Power and Conflict Poetry—Power in Society

Revision Booklet

Student name:

Teacher name:

Form tutor:

Power and society sub-cluster

AO1: Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to:
• maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response
• use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.

AO2: Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

AO3: Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.
**Task One**

The poem has three speakers/three voices. Highlight the three voices in three different colours. Explain how this choice helps Shelley convey his message.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice 1</th>
<th>Voice 2</th>
<th>Voice 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ozymandias</td>
<td>Traveler</td>
<td>God</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Task Two**

The poem has fourteen lines. What form of poem is this? How/why has Shelley used this form of poetry to help convey his message?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line 1</th>
<th>Line 2</th>
<th>Line 3</th>
<th>Line 4</th>
<th>Line 5</th>
<th>Line 6</th>
<th>Line 7</th>
<th>Line 8</th>
<th>Line 9</th>
<th>Line 10</th>
<th>Line 11</th>
<th>Line 12</th>
<th>Line 13</th>
<th>Line 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I met a traveller from an antique land</td>
<td>Who said: &quot;Two vast and trunkless legs of stone</td>
<td>Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,</td>
<td>Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,</td>
<td>And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,</td>
<td>Tell that its sculptor well those passions read</td>
<td>Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,</td>
<td>The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:</td>
<td>And on the pedestal these words appear:</td>
<td>'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:</td>
<td>Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'</td>
<td>Nothing beside remains. Round the decay</td>
<td>Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare</td>
<td>The lone and level sands stretch far away.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Task Three**

The poem features sibilance and negative imagery, as well as individual words with negative connotations, to portray 'Ozymandias'. Select one or two quotations Shelley uses to portray Ozymandias, and analyse them.
Task Four

What is Shelley’s message in the poem? How far do you think Shelley would agree with the following view?

“Power and pride are vain and temporary possessions that make human beings arrogant, but time will treat everything and everyone equally.”
London

I wander through each chartered street,
Near where the chartered Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every man,
In every infant’s cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forged manacles I hear:

How the chimney-sweeper’s cry
Every black’ning shurch appals,
And the hapless soldier’s sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.

But most thro’ midnight streets I hear
How the youthful harlot’s curse
Blasts the new-born infant’s tear,
And blights with plagues the marriage hearse.

William Blake

Task One

The poem is written in the first person and charts the speaker’s journey through London one day. Summarise what he finds/sees/hears as he walks around London.

Task Two

The poem has a regular structure of four quatrains, each with an ABAB rhyme-scheme. How do these repetitive, organised and predictable structural choices help Blake to make his point about London, and about society?

Task Three

There are two metaphors in stanza three: one attacking religion, and the other attacking the monarchy. Identify the two metaphors, and analyse how Blake uses them to make his point about London, and about society.
Task Four

What is Blake's message about London, and about society? How far do you think Blake would have agreed with these two quotations from famous French revolutionary thinkers?

"Men will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest." Denis Diderot

“Everywhere man is born free, and everywhere man is in chains.” Rousseau
**Storm on the Island**

SEAMUS HEANEY

We are prepared: we build our houses squat,
Sink walls in rock and roof them with good slate.
This wizened earth has never troubled us
With hay, so, as you see, there are no stacks
Or stooks that can be lost. Nor are there trees
Which might prove company when it blows full
Blast: you know what I mean – leaves and branches
Can raise a tragic chorus in a gale
So that you can listen to the thing you fear
Forgetting that it pummels your house too.
But there are no trees, no natural shelter.
You might think that the sea is company,
Exploding comfortably down on the cliffs
But no: when it begins, the flung spray hits
The very windows, spits like a tame cat
Turned savage. We just sit tight while wind dives
And strafes invisibly. Space is a salvo,
We are bombarded by the empty air.
Strange, it is a huge nothing that we fear.

**Task One**

The poem describes, literally, how some islanders are deceived into feeling ready for an oncoming storm. With quotations, prove that they do feel ready at the beginning of the poem, and that their attitude changes by the end of the poem. **Stretch yourself: can you identify the volta (turning point)?**

**Task Two**

The poem is one condensed stanza. Why might Heaney have structured it in this way? What might it reflect?

**Task Three**

The language suggests safety and security in the opening lines, and then becomes much more violent and aggressive by the end of the poem. Analyse this use of contrast with two quotations—one from the start and one from towards the end.
Task Four

Heaney is an Irish poet. The parliament building is called ‘Stormont’ - the first seven letters of the poem’s title.

When he won the Nobel Prize in 1995, they said it was: "for works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and the living past".

What is *this* poem really about—the ‘everyday miracle’ of surviving a storm, or ‘the living past’ of violent political conflicts in Ireland? Can the poem be about both at the same time?
The Émigree  CAROLE RUMENS

There once was a country... I left it as a child but my memory of it is sunlight-clear for it seems I never saw it in that November which, I am told, comes to the mildest city. The worst news I receive of it cannot break my original view, the bright, filled paperweight. It may be at war, it may be sick with tyrants, but I am branded by an impression of sunlight.

The white streets of that city, the graceful slopes glow even clearer as time rolls its tanks and the frontiers rise between us, close like waves. That child’s vocabulary I carried here like a hollow doll, opens and spills a grammar. Soon I shall have every coloured molecule of it. It may by now be a lie, banned by the state but I can’t get it off my tongue. It tastes of sunlight.

I have no passport, there’s no way back at all but my city comes to me in its own white plane. It lies down in front of me, docile as paper; I comb its hair and love its shining eyes. My city takes me dancing through the city of walls. They accuse me of absence, they circle me. They accuse me of being dark in their free city. My city hides behind me. They mutter death, and my shadow falls as evidence of sunlight.

Task One
The poem tells the story of a migrant who looks back fondly on the childhood memories of their home country, and conflicts it with the darker views she holds as an adult.
Summarise what you learn about the home country, both the fond memories and the darker truths.

Task Two
The poem is full of metaphors and similes. Identify a few and analyse how they are used to reveal the poet’s views on society.

Task Three
Try to explore how the poem changes over its three stanzas. Is the poet doing anything with the structural choices to help convey her views?
Task Four

The poem contains a repeated motif of sunlight:

“There once was a country… I left it as a child but my memory of it is sunlight-clear”

“It may be at war, it may be sick with tyrants, but I am branded by an impression of sunlight.”

“It may by now be a lie, banned by the state but I can’t get it off my tongue. It tastes of sunlight.”

“My city hides behind me. They mutter death, and my shadow falls as evidence of sunlight.”

Explain why you think Rumens uses this image, and why she uses it repeatedly. What do you think Rumens would think of the following famous statement from 1913? ‘Sunlight is the best disinfectant’ Louis D. Brandeis
Comparison Essay Practice

Select two of the poems from this booklet.

Compare how each poet presents their views on power in society. Try to include all of the notes from this booklet, as well as anything else you can think of/remember for both poems.