



**Exam**

**Preparation**

**Guide**

***AQA English Lit***

***Shakespeare – Macbeth***

*********Unseen Poetry***

*Key Tips to Success!*

*Well done on your hard work, efforts + progress. Do your best and good luck!*

**Exam Overview**

Macbeth

***50 mins = 5 mins plan // 40 mins write // 5 mins check***

1 – Key word in Question – what do you know re this?

Note – points, quotes, key words you want to remember

2- Read extract – highlight quotes linking to this

3 – Get writing!

A – Answer question!

B – Analyse quote – layers of meaning + methods

C – Make your links to other parts of book – connect everything you know!

D – How link / what reveal about Jacobean era

(if said once, don’t repeat!)

**Macbeth Key Quotes**

Act 1 Scene 1 – Opening

**Witches** – ‘Fair is foul and foul is fair’

Act 1 Scene 2 – Positive adjectives + views on Macbeth

**Duncan** –‘What bloody man is this’? – foreshadowing!

**Captain** –‘brave Macbeth – well he deserves that name’

**Positive adjectives**

Valiant cousin!

Worthy gentleman!

**Duncan** – ‘What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won’

Act 1 Scene 3 – Initial fear at thought of regicide

**Macbeth** – ‘So foul and fair a day I have not seen’ – Opening words – mirror witches!

**Macbeth** –‘Horrid image doth unfix my hair and make my heart knock at my ribs’

**Macbeth** – ‘ if chance will have me King, why, chance may crown me, without my stir’

Act 1 Scene 4 – sinister intentions + thoughts of murder

**Macbeth** – ‘That is a step on which I must overleap’

**Macbeth** – ‘Stars, hide your fires, let not light see my black and deep desires’

Act 1 Scene 5 – Lady Macbeth’s views + intent

**Lady Macbeth** – ‘I fear thy nature is too full o’th’milk of human kindness’

 ‘Art not without ambition but without the illness should

 attend it’

**Lady Macbeth** –‘come, you spirits, unsex me here’

 ‘come to my woman’s breasts and take my milk for gall’

**Lady Macbeth** – ‘look like th’innocent flower but be the serpent under’t

Act 1 Scene 7 – Macbeth’s doubts + Lady Macbeth’s persuasion through emasculation

**Macbeth** – ‘We still have judgement here that we but teach bloody instructions… return to plague the’inventor’.

 ‘We will proceed no further in this business – he hath honoured me of late’

**Lady Macbeth** –‘When durst do it, then you were a man’

**Lady Macbeth** –‘I would, while it was smiling … have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums and dashed the brains out’.

Act 2 Scene 2 – Foreshadowing

**Macbeth** – ‘Will all great Neptune’s ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?’

**Lady Macbeth** – ‘My hands are of your colour, but I shame to wear a heart so white’

Act 3 Scene 2 – Macbeth’s dark mindset following murder

**Macbeth** – ‘make our faces vizards to our hearts’

**Macbeth** - ‘full of scorpions is my mind’ ‘come, seeling night’

Act 3 Scene 4 – Emasculation at Banquet

**Lady Macbeth** – ‘Are you a man?’ ‘What, quite unmanned in folly?’

Act 4 Scene 1 – Following witches – plans to murder

**Macbeth –** ‘From this moment, the very firstlings of my heart shall be the firstlings of my hand’

Act 4 Scene 2 – Lady Macduff recognises limitations of her innocence

**Lady Macduff –** ‘I am in this earthly world where to do harm is often laudable, to do good sometime accounted dangerous folly. Why then do I put up that womanly defence to say I have done no harm?’

Act 4 Scene 3 - Irony within Malcolm’s test of Macduff’s loyalty

**Malcolm -**

‘Yet my poor country shall have more vices than it had before’

‘Black Macbeth will seem as pure as snow’

‘I grant him bloody, false, deceitful’

‘there’s no bottom in my voluptuousness …….I should cut off the nobles for their land’

‘Justice, stableness, mercy, patience, courage - I have no relish of them’

**Macduff** – ‘All my pretty ones? Did you say all?’

Act 5 Scene 1 –Sleepwalking

**Gentlewoman** – ‘she has a light by her continually’

**Lady Macbeth** – ‘Out, damned spot! Out, I say’

**Doctor** – ‘Unnatural deeds do breed unnatural troubles’

Act 5 Scene 5 – Nihilistic mindset

**Macbeth** – ‘I have supped full with horrors; familiar to my slaughterous thoughts cannot once start me’

**Macbeth** – ‘Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, creeps in this petty pace from day to day’

‘Out, out, brief candle! Life’s but a walking shadow’

Act 5 Scene 9 – Rightful King return

**Malcolm** –‘By the grace of Grace, we will perform in measure, time and place’

**Key Character Points**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Macbeth**  | *Loyal // brave // courageous* *Uncertain // ambitious // unsure* *Fearful // remorseful //regretful* *Ruthless // impulsive // insecure //paranoid* *corrupt // tyrannical* *Negative // nihilistic // emotions repressed**Machiavellian - cunning, scheming, and unscrupulous,* |
| **Lady Macbeth**  | *Ambitious // determined // manipulative* *Independent // subversion* *Controlling // domineering // dictatorial* *Ruthless // corrupt // tyrannical* *Guilt-ridden // tormented // insecure* *Machiavellian /* |
| **The Witches**  | *Sinister // scheming // prophetic* |
| **Duncan**  | *Moral // just // fair* *Trustworthy // virtuous* *Naïve*  |
| **Malcolm**  | *Moral // just // fair* *Trustworthy // virtuous* *Represents peace + purity*  |
| **Banquo**  | *Moral // loyal // trustworthy // cynical // insightful // paternal // protective* *virtuous*  |
| **Macduff**  | *Moral // loyal // patriot* *virtuous // honour // selflessness*  |
| **Lady Macduff** | *Innocent // moral // maternal // protective*  |

**AO2 – Writer’s Methods – Macbeth**

The **hamartia,** or tragic flaw that causes their downfall. – **MACBETH = AMBITION** ➔ The **hubris**, or excessive pride and disrespect for the natural order ➔ **Peripeteia, or reversal of fate**

Key Points

* **Contrast f**rom beginning to end - Gone from brave + respected to although fights again bravely but has lost respect
* **Foreshadowing** - Witches foreshadow danger + impact of supernatural, evil forces – open with them shows impact they will have
* **Pathetic Fallacy** – open with stormy weather – sense of unbalance + punishment by God. Also storms night Duncan killed – represent unnatural actions
* End with Malcolm –**cyclical** – start + end with rightful King – show justice + rightful King restored – as expected by Jacobeans!
* Macbeth’s opening words – **repetition** of ‘fair’ + ‘foul’ – instantly connect to Witches
* Lady Macbeth first sight – on stage alone – represent independence but also foreshadow deterioration of relationship
* Banquet scene – last scene Macbeth + Lady Macbeth together – show down turn in relationship + acting alone
* **Imperatives** – used repeatedly by Lady Macbeth – highlight role reversal through their inverted power dynamics
* **Role Reversal** – Lady Macbeth and Macbeth switching roles within relationship
* **Rhyming Couplets** – witches use to create supernatural, other-worldly speech. Macbeth use when thinking/planning evil thoughts. Malcolm use at very close but represents sense of finality + unity – contrast!
* **Prose** – when does not follow normal patterns of speech – represent loss of control eg Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking scene
* **Soliloquy** – when character on stage alone – allow audience see character true thoughts

**Contrasts**

* Macbeth vs Lady Macbeth
* Macbeth vs Banquo
* Macbeth vs Macduff
* Macbeth vs Malcolm
* Malcolm vs Duncan
* Macbeth vs Duncan
* Lady Macbeth vs Lady Macduff

**AO3 Context – Jacobean Era**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Gender** | *Patriarchal society* *Macbeth Fulfil expectations of masculinity – warrior // use of violence – irony praised for this* *Military standards + warrior culture – powerful + dominant* *Macbeth values his masculinity = why Lady Macbeth use emasculation successfully* *Women = submissive // subservient // deferential to husband* *Support husband + obey* *Maternal* *Weaker sex to be protected by men + sheltered from unpleasantness* *Lady Macbeth – subvert* *Lady Macduff – adhere – foil though protective + positive relationship with children* *Recognises husband’s dominance*  |
| **Religion**  | *Strong belief in religion – God ultimate authority – Macbeth recognises at beginning there will be judgement for his actions – foreshadows own downfall* *Knows broken connection by being unable to say ‘Amen’ after murder* *Regicide – killing of royalty – ultimate crime*  |
| **Divine Right of Kings**  | *God appoint King through his representative – Macbeth recognises he will have to ‘overleap’ this**Succession – concept of next in line for Kingship in line with natural order – King Duncan appoint Malcolm* *Macbeth’s worry due to lack of son + Banquo does* *Duncan – link to heaven + light imagery**Macbeths – link to hellish + darkness imagery*  |
| **Supernatural**  | *link to evil in contrast with good – Witches / ghost**King James I keen interest in supernatural + role of witches*  |
|  | *Bad weather – sign or punishment from God - Witches + night of Duncan’s murder* |
| **Social hierarchy**  | *Macbeth’s impatience and ambition to climb* *Use of Porter to demonstrate lower class*  |
|  |  |

**Aspects of the Play to link to various possible questions ……**

**Macbeth**

Extract 1 - Braveness of Macbeth Extract 2 – Duncan rewards Macbeth

Extract 4 –Macbeth’s fear of murdering Duncan Extract 5 - Duncan greets Macbeth

Extract 6 - Macbeth’s thoughts on murdering Duncan

Extract 11 - Macbeth’s doubts Extract 15 - Macbeth sees vision of dagger

Extract 17 - Macbeth’s fear/guilt

Extract 21 - Macbeth’s false response to Duncan’s death

Extract 26 - Macbeth persuade murderers to kill Banquo

Extract 28 - Macbeth tell wife act false Extract 29 - Macbeth’s fears with murderers

Extract 30 - Lady Macbeth’s reactions to Macbeth seeing ghost

Extract 31 - Lennox’s changing views Extract 32 - Macbeth’s decision to kill Macduff

Extract 40 - Macbeth growing weary + given update of wife

Extract 41 – Macbeth responds to news of wife’s death

Extract 42 - Macbeth’s bravery returns

**Lady Macbeth**

Extract 7 - Lady Macbeth’s doubts about Macbeth Extract 8 - Lady Macbeth calling on spirits

Extract 9 - Lady Macbeth telling Macbeth to deceive Duncan

Extract 10 - Lady Macbeth falseness to Duncan Extract 12 - Lady Macbeth’s disgust at Macbeth

Extract 13 - Lady Macbeth’s lack of femininity Extract 16 - Lady Macbeth’s reaction to murder

Extract 18 - Lady Macbeth reaction to murder

Extract 21 - Macbeth’s false response to Duncan’s death

Extract 27 - Lady Macbeth reaction to events Extract 28 - Macbeth tell wife act false

Extract 30 - Lady Macbeth’s reactions to Macbeth seeing ghost

Extract 34 - Lady Macduff’s relationship with son Extract 35 - Lady Macduff innocence

Extract 39 - Lady Macbeth’s guilt shown through sleepwalk

Extract 41 – Macbeth responds to news of wife’s death

**Relationships**

Extract 7 - Lady Macbeth’s doubts about Macbeth

Extract 9 - Lady Macbeth telling Macbeth to deceive Duncan

Extract 12 - Lady Macbeth’s disgust at Macbeth Extract 18 - Lady Macbeth reaction to murder

Extract 21 - Macbeth’s false response to Duncan’s death

Extract 27 - Lady Macbeth reaction to events Extract 28 - Macbeth tell wife act false

Extract 30 - Lady Macbeth’s reactions to Macbeth seeing ghost

Extract 33 - Rosse + Lady Macduff views on Macduff

Extract 34 - Lady Macduff’s relationship with son

Extract 38 – Macduff’s grief hearing news of family murder

Extract 40 - Macbeth growing weary + given update of wife

Extract 41 – Macbeth responds to news of wife’s death

**Unnatural acts**

Extract 3 - Banquo’s reactions to witches Extract 8 - Lady Macbeth calling on spirits

Extract 9 - Lady Macbeth telling Macbeth to deceive Duncan

Extract 11 - Macbeth’s doubts Extract 12 - Lady Macbeth’s disgust at Macbeth

Extract 13 - Lady Macbeth’s lack of femininity

Extract 15 - Macbeth sees vision of dagger Extract 19 – Unnatural act of murder

Extract 21 - Macbeth’s false response to Duncan’s death

Extract 23 - Unnatural acts following Duncan’s death

Extract 30 - Lady Macbeth’s reactions to Macbeth seeing ghost

Extract 34 - Lady Macduff’s relationship with son

Extract 38 – Macduff’s grief hearing news of family murder

Extract 39 - Lady Macbeth’s guilt shown through sleepwalk

Extract 41 – Macbeth responds to news of wife’s death

**Responses to death**

Extract 4 –Macbeth’s fear of murdering Duncan

Extract 6 - Macbeth’s thoughts on murdering Duncan

Extract 7 - Lady Macbeth’s doubts about Macbeth

Extract 11 - Macbeth’s doubts Extract 17 - Macbeth’s fear/guilt

Extract 18 - Lady Macbeth reaction to murder

Extract 20 – Macduff + Banquo’s reaction to Duncan’s death

Extract 21 - Macbeth’s false response to Duncan’s death

Extract 22 - Malcolm’s reaction to Duncan’s death Extract 28 - Macbeth tell wife act false

Extract 29 - Macbeth’s fears with murderers

Extract 30 - Lady Macbeth’s reactions to Macbeth seeing ghost

Extract 32 - Macbeth’s decision to kill Macduff

Extract 38 – Macduff’s grief hearing news of family murder

Extract 39 - Lady Macbeth’s guilt shown through sleepwalk

Extract 41 – Macbeth responds to news of wife’s death

**Kingship**

Extract 1 - Braveness of Macbeth Extract 2 – Duncan rewards Macbeth

Extract 5 - Duncan greets Macbeth Extract 6 - Macbeth’s thoughts on murdering Duncan

Extract 10 - Lady Macbeth falseness to Duncan

Extract 20 – Macduff + Banquo’s reaction to Duncan’s death

Extract 21 - Macbeth’s false response to Duncan’s death

Extract 36 - Malcolm’s view on Macbeth’s ruling

Extract 37 - Malcolm’s view on good king + Macduff proves his loyalty

Extract 42 - Macbeth’s bravery returns Extract 43 – Malcolm’s closing speech

**Role of women**

Extract 7 - Lady Macbeth’s doubts about Macbeth Extract 8 - Lady Macbeth calling on spirits

Extract 9 - Lady Macbeth telling Macbeth to deceive Duncan

Extract 10 - Lady Macbeth falseness to Duncan

Extract 12 - Lady Macbeth’s disgust at Macbeth Extract 13 - Lady Macbeth’s lack of femininity

Extract 16 - Lady Macbeth’s reaction to murder Extract 18 - Lady Macbeth reaction to murder

Extract 19 – Unnatural act of murder Extract 20 – Macduff + Banquo’s reaction to Duncan’s death

Extract 21 - Macbeth’s false response to Duncan’s death

Extract 27 - Lady Macbeth reaction to events

Extract 33 - Rosse + Lady Macduff views on Macduff

Extract 34 - Lady Macduff’s relationship with son Extract 35 - Lady Macduff innocence

Extract 39 - Lady Macbeth’s guilt shown through sleepwalk

**Banquo**

Extract 3 - Banquo’s reactions to witches Extract 14 – Contrasting reactions to witches

Extract 20 – Macduff + Banquo’s reaction to Duncan’s death

Extract 24 - Banquo’s doubts regarding Macbeth Extract 25 - Macbeth thoughts regarding Banquo’s murder

Extract 29 - Macbeth’s fears with murderers Extract 30 - Lady Macbeth’s reactions to Macbeth seeing ghost

**Macduff**

Extract 20 – Macduff + Banquo’s reaction to Duncan’s death

Extract 32 - Macbeth’s decision to kill Macduff Extract 33 - Rosse + Lady Macduff views on Macduff

Extract 34 - Lady Macduff’s relationship with son Extract 36 - Malcolm’s view on Macbeth’s ruling

Extract 37 - Malcolm’s view on good king + Macduff proves his loyalty

Extract 38 – Macduff’s grief hearing news of family murder

Extract 42 - Macbeth’s bravery returns Extract 43 – Malcolm’s closing speech

**King Duncan**

Extract 1 - Braveness of Macbeth Extract 2 – Duncan rewards Macbeth

Extract 5 - Duncan greets Macbeth Extract 6 - Macbeth’s thoughts on murdering Duncan

Extract 10 - Lady Macbeth falseness to Duncan Extract 11 - Macbeth’s doubts

Extract 19 – Unnatural act of murder

Extract 20 – Macduff + Banquo’s reaction to Duncan’s death

Extract 21 - Macbeth’s false response to Duncan’s death

Extract 22 - Malcolm’s reaction to Duncan’s death

Extract 23 - Unnatural acts following Duncan’s death

Extract 36 - Malcolm’s view on Macbeth’s ruling

Extract 37 - Malcolm’s view on good king + Macduff proves his loyalty

**Malcolm**

Extract 22 - Malcolm’s reaction to Duncan’s death

Extract 21 - Macbeth’s false response to Duncan’s death

Extract 23 - Unnatural acts following Duncan’s death

Extract 36 - Malcolm’s view on Macbeth’s ruling

Extract 37 - Malcolm’s view on good king + Macduff proves his loyalty

Extract 38 – Macduff’s grief hearing news of family murder

Extract 43 – Malcolm’s closing speech

**Macbeth Extract 6**

**How is good and evil presented in this extract and throughout the play?**

Shakespeare presents these controversial themes in this extract through 2 key characters. Duncan is used to represent the theme of good which is contrasted through Macbeth who is becoming more deeply associated with evil.

A key issue during the Jacobean era was the idea of the rightful King. Shakespeare uses the character of Duncan to demonstrate how a King should act and behave to explore the theme of ‘goodness’. We see Duncan associated with positivity throughout his first speech such as **‘plenteous joys’**. This suggests that Duncan is happy at this current state after the recent defeat over the traitor in the Thane of Cawdor. Shakespeare is using dramatic irony effectively here as the audience are fully aware that Duncan’s newest Thane of Cawdor, Macbeth, is planning a similar traitorous and evil act – murdering him. It was a common belief in the Jacobean era that the King was God’s representative on Earth and so Duncan’s opening line portrays the positivity he feels. We go on to see what else makes Duncan a positive King. We see he uses a list of other nobles to show how he brings the country and his subjects together in a valued and respectful way – **‘Sons, kinsmen, thanes’**. He speaks to his subjects in a way which shows he clearly is happy with them and wants them to be involved in his celebrations. This equality is further demonstrated through the use of inclusive pronouns ‘**our eldest, we name’**. This again shows that Duncan is including everyone when he speaks and is acting on behalf of the whole country. We can see that Duncan is doing what is best for the country and is acting in the correct way associated for a King. However, later in this extract, we see the use of personal pronouns in Macbeth’s speech **‘I must fall’**. This shows that Shakespeare is presenting Macbeth as a more narcissistic, selfish character who is acting for his own benefit rather than putting his subjects first. We see throughout the play that Macbeth’s Kingship is more focused on sustaining his own role rather than act for his subjects. Rather than protect them, we see he becomes more affiliated with evil through the murder of many of his subjects such as Banquo and Macduff’s family and servants. He subverts the role of a good king like Duncan and becomes a more tyrannical figure who is eventually referred to as a **‘butcher’**. This conveys how Macbeth’s reign if more associated with death than with Duncan’s who is associated with good.

We further see the theme of goodness through the naming of Malcolm as the rightful heir – **‘we name hereafter The Prince of Cumberland’**. This follows the theme of goodness as it was believed that Duncan, through God, would have the authority to name the next heir. However, we see Macbeth represent evil when he says **‘that is a step on which I must fall down or o’erleap’.** Shakespeare is using **‘or’** to show that Macbeth is aware he is being given a choice now – accept it or act against this. We know that he will go against Duncan’s good ruling through the verb **‘o’erleap’**. He is going to break the order of the Divine Right of Kings despite stating ‘if chance will crown me King’, we see he is now going to manipulate and act on the witches predictions to make these come true. We will see how Macbeth’s evil acts will create a negative outcome – we are told about the unnatural actions such as dark skies and bad weather. A Jacobean audience would have believed these negative consequences would have been a punishment from God because Macbeth has broken the natural order of Kingship and evilly killed the rightful King.

Another way Shakespeare demonstrates these key themes is through the use of imagery in this extract. We see heavenly imagery used in Duncan’s speech – **‘signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine on all deservers’**. We see the use of the simile and reference to stars to remind us of the link between God and the King. Duncan is saying that those who are good and noble will be seen in this way which is also ironic as he previously used the adjective **‘noble’** to describe Macbeth. However, Macbeth’s actions are becoming more and more evil. To directly contrast this heavenly imagery, Shakespeare uses hellish imagery later in Macbeth’s speech – it is interesting these lines are placed so close together to create a strong juxtaposition here. Macbeth says **‘stars hide your fires; let not light see my black and deep desires’.** This shows us that while Duncan was outlining stars as a way of showing goodness, Macbeth wants stars to be hidden and does not want there to be light. This reminds us that Shakespeare structures the play so key murders such as Duncan’s and Banquo’s take place at night. He uses the word **‘black’** as a clear link to the growing evil in his character. It is also significant that Shakespeare has used rhyming couplets in Macbeth’s speech here. This contrasts with the blank verse which Duncan has used which would be most associated with natural speech. The rhyming couplets are a key feature associated with the witches so this is creating a strong connection between Macbeth and the witches. This clearly shows us his association with evil now. It is also important that Shakespeare used repetition of the witches words **‘fair and foul’** in Macbeth’s first line to create a bond between them and link him to evil. A further connection is made when we see the witches use animals in their evil potions and Macbeth later speaks of his mind being **‘full of scorpions.’** This use of animalistic imagery would also be connected to evil. Light imagery associates Duncan with positivity and goodness but the opposite is used to show e vil.

Finally in the extract, we see Duncan’s goodness through his positive views on Macbeth. Shakespeare uses the adjective **‘worthy’** to address Macbeth. We see Duncan’s trusting side here by repeating positive adjectives towards Macbeth. However, this is contrasted with Macbeth’s more deceitful statement ‘**humbly take my leave’**. He is acting as people would expect him to speak in from of the King and recognising his role as his subject through ‘**humbly’**. However, we know this is not genuine due to his soliloquy after this which gives the audience an insight to how his thoughts completely contradict the way he has just behaved in front of the King. This reminds us of his later words to Lady Macbeth – **‘make our faces vizards to our hearts’**. This shows us that he is able to mask and hide what he is really thinking to present himself falsely. Shakespeare uses the role of Malcolm, the rightful King, to show the lessons he has learnt from his father’s life to continue to the role of goodness. His brother has recognised **‘there are daggers in men’s smiles’** to know not to trust which is why Malcolm tests Macduff’s loyalty before joining with him to raise an army against Macbeth. From this we can learn that Shakespeare uses the role of the King to represent goodness; an idea which would have pleased the current King James. Shakespeare is showing his acknowledgement that James is the good and rightful king through this. He would also have used the positive portrayal of a loyal Banquo who says he will keep his **‘allegiance clear’** as another sign of support to King James who would have been related to the historical Banquo. The final rhyming couplet in the play is used to show that good has been restored and evil overthrown.

We see how Shakespeare has used these characters to effectively convey the contrasting roles of good and evil. As would be expected to the audience, good overpowers evil.

**Extract 8**

**How does Shakespeare present the role of women in this extract and throughout the play?**

Shakespeare presents a number of differing roles of women to represent contrasting views of women in this era. We see a range of different characters to show different actions in the play.

Within this scene, we see Shakespeare present Lady Macbeth preparing herself for the murder of Duncan. This shows women in a completely different way from that which we as an audience would expect a woman to act. A woman in the Jacobean era would stereotypically be seen as the ‘weaker sex’ who was completely reliant on her husband. Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a woman who subverts this stereotype as we see her on the stage completely alone and independently planning a murder. Shakespeare has structured the play so we meet Lady Macbeth on her own to demonstrate her independent role in the play who can act without her husband. However, the fact we first see her on her own could also foreshadow the later deterioration of their relationship. We never see Lady Macbeth with her husband following the Banquet scene about half way through the play and we learn she commits suicide in the final act. She is therefore associated with death through the play which is ironic as women are associated with childbirth and life.

Shakespeare has used the symbol of a **‘raven’** at the beginning of this extract. A raven would have been seen as the symbol of death so again women are at this point linked more with life ending. Shakespeare also uses an owl later as a link to life ending. He also goes on to use the adjective **‘fatal’** to describe Duncan’s arrival at their palace. Women would normally be associated with the domestic sphere and Lady Macbeth would have been expected to welcome and look after Duncan while he was staying. However, **‘fatal’** again links her to death. We see immediately that Lady Macbeth is not acting how she would be expected to.

We continue to see this through the repeated use of imperatives in this extract. This is again important as women would have been expected to go along with the wishes of their husbands and be subservient to them. However, Shakespeare has created a role reversal in this relationship as we instead see these imperatives used to show Lady Macbeth’s more controlling nature. We see **‘come’** repeated throughout this extract when she is stating what she wants to be able to carry out the murder. These commands were also used by Lady Macbeth towards her husband when he mistakenly brought the daggers from the murder scene and she orders they are returned. She repeatedly takes control by telling him not to think of their actions or they **‘will go mad’** and covers for him both by fainting at the news of Duncan’s death and her explanation for his strange behaviour when he sees Banquo’s ghost. It is interesting that Macbeth follows these commands from her but his main imperative towards her **‘We will proceed no further in this business’** is instantly ignored from her which again shows the power she holds in the relationship. However, Shakespeare has created a foil through the character of Lady Macduff, who feels at loss by her husband’s behaviour and simply has to be submissive towards him. We see both females hold very different roles within their relationships.

The next way Shakespeare has portrayed various roles of women is when Lady Macbeth calls on **‘spirits’**. This is where we see her call on unnatural beings to remove her of her feminine qualities which she believes would be a barrier on her carrying out this murder. We see her unnatural behaviour by calling on unnatural spirits – much like the unnatural witches who opened the play. We know that a Jacobean audience would have recognised this as King James’ interests in the supernatural but would have also been shocked to see a woman act in this way. Much as Banquo described the witches as **‘weird’**, Lady Macbeth’s behaviour would have been seen in the same way. She uses ‘**unsex me’** to show she wishes to defeminised and rid herself of her softer qualities to allow her to end life without thought. Shakespeare also shows Lady Macbeth use a similar strategy when trying to persuade Macbeth to kill Duncan when she tries to emasculate him. We see this through her repeated use of rhetorical questions if he is ‘**a man’** and through colour imagery calling him **‘pale’, ‘green’** and mocks his **‘white heart’** after the murder. We see that Lady Macbeth is attempting to dehumanise herself and her husband so they wouldn’t feel **‘remorse’**. Lady Macbeth is trying to separate herself from her previous identify as a woman.

A further way we see Shakespeare use Lady Macbeth as a contrast to how women should act is when she requests they take her **‘milk for gall’**. This is again her wishing to not be associated with the role of women. Rather than have milk to be able to nurture and sustain her child, she wants again for these feminine qualities to be removed and replaced with a more sinister evil substance. Again, the audience would be expecting a woman to want to protect a young innocent child but Lady Macbeth is also associated with violent verbs towards her child when she says she would **‘dash its brains out’**. The use of **‘its’** also shows her depersonalising a child and lacking any appropriate emotional responses. We can again contrast this with Lady Macduff who uses several terms of endearment and affection towards her son through a light hearted and humorous exchange. Although the role of care giving is usually associated with women, Shakespeare also shows the men in the play act in a more protective role towards their children than Lady Macbeth. Banquo urges Fleance to escape and Macduff is clearly emotional and distraught, repeatedly asking **‘all my pretty ones?’** at the news of his children’s deaths. By using these strong reactions from men, Shakespeare has further heightened how unnatural Lady Macbeth is acting and not behaving as she should.

Finally, the extract ends with dark, hellish imagery from Lady Macbeth. A religious Jacobean society would have held strong views in God and believed in heaven and hell. Shakespeare is further showing Lady Macbeth in an unnatural way through the use of **‘thick night’**. Rather than associating her with light of the day, she is associated with night which is again symbolic of death. Shakespeare has also structured the play so that the key murders of Banquo and Duncan take place at night, which is also full of other unnatural acts like a great storm. She also refers to the **‘dunnest smoke of hell’** which also links her to the evil witches. She does not want **‘heaven to peep through the blanket of dark’**. This metaphor of **‘blanket’** suggests she wants darkness to cover everything so her actions can’t be seen. This is similar to her later advice **‘look like the innocent flower but be the serpent under’.** A flower would normally be seen as a symbol of life and development which would be associated with women but she is planning on acting like a serpent which would have been a symbol associated with the Devil being deceitful in the Garden of Eden. This fully parallels her behaviour of deceiving Duncan. It is also ironic that Lady Macduff acknowledges she is an **‘innocent woman’** but recognises this will no longer be able to help her in this changed world. Lady Macbeth is again associating herself with images which would have shocked and appalled a Jacobean audience.

Shakespeare has created a number of female roles which are used to heighten the extent to which Lady Macbeth does not act as expected. We see this through to the end of the play in her final act of suicide which again would have been seen as unnatural. Lady Macbeth fully contrasts how she would be expected to act.

**Question: In this scene, Macbeth has just returned from killing Duncan. Read from ‘Methoughts I heard a voice cry, “Sleep no more...”’ to ‘Look on’t again, I dare not’ (Act II Scene 2). Write about how Shakespeare explores ideas about guilt in this extract, and in the play as a whole.**

**Answer 1**

Guilt is a key theme in Macbeth and can be seen as largely responsible for Macbeth’s tyrannous rule and his wife’s demise and death. This extract occurs immediately after Macbeth has killed King Duncan and shows how his actions disturb him from the outset.

In this scene we see Macbeth immediately after he has committed the murder of Duncan. He is visibly disturbed and distracted. He says **‘Methought I heard a voice cry “Sleep no more!”’** suggesting that his guilt is already present. In killing the king he has committed the worst of crimes, according to the beliefs of Shakespeare’s society. The Divine Right of Kings promoted the idea that the King was in direct line to God and as such was one of the core elements of the great chain of being. In murdering the king, Macbeth has effectively destroyed faith. He has committed a crime against his own conscience, nature and ultimately God. The voice he hears represents his conscience. It could also be an allusion to a paranoia-induced hallucination, Macbeth’s realisation of the gravity of his actions disturb his mind and provoke sensory disturbances.

Macbeth’s statement that he ‘**does murder sleep’** shows that he has effectively destroyed his own peace. Shakespeare uses sleep as a metaphor for a calm and quiet conscience. However, Macbeth will be troubled by ‘**terrible dreams’** (III.2) and Lady Macbeth will later take to sleepwalking. This can be seen as a disruption of nature, all beings need sleep to function. The scale of their guilt is so great that the Macbeths will ‘sleep no more’. Ironically they have murdered Duncan in his sleep. This could represent the murder of justice and also of innocence.

Macbeth’s language in this extract is repetitious and unsettled. He uses the word ‘**sleep’** seven times, emphasising his obsessive nature and the fixed state of his mind. He is overwhelmed by guilt to the extent that his command of language is depleted. This links to other fixations - on the prophecies, the witches and on the need to maintain his power - all of which contribute to his tragic downfall.

Unlike Macbeth, his wife appears to reject or refuse to acknowledge guilt in this extract. She accuses Macbeth of undoing his **‘noble strength’** and of being **‘brain-sickly’.** Her language is commanding and she insists that he washes the **‘filthy witness’** from his hands. She seems to think that **‘some water’** will be enough to wash away his guilt. However, the extent of their crime is so great that ‘**all great Neptune’s ocean’** will not be enough to clear them. Ironically, Lady Macbeth will later desperately try to wash an imagined ‘**damned spot’** (V.1) or bloodstain from her hands during her sleepwalking. She will be unable to remove the guilt from her mind no matter how much she obsessively washes her hands.

In this scene Lady Macbeth’s role can be seen as unfeminine. She apparently has no compassion for Duncan’s fate and shows no sign of guilt, even when Macbeth is upset. She accuses him of being **‘infirm of purpose!’,** implying that he is incapable of carrying out the task they have set themselves. She gives orders and takes the lead in a manner that a contemporary audience might have deemed more masculine. If there is any taint of fear or guilt it is in her brief reflection that she would have killed Duncan herself ‘**Had he not / Resembled my father as he slept.**’ It is only later that we see the deeper significance of this comment.

In conclusion, Shakespeare shows the immediate and overwhelming impact of guilt on Macbeth following his sin. His reaction reveals the enormity of the crime and sets the tone for the brutal and irrational behaviour he will show as king. As for his wife, the seeds of her own guilt will take far longer to emerge in very different behaviour from that of her husband.

**Answer 2**

In this extract Shakespeare shows us how Macbeth is immediately struck with guilty feelings following the murder of Duncan. He thinks he ‘**heard a voice cry, “Sleep no more!”**’ This suggests that guilt has resulted in Macbeth hearing voices. It could also imply that he hears his own conscience condemning him for his actions.

Macbeth refers to **‘sleep’** repeatedly in this extract. This repetition has the effect of making him seem distracted: he can only think about how he will never sleep again. Sleep is a key motif in the play and will return as evidence of Macbeth’s guilt in later scenes. For example in Act III he talks about the ‘**terrible dreams’** (III.2) he is tormented with. This shows how his fears are confirmed and following the murder his guilt prevents him from sleeping.

The extent of Macbeth’s guilt is due to the fact that, not only has he committed murder, but he has also murdered the king. When Shakespeare wrote the play, society generally believed in the Divine Right of Kings. This meant that the king was directly in line to God. The murder of Duncan is more dreadful because of this. The Macbeths are utterly immoral in their actions and so the guilt they suffer could be interpreted as damnation by God.

Macbeth is so disturbed that he only carries out part of their plan and forgets to leave the daggers on the guards. This could also show his guilt because he has done the deed and then forgotten what comes next. Lady Macbeth has to take charge and return the daggers herself. At this point in the play she seems more focused on the crime than Macbeth, though we later see the destructive effects of this guilt more visibly in her.

Later when he wants Banquo to be killed, Macbeth doesn’t do it himself, but employs murderers to do it. This could be because he knows the lasting effects of guilt and doesn’t want to go there again. He wants Banquo’s son, Fleance, to be killed as well because he is paranoid about the prophecies.

On the other hand, Lady Macbeth seems undisturbed in this extract, and in fact takes charge of the situation. She uses commanding language saying ‘**Go, get some water’** and demanding that her husband clean away **‘this filthy witness’**. The word **‘witness’** shows that the blood on Macbeth’s hand is visible evidence of his guilt. She takes charge, making her **‘brave’** husband seem weak. Historically women were considered the weaker sex, yet Lady Macbeth takes control here and is presented as stronger than Macbeth.

This scene links to the later scene when we see Lady Macbeth’s demise. The plan does not work out as she had hoped and her own sleep is upset by her guilt. We see her sleepwalking and making futile attempts to wash a ‘damned spot’ from her hands. There is irony here as she had previously told her husband that some water would be enough to clean them. The ‘**spot’** represents guilt that cannot be washed out. The Macbeths own knowledge of their crime results in them being ‘**damned’**.

In conclusion, this extract shows some significant examples of guilt that are further developed throughout the play, particularly in the motifs of blood and disturbed sleep.

**Question: In this scene, Lady Macbeth is discussing her plans for the king. Read from 'My dearest love, Duncan comes here tonight ...' to 'Leave all the rest to me.' (Act I Scene 5) Explain how far Lady Macbeth is presented as the play's main villain in this conversation and elsewhere in the play.**

In Act I Scene 5 we are presented with a villainous Lady Macbeth plotting the murder of King Duncan. She is presented as the evil driving force in the lead-up to the king’s murder though this idea is not sustained and later we witness the character softening and eventually descending into madness.

In this conversation Macbeth is presented as a doting husband, using the term ‘**My dearest love’** to address his wife. She is quick to ask when Duncan will leave Dunsinane and becomes excited when she proclaims her intention ‘**never/Shall sun that morrow see!**’ The exclamation mark at the end of this line shows her enthusiasm for the plan to murder the king; a clear example of Lady Macbeth as villain.

She then proceeds to advise Macbeth on how best to present himself. She accuses him of being too easy to read and says he must ‘**look like the innocent flower,/But be the serpent under’t.’** This shows us that she is deceitful and that the audience sees her as a scheming Machiavellian character.

Her evil is further demonstrated by the way she gives directions to Macbeth. In ‘**you shall put/This night’s great business into my dispatch**’- the pronoun ‘**my’** shows that she, not Macbeth, is responsible for this murderous plan.

In fact, Macbeth appears to desire that the plan is delayed. He says ‘**We will speak further’** suggesting that he is not entirely in agreement with Lady Macbeth at this point.

Later in Act I, we see additional evidence of Lady Macbeth as villain. When Macbeth says he will ‘proceed no further in this business’ she uses her powers of persuasion – undermining his manliness and questioning his courage – to convince Macbeth that murder is the best course of action. It is Lady Macbeth who suggests duping the guards ‘**with wine and wassail’,** and she who takes the bloody daggers from Macbeth to plant them on the grooms. She shows no fear of the dead, claiming the ‘**sleeping and the dead/Are but as pictures’.**

A contemporary audience may have been challenged by this intimidating female character. At the time when the play was written, women were largely treated as the property of their husbands or fathers, so Lady Macbeth is unusual in her outspoken manner, and also in her power. Macbeth says she should ‘**bring forth men-children only!**’ suggesting that her strength is more suited to warriors and kings.

Later in the play her character changes and by Act III Scene 2 we begin to see signs of her regret. When she says ‘**naught’s had, all’s spent’** we are presented with a character whose excitement is waning with the disappointment of the outcome. Her language when speaking with Macbeth is less aggressive and more soothing. She says ‘**Gentle my lord’** and whereas in earlier scenes she dominated the dialogue, her lines are fewer in this scene.

In Act III Scene 4 when the ghost of Banquo haunts Macbeth at the feast, Lady Macbeth plays the peacemaker, attempting to calm the ‘**good peers’**. Macbeth echoes her earlier challenge about being a man with ‘**What man dare, I dare’.** The repetition of ‘**dare’** emphasises his determination and sheer determination and we see that he has now overtaken his wife in the role of the play’s main villain.

The next time Lady Macbeth appears is when the doctor has been summoned to witness her strange nightly wanderings. In Act V Scene 1 we see, not a villain, but a woman reduced to sickness by guilt. Eventually she kills herself, not the act of a villain, but more of a coward, unable to face the consequences of her actions.

Overall, Lady Macbeth can be seen as a villain, and she is certainly portrayed as such in the earlier scenes, especially where she is plotting with her husband as in the extract. However, when Macbeth arranges for Banquo’s murder without consulting her, he takes the lead as the main villain in the play and acts increasingly alone during his violent and brutal reign.

Section B – Unseen Poetry

1 hr 45 mins – 50 mins on Macbeth

Unseen Poetry -55 mins

Section A – 35 mins – 24 marks + 4 SPAG

approx 5 mins planning

Approx 30 mins writing

Section B – 20 mins – 8 marks – SAME AS LANG PAPER 2

Approx 5 mins planning

Approx 15 mins writing

**Unseen Steps – What to do?**

1 – What is the key words in BOTH questions?

(this will tell you what both poems are about –

remember they will be similar!)

2 – Read the first poem –

Keep the steer in mind.

Read this a 2nd + possibly 3rd time

3 – How does

Structure + rhyme scheme link?

Steady // controlled // ordered // consistent

Unsteady // lacking control / lack of order // inconsistent

Free verse? Rhyming Couplets? Stanzas? Start + End?

4 – Highlight approx 5 quotes

Look for devices / strong words

Take from beginning / middle / end

5 – What do we learn from these?

**Bringing in Poem 2**

1 – Remind yourself of key word in this question

2 – Read Poem 2 – How same / different

 Agree / disagree

 Positive / negative

3 – Similarities / differences in structure – link to meaning

4 – Pick 3 of the 5 quotes from Poem 1 (RE-USE)

Pick out 3 quotes from Poem 2

5 – What do we learn from these – move between!

**Key points**

Poem 1 - 35 mins – 3 page

Poem 1 +2 – 20 mins – 1 page

Use words from the questions

5 quotes from first + re-use these for 2nd!

Keep thinking what we learn!

**Ageing Schoolmaster**

And now another autumn morning finds me
With chalk dust on my sleeve and in my breath,
Preoccupied with vague, habitual speculation
On the huge inevitability of death.

Not wholly wretched, yet knowing absolutely
That I shall never reacquaint myself with joy,
I sniff the smell of ink and chalk and my mortality
And think of when I rolled, a gormless boy,

And rollicked round the playground of my hours,
And wonder when precisely tolled the bell
Which summoned me from summer liberties
And brought me to this chill autumnal cell

From which I gaze upon the april faces
That gleam before me, like apples ranged on shelves,
And yet I feel no pinch or prick of envy
Nor would I have them know their sentenced selves.

With careful effort I can separate the faces,
The dull, the clever, the various shapes and sizes,
But in the autumn shades I find I only
Brood upon death, who carries off all the prizes.

**How does the poet present the schoolmaster’s feelings about becoming older?**

**When You Are Old**

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,

And nodding by the fire, take down this book,

And slowly read, and dream of the soft look

Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,

And loved your beauty with love false or true,

But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,

And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,

Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled

And paced upon the mountains overhead

And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

**In both poems the speakers describe their feelings about becoming older. What are the similarities/differences between the ways the poets present these feelings?**

**‘Ageing Schoolmaster’ + ‘When You Are Old’ – Sample Responses**

**High Response**

The use of the first person narrative structure and the present tense allows the reader to gain insight to the schoolmaster’s feelings about becoming older, ‘And now the autumn morning finds me.’ The first words of the poem, ‘And now’ imply the passage of time and also suggest that the speaker often reflects on this aspect of his life. The reference to ‘autumn’ is the first example of the use of the extended metaphor (the comparison between the seasons and life). Autumn typically has connotations of death and decay and this suggests that the speaker is very much aware that he is nearing the end of his life. However, in autumn there is also the promise of spring, which connotes new life and new beginnings. Interestingly, the speaker can only see the spring time in the children he teaches and is only looking towards death in his own life.

The structure of the poem also links to the ideas explored regarding the passage of time. Four out of the five stanzas include an abcb rhyme scheme. The regularity of this scheme reflects the speaker’s awareness of the inevitable passage of time and ultimately, his death, ‘I find I only/Brood upon death.’ Although the speaker is alive and still working as a teacher, it seems ironic that he is so preoccupied with death and that these thoughts are now ‘habitual.’ He is surrounded by pupils who are full of life yet all he can focus on is death.

The schoolmaster uses metaphorical language to describe the pupils he teaches, ‘the april faces.’ As previously discussed, the connotations of spring contrast greatly with autumn and this emphasises how the speaker perceives a vast distance between himself and his pupils. A simile is also used to develop this idea further; their faces are described ‘like apples ranged on shelves.’ As well as being associated with spring time, apples are also a recognisable image that is often associated with school. The fact that they ‘gleam’ suggests their readiness to learn and the idea that many opportunities and experiences lie ahead for them. Again, this is a significant contrast to the speaker’s view of life and his future.

Interestingly, the speaker claims that he does not feel a ‘pinch or prick of envy’ towards his young pupils. Instead, his tone is more nostalgic and reflective; he does not seem to show any bitterness about becoming older. For example, when looking back on his own youth, the speaker wonders ‘when precisely tolled the bell/Which summoned me from summer liberties/And brought me to this chill autumnal cell.’ He wonders where the time has gone and again uses a reference to autumn to convey his perception that he is in a stage of decay and impending death. As with the reference to the pupils’ faces as ‘apples,’ the bell is also a recognisable image associated with school. In the same way that school children are told when their playtime is over, the speaker reflects on how his ‘summer liberties’ ended just as suddenly and without warning.

This poem uses imagery associated with the familiar experience of school as well as the extended metaphor of the seasons, to convey the speed with which time passes. The speaker is seemingly surprised by how quickly he has become old and also leaves the reader to ‘wonder’ about this themselves. Although the speaker is not angry or resentful about getting older, there is a tone of certainty in his language that conveys the way in which his thoughts are fixed on death and can see no future in his life at this stage.

Mid Response

The poem ‘Ageing Schoolmaster’ is about a school teacher who thinks about his life and how he is getting older. He thinks about his own life and the poet uses lots of techniques, such as metaphors and imagery, to present his thoughts. It is written in first person so we know exactly what he is thinking.

The speaker uses the seasons to compare his old age with the youth of his students, ‘the april faces/That gleam before me.’ This metaphor suggests that the students are young and have the rest of their lives to look forward to, unlike the schoolmaster. He writes that he is in a ‘chill autumnal cell.’ The word ‘cell’ implies that the speaker is trapped and he cannot escape from getting older. Also, ‘chill’ suggests that this is not a pleasant experience for him and that it makes him uncomfortable.

The speaker is not jealous of his students but he does not want them to know what it is like to get old, ‘Nor would I have them know their sentenced selves.’ The word ‘sentenced’ links to the schoolmaster being in a ‘cell.’ The pupils do not have a choice about getting older and the schoolmaster does not want them to know what it is like. The reference to prison here suggests that the speaker believes getting older is a punishment but it is something that happens to everyone even if you have not done anything wrong. When you are young, you don’t think about getting old, just like the pupils in the poem. The schoolmaster says he was like this once when he ‘rollicked round the playground’ but his life is very different now that he is older.

The schoolmaster appeals to the reader’s senses to present his views about becoming older, ‘I sniff the smell of ink and chalk and my mortality.’ Ink and chalk make the reader think of school and this reflects his long career as a teacher. By appealing to the senses, the speaker creates an image for the reader of an old, traditional schoolmaster. The schoolmaster writes that he can smell his ‘mortality.’ This is a metaphor and suggests that he might die soon.

All of the stanzas have four lines and this makes me think that the schoolmaster’s days are all the same. He says that his thoughts about death are now ‘habitual’ so it is clear he spends a lot of time thinking about how he has become older and cannot escape death. He knows there is nothing he can do about getting older and he is surprised about how quickly time has passed.

In conclusion, it is clear that the schoolmaster does not like getting older and even though he is not jealous of his pupils because they are young, the reader gets the impression that he wishes he could go back to when he was younger. The schoolmaster always thinks about death and Scannell uses different techniques to present his ideas and opinions about this.

**Comparison Sample Responses**

High Response

The use of the personal pronoun ‘you’ in ‘When You Are Old’ initially suggests that the speaker is addressing the reader, inviting them to reflect on the ageing process and the passage of time in their life, ‘When you are old and grey and full of sleep.’ This is perhaps a stereotypical image of an elderly person and one that readers will be familiar with. The word ‘when’ conveys the idea that becoming older is inevitable, which is an idea also explored in ‘Ageing Schoolmaster,’ particularly in the way in which he describes the process as similar to being ‘sentenced’ for a crime.

However, it is soon clear that unlike ‘Ageing Schoolmaster,’ Yeats’ poem is addressed to someone the speaker once loved. Both poets use natural imagery when looking back on the past; Yeats refers to how the speaker’s love ‘paced upon the mountains overhead’ while Scannell recalls his ‘summer liberties’ with fondness. The use of this type of imagery in both poems could suggest the inevitability of the ageing process but also the way in which the past seems to be superior to the present for both speakers.

Both poems include repetition but to present very different views about becoming older. For example, ‘Ageing Schoolmaster’ makes repeated references to death and its ‘huge inevitability.’ In contrast, ‘When You Are Old’ repeats the verb ‘loved’ to suggest that the love the speaker felt when he was young has not altered over time. Although age has caused the woman to have a ‘changing face,’ the speaker’s love has remained and this creates a poignant tone.

Mid Response

Both poems contain imagery to present the speakers’ views about becoming older ’When you are old and grey and full of sleep.’ This is an image lots of people would associate with an elderly person. It seems that life has made them tired and in need of rest. This presents the person as being quite peaceful and calm. Similarly, Scannell also uses imagery to show the differences between the young and old. He suggests that when you are young, you are full of energy and have lots to look forward to. For example, he describes the pupils ‘like apples ranged on shelves.’ This simile emphasises the contrast between them and the teacher.

Both poems are written in the first person but ‘When You Are Old’ is directed at someone in particular. ‘Ageing Schoolmaster’ includes the personal thoughts of the speaker about ‘the huge inevitability of death,’ while Yeats’ poem is addressing someone the speaker used to love and is focused on past happiness. For example, ‘How many loved your moments of glad grace.’ The alliteration of ‘glad grace’ emphasises how the speaker admired the woman and suggests that when she was young, she was very beautiful. There is also a tone of sadness because perhaps the relationship did not end well, ‘a little sadly.’ ‘Ageing Schoolmaster’ could also be described as having a sad tone because the speaker feels that getting older is a punishment that he cannot escape; he is trapped in his ‘cell’ until he dies.

**Don’t Say I Said – Sophie Hannah**

Next time you speak to you-know-who
I’ve got a message for him.
Tell him that I have lost a stone
Since the last time I saw him.
Tell him that I’ve got three new books
Coming out soon, but play it
Cool, make it sound spontaneous.
Don’t say I said to say it.

He might ask if I’ve mentioned him.
Say I have once, in passing.
Memorise everything he says
And, no, it won’t be grassing
When you repeat his words to me –
It’s the only way to play it.
Tell him I’m toned and tanned and fine.
Don’t say I said to say it.

Say that serenity and grace
Have taken root inside me.
My top-note is frivolity
But beneath, dark passions guide me.
Tell him I’m radiant and replete
And add that every day it
Seems I am harder to resist.
Don’t say I said to say it.

Tell him that all my ancient faults
Have been eradicated.
I do not carp or analyse
As I might have when we dated.
Say I’m not bossy any more
Or, better still, convey it
Subtly, but get the point across.
Don’t say I said to say it.

**How does the poet present her views on relationships?**

**Flowers – Wendy Cope**

Some men never think of it.
                 You did. You’d come along
                 And say you’d nearly bought me flowers
                 But something had gone wrong.

                 The shop was closed. Or you had doubts –
                 The sort that minds like ours
                 Dream up incessantly. You thought
                 I might not want your flowers.

                 It made me smile and hug you then.
                 Now I can only smile.
                 But, look, the flowers you nearly brought
                 Have lasted all this while.

**Both poets reveal their feelings about the end of a relationship. Compare the similarities and/or differences in how these are presented.**

**How does the poet present her views on relationships? – DSIS**

The poet presents her negative views on her past relationship in this poem. She doesn’t seem to have let go of the relationship and is fixated on him knowing positive aspects of her life.

The poem’s structure highlights the negative attitude towards the end of the relationship. We can see she is unable to move on as the poem is structured through the dramatic monologue of the speaker telling her friend what to say to her old partner. This is also ironic as we see that she is still trying to maintain a level of control even though the relationship is ended. There is also a contrast between the fact that this poem has a very conversational tone but shows the speaker to trying to dominate this! We can see that the speaker is struggling to move on through the cyclical references to ‘don’t say I said to say it’. This shows that she is unable to move on and still wants to know what is happening. We can also see this negativity and bitterness from the very beginning – ‘you-know-who’. The fact that she refuses to name him could show how hurt she has been by him. We can also see her focus on the end of the relationship at the end of this poem – this has clearly had a big impact on her. The structure fully shows her negative view on this relationship.

The first way the language shows us her views is through the repeated use of imperative ‘Next time… I’ve got a message’. This clearly shows us that she is taking control in the piece and wants to have more dominance. It could suggest that the relationship did not end the way she wanted and so she is now trying to maintain a form of control she lacked in the relationship. We see the writer create a sense of humour through ‘play it cool, make it sound spontaneous’. This is ironic as being ‘spontaneous’ is the exact opposite of what she is doing! This again shows her controlling attitude. She uses the verb ‘memorise everything he says’ which shows how important he must still be to her as she wants to know exactly what was said. The writer tells us that she wants her friend to say she is ‘toned and tanned and fine’. This triplet highlights the fact that she is trying to show off about her physical condition and is focusing on the positive. This shows that she wants him to think of her in this way and regret ending the relationship or feel jealous they are no longer together.

The writer also uses the repeated ‘r’ sound in ‘radiant and replete …. Harder to resist’. This alliterative use of the same letter could again convey that she is finding it difficult to move on and highlight her obsessive nature over this past relationship. At the end of the poem, she says about her ‘ancient faults’ have been ‘eradicated’. This shows that she wants him to think that his possible reasons for ending the relationship are no longer justified. By using the adjective ‘ancient’ she is making her faults sound as if they are historical and no longer relevant. The strong word choice ‘eradicated’ shows that they are completely gone – again she is trying to show an improved version of herself since the relationship ended. The writer also says ‘say I’m not bossy’. Like earlier, this is also ironic as this is exactly what she is doing! The imperative shows that this is how she is in fact acting and could again suggest that she is not able to let go of how she was when she was in the relationship – much as she recognises the problems of this!

Throughout this poem we have seen the speaker provide a humorous take on what she wants her ex to know about her. However, this compulsion shows that she is not over the past relationship and still has a negative view of this.

**Both poets reveal their feelings about the end of a relationship. Compare the similarities and/or differences in how these are presented.**

Despite both poems showing the end of a relationship, the speakers view this ending in different ways. Poem A seems unable to move on from the relationship as she constantly wants him to know how she is whereas Poem B seems much more content to think about the end and looks on their time together fondly.

Both poems are structured to show their differing views. Poem A uses cyclical references – ‘don’t say I said to say it’ throughout. This shows that she has not been able to move on and also doesn’t want to speak to her ex. This is contrasted in Poem B as the speaker seems to be directing her poem towards him with the direct address ‘You’ throughout. This shows that she is more positive towards him and can look back on their time with more happiness than Poem A which starts and ends the poem with negative thoughts about the relationship.

Poem A also starts the poem by saying ‘you know who’. This suggests there has been a negative end to the relationship so she doesn’t want to say him name which is also contrasted with Poem B who seems to still think about her ex with fondness. We see this through ‘now I can only smile’. The verb ‘smile’ shows us she is able to recognise the positives from their relationship and appreciate these. We also see one of the aspects Speaker A wants passed on is that her ‘ancient faults’ have been ‘eradicated’. The use of the adjective ‘ancient’ could again show that she is trapped in the past and unable to move on. The use of ‘faults’ shows that she is also focusing on the more negative aspects of how the relationship ended. This is different to Poem B as the speaker ends by saying ‘the flowers you nearly brought have lasted all this while.’ This shows that she is still holding onto her thoughts of him which will outlive the flowers. However, she is focusing on a positive memory from the relationship whereas Speaker A is focusing on the negatives.

Despite both relationships ending, the speakers seem to be dealing with this in different ways. Poem B is more accepting of the end and can reflect on it with more positivity whereas Poem A seems to still want to have an aspect of control and is unable to let go.

**Ninetieth Birthday – R. S. Thomas**

You go up the long track
That will take a car, but is best walked
On slow foot, noting the lichen
That writes history on the page
Of the grey rock. Trees are about you
At first, but yield to the green bracken,
The nightjars house: you can hear it spin
On warm evenings; it is still now
In the noonday heat, only the lesser
Voices sound, blue-fly and gnat
And the stream's whisper. As the road climbs,
You will pause for breath and the far sea's
Signal will flash, till you turn again
To the steep track, buttressed with cloud.

And there at the top that old woman,
Born almost a century back
In that stone farm, awaits your coming;
Waits for the news of the lost village
She thinks she knows, a place that exists
In her memory only.
You bring her greeting
And praise for having lasted so long
With time's knife shaving the bone.
Yet no bridge joins her own
World with yours, all you can do
Is lean kindly across the abyss
To hear words that were once wise.

**How does the poet present old age and people’s attitudes towards it?**

**My Grandmother – Elizabeth Jennings**

She kept an antique shop – or it kept her.
Among Apostle spoons and Bristol glass,
The faded silks, the heavy furniture,
She watched her own reflection in the brass
Salvers and silver bowls, as if to prove
Polish was all, there was no need of love.

And I remember how I once refused
To go out with her, since I was afraid.
It was perhaps a wish not to be used
Like antique objects. Though she never said
That she was hurt, I still could feel the guilt
Of that refusal, guessing how she felt.

Later, too frail to keep a shop, she put
All her best things in one narrow room.
The place smelt old, of things too long kept shut,
The smell of absences where shadows come
That can’t be polished. There was nothing then
To give her own reflection back again

**In both poems explore relationships between young people and the elderly. Compare the ways these relationships are presented in the two poems.**

**How does the poet present old age and people’s attitudes towards it? – NB**

We see the poet presents a negative attitude towards old age in ‘Ninetieth Birthday’. We see the speaker’s negative attitude as he does not seem close to the person he is visiting and focuses on the distance between them.

The poem’s structure highlights the negative attitude towards the elderly relation. The title is used effectively as we can see the focus on her age immediately followed by ‘birthday’. This normally connotes celebration and happiness but these emotions are not demonstrated here. The structure highlights a sense of detachment between the elderly relative and speaker. The use of second person narrative ‘you’ creates a sense of distance that the speaker feels and the ongoing description of the surroundings makes it feel as if she is quite far away both physically as well as metaphorically. The lack of stanza or rhyme structure could then represent the fact that she has been almost cut off or forgotten from life – she could have lost sense of any structure or routine. The poem uses caesuras repeatedly and a great deal of punctuation which slows the pace of the poem. This could again reflect her old age and add to the distance between her and the speaker.

The writer also uses language to convey his negative attitude. We see this first in the descriptions of getting to the person. The writer uses the adjective ‘long’ on the first line. This is effective as it conveys that he has a journey to get to her physically but this coud also suggest that she is far away from his mind. He does not think about her and she has been forgotten about. He also uses the phrase ‘writes history on the page of the grey rock’. The use of history could suggest that she is not part of current life and has been resigned to the past. The use of colour imagery ‘grey’ could also relate to death and decay to show she is no longer associated with life. Ironically, we see examples of personification in the nature around. The writer uses personification in the nature imagery to describe this area. We are told that ‘voices sound, blue-fly and gnat’. This could be used as a contrast to show the lack of life associated with the old lady by showing the life in nature instead. This again gives us a more negative view of the elderly. We see the speaker ‘pause’ as he gets near which could also suggest his reluctance to continue to visit. The writer has also used the verb ‘climb’ to show his negative view and that he is struggling to go through with this visit.

The writer continues with this negative attitude towards old age when he arrives at the home. The writer describes her as ‘that old woman’. The use of ‘that’ creates a cold, distant feeling and the lack of name could show that she lacks an identity. This could show that he doesn’t see her as very important or show any interest in her. The fact she ‘awaits’ shows that she is more excited to see him than he is to see her. We see this lack of connection continue in ‘no bridge joins her own world with yours’. The ‘bridge’ could be used as a metaphor to show that the speaker feels like he has nothing in common and shows the distance between the two. This imagery of distance is also continued in the hyperbolic ‘abyss’. This heightens the widening gap between the two and heightens the disconnection between them. The writer uses ‘once wise’ to describe her words at the end. This could suggest that her opinion and views are no longer relevant and like where she lives have been forgotten.

Throughout this poem, we see that the speaker feels removed from old age. He shows a discomfort at visiting and clearly has a negative attitude.

**Both poems explore relationships between young people and the elderly. Compare the ways these relationships are presented in the two poems.**

Although both poems show a relationship between young people and the elderly, we see a slight difference between these. In ‘My Grandmother’ we see a sense of detachment between the speaker and her Grandmother although there is more of a sense of a relationship than in ‘NB’.

The title of ‘NB’ focuses more on age rather than the relationship whereas we do see the possessive pronoun ‘My’. This shows distance in ‘NB’ with more of a relationship in ‘MG’. However, as the poem develops we see this is not a very close relationship either. Although there is no strong structure in ‘NB’ to show how cut off the elderly person is there is a stronger rhyme scheme present in ‘MG’ with a rhyming couplet at the end. However, this creates a sense of formality and could reflect the stricter routine and relationship they have. There is a strictness rather than loving feeling here.

We see the writer uses nature imagery in ‘NB’ as a way of showing how far away the woman is from society to suggest she is cut off and detached from this. We see there is a ‘long track’ – the adjective ‘long’ suggests a distant relationship between them. However, the grandmother is more associated with antiques. ‘She kept an antique shop – or it kept her’. The repetition of ‘kept’ creates a stronger link between her and these items which could suggest she is more materialistic and seems to show more love towards these objects than her grand-daughter. This could show they don’t have a close relationship. We see this later in the simile ‘a wish not to be used like antique objects’. The writer shows that she felt that she was being objectified and treated like a possession. We also see a distance as the speaker in ‘NB’ refers to the elderly lady as ‘that old woman’. The use of ‘that’ is cold and distant. The lack of a name could also show that he doesn’t recognise her identity or see her in a close way. Finally, the writer of ‘MG’ uses the darker language of ‘absences’ and ‘shadows’ which again suggests a lack of relationship here. We also see language associated with distance through the metaphors of ‘bridge’ and ‘abyss’ to also show they are not close or have anything in common.

Although we see more of a relationship in ‘MG’ as she provides more personal details about this, both poems show a lack of a bond or connection with the elderly.

**Alpine Letter**

Love? If you’d asked me yesterday, I’d say

love is a saw that amputates the heart.

I’d call it my disease, I’d call it plague.

But yesterday, I hadn’t heard from you.

So call it the weight of light that holds one soul

connected to another. Or a tear

that falls in all gratitude, becoming sea.

Call it the only word that comforts me.

The sight of your writing has me on the floor,

the curve of each letter looped about my heart.

And in this ink, the tenor of your voice.

And in this ink the movement of your hand.

The Alps, now, cut their teeth upon the sky,

and pressing on to set these granite jaws

between us, not a mile will do me harm.

Your letter, in my coat, will keep me warm.

Ros Barber

**In ‘Alpine Letter,’ how does the poet present ideas about love?**

**Praise Song for My Mother**

You were

water to me

deep and bold and fathoming

You were

moon’s eye to me

pull and grained and mantling

You were

sunrise to me

rise and warm and streaming

You were

the fishes red gill to me

the flame tree’s spread to me

the crab’s leg/the fried plantain smell

replenishing replenishing

Go to your wide futures, you said

Grace Nichols

**In both ‘Alpine Letter’ and ‘Praise Song for my Mother’, different types of love and attitudes towards love are presented. What are the similarities and or differences in the ways that these ideas are presented?**

Both ‘Alpine Letter’ and ‘Praise Song for my Mother’ deal with love in different forms. While ‘Alpine Letter’ deals with romantic love, ‘Praise Song for My Mother’ uses a variety of techniques to describe the love between a mother and her child.

In ‘Alpine Letter’, the poet uses metaphor to describe the power of romantic love: ‘ The curve of each letter looped around my heart’. Here, the metaphor suggests that the speaker has been captured or perhaps trapped by her feelings of love. Similarly, the speaker of ‘Praise Song’ uses metaphor but she is exploring her love for her mother rather than romantic love. For instance: ‘You were/ sunrise to me/ rise and warm and streaming.’ The use of metaphors of natural elements suggest that to her, her love for her mother is reassuringly predictable and also necessary for the speaker to grow and flourish.

The imagery within ‘Alpine Letter’ is also powerful in presenting love. For example, the poet presents the connection between the lovers as a ‘tear…becoming sea’. This image allows the reader to understand that as their separation goes on, their longing for each other grows into a ‘sea’, something vast and wide and eternal. Alternatively, in ‘Praise Song’, imagery is used to convey the poet’s pride and love for her culture which she sees as something her mother has instilled within her as part of her identity. We are told that the speaker is nourished by ‘the fried plantain smell/ replenishing replenishing’. Here, the reference to the poet’s Caribbean identity allows the reader to understand that the food her mother provided her with helped to establish within her not only a love and appreciation for her mother but also a pride and appreciation for her cultural identity.

‘Alpine Letter’ is also structurally interesting in presenting the poet’s attitudes to romantic love. The poem is highly regular in its structure with a neat layout of 4 quatrains. Line lengths are similar and predictable, demonstrating the reassuring nature of love. Perhaps the poet is suggesting that within the predictable patterns of love, there is comfort to be found. Differently, in ‘Praise Song’, whilst there is regularity within the poem, the final stanza is shortened and separate from the main body of the writing, as though it is floating on its own: ‘Go to your wide futures you said’. The separation of this line from the poem suggests that the separation between a mother and child is inevitable, yet perhaps brutal as the separation of this line is an unexpected surprise to the reader.