



EMC Approaches to

WORLDS & LIVES

for AQA GCSE English Literature

FULL PUBLICATION

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Tate Galleries for Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851): View in Wales: Mountain Scene with Village and Castle - Evening

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching Aims

In teaching this anthology, you will undoubtedly be hoping for many different outcomes for students. One, of course, is examination success. But there are several other aims that are also very important in their own right. We would argue that these happen to also be closely related to that examination success and will contribute to it. These aims include the following:

- ▶ That students really enjoy the poems in the collection and the study of them
- ▶ That they learn about the ‘terms of engagement’ for the reading and study of poetry as a genre, which involves learning to recognise what’s special about it, why it doesn’t have simple, straightforward ‘answers’, and why each reader’s responses will all be quite justifiably a little different
- ▶ That students build up independence and confidence in the reading and critical analysis of poetry that will go forward into future study and, hopefully, into their adult lives
- ▶ That their responses to poems, both studied and unseen, will become increasingly sophisticated and mature, as they develop understanding of how expert readers, academics and critics write about poetry.

To achieve these aims, we believe that the approach to the poems in the anthology should provide plenty of opportunities for students to do the things in the list below.

- ▶ Range around the anthology, exploring what makes each poem special in relation to the others.
- ▶ Talk about what they notice, like, find interesting or puzzling, as well as what makes them think deeply or provokes strong feelings. In other words, they should explore their own, authentic responses and deepen them through high quality classroom dialogue.
- ▶ Read, write and think independently, so that they are able to make their own judgements about what’s significant in a poem, how poems relate to each other, which poems have things in common, as well as how to adapt their knowledge to meet the requirements of different essay questions.
- ▶ Make choices of poems to pair with each other, as they will have to do in their final examination task.
- ▶ Explore big ideas about the nature of poetry.
- ▶ Understand how big ideas about poems can be supported by the use of relevant evidence of different kinds, including the stylistic and structural choices made by the poets.
- ▶ Understand more about how poems work by writing creatively as well as critically.

Talking, Exploring and Reading Comparatively

To allow this to happen, there needs to be an emphasis on talk, exploration and open thinking, with plenty of work on poems in relation to each other, rather than solely studying each poem one by one. At the end of the day, in the GCSE examination, students will be better served by being able to think flexibly and choose sensible grounds for comparing the poems, rather than knowing each one in minute detail but not being able to identify interesting, big picture points of comparison.

It is for this reason that this resource includes many different approaches that encourage comparative thinking, ranging across the anthology, reading poems in relation to each other, making judgements about what is interesting and significant and so on.

The Examination Questions

As a reminder of why we think it's essential to do this kind of ranging around, not just as a good way of teaching poetry in general, but also in preparation for the GCSE examination, here are some example past questions from one of the other AQA GCSE clusters.

Compare the ways poets present power in 'Ozymandias' and in one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'.

Compare the ways poets present military conflict in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' and in one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'.

Compare the ways poets present the power of place in 'The Emigree' and in one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'.

As students *never* have to go through two poems in turn, line by line, they don't need to know every detail of every line, inside out and back to front. What they need to do is choose a second poem to connect with the named poem on the exam paper and choose it well. They then need to choose their own ground sensibly and soundly, making some valid and significant points of comparison. The points they make are not fixed ones; different students can write equally well, and get high marks, choosing to say different things. As you might notice, the word 'choose' crops up a lot in what's said here. 'Choosing' (selecting) is exactly what the examiners are looking for when they talk about wanting a personal response and looking for a good choice of poem, judgement, skills of selection and so on.

Teaching in Clusters, Not One by One

Clearly, there need to be times when students focus closely on poems in their own right, as well as in relation to others. Our solution to the question of how to balance this close focus with broader comparative work is to loosely cluster the poems for teaching purposes. Our route through, in three separate chunks, offers a manageable and coherent approach to this. Having said this, it's essential that the students don't get absolutely 'wedded to' these clusters as the only way of thinking about the poems, so we offer lots of ideas for re-clustering, or thinking afresh along the way.

If you choose not to use our clusters, the resources and activities will still be highly adaptable for use in different sequences.

Powerpoint Resources for the Suggested Activities

We have chosen to address the material to the teacher, rather than the student. Many of the activities and approaches do not require a lot of 'resources' as such. A teacher might be able to go into the classroom primed for the lesson with the anthology poems and a set of teaching ideas, as well as some pointers as to what is worth bringing out and what might emerge. Where the students need something other than the anthology, we have put these resources onto a Powerpoint for each cluster, for ease of use in the classroom.

The PowerPoints are included in the zipped folder of downloadable resources for the full publication available to purchase at www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications.

RANGING AROUND –
ACTIVITIES TO LOOK AT MORE
THAN ONE POEM AT A TIME

MINI-QUOTATIONS

Overview

Mini-quotations can be used at different points in the study of the anthology – before reading any poems, as a way of thinking about poems in combination later on, or as a revision activity.

Using Mini-quotations at the Start

Starting your study of the anthology by giving students a selection of snippets from across the cluster is a great way to open up thinking about the cluster as a whole and avoid a poem-by-poem approach (**Handout 1: Mini-quotations to cut up** on page 12-14). You could choose whether to use all the snippets at this stage, or just some of them, though giving them all gives a good overview of the whole collection and will generate a set of questions for students to ask themselves as they read more closely. It primes their reading of the poems and encourages comparative thinking right from the get-go.

Here's how to do it.

- Cut up the quotations and give each group (2s, 3s or 4s) a set.
- Ask students to talk about what they notice. This can be a very open discussion. At this stage, it doesn't need to be pinned down. So students could be encouraged to talk about all kinds of things, such as points of similarity between poems, thematic connections in terms of style, a shared image, which poems they find most engaging or intriguing or puzzling, or anything else that occurs to them.
- While they're talking, make interventions to shape, develop, question and share, teasing out for them the kinds of things that an alert reader might want to think about.

For example:

'Stop everyone! I've heard Sofia's group talking about how some of the poems seem very personal. Can anyone say something more about that?' or 'Great point here from Kieron's group about the natural world. Could you pin that down more? What kind of responses to the natural world?' Or, 'Did anyone notice anything about whose stories are being told?'

- Feed back as a whole class to create an 'agenda' for studying the Worlds and Lives cluster. This will establish some ideas about themes and preoccupations, ways of writing, questions and things to look out for and think about more deeply once the poems are studied in more detail. It is a 'provisional agenda', one that will change and develop over time.

Handout 2: One Teacher's Agenda (page 15) shows some of the kinds of things that emerged from one teacher's mini-quotations and agenda-setting activity.

- You could show Handout 2 to your students if you wanted to, to see if there are any that strike them as really important and interesting – perhaps just two or three extra ones to add to their own agenda.

- If you wish to, and have time, you could add a ‘meta-level’ activity at this stage, where you explicitly talk with the students about what kinds of ideas about poetry have been raised by creating the agenda. This might start to introduce more explicit thinking about how we discuss and analyse poetry. So perhaps they might group their comments on the agenda into different ways of thinking about the poems, such as:

- ▶ Themes and Ideas
- ▶ Form and Structure
- ▶ Use of Language
- ▶ Imagery
- ▶ Voice and Address
- ▶ Sound
- ▶ Look on the Page

As with the main activity, this can be introductory and exploratory, simply raising ideas that will be picked up later on. **Handout 3: Grouping the Mini-quotations – An Example** (page 16) gives you an example of one teacher’s grouping of the initial agenda thoughts into some of these headings. As you’ll see, these headings are not hard and fast, so in her case she’s also added something called ‘Puzzles/question marks’ which is an aspect of the anthology that the students noticed.

Using Mini-quotations Later On

- Once students are well into reading whole poems, one highly productive use of mini-quotations is to get students to work in pairs to create their own, by going back into the collection. You might focus on a single aspect of the poems e.g. ‘Go back to the poems we’ve read so far and put together at least 5 mini-quotations that show an interesting use of voice,’ or ‘5 quotations that are about the everyday lives of people’ or ‘a visual description of a physical object.’
- Ask students to share their quotations with other pairs, or with the whole class, explaining their choices.

This encourages the kind of flexible thinking and choice of textual evidence that will stand them in very good stead for the exam.

Mini-quotations for Revision

There are multiple possible uses for revision. Here are just a few.

- Option 1** Go back to the original quotations and agenda and revisit them, re-thinking, developing and revising the agenda in the light of studying the collection.
- Option 2** Ask students to turn over each quotation in turn and talk for 2 minutes about it – exploring which poem it is from and what is especially interesting about it.
- Option 3** Ask students to create their own new collection of mini-quotations (one from each poem) to represent the collection, and explain to each other why they’ve made the choices they have.

Handout 1: Mini-quotations to cut up

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Rulers who neither see nor feel nor know,
But leechlike to their fainting country cling
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow.

I know my mountain breezes
Enchant and soothe thee still—
I know my sunshine pleases
Despite thy wayward will.

No bird can make a shadow as it flies,
For all is shadow, as in ways o'erhung
By thickest canvass, where the golden rays
Are clothed in hemp. No figure lingering

Hard to see why you leave
such sunny country she said.
Snow falls elsewhere I said.

travelling from South
to North, where the Punjabi in my mouth

became dislodged as milk teeth fell
and hit infertile English soil.

you could be from anywhere pot

styles have travelled just like terracotta
you could almost be an english pot

but I know you're not.

drew his sights beyond the limits of his working life
drowned the din of engines, looms and shuttles
with imagined peals of ringing bells.

to let years of lost words spill out –
bibble, fittle, tay, wum,
vowels ferrous as nails, consonants

you could lick the coal from.

This girl has won
the right to be ordinary,

wear bangles to a wedding, paint her fingernails,

go to school. *Bullet*, she says, *you are stupid.*

EMC CLUSTER 1 – PEOPLE & PLACES

In a London Drawingroom

With Birds You're Never Lonely

Shall earth no more inspire thee

Lines Written in Early Spring

Like an Heiress

A Wider View

This sequence begins with a close focus on 'In a London Drawingroom'. This is then used as the base poem for comparison with the other poems in this cluster.

IN A LONDON DRAWINGROOM

An Early Taster of the Poem

- Show students the blacked-out 'Version A' of the poem (**PowerPoint W&L Cluster 1 People Places Slide 3**), which draws attention to the description of the environment.
- Ask them to discuss the following in pairs:
 - ▶ What's happening in the bits of the poem you can see here?
 - ▶ Can you make any connections between different parts of the poem?
 - ▶ How well do these words work as a poem in their own right?

You might like to guide the discussion towards some of the following: the repetition of 'shadow', the lack of colour and light, the way nature seems stifled by the fog, the sense of oppression created by the 'prison-house & court' line.

- Now share the blacked-out 'Version B' of the poem with students (**PowerPoint W&L Cluster 1 People Places Slide 4**), which draws attention to the human elements this time.
- Discuss the following with students:
 - ▶ What's happening in the bits of the poem you can see here?
 - ▶ Can you see any patterns or contrasts in the poem now? What are they?
 - ▶ What are you expecting to find when you see the whole poem?

You might like to guide students towards the sense of movement, the lack of people's engagement with the world around them and their fellow citizens, and ideas about power and inequality in society.

- Finally, reveal to students the poem in full, including the title, and read the whole poem out loud a couple of times. You may need to explain what a 'drawingroom' is, and how this denotes the speaker's economic status.
- Ask students to note down their first impressions, considering:
 - ▶ What difference does the title make to your ideas about the poem?
 - ▶ What is the speaker's relationship to the scene outside?
 - ▶ What are the overriding feelings and emotions in this poem? Which lines or images give you this impression?
- Share ideas around the class and ask students to add any ideas they agree with to their notes.

London Fog

In the Victorian period London was famous for its thick fog, thought to be caused by a combination of pollution from coal fires, the damp weather and factory emissions, which had increased dramatically during the Industrial Revolution. The fog was especially bad in the 1850s and 1860s and was a regular feature in the literature and art of the Victorian period. 'In A London Drawingroom' was written in 1869.

- Show students some images of the 'London fog' on **PowerPoint W&L Cluster 1 People Places Slide 5**. Ask students what they notice about the atmosphere of the city, and how it might have felt to be out on the street in this environment.
- Read the poem again and ask students to select a line from the poem to act as a caption for one of the images.

Pulling it All Together

- Ask students this question:

If you had to choose one phrase or line from the poem that seems to sum up its key message what would it be?
- They could discuss this in pairs and then share ideas as a whole class, justifying their thinking. There are obviously no 'right' answers but plenty of ways of teasing out what is most significant, as compared with less significant ideas.
- Now, ask students to choose one of the following tasks. They are designed to help students engage with Eliot's poem and consider how the poetic form allows Eliot to explore the scene of Victorian London in interesting ways.

- Task 1** Re-write 'In A London Drawingroom' as a piece of prose. Write a commentary explaining the similarities and differences between this piece of writing and Eliot's original poem.
- Task 2** Edit Eliot's poem. Change the title and remove the last three lines, replacing them with lines of your choice. Explain the difference that your editing makes to the poem as a whole.
- Task 3** Delete some whole lines, phrases or single words from the poem. Think about what difference these deletions make. Choose the one that seems to you to have made the most interesting difference and present that to the rest of the class.
- Task 4** Write a listicle with the title '5 Reasons why "In A London Drawingroom" is the gloomiest poem ever!' or '5 Reasons why "In a London Drawingroom" conjures up a scene brilliantly!'

EMC CLUSTER 2 – THE PAST IN THE PRESENT

A Portable Paradise

Homing

A century later

Name Journeys

When teaching this cluster, we suggest that you spend a decent amount of time at the beginning making sure that students have a strong understanding of 'A Portable Paradise'. When this is in place, they will be able to judge how the other poems compare with Roger Robinson's poem, using the 'Magic Cards' (**Handout 6: Magic Cards** on pages 31-32).

A PORTABLE PARADISE

Before Reading

- Display the title of the poem and the selection of words and phrases taken from it. These can be found on PowerPoint W&L Cluster 2 Past in Present Slide 3.

A Portable Paradise

carry it always

white sands

piney scent

anthem

paradise

fresh hope of morning

no one else would
know

fresh fish

In your pocket

stresses

concealed

pressure

find a lamp

my grandmother

keep staring at it

Shine the lamp

green hills

- In pairs, ask students to make some predictions about the poem based on these words and phrases:
 - ▶ What different words and phrases make you think about
 - ▶ Connections between the title and the words and phrases, or between different words and phrases
 - ▶ Any words that stand out from the rest
 - ▶ Who and what the poem might be about.

Developing Students' Ideas

- Read the poem in full a couple of times out loud.
- Discuss students' predictions again in the light of the full poem – how does the poem compare to their predictions?
- Explain to students that while this is quite a straightforward poem to follow, there are several aspects of it that might be puzzled over. Ask them to come up with as many possible answers as they can for each of the questions below. (There is a model for how they might do this in the box.)

Question	Possible answers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Why do some of the lines start with 'and'? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » To create the impression that the speaker is beginning in the middle of a thought » To make the tone feel conversational » To remind readers of the way the Bible is written, which adds to the feeling of wisdom or comfort

Further questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Why do you think the grandmother encourages the speaker to carry paradise with him always? » Why does the grandmother suggest that the speaker conceals his paradise? » Why does the poet structure the poem around three conditional sentences (And if ... And if ... And if ...)? » What does the poet's paradise look like? » Why does the poem move from the first person ('I') to the second person ('you')?

- Share a range of answers around the class and discuss where there is a common understanding of the poem and where there are significant differences. You might like to engage the class in thinking about why a poet might actively want people to read a poem in different ways.
- When this discussion is finished, share this biographical information with the class and ask in what ways it cements, adds to, or changes their understanding of the poem:

Roger Robinson was born in Hackney, London, to Trinidadian parents, and at the age of four went with them to live in Trinidad, returning to England when he was 19 in the 1980s. He initially lived with his grandmother in Ilford, Essex, before moving to Brixton, an area of south London where he felt more at home than when he was living in Ilford. He describes himself as 'a British resident with a Trini sensibility'.

EMC CLUSTER 3 – PEOPLE & POWER

pot

Thirteen

On an Afternoon Train from Purley to Victoria, 1955

England in 1819

The Jewellery Maker

KEEPING A READING JOURNAL

You can find extended details about how to get students to keep reading journals while studying the *Worlds and Lives* anthology on pages 17-21 in the 'Ranging Across the Anthology' resource.

- When studying this short cluster, you can ask students to write journal entries at regular intervals in class, or at home. You could do this after each poem, but not necessarily so. You can also encourage journal entries that range across poems. It needs to be an enjoyable way of 'thinking aloud', rather than a repetitive chore.

Here is a chance for your students to engage with some journal entries written by adults about 'pot' as a way into this cluster. After working through the suggested activities, you might like to think about how to stage future journal entries. For example, depending on your class and the poem, you might like to ask students to write a journal entry:

- ▶ About a poem that they've met on their own for the first time
- ▶ About a poem that they've discussed in groups, or as a whole class
- ▶ After doing lots of work on a single poem
- ▶ After working on two or three poems between journal entries.

POT – A READING JOURNAL

[You can skip to 'A Close Focus on 'Pot'' if you are not going to ask your students to write journals, or if they are already familiar with writing them.]

Exploring Journal Entries for 'pot'

- Read 'pot' with your class a couple of times and establish that students have a broad understanding of the poem. It doesn't matter if students have missed out on small details, or are unclear about some aspects of the poem. Reading different journal entries in the next part of the sequence should help with that.
- Share out the journal entries from the 'Ranging Around *Worlds and Lives*' section with small groups. Ask each group to read the journal entry they have been allocated together and discuss their thoughts around the following:
 - ▶ What is the reader's main focus?
 - ▶ How has the reader approached writing a journal? E.g. how have they set it out? what kind of writing are they doing? what is the tone?
 - ▶ What has the reader said that adds to their own understanding of the poem?
 - ▶ What, if anything, did the reader say that the students were particularly impressed by?
 - ▶ What else would the students have liked the readers to focus on?
- Ask each group to present a summary of the journal entry that they have read, based on the questions above.
- Now study 'pot' in more detail before asking students to write their own journal entry for the poem. The entry might explore how their ideas developed over different readings and how they drew on these journal entries, as well as their own thoughts about the poem.