational tone and gives it a fast pace, especially when conveying the horror of the killing
- Repetition of ‘Probably armed, Possibly not’ conveys his guilt and inner turmoil.
- The last stanza only has two lines and this break in structure helps emphasise the final image of guilt.

Poppies

By Jane Weir



Themes: Effects of Conflict; Reality of Conflict; Loss and Absence; Memories; Individual Experience.

Tone: Poignant, Emotive.

Content, Meaning and Purpose

- A modern poem that offers an alternative interpretation of bravery in conflict: it does not focus on a soldier in battle but on the mother who is left behind and must cope with his death.
- The narration covers her visit to a war memorial, interspersed with images of the soldier's childhood and his departure for war.

Context

- Set around the time of the Iraq and Afghan wars, but the conflict is deliberately ambiguous to give the poem a timeless relevance to all mothers and families.
- There are hints of a critical tone; about how soldiers can become intoxicated by the glamour or the military: “a blockade of yellow bias” and “intoxicated”.

Language

- Contrasting semantic fields of the domestic: home/childhood (“cat hairs”, “play at being Eskimos”, “bedroom”) with war/injury (“blockade”, “bandaged”, “reinforcements”)
- Aural (sound) imagery: “All my words flattened, rolled, turned into felt” shows pain and inability to speak, and “I listened, hoping to hear your playground voice catching on the wind” shows longing for dead son.
- “I was brave, as I walked with you, to the front door”: different perspective of bravery in conflict.

Form and Structure

- This is an Elegy, a poem of mourning.
- Strong sense of form despite the free verse, stream of consciousness addressing her son directly – poignant
- No rhyme scheme makes it melancholic
- Enjambment gives it an anecdotal tone.
- Nearly half the lines have caesura – she is trying to hold it together, but can't speak fluently as she is breaking inside.
- Rich texture of time shifts, and visual, aural and touch imagery.



English

Y10 Summer I: Power and Conflict Poems

War Photographer

By Carol Ann Duffy

Themes: Effects of Conflict; Reality of Conflict; Memories; Negative Emotions; Individual Experience.

Tone: Detached



Content, Meaning and Purpose

-Tells the story of a war photographer developing photos at home in England: as a photo develops he begins to remember the horrors of war – painting a contrast to the safety of his dark room.
-He appears to be returning to a warzone at the end of the poem.
-Duffy conveys both the brutality of war and the indifference of those who might view the photos in newspapers and magazines: those who live in comfort and are unaffected by war.

Context

-Like Tennyson and Ted Hughes, Duffy was the Poet Laureate.
-Duffy was inspired to write this poem by her friendship with a war photographer. She was intrigued by the challenge faced by these people whose job requires them to record terrible, horrific events without being able to directly help their subjects.
-The location is ambiguous and therefore universal: (“Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh.”)

Language

“All flesh is grass”: Biblical reference that means all human life is temporary – we all die eventually.
“He has a job to do”: like a soldier, the photographer has a sense of duty.
“running children in a nightmare heat”: emotive imagery with connotations of hell.
“blood stained into a foreign dust”: lasting impact of war – links to Remains and ‘blood shadow’.
“he earns a living and they do not care”: ‘they’ is ambiguous – it could refer to readers or the wider world

Form and Structure

-Enjambment – reinforces the sense that the world is out of order and confused.
-Rhyme reinforces the idea that he is trying to bring order to a chaotic world – to create an understanding. -
Contrasts: imagery of rural England and nightmare war zones.
-Third stanza: A specific image – and a memory – appears before him.

Kamikaze

By Beatrice Garland

Themes: Power of Nature; Effects of Conflict; Loss and Absence; Memories; Identity; Individual Experience; Patriotism; Bravery and Cowardice.

Tone: Poignant, Reflective



Content, Meaning and Purpose

-In World War 2, Japanese Kamikaze pilots would fly manned missiles into targets such as ships.
-This poem explores a kamikaze pilot’s journey towards battle, his decision to return, and how he is shunned when he returns home.
-As he looks down at the sea, the beauty of nature and memories of childhood make him decide to turn back.

Context

- World War 2, Japan
-Cowardice or surrender was a great shame in wartime Japan.
-To surrender meant shame for you and your family, and rejection by society: “he must have wondered which had been the better way to die
- Written by a modern British poet – an exploration of cultural and historical values.

Language

-The Japanese word ‘kamikaze’ means ‘divine wind’ or ‘heavenly wind’, and has its origin in a heaven-sent storm that scattered an invading fleet in 1250.
-“dark shoals of fish flashing silver”: image links to a Samurai sword – conveys the conflict between his love for nature/life and his sense of duty. Also has sibilance.
- “they treated him as though he no longer existed”: cruel irony – he chose to live but now must live as though he is dead.
-“was no longer the father we loved”: the pilot was forever affected by his decision.

Form and Structure

-Narrative and speaker is third person, representing the distance between her and her father, and his rejection by society.
-The first five stanzas are ordered (whilst he is flying on his set mission).
-Only full stop is at the end of Stanza Five: he has made his decision to turn back.
-The final two are in italics and have longer line to represent the fallout of his decision: his life has shifted and will no longer be the same.
-Direct speech (“My mother never spoke again”) gives the poem a personal tone.