

**Typical essay structure:**

- Overview: briefly say what the poem is about and some brief explanation of the context
- Main paragraph 1: beginning of poem (see below)
- Main paragraph 2: middle of poem (see below)
- Main paragraph 3: end of poem (see below)
- Conclusion: summarise how the poem explores the theme

**Success criteria for main paragraphs:**

- Answer the question
- Use a quote
- Simple explanation of quote
- Deeper analysis of quote
- Word analysis
- Effect on the reader
- Link to context



**Sentence Stems:**

- At the beginning of the poem... / The poet presents [theme] as...  
 This is shown when... / An example of this is...  
 This shows... / This suggests...  
 It may also suggest... / An alternative interpretation is...  
 The poet used... in order to... / The [metaphor etc.] ... suggests...  
 At this time... / This is typical of when the poem was written...  
 This makes the reader feel... / From this the reader may think...

**Assessment**

You will be assessed on your knowledge of a given poem (from the ones we have studied), and your ability to write analytically about it.

AO1: ideas supported by quotations;

AO2: analysis of language and structure;

AO3: linking the poem to the context in which it was written

**Terms you must know:**

- **Stanza:** a group of lines (like a paragraph in a story)
- **Rhyming couplet:** two lines together that rhyme e.g. AABB
- **Alternating couplet:** every other line rhymes e.g. ABAB
- **Speaker/ voice:** the individual who narrates the poem (not necessarily the poet)
- **Simile:** a comparison between two unlikely things in which one is described as being 'like' the other
- **Metaphor:** a comparison between two unlikely things in which one is described as if it **is** the other
- **Personification:** giving a non-living object human qualities
- **Rhythm:** the beat of the poem; often measured in syllables or the stresses of words

**Other useful terms:**

- **End stop:** when there is punctuation at the end of a line
- **Enjambment:** when there is **no** punctuation at the end of a line
- **Caesura:** when there is punctuation in the middle of a line
- **Hyperbole:** exaggeration for effect
- **Anthropomorphism:** giving animals human behaviour
- **Oxymoron:** two words together which mean opposite things

**Darkness: what it's about**

The poem explores what would happen at the end of the world, and what it would do to human behaviour.

**Darkness: context**

A volcanic eruption covered Europe in an ash cloud; many believed God had come to judge them at the end of the world.

**Rime of the Ancient Mariner: what it's about**

The Mariner kills an albatross, bringing great misfortune to the ship. They run out of supplies and get very desperate.

**Rime of the Ancient Mariner: context**

The Age of Discovery saw many voyages into uncharted areas. These were very dangerous and would take months aboard ships.

**London: what it's about**

Blake wrote the poem as a protest against all the terrible living conditions in London, and how people do nothing about it.

**London: context**

The church taught people to put up with their situation rather than expect the government to change things.

**Ozymandias: what it's about**

Ozymandias was a successful but cruel ruler, who challenged even God. Even he was unable to defeat time.

**Ozymandias: context**

The ancient Egyptians believed that pharaohs were gods in mortal form. Ramses II is believed to be the pharaoh in the poem.

**My Last Duchess: what it's about**

A Duke's wife has recently died in mysterious circumstances. He believes she had an affair – did he have her murdered?

**My Last Duchess: context**

Royalty had ruled countries for centuries, and they had great power before industrialisation. They were seen above the law.