

Warning

When examiners are asked what types of responses they enjoy marking the most, they reply those that show a spark, a personal response and engagement with the poems. They want a sense that you understand and enjoy the poems. Interestingly students often do better in the unseen section where responses are more 'fresh' and teachers are warned against 'over-teaching' the anthology poetry. We therefore give you this revision guide with some trepidation...

This guide is there to support your revision, not *be* your revision. It is deliberately not an exhaustive analysis of each and every poem. Rather it gives you some starters on which to build. For revision purposes our advice is to start with the poems themselves. Print off blank copies from the anthology. Available here:

https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/English%20Literature/2015/teaching-and-learning-materials/GCSE_Lit_Poetry_Anthology_FINAL_FOR_WEB.pdf

Read them. Read them again. Practice annotating them. Place them side by side and start making links on theme, structure, language and context. Read the revision notes. Complete essay plans and charts – always planning across, not down, so that you focus on connections (similarities and differences). Learn short quotations of words and phrases that you have something good to say about.

E.g. Breakdown of a relationship

La Belle Dame Sans Merci	Neutral Tones
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Context

The exam board wants you to refer to context. This may be the biographical context of the poet, the setting of the poem (geographical and historical), and the literary heritage which influenced it. Or it might be the prevalent social and cultural attitudes in the poem which may or may not have changed between when it was written and now – when you're reading it. The exam board does not want 'tacked on' paragraphs about context that add nothing to your understanding and appreciation of the poem. The modern day reception of a poem (i.e. your reading and understanding of it and how you relate it to your world) might be the most accessible form of context.

Also being assessed is: Making links across texts, language and structure analysis and clear written expression and essay structure. And all in 30 – 35minutes!

Good Luck – The English Department