**Poetry Analysis Task Sheet**

**Purpose**

To assess your ability to closely analyse a range of poems by three or more poets and display understanding of the comparison between the texts’ themes and stylistic features.

**Description of assessment**

* The outcome of this task is to produce 1250 words of analytical writing about a range of poems and poets. The responses will take the form of separate paragraphs. Across the range of responses you should write about at least three poets and three poems.
* At least one of the responses must be comparative: you must compare poems by two *different* poets. Compare the poems in terms of thematic concerns, form, tone and stylistic features.
* In the other responses you may choose to write about a range of poems by the *same* poet; or you may choose to analyse a single poem; or you may choose to again write comparatively about poems by different poets.
* You might also choose to write about the three poets you choose in each of the paragraphs that you write.
* Note: **this is not an essay** and therefore the ideas you explore do not require an introduction or conclusion

**Outline of the task**

* Particular aspects to consider:
  + Provide a heading for each section (preferably with a focus on the central idea, or even taking the form of a question)
  + You may write a single paragraph within the section. Develop a clear topic sentence for this paragraph: use descriptors to describe the overall theme and tone of each poem in your opening topic sentence.
  + You may also write more than one paragraph in a particular section. If so, you must have clear topic sentences for each paragraph.
  + Within your paragraphs move logically from one idea to the next.
  + In comparative paragraphs make sure that topic sentences and sub-statements include *both* texts/poets and weave your discussion of the poems throughout your paragraph, rather than discussing poems sequentially.
  + Be careful in paragraphs about single poems to have a clear focus (asking a question in the heading would assist in this) and avoid writing a sequential recount of the poem.
  + Use appropriate poetic metalanguage.
  + Use evidence and quotations to support your claims
  + You may address the poems by exploring the interpretation as affected by critical perspectives

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| *Assessment Design Criteria* |
| Knowledge and Understanding  KU1 Knowledge and understanding of ways in which ideas, perspectives, and values are represented in texts.  KU2 Knowledge and understanding of ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas.  KU3 Knowledge and understanding of the stylistic features and conventions of different text types.  Analysis  An1 Analysis of ways in which texts represent ideas, perspectives, and values.  An2 Analysis and evaluation of ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the interpretation of texts.  An3 Analysis of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks.  An4 Analysis of ways in which different critical perspectives inform interpretation.  Application  Ap1 Use of conventions, and stylistic features to create coherent texts that address the meaning and intention of the task.  Ap2 Use of evidence from texts to develop, support and justify responses.  Ap3 Use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression appropriate for purpose and audience. |

***Paragraph 1: The problem about time that all three poets present***

In their respective poems ‘The Anniversaire’, ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ and ‘Out of Time’ John Donne, John Keats and Kenneth Slessor are melancholic in their observations about the entropic and destructive nature of time. The passing of time as the subject of Donne’s poem is immediately obvious in the title, for an anniversary is an observation of an annual event, the acknowledgement of which refers to the passing of another year. In the first stanza Donne alludes to the Great Chain of Being by introducing ‘All Kings, and all their favourites’ and then declares that even those in their elevated and metaphysical positions cannot escape the consequences of time for they are drawn ‘to their destruction’ and face inevitable ‘decay’. Donne uses high modality language when exploring the outcome of this decay because humans ‘**must** leave at last in death’. The poet imagistically presents ‘two graves’ and evokes sadness, for Donne’s Christian values assert that the two lovers had initially become one and are separated again by death. Not only is it human beings that are subject to the despondent nature of time, but also ‘glory’, ‘beauties’, ‘wits’, elements that are asyndetically listed to suggest the multilayered nature of the destruction that is the consequence of time. Such destruction that affects all things is reinforced by the hyperbole Donne uses to declare that even the ‘Sun’ itself is ‘elder by a year’. Keats similarly views the factors ‘glory’, ‘beauties’ and ‘wits’ by presenting the attributes ‘beauty’, ‘love’ and ‘youth’ to be entropic. As a belittling consequence to these attributes, the poem opens and establishes a source of melancholy, for Keats declares that his ‘heart aches’ and a ‘drowsy numbness’ pains his senses. To explore the effects of time on a person’s characteristics Keats personifies them in their corporeal reality and declares despondently that ‘beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes’ or ‘new Love pine.. beyond tomorrow’ and ‘youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies’*.* He is prosaic in his description of life which he declares to be one of ‘weariness… fever... and fret’ and in this environment cognitive awareness means that ‘men sit and hear each other groan’. Keats builds an inexorable movement to the rhythm in the iambic pentameter when he observes that ‘palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs’ to emphasise the relentless nature of human suffering. Slessor uses a similar rhythmic technique when he personifies time declaring that ‘Time takes [him], drills [him], drives through bone and vein’, and it is the metaphor of time being like a knife that imagistically captures it’s violent nature. Slessor reflects this idea for he observes ‘the bony knife’ that continuously and stupidly ‘pierces’ and ‘thrusts’- violent verbs that describe the way in which ‘Time… runs [him] through’. Slessor’s high modal language adds certainty to the heartbreak of death, as he observes ‘you **must** cry farewell’. All three poets philosophically despair over the reality that human beings are mortal and time is therefore an enemy.

KU2 The student uses an understanding of the stylistic features to create a connection between the poets.

KU1 The student maintains a focus upon the central concept and reveals a detailed understanding of the nuances in the thematic concerns of the poets.

APP1 This is perhaps the most obvious example of a transition that is unclear.

KU2 throughout the response the student integrates references to techniques in a non-didactic manner so that they are naturally integrated into the line of reasoning.

KU1 The student immediately establishes a focus on a sophisticated concept.

***Paragraph 2: The various solutions that all three poets offer***

KU1 Again, there is an intelligent focus upon a central thesis that is sophisticated in nature.

All three poets concerned with the entropic nature of time provide solutions to mitigate the suffering that is the result of the human condition. Donne’s solution is that human beings are spiritual in nature, possessing both body and soul, and when the body dies the soul ‘from [its] grave remove[s]’ and goes to a place ‘there above… where nothing dwells but love’. Love in this place is infact ‘increased’ and Donne uses high modal language in the suggestion ‘wee [everyone] **shall [will]** be thoroughly blessed’ to convey the certainty of his solution. Donne believes love ‘hath no decay’ and emphasises the immortality that love and connection hold as they become transcended beyond death. He uses imagery to enhance the aftermath of death in the observation ‘bodies [go] to their graves’ evoking a melancholic tone within the poem, however, the tone drastically changes as Donne demonstrates the strong spiritual connection between two souls in the comment love can ‘add againe [be continued after death]’. In the conclusion of his poem, Donne creates a triumphant tone for he regards his solution as a sustainable one and declares defiantly that time after death can add years onto years. He and his lover will be able to successfully write ‘threescore’ because the fear of physical decay no longer exists due to the spiritual eternity which will never be destroyed as a personal belief cannot be wrong. Keats also explores a possible state of transcendence as a way of escaping the reality of time, for he suggests this state can be created through poetry. In highlighting the state of transcendence, Keats observes ‘Away! Away for I will fly… on the viewless wings of Poesy’ escaping to ‘dissolve’ and ‘forget’ the idea that the world is one of ‘weariness… fever and… fret’, therefore the sorrow that comes from time is the result of cognition. Keats reflects a tranquil environment in his fictional world where the ‘Queen-Moon is on her throne…clustered around… starry Fays’, surrounded by flora and explores the world through olfactory imagery in the observation ‘the coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine’. He creates beautiful imagery and emphasises it through lulling sounds and assonance in the remarks ‘white hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine’ and ‘fast fading violets covered up in leaves’, together strengthening the calming sensation and lyrical beauty that poetry is able to produce. His solution, however, is unsustainable for since poetry is made of words, he finally chances across one that has pejorative connotations and in using the word ‘forlorn’ a metaphorical bell forces him to return to reality. In the physical world where the ‘nightingale’, on which Keats had been meditating, flies away provoking a sense of defeat in the observation ‘Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades’. The poem ends with a series of questions reflecting the absence of reality and consequences of time in his lyrical world, for Keats asks ‘Was it a vision, or a waking dream?’ and ‘Do I wake or do I sleep?’, questions that remain unanswered with no resolution. Similarly, Slessor uses the human capacity to achieve transcendence through memories, viewing them as ‘lovely moment[s]’ from the past. Accessing these memories enables individuals to recall, lean ‘against the golden undertow’, ‘laugh’ with the moment, and once more become part of ‘the moment’s world’. In this elevated state the individual is able to become ‘fleshless and ageless, changeless and made free’ and fixed in a sweet meniscus. Slessor emphasises that the memory grasped is not affected by time, noting ‘time leaves the… moment at his back’ and that it is the human’s physical form that is affected as they survive in the present. Like Keats, Slessor’s solution is only momentarily sustainable as an individual cannot only exist in memories as memories refer to the past, instead people must live in the present even though they are subject to suffering. To reflect this idea Slessor interrupts the poem with a moment of dialogue in which his heart asks ‘Fool, would you leave this country?’ and as a consequence he is metaphorically taken back ‘by the suck of sea’ that becomes the flow of real time. Therefore, Slessor and Keats’s solution fail for the same reason: they rely on human capacity. In contrast, Donne presents a successful worldview to which no evidence can be sustained in doubt of his mindset.

AN3 There is a logical connection, in the main, between the features to which the student refers and the ideas that are presented through them.

AN3 Even though the student does separate the discussion of each of the three poets, there is an obvious attempt to explore similarities and differences.

KU3 Throughout the response the references to stylistic features are appropriately connected to poetry, revealing an insightful understanding of the text type.

AN1 As the paragraphs develop, the student analyses the ideas, developing an overarching line of reasoning that means the concepts are explored with insight.

APP1 There is not always a clear logic in the transitions between ideas. In this example, the student does not specify the tonal shift in the first sentence, and so the next sentence seems - at first glance - to suddenly shift to ‘the conclusion’ of the poem. It is this sudden shift from idea to idea that affects the cohesion of the line of reasoning throughout the response.

APP3 In the main the writing is accessible and intelligent (particularly in the choice of metalanguage), though there are occasional sentences such as this one that detract from the overall sophistication.

APP2 Throughout the response the student carefully embeds textual references that are fluent and logical.

Word count: 1236

**Knowledge and understanding**

* KU1 [Knowledge and understanding of ways in which ideas, perspectives, and values are represented in texts] The student is clearly aware of the thematic concerns of all three poets (the entropic effects of time, and the various solutions that the poets offer). Each sentence in the response reveals an understanding of the different representations of the poets’ ideas (although the line of reasoning about these points is not always clear because the transitions between the statements is not precisely managed).
* KU2 [Knowledge and understanding of ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas] The student refers to a range of stylistic elements (titles, allusions, modality, imagery, hyperbole, tone, rhythm, personification ) and interweaves these appropriately into the line of reasoning.
* KU3 [Knowledge and understanding of the stylistic features and conventions of different text types] The use of appropriate metalanguage and range of references to poetic techniques reveals a broad understanding of the text type.

**Analysis**

* AN1 [Analysis of ways in which texts represent ideas, perspectives, and values] While there are points made in this essay that indicate an awareness of concepts, the line of reasoning is not always clear and thus the response becomes, at some points, a range of observations connected to a broad focus.
* AN2 [Analysis and evaluation of ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the interpretation of texts] There are references to a range of stylistic elements, and the student attempts to connect those elements with the ideas reinforced through them. At times the references to features are not entirely justified (how is Donne’s reference to the sun an example of hyperbole?) but these are not illogical.
* AN3 [Analysis of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks] The student does observe differences in approach to the same topic (time) in three different authors and thus the thematic exploration is comparative. Structurally, however, the student separates the discussion about each of the poets and so the integration is not as fluent as it could be.

**Application**

* AP1 [Use of conventions, and stylistic features to create coherent texts that address the meaning and intention of the task] The student has managed the paragraphs so that the observations are coherent. However, the transitions between points could be more fluently developed so that the line of reasoning is more accessible.
* AP2 [Use of evidence from texts to develop, support and justify responses] The student carefully integrates appropriate references to the various poems to justify statements and these enhance the argument.
* AP3 [Use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression appropriate for purpose and audience] The style is generally sophisticated and accurate. The metalanguage, in particular, contributes to the precision of the expression.

**General Comments**

The student has an insightful grasp of the ideas explored by three poets and reveals a clear understanding of the ways in which poetic devices are used to present these ideas, using appropriate textual evidence to support these points. It is the structure of the writing that prevents the response from being in the higher A range, for the student separates the discussion of the three texts/authors, and has not worked so carefully on the transitions between ideas so that the paragraphs are, at times, constructed from a series of observations that are only loosely related. This work is on the cusp between an A and an A-.

**GRADE: A**

|  | **Knowledge and Understanding** | **Analysis** | **Application** |
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| **A** | Detailed knowledge and understanding of ways in which ideas, perspectives, and values are represented in texts.  Thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas.  Detailed knowledge and understanding of a range of stylistic features and conventions of different text types. | Perceptive analysis of the ways in which texts represent ideas, perspectives, and values.  Perceptive analysis and evaluation of the complex ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the interpretation of texts.  Perceptive analysis of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks.  Perceptive analysis of ways in which different critical perspectives inform critical interpretation. | Sophisticated use of a wide range of conventions, and/or stylistic features to create coherent texts that address the meaning and intention of the task.  Detailed and appropriate use of evidence from texts develop, support, and justify responses, with textual references incorporated fluently in discussion.  Use of precise and fluent expression, which is appropriate for audience and purpose. |
| **B** | Knowledge and understanding of a range of ways in which ideas, perspectives, and values are represented in most texts.  Knowledge and understanding of a range of ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas.  Knowledge and understanding of a range of stylistic features and conventions of different text types. | Clear analysis of the ways in which texts represent ideas, perspectives, and values.  Clear analysis and evaluation of the complex ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the reading of texts.  Clear analysis of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks.  Clear analysis of ways in which different critical perspectives inform critical interpretation. | Use of a range of conventions, and/or stylistic features to create coherent texts that address the meaning and intention of the task.  Appropriate use of evidence from texts to develop, support, and justify responses, with textual references incorporated in discussion.  Mostly accurate and fluent expression, which is appropriate for audience and purpose. |
| **C** | Knowledge and understanding of some ways in which ideas, perspectives, and values are represented in texts.  Knowledge and understanding of some ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas.  Knowledge and understanding of some of the stylistic features and conventions of different text types. | Some analysis of ways in which texts represent ideas, perspectives, and values.  Description, with some analysis and evaluation, of ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the reading of texts.  Description, with some analysis, of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks.  Some analysis of ways in which different critical perspectives inform critical interpretation. | Competent use of conventions, and/or stylistic features to create texts that address the meaning and intention of the task.  Competent use of evidence from texts to develop, support, and justify responses, with some use of textual references in discussion.  Generally fluent and clear expression, which is mostly appropriate for audience and purpose. |
| **D** | Some knowledge and restricted understanding of a narrow range of ways in which ideas and values are represented in texts.  Some knowledge and restricted understanding of a narrow range of ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas.  Some knowledge and restricted understanding of a few of the stylistic features and conventions of different text types. | Description of the ideas and values represented in texts.  Description of some ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the reading of texts.  Some description of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks.  Recognition of some ways in which different critical perspectives inform critical interpretation. | Use of some language features to create texts that address the meaning and intention of the task in a limited way.  Some use of evidence from texts to develop, support , and attempt to justify responses, with use of a narrow range of textual references.  Occasionally clear expression, which is appropriate for some audiences and purposes. |
| **E** | Simplistic knowledge and very restricted understanding of the way in which an idea or a value is represented in a text.  Limited knowledge and restricted understanding of a restricted range of stylistic features used by authors.  Limited knowledge and restricted understanding of different text types and conventions. | Reference to an idea or value represented in a text.  Limited description of a way in which a stylistic feature is used to influence the reading of a text.  Simplistic description of a connection between texts in a comparative task.  Reference to a critical perspective. | Attempted use of some language features to create texts that attempt to address the meaning and intention of the task in a limited way.  Restricted use of evidence from texts to develop and support a simple response, with minimal textual references.  Emerging development of control of expression. |