

GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE REVISION PACK

YEAR 11

This pack is designed to support your revision through reminders of exam structure, key content, key techniques and essay writing skills. You can also find many practice questions included that can be used to practise exam skills. You should also seek advice and feedback from your teacher and use this to help you.

Name.....

Tutor Group.....

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Jekyll & Hyde Characters, themes and quotations

Jekyll

1. 'He began to go wrong, wrong in the mind,' (Lanyon about Jekyll)
2. 'The large, handsome face of Dr Jekyll grew pale to the lips and there came a blackness about his eyes,'
3. 'You must suffer me to go my own dark way.'
4. 'Like some disconsolate prisoner'
5. 'Weeping like a woman or a lost soul'
6. 'Pale and shaken and half fainting, and groping before him with his hands, like a man restored for death-there stood Henry Jekyll'

Utterson

1. 'If he be Mr Hyde, I shall be Mr Seek'
2. 'God forgive us! God forgive us!'
3. "he had an approved tolerance for others"
4. "the last reputable acquaintance and the last good influence in the lives of downgoing men"
5. "Mr. Utterson the lawyer was a man of a rugged countenance, that was never lighted by a smile; cold, scanty and embarrassed"
6. "backward in sentiment; lean, long, dusty, dreary"
7. "somehow lovable"

Horror/Fear/Setting

1. 'nocturnal city,'
2. 'The figure in these two phases haunted the lawyer all night,'
3. labyrinths of lamp lighted city'
4. 'Like a district of some city in a nightmare,'
5. 'It was a wild, cold seasonable night of March'
6. "fog rolled over" and "dismal quarter of Soho"
7. "dingy windowless structure"
8. "sordid negligence"
9. "fog slept above the drowned city"

Violence/Crime

1. "Little man trampled calmly over the child's body...it was hellish to see"
2. "bones were audibly shattered"
3. "I mauled the unresisting body, tasting delight from every blow"
4. "clubbed him to the earth"

Hyde

1. 'Black, sneering coolness/like Satan'
2. 'The other snarled in a savage laugh'
3. 'Stamping his foot/broke out of all bounds and clubbed him to the earth,'
4. "ape-like fury"
5. 'A murderer's autograph'
6. "like some damned Juggernaut"
7. "mere animal terror"
8. "pale and dwarfish"
9. "haunting sense of deformity"
10. "like a rat"
11. "some creature"

Lanyon

1. He had his death warrant written legibly upon his face,'
2. 'Lanyon declared himself a doomed man'
3. "my soul sickened at it...I must die"
4. "O God!" I screamed, and "O God!" again and again; for there before my eyes—pale and shaken, and half fainting"

Duality

1. 'The two hands are in many points identical,' said by Guest
2. 'If it was my master, why had he a mask upon his face?' said by Poole
3. 'Man is not truly one but truly two'
4. 'I felt younger, lighter, happier in body..'
5. 'I had gone to bed Henry Jekyll, I had awakened Edward Hyde,'
6. "my devil had been long caged, he came out roaring"
7. "all human beings are commingled out of good and evil"
8. "If I am the chief of sinners, I am the chief of sufferers"
9. "disconsolate prisoner"
10. "strip off these lendings and spring headlong into a sea of liberty"

Science Vs Religion

1. 'The compound changed to a dark purple...watery green'
2. 'To be more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to my original evil; and the thought, in that moment, braced and delighted me like wine.'
3. "Pious work...annotated with startling blasphemies"
4. "I let my brother go to Cain's heresy"
5. "hid them with a sense of shame"

Key Context:

Progression & Technological Advances in the 19th Century

- The Victorian era, named for Queen Victoria, who ruled England for most of the nineteenth century, was a time of unprecedented technological progress and an age in which European nations carved up the world with their empires.
- By the end of the century, however, many people were beginning to call into question the ideals of progress and civilization that had defined the era, and a growing sense of pessimism and decline pervaded artistic circles.
- The Victorian era brought a great deal of technological progress and the advancement of European power throughout the world. However, during the height of Stevenson's writing at the end of the nineteenth century, artists, writers and intellectuals were beginning to move away from the celebration of "progress" that had so defined the times, and were questioning the relevance and permanence of the global domination of Western culture.
- As a part of this increasingly pessimistic group of writers, Stevenson based this book on his own experiences.

Violence & Crime in the Victorian Era

- The novel begins on a London street that proves to act as central to much of the novel's action. The descriptions of the city vary, from idyllic and majestic to dangerous, mysterious and dark. In Victorian London, the modern city began to powerfully establish itself.
- However, London soon became a place of fear and terror when the 'Jack the Ripper' murders or 'Whitechapel murderer' plagued the streets of London; brutally murdering lower class women.

Nature vs the Supernatural

- Closely linked to the Victorians' increasing sense of the conflict between science and religion was the idea that humans have a dual nature. On the one hand, they saw the calm, rational, everyday normality of family life and employment; on the other, fantasies, nightmares, anger and violence. It was the explainable versus the inexplicable; the natural versus the *supernatural*; good versus evil. This is the duality the novel explores.
- The notorious *Jack the Ripper* murders occurred in London in 1888. In the minds of the Victorians, they underlined the Jekyll and Hyde duality of human nature, especially as there was discussion about the murderer being highly educated, or even of royal birth.

Science vs Religion

- In 1859, when Stevenson was nine years old, Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species*. This book became famous for introducing the *Theory of Evolution* to the public. Many people saw it as an attack on religion, because the book made it impossible to believe that God created the world in seven days.
- Darwin put forward the theory that all life, including humans, has evolved from more *primitive* forms.
- The book's release came at a time when many people saw science and a belief in religion and the supernatural as being at odds with each another. A lot felt they had to choose between the two. And many believed that science had become dangerous and was meddling in matters which only God had control over. This is clearly embodied by Jekyll in the novel.

Jekyll & Hyde – the basic plot outlined in 6 bullet points:

1. Dr. Jekyll's lawyer Mr. Utterson takes an immediate disliking to Jekyll's new friend Hyde, whom Jekyll has written into his will.
2. Hyde has been seen abusing people in public and is a suspect in the murder of an old man named Sir Danvers Carew.
3. Mr Utterson takes it upon himself to find out the truth about Hyde and his 'influence' over his friend Jekyll.
4. When Jekyll's friend Dr Lanyon dies, as a result of the shock of seeing Jekyll transform into Hyde - Utterson finds a sealed letter that is only to be opened in the event of Jekyll's death.
5. After finding Dr. Jekyll dead in his laboratory, Utterson opens the letter and learns the horrible truth.
6. The truth: Dr. Jekyll had invented a drug that allowed his split personality, Mr. Hyde, to take control of Jekyll's body, changing his entire appearance and personality. The evil Mr. Hyde soon became too powerful, and Jekyll was forced to kill himself to stop Hyde.

Themes:

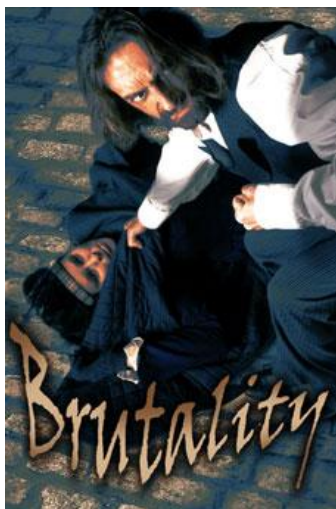
1. Duality 2. Urban Terror/Fear 3. Crime/Violence 4. Science vs Religion 5. Morality 6. Secrecy/Deceit 7. Reputation/Class

Contextual information about Victorian society and literature

Context	Links to the novel
<p>Gothic horror included the following key features: mystery, suspense and unease, horror and violence, the supernatural, isolation, insanity, pathetic fallacy and tense atmospheres</p>	
<p>Crime in the Victorian Era In the 1850s and early 1860s there were panics about street robbery and most offenders were male and came from the working class. Petty crimes, such as pick-pocketing and food-snatching, were regular, but assault and violent crime (crimes shedding a lot of blood) were unusual.</p>	
<p>There was a clear division between rich and poor during the 19th century: status and wealth were key parts of Victorian life</p>	
<p>Important scientific discoveries were made. For example, the introduction of antiseptics in 1867. It was also used in different ways: a form of entertainment involved 'spectacles' where paranormal events, such as hypnotism, communication with the dead, ghost conjuring and the like, were carried out to the delight of crowds and participants.</p>	
<p>Progress in the Victorian era: most of the nineteenth century was a time of unprecedented technological progress and an age in which European nations carved up the world with their empires. Victorian England's secret attraction to allegedly savage non-Western cultures, even as Europe claimed superiority over them. As the Western world came in contact with other peoples and ways of life, it found aspects of these cultures within itself, and both desired and feared to indulge them.</p>	

On the next few pages, you will find chapter summaries (as found on BBC Bitesize). Highlight the key points and write which theme is present in each chapter.

Chapter 1 - Story of the Door



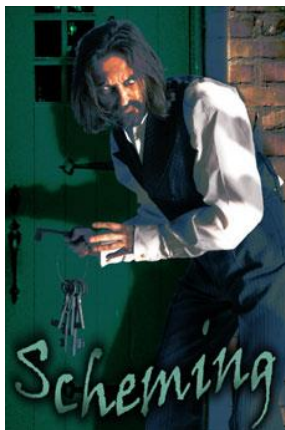
Utterson and Enfield are out for a walk when they pass a strange-looking door (the entrance to Dr Jekyll's laboratory). Enfield recalls a story involving the door. In the early hours of one winter morning, he says, he saw a man trampling on a young girl. He pursued the man and brought him back to the scene of the crime. (The reader later learns that the man is Mr Hyde.)

A crowd gathered and, to avoid a scene, the man offered to pay the girl compensation. This was accepted, and he opened the door with a key and re-emerged with some money and a large cheque.

Utterson is very interested in the case and asks whether Enfield is certain Hyde used a key to open the door. Enfield is sure he did.

Themes:

Chapter 2 - Search for Mr Hyde



That evening the lawyer, Utterson, is troubled by what he has heard. He takes the will of his friend Dr Jekyll from his safe. It contains a worrying instruction: in the event of Dr Jekyll's disappearance, all his possessions are to go to Mr Hyde.

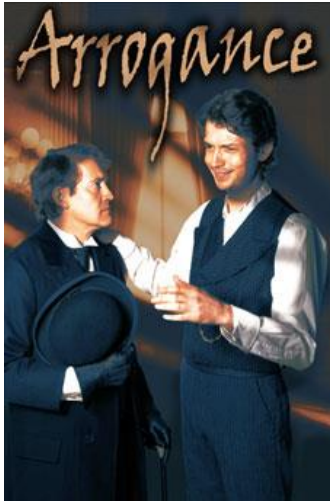
Utterson decides to visit Dr Lanyon, an old friend of his and Dr Jekyll's. Lanyon has never heard of Hyde, and not seen Jekyll for ten years. That night Utterson has terrible nightmares.

He starts watching the door (which belongs to Dr Jekyll's old laboratory) at all hours, and eventually sees Hyde unlocking it. Utterson is shocked by the sense of evil coming from him.

Utterson goes next door to warn his friend, Jekyll, against Hyde, but is told by the servant, Poole, that Jekyll is out and the servants have all been instructed by Jekyll to obey Hyde.

Utterson is worried that Hyde may kill Jekyll to benefit from the will.

Themes:



Chapter 3 - Dr Jekyll Was Quite at Ease

Two weeks later, following a dinner party with friends at Jekyll's house, Utterson stays behind to talk to him about the will.

Jekyll laughs off Utterson's worries, comparing them to Lanyon's 'hidebound' (conventional and unadventurous) attitude to medical science. The reader now sees why Lanyon and Jekyll have fallen out, and starts to understand that Jekyll's behaviour has become unusual.

Utterson persists with the subject of the will. Jekyll hints at a strange relationship between himself and Hyde. Although he trusts Utterson, Jekyll refuses to reveal the details. He asks him, as his lawyer not his friend, to make sure the will is carried out. He reassures him that 'the moment I choose, I can be rid of Mr Hyde'

Themes:

Chapter 4 - The Carew Murder Case



Nearly a year later, an elderly gentleman is brutally clubbed to death in the street by Hyde. The murder is witnessed by a maid who recognises Hyde.

A letter addressed to Utterson is found on the body and the police contact him. He recognises the murder weapon as the broken half of a walking cane he gave to Jekyll years earlier. When he hears that the murderer is Hyde, he offers to lead the police to his house.

They are told that Hyde has not been at home for two months. But when they search the house they find the other half of the murder weapon and signs of a hasty exit.

Themes:

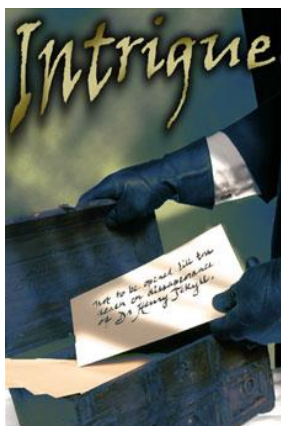
Chapter 5 - Incident of the Letter

Utterson goes to Jekyll's house and finds him 'looking deadly sick'. He asks whether he is hiding Hyde. Jekyll assures him he will never see or hear of Hyde again. He shows Utterson a letter from Hyde that indicates this.

Utterson asks Guest, his head clerk, to compare the handwriting on the letter to that on an invitation from Jekyll. There is a resemblance between the two, though with a different slope. Utterson believes Jekyll has forged the letter in Hyde's handwriting to cover his escape.

Themes:

Chapter 6 - Remarkable Incident of Dr Lanyon



The police cannot find Hyde. Coincidentally, Jekyll seems happier and, for two months, he socialises again.

Suddenly, however, he appears depressed and will not see Utterson. Utterson visits Dr Lanyon to discuss their friend's health, but finds Lanyon on his death-bed.

Lanyon refuses to discuss Jekyll who, he hints, is the cause of his illness.

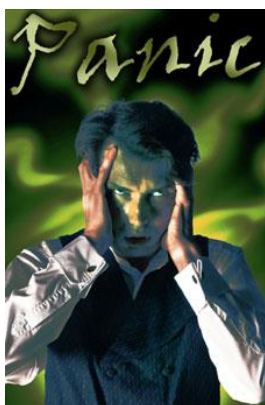
Trying to find out what has happened, Utterson writes to Jekyll. He receives a reply which suggests Jekyll has fallen into a very disturbed state and talks of being 'under a dark influence'.

Lanyon dies and leaves a letter for Utterson in an envelope marked 'not to be opened till the death or disappearance of Dr Henry Jekyll'. Utterson, being a good lawyer, locks it away unopened in his safe.

Utterson tries to revisit Jekyll several times, but his servant, Poole, says he is living in isolation and will not see anyone.

Themes:

Chapter 7 - Incident at the Window

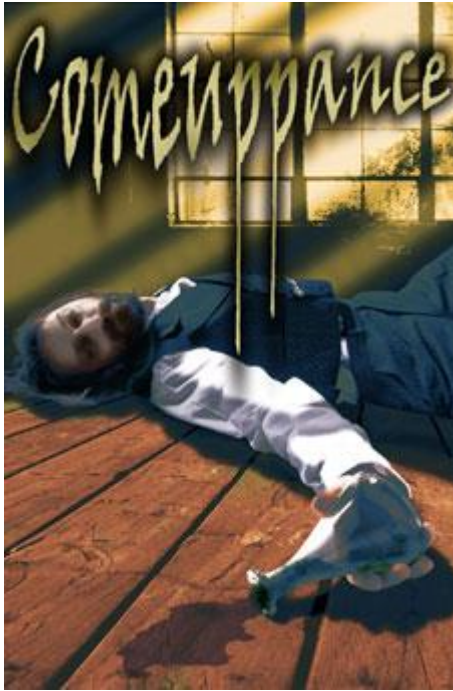


Utterson and Enfield are taking one of their walks, as at the opening of the book. They pass Jekyll's window and see him looking like a prisoner in solitary confinement. Utterson calls out to him and Jekyll replies, but his face suddenly freezes in an expression of 'abject terror and despair'.

The change in Jekyll's expression is so sudden and horrible it 'froze the very blood of the two gentlemen below', and they depart in silence.

Themes:

Chapter 8 - The Last Night



One evening, Jekyll's servant comes to Utterson and asks him to come to Jekyll's house. They go to the laboratory, but the door is locked. The voice from inside does not sound like Jekyll's and both men believe it is Hyde.

Poole says the voice has for days been crying out for a particular chemical to be brought, but the chemicals given have been rejected as 'not pure'.

Poole says that earlier he caught a glimpse of a person in the lab who looked scarcely human.

They break down the door and inside find a body, twitching. In its hand are the remains of a test tube (or vial). The body is smaller than Jekyll's but wearing clothes that would fit him.

On the table is a will dated that day which leaves everything to Utterson, with Hyde's name crossed out. There is also a package containing Jekyll's 'confession' and a letter asking Utterson to read Dr Lanyon's letter which he left after his death ([see Chapter 6](#)) and is now in Utterson's safe.

Utterson tells Poole he will return before midnight, when he has read all the documents.

Themes:

Chapter 9 - Dr Lanyon's Narrative



Chapter 9 lists the contents of Dr Lanyon's letter. It tells of how Lanyon received a letter from Jekyll asking him to collect a drawer containing chemicals, a vial and a notebook from Jekyll's laboratory and to give it to a man who would call at midnight.

Lanyon says he was curious, especially as the book contained some strange entries.

At midnight a man appears. He is small and grotesque, wearing clothes that are too large for him.

The man offers to take the chemicals away, or to drink the potion.

Lanyon accepts and, before his very eyes, Hyde transforms into none other than Dr Jekyll.

In horror at what he has witnessed, Lanyon becomes seriously ill.

Themes:

Chapter 10 - Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case



Jekyll tells the story of how he turned into Hyde.

It began as scientific curiosity in the duality of human nature (or the good and evil), and his attempt to destroy the 'darker self'. Eventually, however, he became addicted to the character of Hyde, who increasingly took over and destroyed him.

The novel does not return to Utterson who, at the end of Chapter 8, was going to return to Jekyll's house.

Themes:

Article: Man is not truly one, but truly two': duality in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

- Article by: [Greg Buzwell](#)
- Themes: [Fin de siècle](#), [The Gothic](#), [London](#)

Curator Greg Buzwell considers duality in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, exploring how the novel engages with contemporary debates about evolution, degeneration, consciousness, homosexuality and criminal psychology.

[Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*](#) (1886) is a late-Victorian variation on ideas first raised in Mary Shelley's [Frankenstein](#) (1818). Stevenson's monster, however, is not artificially created from stitched-together body parts, but rather emerges fully formed from the dark side of the human personality. In the story Dr Jekyll, an admired member of the professional Victorian middle-classes, conducts a series of scientific experiments which unleash from his own psyche the 'bestial' and 'ape-like' Mr Hyde (ch. 10). Gothic fiction had examined the idea of the sinister *alter ego* or double before on many occasions but Stevenson's genius with *Jekyll and Hyde* was to show the dual nature not only of one man but also of society in general. Throughout the story, respectability is doubled with degradation; abandon with restraint; honesty with duplicity. Even London itself has a dual nature, with its respectable streets existing side-by-side with areas notorious for their squalor and violence.

Evolution and degeneration

Viewed on a simple level, Dr Jekyll is a good man, much admired in his profession. Mr Hyde, meanwhile, is evil. He is a murderer; a monster who tramples upon a small girl simply

because she happens to be in his way. On a deeper level, however, the comparison is not merely between good and evil but between evolution and degeneration. Throughout the narrative Mr Hyde's physical appearance provokes disgust. He is described as 'ape-like', 'troglodytic' and 'hardly human' (ch. 2). As Mr Enfield, a well-known man about town and distant relative of Jekyll's friend Mr Utterson, observes 'There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable' (ch. 1). Some 15 years before *Jekyll and Hyde*, Charles Darwin had published *The Descent of Man* (1871), a book in which he concluded that humankind had 'descended from a hairy, tailed quadruped' which was itself 'probably derived from an ancient marsupial animal'.^[1] Going back even further, Darwin hypothesised that these stages of evolution had been preceded, in a direct line, by 'some amphibian-like creature, and this again from some fish-like animal'. Such a nightmarish biological lineage that denied the specialness of humans, feeds into many late-Victorian Gothic novels. Dracula's ability to transform into the shape of a wolf or a bat is one example, while Dr Moreau's experiments upon the hapless animals on his island as he attempts a barbaric form of accelerated evolution is another. Stevenson's portrayal of Hyde works in a similar fashion. Mr Hyde is regarded as physically detestable but perhaps only because he subconsciously reminds those he encounters of their own distant evolutionary inheritance. When Dr Jekyll's medical colleague, Dr Lanyon, witnesses Hyde transform back into Jekyll, the knowledge that the ugly, murderous beast exists within the respectable Victorian scientist sends him first to his sick-bed, and then to an early grave.

Double lives and misleading appearances

The depiction of Dr Jekyll's house was possibly based on the residence of famous surgeon John Hunter (1728-1793), whose respectable and renowned house in Leicester Square in the late 18th century also had a secret. In order to teach and to gain knowledge about human anatomy, Hunter required human cadavers, many of them supplied by 'resurrection men' who robbed fresh graves. These were brought, usually at night, to the back entrance of the house, which had a drawbridge leading to the preparation rooms and lecture-theatre

The front aspect of Dr Jekyll's house presents a 'great air of wealth and comfort' (ch. 2). Meanwhile Mr Hyde, soon after we first encounter him, is seen entering a building which displays an air of 'prolonged and sordid negligence' (ch.1). The twist is that the reputable front and the rundown rear form two sides of the same property. Stevenson is not only making the point that the respectable and the disreputable frequently exist in close proximity, but also that a respectable façade is no guarantee against dark secrets lurking within. In a similar fashion, the seemingly decent Mr Enfield, a friend of the lawyer Mr Utterson, first encounters Hyde while 'coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o'clock of a black winter morning' (ch. 1). Exactly where Mr Enfield has been, and what he has been up to, are never made clear but it sounds far from innocent. Throughout the book the people and events that initially seem innocent and straightforward become dark and sinister when viewed more closely.

Double-consciousness

Just as the differing appearances of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde play upon the theories emerging from Charles Darwin's work, so their differing personalities explore contemporary debates about moral behaviour and the possible plurality of human consciousness. By literally splitting the consciousness of Dr Jekyll into two – the decent side that attempts, and largely

succeeds, in suppressing desires that run contrary to the dictates of society; and the amoral side that runs riot in an attempt to gratify animal desire – Stevenson explores in a heightened fashion the battles played out in every one of us. As Dr Jekyll observes ‘I saw that, of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both’ (ch. 10). Through Hyde, the respectable Dr Jekyll is freed from the restraints imposed by society – ‘my devil had been long caged, he came out roaring’ (ch. 10). In his confession at the end of the book, Jekyll observes that, ultimately, he will have to choose between being Dr Jekyll or Mr Hyde. To become the latter would mean giving up on noble aspirations and being ‘forever despised and friendless’. (ch. 10) To become Jekyll, however, means giving up the sensual and disreputable appetites he can indulge as Hyde. In spite of the curious circumstances of his own case it is, as the melancholy Jekyll observes, a struggle and debate ‘as old and commonplace as man’ (ch. 10).

<http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/duality-in-robert-louis-stevensons-strange-case-of-dr-jekyll-and-mr-hyde>

Article: Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Barbara T. Gates, Alumni Distinguished Professor of English, University of Delaware

Such surrogation can be distinguished from dissociation, a more dramatic type of doubling represented in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). Jekyll and Hyde are like a dual personality, a single entity dissociated into two. They have become what Otto Rank calls opposing selves. According to Rank, the double in primitive societies is conceived of as a shadow, representing both the living person and the dead. This shadow survives the self, insuring immortality and thus functioning as a kind of guardian angel. In modern civilizations, however, the shadow becomes an omen of death to the self-conscious person. Doubles become opposites and demons rather than guardian angels (Rank, 71-76). This is particularly true in inhibited or self-restrained modern societies like that of Victorian Britain.

In *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Hyde thus becomes Jekyll's demonic, monstrous self. Certainly Stevenson presents him as such from the outset. Hissing as he speaks, Hyde has "a kind of black sneering coolness . . . like Satan" (32). He also strikes those who witness him as being deformed — "pale and dwarfish" (SC, 40) and simian like. He is both monster and shadow *par excellence* — another self not only for Jekyll but for all the presumably upright Victorian bachelors of the story who perceive his deformities and for whom he becomes both devil and death knell. The Strange Cafe unfolds with the search by these men to uncover the secret of Hyde. As the narrator/lawyer, Utterson, says, "If he be Mr. Hyde . . . I shall be Mr. Seek" (SC, 38), and so will they all. Utterson begins his quest with a cursory search for his own demons. Fearing for Jekyll because the good doctor has so strangely altered his will in favor of Hyde, Utterson examines his own conscience, "and the

lawyer, scared by the thought, brooded a while in his own past, groping in all the corners of memory, lest by chance some Jack-in-the-Box of an old iniquity should leap to light there" (SC, 42). Like so many eminent Victorians, Utterson lives a mildly double life and feels mildly apprehensive about it. An ugly dwarf like Hyde may jump out from his own boxed self, but for him such art unlikely creature is still envisioned as a toy. Although, from the beginning Hyde fills him with a distaste for life (SC, 40, not until the final, fatal night, after he storms the cabinet, can Utterson conceive of the enormity of Jekyll's second self. Only then does he realize that "he was looking on the body of a self-destructor" (SC, 70); Jekyll and Hyde are one in death as they must have been in life.

Poole, Jekyll's servant, and Lanyon, his medical colleague, are even more incredulous. When Poole sees Jekyll/Hyde in his final form, he thinks he sees his master with a "mask" on his face: "that thing was not [118/119] my master and there's the truth" (SC, 66). Again, Poole's "thing" is monkey-like and dwarfish, and it weeps "like a woman or a lost soul" (SC, 69). When Poole and Utterson hear Jekyll on the opposite side of the door that last night, they react like Ralph Nickleby's would-be rescuers. The voice they hear sounds like something "other," not like the person they know. Lanyon, alas, never survives to that final night. An earlier party to the knowledge that Jekyll and Hyde are one, he has already lost his life to that secret. A man who believes in rationalism and moral rectitude, Lanyon simply cannot adapt to the truths uncovered in the revelation of Hyde: improbability and "utter moral turpitude" (SC, 80). He sinks slowly into death, his body following the lead of his "sickened" soul. His too is a kind of suicide, a death permitted, if not willed. Lanyon simply cannot accommodate himself to the horror of Jekyll unveiled.

And neither can Jekyll himself, who is a suicide, as his name indicates ('Je' for the French 'I'; 'kyll' for 'kill'). His double is killing him even in the early stages of their association, when he believes that he can with impunity rid himself of Hyde at any time. Initially, Jekyll does not care whether or not Hyde survives: "I cannot say that I care what becomes of Hyde; I am quite done with him" (SC, 52). But as his opposing selves prove inextricably bound, Jekyll becomes "careless" of life itself (SC, 97). He knows he risks death in taking his drug, but he does so quite deliberately. If not uppermost in his mind, suicide lurks there all the same. Jekyll often uses telling language, words like "I had come to a fatal cross roads" (SC, 85). Yet his Hyde-self totally fears death. As Jekyll becomes "occupied by one thought: the horror of my other self" (SC, 95), he simultaneously delights in realizing he has the power of death over Hyde. On the other hand, Jekyll is fascinated by Hyde's "wonderful" love of life and remarks, "when I know how he fears my power to cut him off by suicide, I find it in my heart to pity him" (SC, 96). These vacillations continue until the cabinet door is forced — and with it Jekyll/Hyde's nearly involuntary suicide.

Through Jekyll/Hyde's equivocal attitudes toward self-murder, Stevenson leaves the mystery of his tale in place, much as Le Fanu did. Because all of Stevenson's characters are wanting in self-knowledge, they ultimately fail to understand the links between duality, demons, and death. Stevenson's readers are therefore forced to try to solve the mystery of the strange case. More than Le Fanu, however, Stevenson leads us in this attempt. For even *in extremis*, his Jekyll fears exposure more than death. This is why he finally kills himself when the door is forced. Hyde must be hidden if it takes death to hide him, and Jekyll must ultimately be his own murderer to avoid full disclosure of the [119/120] duality. Here Stevenson is not only revealing human nature's deeply intertwined double nature; he is also

castigating Victorian hypocrisy. The kind of double life that characters in this book lead is not only false but suicidal. As Stevenson says in his essay "Lay Morals": "We should not live alternately with our opposing tendencies in continual see-saw of passion and disgust, but seek some path on which the tendencies shall no longer oppose, but serve each other to common end." (Osbourne, vol. 24, 208) To behave otherwise, his tale implies, is to court the death of authenticity, the loss of one's self. If altruism and bestiality are both embedded in human nature, one must not only know this rationally as did Jekyll, but must live comfortably with this knowledge.

Many of Stevenson's contemporaries did not live so, nor did they like the link with suicide that Stevenson's story forged. John Addington Symonds wrote Stevenson that one "ought to bring more of distinct belief in the resources of human nature, more faith, more sympathy with our frailty than you have done.... The scientific cast of the allegory will act as an incentive to moral self-murder with those who perceive the allegory's profundity." (qtd. in Steuart, II, 83) But Stevenson was nonetheless acting as a moralist. His "shilling shocker," conceived in a dream and written in a white heat, captured both his own deepest divisions and insights into the callous folly of late-Victorian hypocrisy. Stevenson had himself considered suicide at least three times and yet persisted through ill health to natural death.:(34) Far from counselling "moral self-murder," his dark story of monstrous alter egos was counselling integration. Far from starting another Werther-craze, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* pioneered as a modern admonition of blind, self-destructive behavior. Stevenson's fictional lawyers and scientists show dangerous second sides because they have not persisted in self-knowledge. His fictional workers, like the butler, Poole, see masks in place of the "horrors" that their presumed betters have become because they have opted for distorted vision over clear-sightedness.

<http://www.victorianweb.org/books/suicide/06e.html>

Key J and H Quotes

Story of the Door

'Mr Utterson, the lawyer,' *the noun 'lawyer' shows that Utterson is...*

'Counted them the chief jewel of each week,' *this metaphor shows that Utterson and Enfield regard their walks as..*

'Two doors from one corner,' *the number 'two' highlights that the theme of duality is even reflected in the contrasting settings..*

'Showed no window/was blistered and distained'

'Tramps slouched in the recess/the schoolboy tried his knife on the mouldings'

'All as empty as a church' *this simile..*

'It wasn't like a man, it was like some damned Juggernaut'

'Black, sneering coolness/like Satan'

'The more it looks like Queer St, the less I ask,' *this links into the theme of secrecy and keeping up appearances in society as..* **Enfield**

'He must be deformed somewhere, he gives a strong feeling of deformity,' **Enfield**

'I am ashamed of my long tongue. Let us make a bargain never to refer to this again.' **Enfield**

Search for Mr Hyde

'He began to go wrong, wrong in the mind,' **Lanyon about Jekyll**

'Still he was digging at the problem,' the verb 'digging' implies that Utterson is trying to solve the mystery even in his sleep.

'He would be aware of a great field of lamps in a nocturnal city,'

'The figure in these two phases haunted the lawyer all night,'

'Glide more stealthily, more swiftly'

'Through wider labyrinths of lamp lighted city'

'And still the figure had no face/melted before his eyes'

'If he be Mr Hyde, I shall be Mr Seek' **Utterson**

'Mr Hyde shrank back with a hissing intake of the breath'

'The other snarled in a savage laugh'

'My Hyde has a key/ we all have orders to obey him' **Poole**

Dr Jekyll was Quite at Ease

'A large, well-made, smooth faced man of fifty, with something of a slyish cast perhaps..' **Jekyll**

'The large, handsome face of Dr Jekyll grew pale to the lips and there came a blackness about his eyes,'

'The moment I chose, I can be rid of Mr Hyde'

'I don't ask that,' pleaded Jekyll

The Carew Murder Case

'Nearly a year later..'

'Maid-servant...had gone upstairs to bed about eleven'

'She became aware of an aged and beautiful gentlemen with white hair..'

'All of a sudden he broke out in a great flame of anger' **Hyde**

'Stamping his foot/broke out of all bounds and clubbed him to the earth,'

'With ape like fury he was trampling his victim under foot,'

'Hailing down a storm of blows under which the bones were audibly shattered,'

'A great chocolate covered pall lowered over Heaven'

'The fog would be broken up and a haggard shaft of daylight would glance in between the swirling wreaths,'

'Like a district of some city in a nightmare,'

'Dingy Street/gin palace/ragged children huddled in the doorways,'

'He had never been photographed'

'That was the haunting sense of unexpressed deformity which the fugitive impressed his beholders,'

Incident of the Letter

'Close up to the warmth, sat Dr Jekyll, looking deadly sick

'The doctor shuddered'

'Utterson I swear to God,' cried the doctor, 'I swear to God..'

'He did not like his friend's feverish manner,' **Utterson about Jekyll**

'The letter was written in an odd, upright hand,'

'A murderer's autograph'

'Guest's eyes brightened..'

'It is an odd hand' **Guest**

'The two hands are in many points identical,' **Guest**

'Henry Jekyll forge for a murderer!' **Utterson**

Remarkable Incident of Dr Lanyon

'A new life began for Dr Jekyll'

He had his death warrant written legibly upon his face,' **Lanyon**

'Lanyon declared himself a doomed man'

'You must suffer me to go my own dark way.' **Jekyll**

'The packet slept in the inmost corner of his private safe,' **Uttersson putting aside Lanyon's dying letter.**

'He preferred to speak to Poole upon the doorstep, rather than to be admitted into the house of voluntary bondage,' **Uttersson about Jekyll**

Incident at the Window

'I am uneasy about poor Jekyll,' **Uttersson**

'Like some disconsolate prisoner, Uttersson saw Jekyll'

'I am very low Uttersson...very low,' **Jekyll**

'The smile was struck out of his face and succeeded by an expression of such abject terror and despair,'

'In silence'

'They were both pale, and there was an answering horror in their eyes,'

'God forgive us! God forgive us! Said Mr Uttersson

The Last Night

'I think there's been foul play,' said Poole hoarsely

'It was a wild, cold seasonable night of March'

'The wind made talking difficult and flecked the blood into the face'

'And about the hearth, the whole of the servants, men and women, stood huddled together like a flock of sheep.'

'A voice answered from within,' **Jekyll the use of the word 'voice' instead of 'Dr Jekyll' makes us question**

'Is a thing that cries to Heaven,' **Poole about Jekyll**

'This is a very strange tale Poole; this is a rather wild tale my man,' **Uttersson to Poole**

'If it was my master, why had he a mask upon his face?' **Poole about Jekyll**

'If it was my master, why did he cry out like a rat and run from me?' **Poole about Jekyll**

'I give you my bible word it was Mr Hyde' **Poole**

'Once I heard it weeping..' Weeping like a woman or a lost soul,' **Poole**

'Right in the midst there lay a body of a man sorely contorted and still twitching. They drew near on tiptoe, turned it on its back, and beheld the face of Edward Hyde.'

Dr Lanyon's Narrative

'Upon the reading of this letter, I made sure my colleague was insane,' **Lanyon**

'The phial...might have been about full of a blood red liquor'

'The more I reflected, the more I became convinced that I was dealing with a case of cerebral disease'

Lanyon

'Have you got it,' he cried 'Have you got it?' **Hyde**

'I put him back, conscious of his touch of a certain icy pang along his blood,' **Lanyon**

'The compound changed to a dark purple...watery green'

'Your sight shall be blasted by a prodigy to stagger the unbelief of Satan.' **Hyde**

'Pale and shaken and half fainting, and groping before him with his hands, like a man restored for death-there stood Henry Jekyll' **Lanyon**

'The creature who crept into my house that night..' **Lanyon**

Henry Jekyll's Full Statement

'Though so profound a double dealer, I was in no sense a hypocrite; both sides of me were in dead earnest,' **Jekyll**

'Man is not truly one but truly two' **Jekyll**

'That in the agonising womb of consciousness these polar twins should be continually struggling'

Jekyll

'The most racking pains succeeded: a grinding in the bones, deadly nausea and a horror of the spirit,'

Jekyll

'I felt younger, lighter, happier in body..' **Jekyll**

'To be more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to my original evil; and the thought, in that moment, braced and delighted me like wine.' **Jekyll**

'Edward Hyde, alone, in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil,' **Jekyll**

'I had been out for one of my adventures..' **Jekyll**

'I had gone to bed Henry Jekyll, I had awakened Edward Hyde,' **Jekyll**

'Instantly the spirit of hell awoke in me and raged' **Jekyll**

'The powers of Hyde seem to have grown with the sickliness of Jekyll' **Jekyll**

'That child of hell had nothing human' **Jekyll about Hyde**

'Will Hyde die upon the scaffold? Or will he find the courage to release himself at the last moment? God knows; I am careless; this is my true hour of death,' **Jekyll**

Example Exam Question

Section B: The 19th-century novel

Read the following extract from chapter 2 and answer the question that follows.

Mr Utterson has been looking for Mr Hyde and meets him for the first time.

"If he be Mr. Hyde," he had thought, "I shall be Mr. Seek."

And at last his patience was rewarded. It was a fine dry night; frost in the air; the streets as clean as a ballroom floor; the lamps, unshaken, by any wind, drawing a regular pattern of light and shadow. By ten o'clock, when the shops were closed, the by-street was very solitary and, in spite of the low growl of London from all round, very silent. Small sounds carried far; domestic sounds out of the houses were clearly audible on either side of the roadway; and the rumour of the approach of any passenger preceded him by a long time. Mr. Utterson had been some minutes at his post, when he was aware of an odd, light footstep drawing near. In the course of his nightly patrols, he had long grown accustomed to the quaint effect with which the footfalls of a single person, while he is still a great way off, suddenly spring out distinct from the vast hum and clatter of the city. Yet his attention had never before been so sharply and decisively arrested; and it was with a strong, superstitious prevision of success that he withdrew into the entry of the court.

The steps drew swiftly nearer, and swelled out suddenly louder as they turned the end of the street. The lawyer, looking forth from the entry, could soon see what manner of man he had to deal with. He was small and very plainly dressed, and the look of him, even at that distance, went somehow strongly against the watcher's inclination. But he made straight for the door, crossing the roadway to save time; and as he came, he drew a key from his pocket like one approaching home.

Mr. Utterson stepped out and touched him on the shoulder as he passed. "Mr. Hyde, I think?"

Starting with this extract, how does Stevenson present Mr Utterson as rational and reserved?

Write about:

- how Stevenson presents Mr Utterson in this extract
- how Stevenson presents Mr Utterson as a in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Romeo and Juliet Revision

Romeo

1. O brawling love! O loving hate! (Act One Scene One – Love sick Rosaline)
2. Under love's heavy burden do I sink. (Act One Scene Four – love sick Rosaline)
3. O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright! (Act One Scene Five – about Juliet)
4. This Holy shrine (Act 1 scene 5 – about Juliet)
5. Juliet is the sun (Act 2 Scene 2)
6. Good Capulet, which name I tender as dearly as mine own (Act 3 Scene 1 Said to Tybalt)
7. I am fortune's fool (Act 3 scene 1 after Mercutio and Tybalt's death)
8. Thus with a kiss I die (Act 5 scene 3)

Juliet

1. "It is an honour I dream not of" (Act 1 sc 3 – when Lady Capulet is trying to arrange a suitor for Juliet at the party)
2. "Palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss" (Act 1 scene 5)
3. My only love sprung from my only hate! (act 1 scene 5)
4. "Deny thy father and refuse thy name" (Act 2 scene 2)
5. "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet." (act 2 scene 2)
6. "parting is such sweet sorrow" (act 2 scene 2)
7. Come, night, come Romeo (act 3 scene 2)
8. O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face! (act 3 scene 2)
9. O happy dagger (Act 5 scene 3)

Mercutio

8. "if love be rough with you, be rough with love: prick love for pricking, and you beat love down." (Act 1 Scene 4)
9. "This is the hag when maids lie on their backs" (Act 1 scene 4)
10. "pale hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline" (Act 2 scene 4)
11. "A challenge on my life" (act 2 scene 4 – when Mercutio learns that Tybalt has sent a letter to Romeo's house about Romeo being at the Capulets' party)
12. "Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo" (Act 2 Scene 4)
13. "Farewell ancient lady, farewell" (Act 2 scene 4 –to the nurse)
14. "O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!" (Act 3 scene 1)
15. "A plague on both your houses!" (Act 3 scene 1)

Benvolio

5. "I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword!" (Act one scene one)
6. "Examine other beauties" (Act 1 scene 2)
7. "I will make thee think thy swan a crow" (act 1 scene 2)
8. "The day is hot, the Capels are abroad, and if we meet we shall no scape a brawl!"(Act 3 scene 1)

Tybalt

10. "...talk of peace? I hate the word, as I hate hell" (Act 1 scene 1)
11. " 'Tis he, that villain Romeo" (Act 1 scene 5)
12. "this intrusion shall, now seeming sweet, convert to bitterest gall." (Act 1 Scene 5)
13. "thou art a villain" (To Romeo (Act3 Scene 1 – doesn't know Romeo has married Juliet – dramatic irony)

The Friar

11. "Two such opposed kings encamp them still in man as well as herbs" (Act 2 Scene 3 – meaning good and evil/ love and hate exist within people)
12. "For this alliance may so happy prove to turn your households' rancour to pure love" (Act 2 scene 3)
13. "Wisely and slow, they stumble that run fast" (Act 2 Scene 3)
14. "These violent delights have violent ends" (Act 2 Scene 6 – warns that it is dangerous to love too passionately and quickly)
15. "Thou art wedded to calamity" (Act 3 scene 3 – to Romeo)
16. "Unhappy fortune!" (Act 5 Scene 2 – learns that his letter has not be delivered to Romeo)
17. "I dare no longer stay." (Act 5 scene 3 – trying to persuade Juliet to leave the tomb – after Romeo has killed himself)

The Nurse

5. "Women grow by men" (Act 1 Scene 3)
6. "Seek happy nights to happy days" (Act 1 Scene 3)
7. "The only son of your great enemy" (Act 1 scene 5 – revealing Romeo's identity as a Montague to Juliet)
8. "My mistress is the sweetest lady" (Act 2 scene 4 describing Juliet to Romeo)
9. "you shall bear the burden soon at night" (Act 2 Scene 6 – talking in a crude manner about sex)
10. "I think it best you married with the county" (Act 3 scene 5 – this makes Juliet feel betrayed by the Nurse as she encourages her to marry Paris – knowing she's married to Romeo)

Lady Capulet (Juliet's Mother)

1. "Nurse, where's my daughter?" (Act 1 scene 3)
2. "we must talk in secret. Nurse come back again" (Act One scene Three)
3. "Think of marriage now; younger than you [...] are already mothers" (Act one Scene three)
4. "Speak briefly, can you like of Paris' love?" (Act 1 scene 3)
5. "The County Paris [...] shall happily make thee there a joyful bride" (Act 3 scene 5)
6. "I would the fool were married to her grave" (act 3 scene 5)
7. "I have done with thee" (Act 3 Scene 5)

Context:

- **Written in the Elizabethan era**
- **Played by male actors**
- **Patriarchal society**
 - **Men had more power and influence than women**
- **Elizabethan women were subservient to men. They were dependent on their male relatives to support them.**
- **Marriage**
 - **Marriages were often arranged**
- **Children and the family**
 - **Children were expected to be obedient towards their parents. Fathers were seen as the head of the family**
 - **Rich women would often use a wet nurse. This meant that poorer women were employed by the wealthy to breastfeed wealthy women's children (the Nurse is a wet nurse)**
- **Superstition and fate**
 - **Elizabethan audiences believed in fate and destiny – they also believed in fairies**

- **The Black Death still plagued England. Several of Shakespeare's family were killed by it.**
- **Duelling, or fencing, was a popular means to settle private disagreements especially those concerning reputation and honour.**

Romeo and Juliet the plot – in ten bullet points!

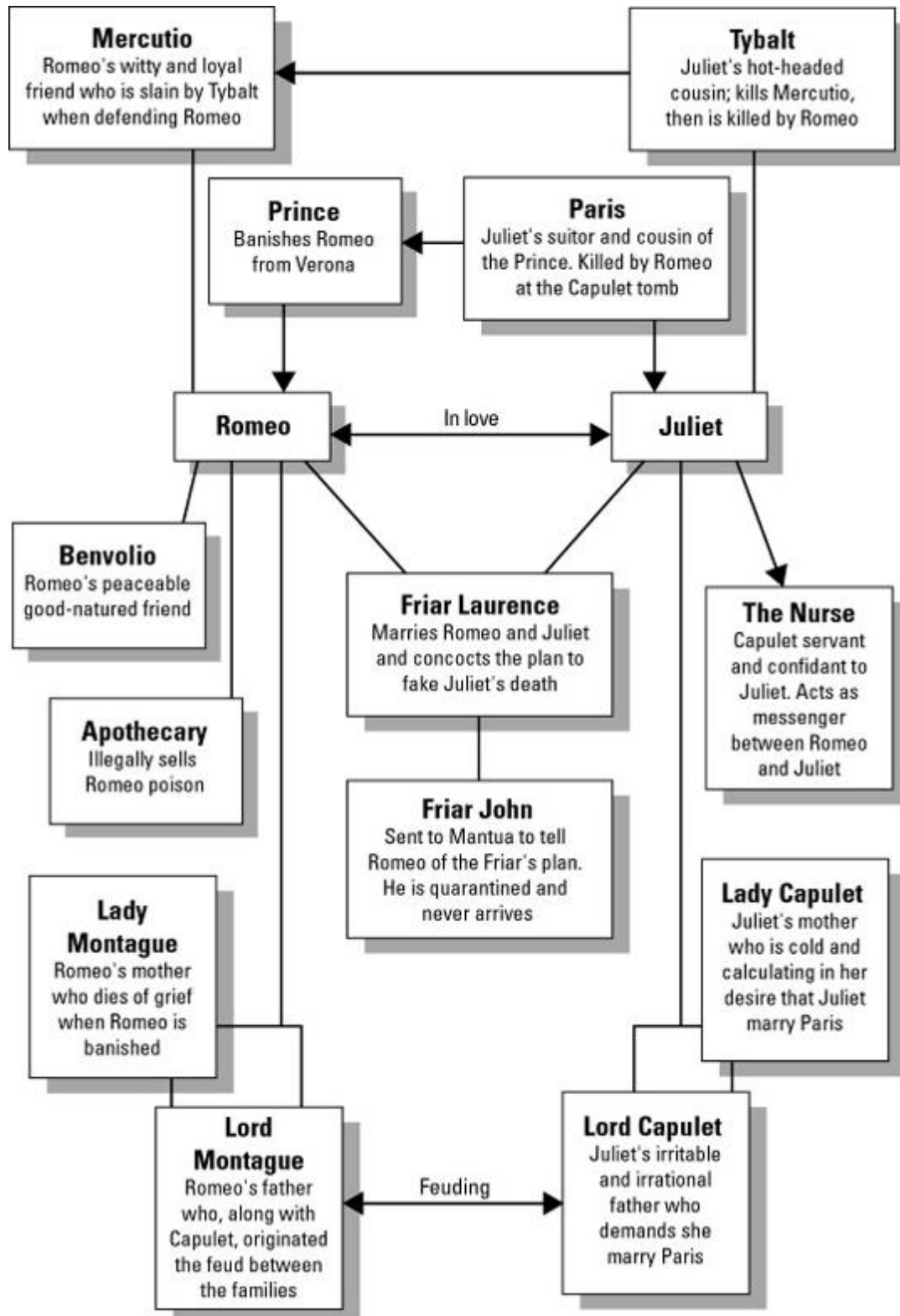
7. There are two feuding families: the Montagues and the Capulets
8. Romeo is someone who loves easily and at the start of the play is suffering from unrequited love for a young lady called Rosaline. Juliet is expected to marry Paris, a young gentleman of Verona.
9. Romeo is convinced by his cousin, Benvolio, to gate-crash the Capulet party. He goes along with his friend Mercutio and Benvolio. He sees Juliet, she returns his glance and without knowing who each other are, they fall in love.
10. Romeo leaves the party quickly, as Tybalt sees him and looks on angrily. Juliet finds out who Romeo is, and is horrified he is the son of the Capulets' great enemies, but they cannot be kept apart. He sneaks to her balcony that night and declares his love. She returns the declaration and they agree to marry the following day.
11. The nurse meets Romeo the following day, and carries the message back to Juliet that their marriage has been arranged. Friar Laurence marries the pair **in secret**.
12. Benvolio and Mercutio are in Verona. Benvolio fears that something is wrong. Tybalt arrives searching for Romeo, ready for a fight. When Romeo arrives Tybalt baits him for a fight. Romeo desperately tries to walk away and therefore Mercutio is drawn into the fight. He is killed by Tybalt. A furious Romeo responds by killing Tybalt. He is banished from Verona.
13. Juliet is left in Verona, devastated that she cannot see her Romeo. Her father arrives with the news that she must marry Paris in three days. Juliet knows this is impossible; she is already married to her love Romeo. However, she cannot reveal this to her father. He is furious with her attempts to resist marriage to Paris, and declares she must marry Paris the next morning.
14. Juliet decides she will not marry Paris and would rather kill herself than go through with it. She finds the Friar, who gives her some potion that will make her appear dead to anyone who finds her. The night before she is due to marry Paris, she takes it. The next morning she is found and her family believe her to be dead.
15. The friar has sent a letter to Romeo to inform him of the plan. However, this does not arrive before Balthasar, who tells him that Juliet is dead. Romeo is beside himself, resolving to visit her tomb and end his life. When he arrives, he finds Paris guarding the tomb. He kills Paris. When he discovers Juliet, he remarks how alive she looks. He then kills himself by drinking poison.
16. The friar arrives, surprised and horrified by the blood in his church. Juliet wakes up and finds Romeo dead. The friar desperately tries to persuade her to leave as he hears voices. She refuses to leave the side of her dead love. The friar runs off. Juliet kills herself with a dagger that lies nearby. The families arrive to find both children dead. The friar arrives and retells the whole sad story. The Prince arrives and makes his final speech. He remarks "all are punished". He ends with the words "Never was a tale of more woe/ that this of Juliet and her Romeo".

Themes:

1. Love 2. Hate 3. Light and darkness 4. Fate 5. Violence 6. Conflict – boundaries – restrictions 7. Time

Characters: Who is who and how are they related?

Label or colour code the characters for their family: Montague, Capulet or neither.



Romeo and Juliet Key Words

Dutiful	Volatile	Loyal	Immature
Obedient	Aggressive	Passionate	Superficial
Vengeful	Misogynistic	Passive	Lustful
Determined	Self-assured	Reckless	Arrogant
Courageous	Obsessive	Impulsive	Fearless
Honour-driven	Belligerent	Hostile	Erratic
Witty	Fervent	Bitter	Defiant
Brutal	Tyrannical	Rebellious	Powerful
Fraternal	Proud	Dominant	Crude
Destructive	Cynical	Excitable	Naïve

Article: Opposites

Jonathan Bate describes how Shakespeare emphasises the convergence of opposites in *Romeo and Juliet*: youth and age, day and night, poison and medicine, and of course: love and hate.

The earth, that's nature's mother, is her tomb.
What is her burying, grave that is her womb...
Within the infant rind of this small flower
Poison hath residence and medicine power.
(Friar Lawrence, Act 2 Scene 3)

Day and night, the earth as both womb and tomb, herbs and flowers that are simultaneously poisonous and medicinal, virtue and vice, God's grace and our own desires:
'such opposèd kings encamp them still
In man as well as herbs.'

Give Shakespeare an idea and he is equally interested in its opposite. Opposition is indeed the key to *Romeo and Juliet*: the lovers are doomed because they are from the two opposed houses of Capulet and Montague. In a violent world, violent delights have violent ends. Youthful passions boil over not only into poetry and embraces, but also into insult and sword-fight.

Friar Laurence's soliloquy cuts to the quick of the play's double vision. It is structured around the rhetorical figure of oxymoron, the paradox whereby opposites are held together. Versions of the figure recur throughout the play, from Romeo's 'heavy lightness, serious vanity' to the duet of nightingale and lark in the great scene of lovers parting at dawn.

At the beginning of the play, Romeo is in love with Rosaline. Or rather, he is in love with the *idea* of being in love. We never actually see Rosaline: she exists solely as the idealised love-object of Romeo. She is nothing more than a literary type, the beautiful but unavailable mistress of the sonnet tradition that goes back to the Italian Renaissance poet Petrarch. The Petrarchan lover thrives on artifice and paradox. The fire in his heart is dependent on his lady's icy maidenhood
'Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!
Still-waking sleep that is not what it is!'

As the Friar recognises, this is mere 'doting', not true loving. And so long as Mercutio is around, the bubble of poetic language keeps on being pricked - is it not just a matter of rhyming 'love' with 'dove'? Romeo still poeticises on seeing Juliet, though he speaks in more richly textured imagery:

'It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear.'

When the lovers meet at the Capulet ball, they weave a verbal dance that answers to the motions of their bodies and hands: their initial dialogue is wrapped into the form of a sonnet. But over the next few scenes their language evolves into something more fluid and more natural. You can hear Shakespeare growing as a poet even as you see the love between Juliet and Romeo growing from infatuation at first sight to the conviction that each has found the other's soul-mate.

Love is a chemistry that begins from a physiological transformation - Romeo is 'bewitched by the charm of looks' - but it becomes a discovery of the very core of human being:

'Can I go forward when my heart is here?
Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out.'

What haunts the lover is the suspicion that it might all be a dream. Mercutio spins a tale of how love is but the mischief of Queen Mab, midwife of illusion. Romeo blesses the night, but then acknowledges his fear that:

'Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.'

Juliet has to deal with another fear. For a girl in Shakespeare's time, chastity was a priceless commodity. To lose her virtue without the prospect of marriage would be to lose herself. In the speech that begins 'Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face', Juliet reveals quite remarkable self-understanding. She is acutely aware that in love the stakes for a woman are far higher than those for a man. Here Shakespeare's poetic language becomes the vehicle of both argument and emotion. The artifice of rhyme is replaced by blank verse that moves with the suppleness of thought itself.

In the original production, the lines would have been spoken by a young male actor of perhaps around the same 13 years as the character of Juliet. By highlighting extreme youthfulness (in the source, Juliet is 16), Shakespeare makes a bold implicit claim for his poetic drama. Both actor and character are speaking with maturity far beyond their years: such, the dramatist implies, is the metamorphic potency of the mingled fire and powder of love and art.

Though younger than Romeo, Juliet is more knowing. She senses the danger in his talk of idolatry. In the soaring love-duet that is their final scene together before Romeo's exile, she wills the song to be that of the nightingale rather than the lark because she knows that the break of day will mean the end of their night of love and the dawn of a harsh reality in which she will be reduced to the status of a bargaining chip in the negotiations between Verona's powerful families.

According to the social code of the time, it is the duty of the young to obey the old. Marriage is a matter not of love, but of the consolidation and perpetuation of wealth and status. Arthur Brooke, author of the *Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet* which Shakespeare had before him as he wrote, told his readers that the moral of the story was that young lovers who submit to erotic desire, neglecting the authority and advice of parents and listening instead to drunken gossips and superstitious friars, will come to a deservedly sticky end.

Shakespeare's play, by contrast, glories in the energy of youth. It does not seek to advance a moral, but offers instead the tragic paradox that the heat in the blood that animates the star-crossed lovers is the same ardour that leads young men to scrap in the street and to kill out of loyalty to their friends.

The kinship of love and revenge, the perpetual war between the generations: Shakespeare will return to this territory in later plays such as *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. The final scene takes place in an ancestral tomb, but those who lie dead are the flower of a city's youth - Mercutio, Tybalt, Paris, Juliet and her Romeo.

Article: Love and Hatred

Psychologist Dorothy Rowe examines how our strongest emotions are intertwined as we cannot be indifferent to those that fulfil our greatest need or inspire our greatest fear.

Romeo and Juliet (2008) directed by Neil Bartlett.

Love and hatred are not opposites but two sides of the one coin. The coin is attachment. We are attached to those we love and those we hate. The opposite of attachment, and thus the opposite of love and hatred, is indifference. We want nothing, neither approval or disapproval, from those to whom we are indifferent. However, we cannot be indifferent to those we love or those we hate because they can fulfil our greatest need or inspire our greatest fear.

The people we love are those who can affirm that we are the person we know ourselves to be, and do so. The people we hate are those who can disconfirm the person we know ourselves to be, and are prepared to do disconfirmed can override our love, often with tragic circumstances.

Our greatest need is to become and be the person that we know ourselves to be. When we are young like Romeo and Juliet, our heart often feels that it will burst with our longing to be the person we know ourselves to be, and to have all the people who matter to us - those we love and those we hate - recognise the extraordinary individual that we are. Alas, at that age we do not know how to be ourselves. We have not gained the confidence we need both to be ourselves and to face the hazards and uncertainties of life. The person we know ourselves to be is our most important possession.

In extreme situations we will choose to let our body die, either in an act of heroism or suicide, in order to die in the truth of who we are rather than live the lie of who we are not. Juliet chose not to live the lie of being Paris's wife; Romeo knew he could not continue as the empty vessel he was. He needed to be filled by Juliet's courage and her love which was 'boundless as the sea'.

Knowing yourself to be a person is both a wonderful and a terrible thing. Wonderful because we not only live but know ourselves to be alive: terrible because our 'I' is no more than a structure of ideas which are the guesses our brain has constructed about who we are, what the world is, what our past was, our present is, and our future will be. When our guesses are being proved to be right, we feel confident and secure, but when our guesses have been shown to be wrong we begin to feel that 'I' is falling apart, and we are terrified.

When we were children, our explanations to ourselves about what was going on, and our predictions about what was going to happen, were often wrong and we gave vent to our terror as we fell apart in what adults called 'temper tantrums' and 'bad dreams'. In deliberately misunderstanding what a child is experiencing, adults try to hide from themselves their own fear of falling apart. They do not recognise that much of what they do is, at least in part, a defence against the fear of being annihilated as a person. This fear is far worse than the fear of death. We can tell ourselves that, when we die, the most important part of ourselves will continue on as a soul, or a spirit, or in our children, or in our work, or in the memories of those who knew us, but, when we are annihilated as a person, it will be that we disappear like a wisp of smoke in the wind, never to have existed.

Every moment of our life, we are monitoring how safe we are as a person. The measures of our degree of safety or danger are our emotions, that is, our interpretations of how safe we are as a person in our present situation. When we are content, or happy, or joyful, or ecstatic we feel safe in ourselves because the world is what we want it to be, and when we are in love we are in the glorious safety where we can be truly and completely ourselves. Anxiety warns us of the first hint of danger, while fear tells us that we are in danger. Our pride tries to rescue us from danger with anger which says, 'How dare this happen to me!' We measure the kind of danger we are in in many ways - hate, envy, jealousy, guilt, shame, and despair. We can be ruthless in trying to preserve our sense of being a person.

Tybalt tries to preserve himself by using his anger and his swordsmanship to inspire fear in other men, even to the extreme of killing Mercutio and thus bringing about his own death. As much as Capulet loves his daughter Juliet, he is prepared to use her or to destroy her in order to pursue 'an ancient grudge' between his family and that of Montague. He sees a victory over Montague as the measure of his value as a person. Accordingly, he wants to give Juliet in marriage to Paris, a kinsman of Escalus, Prince of Verona. When she refuses, he tells her she can: 'hang, beg, starve, die in the streets, / For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee.' Lady Capulet, whose identity depends on that of her husband, sees her daughter as a threat, and rejects her, saying: 'Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word: / Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee.'

The tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* is not just that of the 'star-cross'd lovers' but of the two old men who failed to realise that their hatred and pride tied them to one another as securely as Juliet and Romeo were tied by their love.

Article: Character analysis: Romeo and Juliet

- Article by: [Michael Donkor](#)
- Themes: [Tragedies](#), [Gender, sexuality, courtship and marriage](#)
- Published: 19 May 2017

Michael Donkor studies the characters of Romeo and Juliet in Act 2, Scene 2 of the play – otherwise known as the ‘balcony scene’.

Key quotation

JULIET 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy:
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is nor hand nor foot,
Nor arm nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other word would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for thy name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself. (2.2.38–49)

Setting the scene

Famously referred to as the ‘balcony scene’, Act 2, Scene 2 of *Romeo and Juliet* begins with Juliet standing on her bedroom balcony, talking to herself. She muses on how unfair it is that the striking gentleman she kissed moments ago is in fact Romeo Montague – a young man from the family her Capulet kin are warring with. Romeo, who has crept into the Capulet grounds in order to find Juliet, overhears her words. Stepping out of the shadows, Romeo presents himself to Juliet and the two embark on an impassioned conversation in which they try to define their feelings and profess their love for one another. Their declarations are cut short both by the fear that Romeo will be discovered and by Juliet’s Nurse insistently calling her to come back into her bedroom. Before Romeo finally leaves, Juliet steals away from the Nurse and returns to the balcony. She issues Romeo with instructions about covertly communicating with her the following day in order for them to make plans to marry.

How does Shakespeare present Juliet here?

Juliet’s portrayal in this scene feverishly wavers between different positions, reminding the audience how inexperienced and emotionally unsteady she is. Firstly, [her speech](#) – seemingly

delivered in private – offers the audience access to the thinking of a young girl on the cusp of independent womanhood. In her wrestling with the thorny issue of Romeo’s identity, she repeatedly asks questions: ‘What’s Montague? ... What’s in a name?’ These disgruntled interrogatives about the inefficiencies of language and labels – a linguistic probing which connects with Romeo’s later promise to ‘tear the word’ (2.2.57) – are also assaults on social rigidity and received wisdom. These are not the words of a submissive child content to follow rules as she has been instructed. They are challenges posed by an individual developing a singular, personal way of looking at the world. They are the utterances of someone dissatisfied with the way things are.

1901 edition of Anna Jameson's *Shakespeare's Heroines*, illustrated by Robert Anning Bell

Juliet is characterised in this Victorian book as a woman of ‘passion and imagination’.

This boldness continues throughout this almost-soliloquy, reaching its greatest intensity at the end of the speech when Juliet offers her ‘self’ to Romeo in exchange for him shedding his ‘name’. This imagined or proposed transaction is radical as it undoes all sorts of patriarchal assumptions. One of these is the idea that after marriage it was women who should lose their names. Secondly, in determinedly stating how she envisages her future, her vow here contradicts the Elizabethan expectation that fathers should ‘pilot’ the destinies of their young daughters rather than the daughters directing themselves.

Vives' conduct book for Christian women

Juan Luis Vives insists that, when it comes to choosing a husband, daughters should keep quiet: ‘it becometh not a maide to talke, where hir father and mother be in comunicacion about hir mariage’, 1557.

However, the surprising arrival of Romeo makes Juliet momentarily retreat into a more conventional role: that of the frightened, modest female. She becomes consumed with anxiety that her ‘kinsmen’ may discover and ‘murder’ Romeo (2.2.69–70). Though concealed by the darkness of night, she claims that her cheeks ‘blush’ at the idea that Romeo heard her earlier, emotional outpouring. Equally, she is desperate for assurances about Romeo’s feelings towards her; there is an almost imploring quality to her voice when she describes how she can change her behaviour until it meets Romeo’s approval:

Or if thou thinkest I am too quickly won,
I’ll frown and be perverse, and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo, but else not for the world. (2.2.95–97)

But this submissiveness is short-lived, and Juliet soon regains a sense of stridency. As the scene progresses and Romeo begins to offer Juliet oaths as a way of demonstrating his affection, Juliet controls his smooth talking. Like a much more worldly and experienced woman, one tired of hackneyed ‘chat up lines’, she interrupts and edits his words:

ROMEO Lady, by yonder blessed moon I vow
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops–

JULIET O, swear not by the moon, th' inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

ROMEO What shall I swear by?

JULIET Do not swear at all;
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.

ROMEO If my heart's dear love—

JULIET Well, do not swear. (2.2.107–116)

Interestingly, Juliet's linguistic fussiness here returns us to our earlier analysis of her conceptual dissatisfaction with the limitations of language more generally.

This more controlled Juliet is the one also responsible for the sharp rebuttal to Romeo's suggestive, saucy complaint that he leaves their encounter 'so unsatisfied' (2.2.125). Equally, this Juliet is keen for the relationship's breakneck speed to be stilled, sharing the audience's view that the pair's love is

too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden,
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
Ere one can say it lightens. (2.2.118–119)

It is also this more composed, mature Juliet who, towards the end of the extract, adopts a practical outlook in her attempt to make level-headed plans for the lovers' next course of action.

How does Shakespeare present Romeo here?

Romeo's impulsive nature is in full evidence in this exchange. The very fact of his location – Romeo has brazenly crept behind enemy lines – and his bragging that he has no fear if the Capulets 'find him' in their midst clearly demonstrate to the audience how Romeo's ego is dangerously inflated by the power of love (2.2.75–78). As soon as he engages in conversation with Juliet, and in order to win her over, he immediately and without real thought about the consequences denies his lineage and heritage, instantly claiming his Montague background is now 'hateful' (2.2.55). Equally, in response to Juliet's tender attempts to understand how he has trespassed into her family's grounds, his hyperbolic declaratives and ornate comparisons are dazzlingly quick and unequivocal. For example, adopting the language of chivalric bravery and flattering of the prized lady, he claims

... there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords! (2.2.71–72)

He figures his pursuit of Juliet in the language of perilous expedition, where he must adventurously scale ‘stony limits’ (2.2.67) and traverse the ‘farthest sea’ (2.2.83) in order to reach his love. But, movingly, the grandness of his self-presentation is eventually reduced by the power Juliet has over him. By the end of the scene, rather than as a heroic, questing figure, Romeo describes himself as Juliet’s pet ‘bird’ (2.2.182): a tiny toy of a thing controlled by her every whim.

How does this presentation of Juliet and Romeo fit into the play as a whole?

This scene compares and contrasts with the beginning of Act 3, Scene 5, which contains another anguished parting between the two lovers. As in Act 2, Scene 2, in the later scene there is a sense of negotiation, exchange and gentle conflict between Romeo and Juliet as they sleepily argue about whether or not it is daylight and if Romeo must leave Juliet’s bedroom before he is caught. In the earlier scene both characters seem to agree that linguistic signs – names, in particular – are problematic. In the famous aubade – a song between lovers marking the dawn – of Act 3, Scene 5, the meaning of other kinds of signs – nightingales, larks and what these might symbolise – troubles the lovers.

In Act 3, Scene 5, the pretence both lovers uphold – at different times – that it is not yet daylight adds a note of childishness to the scene. By seemingly lying to themselves and to each other, these characters reveal themselves to be unwilling or ill-equipped to deal with the adult realities of their situation, and so escape into a fantastical realm where they can control the passage of time and prolong the secrecy of night. This youthful element neatly matches with Romeo’s impetuosity and Juliet’s greenness explored earlier.

Themes

Identity emerges as one of the key ideas in Act 2, Scene 2. As well as the discussion of naming, the shifting characterisations of the two lovers prompt audiences to ponder who we become when influenced by love, what we might sacrifice in order to love and how we change ourselves in the presence of one we love.

How has this scene been interpreted?

In typically punchy style, the academic Germaine Greer has referred to Romeo as an unsophisticated ‘dork’. In many ways, this scene provides ample evidence for this useful – albeit unkind – assessment. Romeo’s grandiose and often clichéd expressions of his intense feelings perhaps attest to the foolhardy nature of Romeo that Greer is getting at.

Conversely, the actress Ellie Kendrick, who played Juliet at the Globe in 2009, describes Juliet as ‘fiercely intelligent, very spirited, a really ... mind-blowingly principled ... girl [who] can match anyone on any image, any logic, any conversation that’s thrown at her’. Indeed, the deftness of some of Juliet’s responses in this exchange, her burgeoning self-awareness and analysis of the complexity of her position do make her a remarkable, singular creation; one with perhaps more perceptiveness and insight than her older, male counterpart.

Romeo and Juliet Context

- Petrarchan Lover =

Suffers from unrequited love—the love is not returned or reciprocated, loves from afar. Often the object of love doesn't even know someone is pining for her.

Idealizes—falls in love with an *ideal*, a vision of perfection, rather than a human being with strengths AND weakness. Falls in love with an *idea*—an *idea* of a person, the *idea* of love.

Idolizes—Turns the lover into an idol, an object of worship. Puts the lover on a pedestal (she's high above/he's a lowly peon), worships her from afar, compares her to a goddess or something holy.

This is not truly love. This is infatuation.

Infatuation—in love with the idea of love rather than a real person/ is in love with love/ is in love with longing rather than having

- Elizabethan Women were subservient to men.
- They were dependent on their male relatives to support them.
- They were used to forge alliances with other powerful families through arranged marriages.
- There was little dispute over such arrangements as Elizabethan women were raised to believe that they were inferior to men and that men knew better!
- Disobedience was seen as a crime against their religion. The Church firmly believed this and quoted the Bible in order to ensure the continued adherence to this principle.
- The Scottish protestant leader John Knox wrote:
- *"Women in her greatest perfection was made to serve and obey man."*
- The Elizabethan family life for women was dominated by the men in the family. Elizabethan women were seen as inferior to men. They were subservient to the men in the family all of their lives and expected to obey the men in all aspects of their life. Disobedience was seen as a crime against their religion. Marriages were arranged to suit the family.
- Elizabethan women were expected to marry to increase the wealth and position of the family and then to produce children - preferably male heirs. There were no careers for women - and women and there were no schools for girls, so the majority were illiterate. Family and Home life depended on the skills of the women in relation to good housekeeping and the health of the family was determined by the ability of Elizabethan women to produce medicines from the herbs available to them.
- Children were subservient to the adults in the family. They were raised to respect and obey their parents. Infant mortality was high during the Elizabethan era so the children of the family were cherished. They were given toys to play with - dolls, toy soldiers, hobby horses and the like. Wealthy children were taught good manners and would be punished, boys and girls, for any forms of bad behaviour.

- Some women choose not to breastfeed for social reasons. Many of these women were found to be of the upper class. For them, breastfeeding was considered unfashionable, in the sense that it not only prevented these women from being able to wear the fashionable clothing of their time but it was also thought to ruin their figures.^[3] Mothers also lacked the support of their husbands to breastfeed their children, since hiring a wet nurse was less expensive than having to hire someone else to help run the family business and/or take care of the family household duties in their place.^[3] Some women chose to hire wet nurses purely to escape from the confining and time-consuming chore of breastfeeding
- Its is a hyper-masculine world
- Honour and status are crucial elements of masculine identity
- Hyper-masculinity often manifests itself in actions which overpower and oppress women.
- Masculinity sexuality is often expressed in violent and domineering ways.
- Some Elizabethans were convinced that if they could unlock the meaning of dreams, they could know the future.
- fear of the unknown lead Elizabethans to believe in curses and misfortune.
- Duelling (two people fighting) was commonplace in the Elizabethan era. If someone insulted your honour or name then they would be challenged to a duel.

Romeo and Juliet Quotes

Friar Lawrence: "Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast." – proverb – the generation gap

Romeo: "Love is a smoke made with the fume of sighs." – metaphor – the corruption of love/the meaninglessness of courtly love

Friar Lawrence: "These violent delights have violent ends." – antithesis/contrast – love, passion and violence

Romeo: "I defy you, stars." – short exclamation/strong verb – fate and destiny vs free will

Mercutio: "You are a lover. Borrow Cupid's wings and soar with them above a common bound." – metaphor – the glory and power of true love

Romeo: "O brawling love! O loving hate!" – oxymoron/contrast – love vs hate and violence

Juliet: "My only love sprung from my only hate." – antithesis/juxtaposition/strong verb – conflict and love

Tybalt: "Peace? I hate the word as I hate hell and all Montagues." – repetition for emphasis – violence, hate and conflict

Romeo: "Juliet is the sun" – metaphor/celestial imagery – beauty/true love

Romeo: "she hangs upon the cheek of night like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear" – simile/dark vs light imagery – beauty/true love

Romeo: "Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath hath had no power yet upon thy beauty." – personification – corruption and hate vs beauty and true love

Mercutio: "Is love a tender thing? It is too rough, too rude, too boisterous, and it pricks like thorn." – rhetorical question/simile – the violent, brutal side of love and passion

Romeo: "O, speak again, bright angel" – metaphor/imperative verb – true love/religious or heavenly imagery

Lord Capulet: "Let two more summers wither in their pride ere we may think her ripe to be a bride" – metaphor - marriage, love and family

Juliet: "I'll look to like, if looking liking move" – proverb - love, youth and family

Juliet: "all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay and follow thee my lord throughout the world" – love and marriage and devotion

Lord Capulet: "Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch!

I tell thee what: get thee to church o' Thursday,

Or never after look me in the face.

Speak not; reply not; do not answer me."

– Short sentences/exclamations/imperative verbs – parents and children

Friar Lawrence: "Young men's love then lies not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes." – proverb – the fickle or untrustworthy nature of love/ young vs old

Nurse: "These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old." – list of three – younger vs older

Juliet: "that one word 'banishèd, hath slain ten thousand Tybalts." – hyperbole – love and passion vs violence and hostility

Romeo: "O sweet Juliet, thy beauty hath made me effeminate and in my temper soften'd valor's steel!" – metaphor/exclamation – love/passion/masculinity/conflict

Prologue: "A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life." –metaphor/celsytial imagery/adjective – fate/destiny and love

Juliet: "Parting is such sweet sorrow." – oxymoron – love vs depression/sadness/death

Juliet: "This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,

May prove a beautiful flower when next we meet.” – metaphor – love, passion and youth

Lady Capulet: “That book in many’s eyes doth share the glory

That in gold clasps locks in the golden story.” – metaphor – marriage, family, duty, wealth

Mercutio: “True, I talk of dreams, which are the children of an idle brain” – personification – dreams and fantasies/love as an illusion

Lord Capulet: “For you and I are past our dancing days.” – old age

Romeo: “My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand to smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.” – personification/religious imagery – love as holy and profound

Nurse: “I tell you, he that can lay hold of her shall have the chinks (money)”. – proverb – vulgarity/marriage and wealth and status

Juliet: “My bounty is as boundless as the sea, my love as deep” – simile – true love and devotion

Romeo: “My man ’s as true as steel.” – friendship, loyalty and masculinity

Mercutio: “A plague o’ both your houses!” – corruption, death, hate/fate and destiny

Prince: “you men, you beasts!” – metaphor/exclamation – violence/ man as a brute

Lord Capulet: “my will to her consent is but a part” – pronouns – family duty and relationships between parents and children

Example Exam Question

Romeo and Juliet

Extract: Act 1 Scene 4

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 4 of 'Romeo and Juliet' and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play Benvolio is concerned they will be late for the Montague feast while Romeo fears what the night's party will bring.

BENVOLIO

This wind, you talk of, blows us from ourselves;
Supper is done, and we shall come too late.

ROMEO

I fear, too early: for my mind misgives
Some consequence yet hanging in the stars
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels and expire the term
Of a despised life closed in my breast
By some vile forfeit of untimely death.
But He, that hath the steerage of my course,
Direct my sail! On, lusty gentlemen.

BENVOLIO

Strike, drum.

Exeunt

When a student watched the play, they made the following comment: "This reveals that the theme fate and destiny makes the play a lot more tragic." How do you respond to this point of view?

Write about:

- how the theme of fate and destiny is presented in this extract.
- how the theme of fate and destiny is presented in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
SPaG [4 marks]

Key Quotations – A Christmas Carol

Scrooge – before the spirits arrive:

1. “tight-fisted hand at the grind- stone”
2. “a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner!”
3. “Hard and sharp as flint,”
4. “solitary as an oyster”
5. “It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance,”
6. “every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding,”

Marley’s Ghost quotations:

1. Marley’s ghost: “I wear the chain I forged in life”
2. Marley’s ghost: “Mankind was my business.”

Scrooge – Ghost of Christmas past:

1. The ghost of Christmas past: “It was a strange figure -- like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man”
2. “a solitary child, neglected by his friends” (The ghost shows Scrooge himself as a child left alone at school)
3. “he sobbed” (Scrooge’s reaction to seeing himself alone as a child – he begins to change)
4. (Scrooge’s fiancé on how Scrooge now loves money more than her) “What idol has displaced you?” he rejoined. “A golden one.”

Scrooge – Ghost of Christmas present

1. “Scrooge started back, appalled” – when he sees the children, Ignorance and Want, beneath the ghost’s robes
2. Ignorance and Want: “Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked,”
3. Mrs Cratchit on Scrooge “odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man”

Scrooge – Ghost of Christmases yet to come:

1. “He recoiled in terror,” – when Scrooge sees the dead body as a warning that he must change or he’ll die alone
2. “Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more”

Setting:

1. London weather: “It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal”
2. Bob Cratchit’s office “dismal little cell”
3. “Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal.”
4. Scrooge’s home “They were a gloomy suite of rooms”

Context:

- Victorian Novel
- Hierarchy – Victorian society has a rigid class system. Dickens is critical of the treatment of the working-classes. Dickens wants to encourage the wealthy to look after the poor.
- Poverty – In Victorian London there was lots of poverty as the working-classes had terrible living conditions
- Wealth – Dickens thinks that the wealthy should look after the poor
- Religion – Dickens promotes Christian values of charity, mercy and forgiveness
- Family – The family was an important part of Victorian life and Dickens wishes to promote the importance of family

Charles Dickens message – key words:

To be charitable

Redemption

Christian values

Equality

Redemption (to change and be forgiven)

To love

Be generous and kind

To teach a moral

To protect the needy and vulnerable in society

To be part of a family to avoid loneliness

To learn from the past

Charles Dickens message – key themes:

1. Compassion and forgiveness:

2. Change and transformation:

3. Isolation and loneliness:

4. Family and the home:

A Christmas Carol – Revision Guide

Stave One - summary:

- Marley is 100% dead. Dead, dead, dead, dead.
- His old business partner Scrooge is alive though, and still runs the same small company they used to run together.
- On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is in his office, counting money and watching his clerk.
- His nephew bursts in
- The nephew wants Scrooge to come over for Christmas dinner, but Scrooge isn't having any of it.
- Scrooge makes him leave, but not before insulting his marriage because it's based on love.
- Oh, yes. A couple of guys show up asking for any donations for the poor. Scrooge tells them to go away, and argues that anyone who is poor can either go to jail, go to the workhouse (basically, jail for poor people where you have to work), or die.
- Scrooge then turns on the clerk and grudgingly gives him Christmas Day off with half pay
- Finally, the day is done, and Scrooge goes home to his apartment.
- Then, the door from the cellar bursts open and out of it comes... Marley's ghost! All wrapped up in chains that are a literal mockery of his business life, made out of keys and locks and money purses and cash-boxes.
- Marley's Ghost tells Scrooge that Ghosts of terrible people have to endlessly work to make the world a better place.

<u>Question</u>	<u>Answer</u>
What time of year is the story set? CHALLENGE: Why is this significant?	
Who does Scrooge make leave his office? CHALLENGE: Why does Scrooge not want to hear about his marriage?	
Who are the second group of people to visit Scrooge? What do they teach the reader about Scrooge's character?	
Why does Marley's ghost visit Scrooge?	

Scrooge Stave One - Quotations:

1. Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grind- stone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shriveled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dogdays; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.
2. But what did Scrooge care? It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance,
3. "Don't be cross, uncle!" said the nephew. "What else can I be," returned the uncle, "when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will," said Scrooge indignantly, "every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!"

Scrooge's character:

What impression of Scrooge's character do you have from these quotations?

Scrooge Key Words:

Before the Ghosts:

- Selfish
- Ungenerous
- Rude
- Unfriendly
- Sinful
- Bitter

After:

- Loving
- Regretful
- Friendly

Stave One Setting - Quotations:

1. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal: and he could hear the people in the court outside go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them.
2. The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal.
3. He (Scrooge) lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms

Why does Dickens describe London and Scrooge's work-place and home in this way?

Setting Key words:

Pathetic Fallacy
Atmosphere
Symbolise
Victorian society
Rich and poor (social class)
Poverty
Inequality

Stave One - Marley's Ghost quotations:

1. Marley's Ghost: "I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost. "I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?"
2. Marley's ghost: "Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business.

What message does Marley's Ghost try to teach Scrooge?

Key words – Marley's Ghost:

- Moral
- Regretful
- Warning
- Redemption
- Change

Stave two - summary:

- Suddenly, the clock strikes one, the curtains of his bed are pulled open, and he sees... a ghost that looks like a cross between a tiny old man and a child.
- First stop? Scrooge's totally depressing childhood, spent all alone in a school
- Scrooge starts to sob hysterically at the sight of himself as a little boy reading a bunch of fantasy books
- Scrooge immediately admits to the ghost that he should really have given some money to that caroling kid from earlier in the evening.
- Stop number two is another one of these Christmas-vacation-spent-at-school days. This time, though, Scrooge's little sister comes to bring him home. Her big news is that their dad has become a lot nicer and so little Ebenezer is allowed to come back home for good.
- We learn that the sister is dead now, but that Scrooge's nephew who visited him in stave one is her son.
- Now, it's on to stop number three, where Scrooge remembers how generous that one Christmas his master Fezziwig was
- Scrooge immediately understands that by contrast he's been unkind and ungenerous to his own clerk.
- On to the next glimpse into the past: the Christmas when Scrooge really starts turning into the greedy old man he will become
- In the scene, a slightly older Scrooge sits with his fiancée who accuses him of loving money more than her. She breaks off the engagement
- The ghost then takes Scrooge to see his fiancée is now sitting in the middle of her huge family, with a whole bunch of kids happily running around, and a husband who totally loves her and them and is just completely the kind of Prince Charming that Scrooge would never have been.

<u>Question</u>	<u>Answer</u>
Where does the ghost first take Scrooge? CHALLENGE: Why is this significant?	
What starts to happen to Scrooge's character?	
What do we learn about Scrooge's experience of family?	
What do we learn about Scrooge's treatment of and ability to love?	

Stave two – setting:

1. He was obliged to rub the frost off with the sleeve of his dressing-gown before he could see anything; and could see very little then. All he could make out was, that it was still very foggy and extremely cold,

The Ghost of Christmas Past – Stave Two:

It was a strange figure -- like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child's proportions. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was white as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it, and the tenderest bloom was on the skin. The arms were very long and muscular; the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength. Its legs and feet, most delicately formed, were, like those upper members, bare. It wore a tunic of the purest white and round its waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful. It held a branch of fresh green holly in its hand; and, in singular contradiction of that wintry emblem, had its dress trimmed with summer flowers. But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.

Scrooge Stave Two:

1. They went, the Ghost and Scrooge, across the hall, to a door at the back of the house. It opened before them, and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room, made barer still by lines of plain deal forms and desks. At one of these a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be.
2. ``Nothing," said Scrooge. ``Nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something; that's all."
3. **(seeing Old Fezziwig)** During the whole of this time, Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, enjoyed everything, and underwent the strangest agitation.
4. **(Scrooge's fiancé on how Scrooge now loves money more than her)** ``It matters little," she said, softly. ``To you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve." ``What Idol has displaced you?" he rejoined. ``A golden one."
- 5.

What do you learn about Victorian society?

Victorian society – key words:

Hierarchy

Working-class

Middle-class

Poverty

Wealth

Selfish

Capitalism

Religion

Family

What is Charles Dickens' message?

Charles Dickens message – key words:

To be charitable

Redemption

Christian values

Equality

Redemption (to change and be forgiven)

To love

Be generous and kind

To teach a moral

To protect the needy and vulnerable in society

To be part of a family to avoid loneliness

To learn from the past

Stave three summary:

- The second ghost, the ghost of Christmas present, is wearing a half-open robe, has a jolly vibe, and he's surrounded by a lots of food and drinks.
- Firstly they flyover of the city, where everyone is bustling around getting ready for Christmas dinner. Friendly snowball fights, lots of food, neighbors getting together, and just an eerily picture-perfect scene all around.
- They float away from the town and on to the house of Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's clerk.
- The Cratchits are poor, but totally loving and adorable, of course. The mom loves the kids, the kids love the mom, the kids love each other, and everyone is very loving and happy (even though they are poor)
- They get the table ready for the meal, and then Bob comes home from church with their youngest, sickest kid, Tiny Tim, who walks with a crutch.
- Not only is Tiny Tim brave and stoic about his illness, but he also has deep thoughts about it—he tells his dad that he likes being a visual reminder for everyone else at church about how Christ healed the lame and made the blind see again.
- Their sad little dinner is served, and they all eat with gusto.
- Scrooge is again really quick to understand the message of the ghost and asks the ghost whether Tiny Tim will live. Um, not so much, says the ghost... unless something changes in their lives!
- Then, Bob proposes a toast to his boss Scrooge. He seems to have a lot of compassion for how miserable and horrible Scrooge is, but Mrs. Cratchit, not so much. When the gloom of mentioning Scrooge's name in public wears off, they all get happy again and talk about how awesome it will be when the older kids get jobs and start to earn some money.
- The ghost and Scrooge float away to a mining field. It's horrible and desolate, but still, in a tiny hut, there is a little family celebrating Christmas.
- Then they float even farther away to a lighthouse in the middle of nowhere. But of course, the two men inside are celebrating Christmas
- And even all the way out in the middle of the ocean, on a boat, all the sailors are drinking and singing and getting into the holiday spirit.
- The final stop on the tour: Scrooge's nephew Fred's house.
- Fred and his wife are having a party with some friends and they are totally talking about Scrooge right when he gets there.
- Mostly, Fred and the gang are laughing about how Scrooge doesn't believe in Christmas. Fred says that he will continue to try to get his uncle to come over for the holiday every year forever.
- The last game is a variation of Twenty Questions, with Fred thinking of something, and the others eventually guessing that the "growling and grunting animal" is actually Scrooge.
- They drink to Scrooge's health, and with that, the ghost pulls Scrooge away from the scene.
- Scrooge looks down and sees a huge claw coming out of the bottom of ghost's robe
- The claw turns out to be... two small children! These children are symbols—the boy is Ignorance, and the girl is Want (meaning poverty or the lack of something).
- The ghost tells Scrooge that people need to watch out and not have these children running around in the world. Scrooge makes a note of that.
- The Ghost of Christmas present leaves and Scrooge turns around, only to see... a scary phantom draped in a hooded cloak coming towards him.

<u>Question</u>	<u>Answer</u>
What impression of London do you get from this stave? What is Dickens' message?	
What impression of the Cratchitt family do you have? What is Dickens' message and what does Scrooge learn?	
What does Tiny Tim teach Scrooge?	
What do the children Want and Ignorance teach Scrooge?	

How does each of these themes link to A Christmas Carol?

1. Compassion and forgiveness:

2. Change and transformation:

3. Isolation and loneliness:

4. Family and the home:

Extract from Stave Three

It was a long night, if it were only a night; but Scrooge had his doubts of this, because the Christmas Holidays appeared to be condensed into the space of time they passed together. It was strange, too, that while Scrooge remained unaltered in his outward form, the Ghost grew older, clearly older. Scrooge had observed this change, but never spoke of it, until they left a children's Twelfth Night party, when, looking at the Spirit as they stood together in an open place, he noticed that its hair was grey.

"Are spirits' lives so short?" asked Scrooge.

"My life upon this globe, is very brief," replied the Ghost. "It ends to-night."

"To-night!" cried Scrooge.

"To-night at midnight. Hark! The time is drawing near."

The chimes were ringing the three quarters past eleven at that moment.

"Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask," said Scrooge, looking intently at the Spirit's robe, "but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw?"

"It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it," was the Spirit's sorrowful reply. "Look here." From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment.

"Oh, Man, look here! Look, look, down here!" exclaimed the Ghost.

They were a boy and a girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread.

Scrooge started back, appalled. Having them shown to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine children, but the words choked themselves, rather than be parties to a lie of such enormous magnitude.

"Spirit, are they yours?" Scrooge could say no more.

"They are Man's," said the Spirit, looking down upon them. "And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it!" cried the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. "Slander those who tell it ye. Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse. And abide the end."

"Have they no refuge or resource?" cried Scrooge.

"Are there no prisons?" said the Spirit, turning on him for the last time with his own words. "Are there no workhouses?"

The bell struck twelve.

Scrooge looked about him for the Ghost, and saw it not. As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, he remembered the prediction of old Jacob Marley, and lifting up his eyes, beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him

Question: Starting with this extract, how does Dickens explore the importance of change and transformation?

Practice paragraph:

Stave Four Summary:

- The phantom of Christmases yet to come floats away, with Scrooge somehow dangling from its cloak.
- Immediately they are in the city, overhearing a conversation between a few businessmen. Seems like someone is dead that neither of them cares about, and they are kind of laughing about how hard it'll be to get people to go to the funeral.
- The phantom takes him to the shady side of town, to a rag and bone merchant (basically a gross old pawn shop type place). Just as they show up, two women and a man come up to the counter with bags of stuff.
- These men and women have stolen stuff from Scrooge after his death and show no regret because they did not like him when he was alive (Scrooge still doesn't know that it is his stuff and that he's dead)
- It takes Scrooge to see the dead body lying under a sheet in some dark room with no people around.
- Scrooge again isn't making the connection, and is like, yes, yes, I get it, I will totally be better so I don't end up like whoever that random stranger is! Then for some reason, Scrooge asks the phantom if there is anyone who feels anything about this guy's death.
- Suddenly, Scrooge and the phantom are at the Cratchits' house. Nothing too happy is happening there. The kids all have to go out and get jobs. And also it turns out that Tiny Tim is dead. Bob Cratchit comes back from the cemetery and breaks down.
- Finally, they get to an abandoned cemetery and the phantom points down at one of the graves. Scrooge totally freaks out, but still makes his way over to the grave and sees... his own name!
- Scrooge suddenly understands that the dead guy he saw on the bed and whom everyone was discussing was actually him.
- In terror, he asks the phantom a pretty crucial question—whether what he is being shown is actually the future, or just one of a number of possible futures.
- Scrooge grabs onto the phantom's hand, but the phantom shrinks away into a post

Question	Answer
Why does the ghost show Scrooge his death?	
Why does the ghost show Scrooge the Cratchits' home and Tiny Tim's death?	
What is the message of the ghost of Christmases yet to come?	

Extract Stave Four:

He recoiled in terror, for the scene had changed, and now he almost touched a bed: a bare, uncurtained bed: on which, beneath a ragged sheet, there lay a something covered up, which, though it was dumb, announced itself in awful language.

The room was very dark, too dark to be observed with any accuracy, though Scrooge glanced round it in obedience to a secret impulse, anxious to know what kind of room it was. A pale light, rising in the outer air, fell straight upon the bed; and on it, plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man.

Scrooge glanced towards the Phantom. Its steady hand was pointed to the head. The cover was so carelessly adjusted that the slightest raising of it, the motion of a finger upon Scrooge's part, would have disclosed the face. He thought of it, felt how easy it would be to do, and longed to do it; but had no more power to withdraw the veil than to dismiss the spectre at his side.

Oh cold, cold, rigid, dreadful Death, set up thine altar here, and dress it with such terrors as thou hast at thy command: for this is thy dominion. But of the loved, revered, and honoured head, thou canst not turn one hair to thy dread purposes, or make one feature odious. It is not that the hand is heavy and will fall down when released; it is not that the heart and pulse are still; but that the hand was open, generous, and true; the heart brave, warm, and tender; and the pulse a man's. Strike, Shadow, strike. And see his good deeds springing from the wound, to sow the world with life immortal!

No voice pronounced these words in Scrooge's ears, and yet he heard them when he looked upon the bed. He thought, if this man could be raised up now, what would be his foremost thoughts. Avarice, hard-dealing, griping cares. They have brought him to a rich end, truly.

He lay, in the dark empty house, with not a man, a woman, or a child, to say that he was kind to me in this or that, and for the memory of one kind word I will be kind to him. A cat was tearing at the door, and there was a sound of gnawing rats beneath the hearth-stone. What they wanted in the room of death, and why they were so restless and disturbed, Scrooge did not dare to think.

"Spirit,." he said, "this is a fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not leave its lesson, trust me. Let us go."

Still the Ghost pointed with an unmoved finger to the head.

"I understand you," Scrooge returned, "and I would do it, if I could. But I have not the power, Spirit. I have not the power."

Again it seemed to look upon him.

Question: Starting with this extract, how does Dickens explore the idea of fear and worry?

Practice paragraph

Stave five summary:

- That post turns out to be... Scrooge's own bed post. He is back in his bed. And his bed curtains are still there. And he has time to fix his life.
- Scrooge gets dressed and runs to the window, laughing for the first time in many years. He hears church bells, and a boy passing by tells him it's Christmas Day.
- All smiles and compliments, Scrooge tells the boy to go buy the prize turkey from the poultry shop, planning to send it to the Cratchits. He pays for the boy's time, the turkey, and even cab fare for him to take the thing out to their house.
- Outside, Scrooge runs into those charity collectors from the day before. He gives them a huge pile of money and then goes off to church and to walk around looking at people. All of this makes him super-happy.
- He decides to head over to his nephew's house, where he totally startles his niece-in-law, and where he has a blast at the Christmas party they've got going on (it's the one we saw earlier in the story).
- The next morning, he pretends to be all gruff and crabby at work, and then shocks Cratchit by giving him a huge raise and even buying some coal to heat the place for once.
- And finally, we learn what the real future turns out to be. Scrooge helps out the Cratchit family, takes care of Tiny Tim (who then ends up surviving), and generally becomes a wonderful guy all around.
- Everyone for ever after says that he sure is really good at keeping up the spirit of Christmas.

Questions	Answers
How has Scrooge changed?	
What do the Cratchits teach Scrooge?	
What is Dickens' message?	

Extract Stave five

But he was early at the office next morning. Oh he was early there. If he could only be there first, and catch Bob Cratchit coming late! That was the thing he had set his heart upon.

And he did it; yes, he did. The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter past. No Bob. He was full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time. Scrooge sat with his door wide open, that he might see him come into the Tank.

His hat was off, before he opened the door; his comforter too. He was on his stool in a jiffy; driving away with his pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine o'clock.

"Hallo," growled Scrooge, in his accustomed voice, as near as he could feign it. "What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?"

"I'm very sorry, sir," said Bob. "I *am* behind my time."

"You are?" repeated Scrooge. "Yes. I think you are. Step this way, if you please."

"It's only once a year, sir," pleaded Bob, appearing from the Tank. "It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir."

"Now, I'll tell you what, my friend," said Scrooge, "I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore," he continued, leaping from his stool, and giving Bob such a dig in the waistcoat that he staggered back into the Tank again; "and therefore I am about to raise your salary."

Bob trembled, and got a little nearer to the ruler. He had a momentary idea of knocking Scrooge down with it, holding him, and calling to the people in the court for help and a strait-waistcoat.

"A merry Christmas, Bob," said Scrooge, with an earnestness that could not be mistaken, as he clapped him on the back. "A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year. I'll raise your salary, and endeavour to assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon, over a Christmas bowl of [smoking bishop](#), Bob. Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before you dot another *i*, Bob Cratchit!"

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world. Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh, and little heeded them; for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset; and knowing that such as these would be blind anyway, he thought it quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, as have the malady in less attractive forms. His own heart laughed: and that was quite enough for him.

He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God Bless Us, Every One!

Question: Starting with this extract, how does Dickens explore the changes to Scrooge's character?

OR

Charles Dickens: *A Christmas Carol*

Pre-release: Chapter 1

Read the following extract from Chapter 1 and then answer **both parts** of the question.

In this extract Scrooge is being introduced to the reader.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, nor wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often 'came down' handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, 'My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?' No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blindmen's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, 'No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!'

But what did Scrooge care? It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call 'nuts' to Scrooge.

0 8

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present Scrooge as a lonely character?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents Scrooge in this extract
- how Dickens presents Scrooge as a lonely character in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]**Turn over for the next question**

An Inspector Calls Revision

The Inspector:

Act Three:

1. "Each of you helped to kill her. Remember that. Never forget it."
2. "One Eva Smith has gone – but there are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths"
3. "We don't live alone"
4. "We are members of one body"
5. "If men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire, blood and anguish."

Stage directions:

The Birling Home:

1. "large suburban house"
2. "heavily comfortable, but not cosy and home-like"
3. "The lighting should be pink and intimate until the Inspector arrives, and then it should be brighter and harder."
4. On the table: "champagne glasses"; "decanter of port" and a "cigar box"

Associated with the Inspector:

1. Inspector's arrival "we hear the sharp ring of a front doorbell"
2. "Cutting in massively"

Start of each Act

1. Start of Act Two: "scene and situation are exactly as they were"
2. Start of Act three "Exactly as at the end of Act Two"

Context

- **Set in 1912 – Edwardian society**
- **Written in 1945 – the audience has experienced both World War One and World War Two (unlike the characters within the play)**
- **It was a patriarchal society in 1912 so women were not treated equally to men. However, women's role in society changed significantly after both wars and women had a more valued place in society**
- **Hierarchical society. Britain had a well-defined class system in 1912 and the working-classes had a very tough and impoverished existence with few workers' rights. However, after both wars the distinctions between the classes became less distinct.**
- **In 1912 Britain was a prosperous Capitalist country. Capitalism means that it is an individual's responsibility to work hard and be successful and the state does not intervene to protect the less fortunate. Under a Capitalist system society is divided into the rich and the poor. However in 1945 many people, J.B. Priestley included, began to question whether Capitalism was a very good system and started to champion Socialism. Under a Socialist system everyone in society is equal and so society is no longer divided into the rich and the poor. The Inspector supports this system (Socialism) as he believes the most fortunate have a responsibility to look after the poor and share their wealth to protect the most vulnerable within society.**

Key words:

1. Didactic
2. Mouthpiece
3. Conscience
4. Moral
Compass
5. Responsibility
6. Class Divide

Key words:

1. Inequality
2. Political
Change
3. Seven deadly
sins
4. Omniscient
5. Voice for
women and
the working-
classes

An Inspector Calls Revision

Mr Birling

Act One:

1. 'Fiddlesticks! The Germans don't want war. Nobody wants war.'
2. 'man has to mind his own business and look after himself.'
3. 'I can't accept any responsibility.'
4. 'Well, it's my duty to keep labour costs down,

Act Two:

1. 'I'm a public man'

Act Three:

1. Look, you'd better ask Gerald for that ring you gave back to him, hadn't you?

Gerald

Act One:

1. **"for God's sake don't say anything to the Inspector"**

Act Two:

1. **(distressed) "I've suddenly realised – [...] that she's dead"**
2. **About Daisy Renton "I became at once the most important person in her life"**

Act Three:

1. **There isn't any such Inspector. We've been had."**
2. **"Everything's all right now (holds up the ring). What about this ring?"**

The Inspector

Act One:

1. "There are a lot of young women living that sort of existence, Miss Birling, in every city and big town in this country."
2. "What happened to her then may have determined what happened to her afterwards [...] a chain of events."
3. "it's better to ask for the earth then just take it"
4. "It's my duty to ask questions"
5. Goole G. Double O-L-E"

Act Two:

1. If there's nothing else, we'll have to share our guilt.
2. "Public men, Mr Birling, have responsibilities as well as privileges."
3. Describing the younger generation "They're more impressionable"

Sheila

Act One:

1. 'Oh-it's wonderful! Look- Mummy- isn't it a beauty? (describing the engagement ring)
2. 'But these girls aren't cheap labour – they're people.'
3. 'I'll never, never do it again.'
4. (laughs rather hysterically) Why – you fool – he knows. Of course he knows **(to Gerald when he tries to lie about his involvement with Daisy Renton)**

Act Two:

1. '(slowly, carefully now) You mustn't try to build up a kind of wall between us and that girl. If you do, then the Inspector will just break it down.
2. 'Mother, I think that was cruel and vile'

Act Three:

1. The point is, you don't seem to have learnt anything.
2. No, because I remember what he said, How he looked, and what he made me feel.

Mrs Birling

Act One:

1. To Sheila: "When you're married you'll realise that men with important work to do sometimes have to spend nearly all their time and energy on their business"

Act Two:

1. 'I don't suppose for a moment that we can understand why the girl committed suicide. Girls of that class-'
2. *Unlike the other three, I did nothing I'm ashamed of or that won't bear investigation. '*
3. *'As if a girl of that sort would refuse money.'*

Act Three:

1. *'I was the only one who didn't give in to him'*
2. *'Gerald you've argued this very cleverly and I'm most grateful'*

Eric

Act One:

1. "He could have kept her on instead of throwing her out"
2. "Why shouldn't she try for higher wages?"

Act Three:

1. "I was in that state when a chap easily turns nasty."
2. To Mrs Birling "(nearly at breaking point) Then – you killed her"
3. "And I agree with Sheila. It frightens me too"

Context 19 12	Context 1945
	<p>J.B. Priestley When the First World War broke out, Priestley joined the infantry and only just escaped death on a number of occasions. During the Second World War he broadcast a massively popular weekly radio programme which was attacked by the Conservatives as being too left-wing. During the 1930's Priestley became very concerned about the consequences of social inequality in Britain, and in 1942 Priestley and others set up a new political party, the Common Wealth Party, which argued for public ownership of land, greater democracy, and a new 'morality' in politics. The party merged with the Labour Party in 1945, but Priestley was influential in developing the idea of the Welfare State which began to be put into place at the end of the war.</p>
<p>Class: There were strong distinctions between the upper and lower classes. Social position was far more important in 1912 than it is today. Industrial production expanded massively in the nineteenth century and many industrialists made huge fortunes.</p>	<p>Class: Class distinctions had been greatly reduced as a result of two world wars.</p>
<p>Gender: Women were subservient to men. All a well off women could do was get married; a poor woman was seen as cheap labour.</p>	<p>Gender: As a result of the wars, women had earned a more valued place in society. In 1918 Women over 30 who were householders were given the vote. In 1928 women over 21 were given the vote</p>
<p>Society The ruling classes saw no need to change the status quo.</p>	<p>Society Many people within the audience watching this play would have lived through both World Wars. Certainly all people watching would have felt the consequences of both World Wars. There was a great desire for social change. Immediately after The Second World War, Clement Attlee's Labour Party won a landslide victory over Winston Churchill and the Conservatives.</p>

On the next few pages, you will find act summaries (as found on BBC Bitesize).

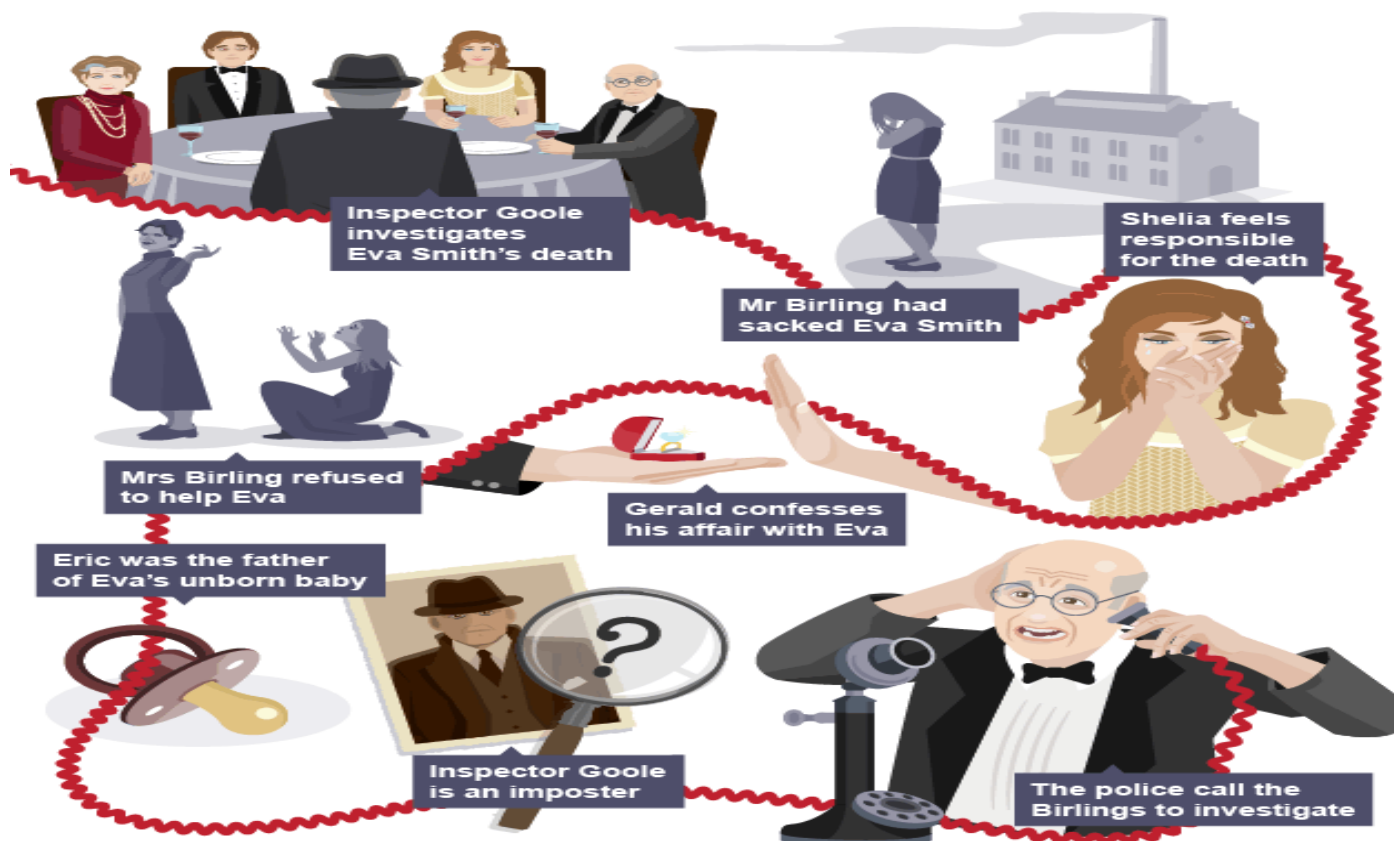
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zxhsyrd/revision/1>

Summary:

An Inspector Calls by J B Priestley, is a play that revolves around the apparent suicide of a young woman called Eva Smith.

In the play, the unsuspecting Birling family are visited by the mysterious Inspector Goole. He arrives just as they are celebrating the engagement of Sheila Birling to Gerald Croft. The Inspector reveals that a girl called Eva Smith, has taken her own life by drinking disinfectant. The family are horrified but initially confused as to why the Inspector has called to see them. What follows is a tense and uncomfortable investigation by an all-knowing Inspector through which the family discover that they are all in fact caught up in this poor girl's death.

Priestley uses dramatic irony to great effect in the play.



The Plot in 8 Key Points:

1. An inspector arrives at the Birling house. He tells them how a girl called Eva Smith has killed herself by drinking disinfectant - he wants to ask them some questions.
2. The Inspector reveals that the girl used to work in Arthur Birling's factory and he had her sacked for going on strike. Mr Birling refuses to accept any responsibility for her death.
3. The Inspector then reveals that Sheila thought that Eva had made fun of her, complained and got her sacked. Sheila is deeply ashamed and feels responsible for the girl's death.
4. The Inspector forces Gerald to confess to an affair he had with Eva. Sheila respects Gerald's honesty but returns the engagement ring he gave her.
5. It is revealed that Sybil Birling had refused to help the pregnant Eva.
6. It turns out that it was Eric who got Eva pregnant, and stole money from his father to help her.
7. The Inspector leaves. The family ring the infirmary and there is no record of a girl dying from drinking disinfectant.
8. Suddenly the phone rings, Mr Birling answers it, to his horror the phone call reveals that a young woman has just died from drinking disinfectant and the police are on their way to question them about it. The curtain falls and the play ends.

Detailed Plot Summary



Inspector Goole arrives at the Birling home

Before the play begins, Priestley gives detailed instructions on how the play should be staged. The action takes place in a single room with few adjustments needed during the performance. The stage directions specify that the house is 'not cosy and homelike' and the lighting needs to become 'brighter and harder' once the Inspector arrives. The first of the three acts opens with the Birling family and Gerald Croft celebrating the engagement of Sheila Birling and Gerald.

Mr Birling makes a speech

As it is a happy occasion, Mr Birling takes the opportunity to make a speech. During the speech he reveals how happy he is that Sheila is marrying Gerald because Gerald's parents are wealthy business owners. It is clear that Mr Birling feels this marriage will be to his advantage, he boasts that he is to be considered for a [knighthood](#). It is important to realise that the audience of 1945 would pick up on the fact that a lot of what Mr Birling says is incorrect. He states how war will never happen and that the Titanic is unsinkable. This would indicate to the audience that what Mr Birling says is not to be trusted. It might also alert them to a few other clues that Priestley gives in this opening scene that things are not as positive as they might appear in the Birling house. Eric Birling is distracted and a little drunk, while Sheila teases Gerald about him neglecting her last summer. During the speech, Mr Birling suggests that 'a man has to make his own way'. At this precise moment, Inspector Goole arrives.

Eva was sacked from the Birling factory



Inspector Goole interrogates Mr Birling (British premiere in 1946)

The Inspector tells the family that a girl died in the infirmary two hours ago. She took her own life by drinking disinfectant. The family are shocked by this news but don't see how they could be involved. The Inspector has a picture of the girl and a letter and diary she had written. He only ever shows one person the picture at a time - this is an important detail for later. He reveals the girl's name - Eva Smith, and that she used to work in Mr Birling's factory. Mr Birling had Eva sacked as she was the ringleader of a group of workers who had asked for higher pay. Mr Birling still can't see how he has anything to do with Eva's death. The Inspector points out that her being sacked could be the beginning of a chain of events that led to her suicide but Mr Birling is still not convinced.

Sheila Birling and Eva Smith



Inspector Goole makes Sheila feel guilty for her behaviour

The Inspector explains that Eva Smith had no family to turn to and was out of work for two months after being sacked by Mr Birling. He then turns his attention to Sheila who has been deeply affected by the news of the girl's suicide. He asks if she remembers making a complaint about a worker at the department store, Milwards. She does and then he shows her the photograph to confirm the girl's identity. Sheila is horrified when she finds out that her complaint led to Eva being sacked for a second time. Sheila gives a full and honest account of what happened in the store, admitting that she thought Eva had smiled when she tried on a dress that didn't suit her. Sheila is very ashamed of her behaviour.

Gerald and Eva Smith

The Inspector says that after being sacked from Milwards, Eva Smith changed her name to Daisy Renton. On hearing this, Gerald is shaken and privately Sheila presses him for more information. He admits that he was having an affair with Daisy over the summer and that was why he didn't see Sheila. The first act ends.

Act II begins with Gerald and Sheila discussing the affair. Gerald is initially hesitant to come clean but eventually tells the truth. Although Sheila respects him for his honesty, she returns his engagement ring. Gerald had picked up Daisy in a bar and had looked after her, giving her money and accommodation. While Gerald was fond of Daisy, she had much stronger feelings for him and was devastated when Gerald ended the relationship.

Mrs Birling and her involvement



Mrs Birling reveals how she knew Eva Smith

The Inspector tells us that after the affair with Gerald, Daisy went to live by the sea for two months - this was when she kept the diary he had found. Attention then turns to Mrs Birling who is revealed to be a prominent member of the Brumley Women's Charity Organisation. She has kept quiet about the fact that just two weeks earlier Daisy had approached the charity seeking help. Daisy had called herself Mrs Birling when she introduced herself to the charity, Mrs Birling did not like this and sent her away. The Inspector continues to question Mrs Birling and it turns out that Daisy was pregnant. Mrs Birling claims that the man who got her pregnant should be made an example of. Sheila knows what has happened by this point and begs her mother to stop talking, Eric enters the scene and Act II ends.

Eric's Confession



Mr and Mrs Birling are shocked by Eric's confession

Mrs Birling looks very stupid after Eric admits that it was he who got Daisy pregnant. Like Sheila, he is very ashamed of his actions and is honest about his involvement with Daisy. He tells the Inspector that he drinks heavily and how, during a night out, he met Daisy. He admits that the first time they met he walked her home and pressured her into letting him into her lodgings. He slept with her that evening and on a further evening. When he next met Daisy, he found out that she was pregnant. They both knew that they weren't in love and marriage wasn't an option but Eric wanted to help by giving her money. She refused to accept the money when she found out Eric had stolen it from his father's business.

The Inspector leaves

The family are distraught by this point and are arguing amongst themselves. The Inspector interrupts and makes a speech about how if we are not responsible for each other, there will be terrible consequences. The Inspector leaves and Gerald returns after a walk outside. He met a police officer and found out that there was no Inspector Goole on the force. They also begin to wonder if the girl mentioned to each of them could have been 'four or five different girls', suggesting that the whole evening could have been a trick. Gerald rings the local infirmary and discovers that no girl who had died by drinking disinfectant had been admitted. Mr and Mrs Birling and Gerald are excited by the idea that they may not be to blame. Eric and Sheila are aware that it makes no difference whether or not the Inspector was real, they still behaved badly.

The phone rings

Just as Mr Birling is mocking the Inspector and is celebrating that he is off the hook, the phone rings. Mr Birling answers and to his horror it is the police. They inform him that a girl has just died after drinking disinfectant and a police officer is on their way to ask the family some questions. The curtain falls and the play ends.

[Article: Chris Power introduces *An Inspector Calls* as a morality play that denounces the hypocrisy and callousness of capitalism and argues that a just society can only be achieved if all individuals feel a sense of social responsibility.](#)

[J B Priestley](#)'s play [*An Inspector Calls*](#), first performed in 1945, is a morality play disguised as a detective thriller. The morality play is a very old theatrical form, going back to the medieval period, which sought to instruct audiences about virtue and evil. Priestley's play revolves around a central mystery, the death of a young woman, but whereas a traditional detective story involves the narrowing down of suspects from several to one, *An Inspector Calls* inverts this process as, one by one, nearly all the characters in the play are found to be guilty. In this way, Priestley makes his larger point that society is guilty of neglecting and abusing its most vulnerable members. A just society, he states through his mysterious Inspector, is one that respects and exercises social responsibility.

What is social responsibility?

Social responsibility is the idea that a society's poorer members should be helped by those who have more than them. Priestley was a socialist, and his political beliefs are woven through his work. There are many different types and degrees of socialism, but a general definition is as follows: an ideal socialist society is one that is egalitarian – in other words, its citizens have equal rights and the same opportunities are available to everybody; resources are shared out fairly, and the means of production (the facilities and resources for producing goods) are communally owned.

Therefore, socialism stands in opposition to a capitalist society, such as ours, where trade and industry is mostly controlled by private owners, and these individuals or companies keep the profits made by their businesses, rather than distributing them evenly between the workers whose labour produced them.

It is precisely this difference between a socialist and a capitalist society that Arthur Birling is discussing in Act 1 when Inspector Goole arrives:

But the way some of these cranks talk and write now, you'd think everybody has to look after everybody else, as if we were all mixed up together like bees in a hive – a man has to mind his own business and look after himself...

The Inspector's arrival cuts Arthur Birling off mid-sentence, enacting in miniature the clash between two ideological positions that unfolds throughout the rest of the play.

The play's structure and setting

An Inspector Calls is a three-act play with one setting: [the dining room](#) of 'a fairly large suburban house belonging to a fairly prosperous manufacturer'. The year is 1912, and we are in the home of the Birling family in the fictional industrial city of Brumley in the North Midlands. In the dining room five people are finishing their dinner: four members of the Birling family and one guest. Arthur Birling is a factory owner; his wife Sibyl is on the committee of a charity, and is usually scolding someone for a social mistake. Their adult children are Sheila and Eric, and their guest is Gerald Croft, Sheila's fiancé, who is from a wealthier manufacturing family than the Birlings. One other person is present: Edna the maid, who is going back and forth to the sideboard with dirty plates and glasses.

Priestley's description of the set at the beginning of the play script stresses the solidity of the Birlings' dining room: 'It is a solidly built room, with good solid furniture of the period'. But a later section of this scene-setting – on the walls are 'imposing but tasteless pictures and engravings', and the 'general effect is substantial and comfortable and old-fashioned but not cosy and homelike' – suggests that although the Birlings' have wealth and social standing, they are not loving to one another or compassionate to others. The setting of the play in a single room also suggests their self-absorption, and disconnectedness from the wider world.

Priestley establishes each of the characters in this opening scene. Arthur Birling is a capitalist businessman through and through, entirely focussed on profit even when discussing the marriage of his daughter:

I'm sure you'll make her happy. You're just the kind of son-in-law I've always wanted. Your father and I have been friendly rivals in business for some time now – though Crofts Limited are both older and bigger than Birling and Company – and now you've brought us together, and perhaps we may look forward to the time when Crofts and Birlings are no longer competing but are working together – for lower costs and higher prices.

His wife Sibyl scolds him, telling him it isn't the occasion for that kind of talk, establishing her as someone primarily interested in doing things properly and conforming to established social rules. Sheila, at this stage in the play, seems to be preoccupied by the thought of her marriage to Gerald, a privileged and deeply conservative man of 30, while the youngest Birling, Eric, appears more interested in the port going around the table than anything anyone is saying.

Priestley has some fun using this opening section to show how wrong Arthur Birling's opinions are, thus positioning the play as anti-capitalist. He does this through the use of dramatic irony, having Arthur state opinions that the audience, with the advantage of hindsight, knows to be incorrect. When Eric mentions the likelihood of war – remember that the play is set two years before the outbreak of [World War One](#) – but was written and first performed 30 years later – Arthur cuts him off:

... you'll hear some people say that war's inevitable. And to that I say – fiddlesticks! The Germans don't want war. Nobody wants war, except some half-civilised folks in the Balkans. And why? There's too much at stake these days. Everything to lose and nothing to gain by war.

He goes on to describe an ocean liner that is clearly meant to be the *Titanic* (which sank in April 1912) as 'unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable', and suggests that in time, 'let's say, in the forties', 'all these Capital versus Labour agitations and all these silly little war scares' will be long forgotten. In fact, as audiences in 1945 would have been keenly aware, the period between 1912 and 1945 saw a huge number of strikes, including the monumental General Strike of 1926, and not one but two global conflicts, the second of which had only recently ended.

Dramatic irony is rarely a subtle technique, but Priestley's use of it is exceptionally blunt. This could be considered clumsy, but it underlines the fact that *An Inspector Calls* is a play with a point to make, and a character whose sole job is to make it.

The Inspector

When Inspector Goole arrives everything changes. He tells the Birlings and Gerald that a young woman, Eva Smith, has committed suicide by drinking disinfectant, and he has questions about the case. Over the course of the next two acts he will lay responsibility for Eva Smith's death at the feet of each of the Birlings and Gerald Croft, showing how their indifference to social responsibility has contributed to the death of this young woman. Or is it young women? He shows each person an identifying photograph of the dead woman one by one, leading Gerald to later suspect they were all shown photographs of different women.

But [who is the Inspector?](#) In the play's penultimate twist, he is revealed not to be a police inspector at all, yet, as Eric states, 'He was our Police Inspector, all right'. Details about him are scant. He says he is newly posted to Brumley, and he is impervious to Arthur Birling's threats about his close relationship with the chief constable 'I don't play golf', he tells Birling. 'I didn't suppose you did', the industrialist replies: a brief exchange that makes a clear point about class, and the battle between egalitarianism and privilege. Beyond these sparse biographical details, the Inspector seems less like a person and more like a moral force, one which mercilessly pursues the wrongs committed by the Birlings and Gerald, demanding that they face up to the consequences of their actions. His investigation culminates in a speech that is a direct expression of Priestley's own view of how a just society should operate, and is the exact antithesis of the speech Arthur Birling made in Act 1:

We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other. And I tell you that the time will soon come when if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish. We don't live alone. Good night.

Hypocrisy

Throughout the course of the Inspector's investigation, and the testimony of Gerald and each of the Birlings, the supposedly respectable city of Brumley is revealed to be a place of deep class divisions and hypocrisy. As Arthur Birling's behaviour towards Eva makes clear, it is a place where factory owners exploit their workers as a matter of course – part of his 'a man has to look after himself' philosophy. Eric accuses his father of hypocrisy for sacking the

dead girl after she asked for higher wages, because the Birling firm always seeks to sell their products at the highest possible prices.

This exploitation is not limited to the factories. In the testimony of Gerald, and later Eric, the Palace Theatre emerges as a place where prostitutes gather, and where the supposedly great and good of the town go to meet them. When Gerald first met Eva, as he describes it, she was trapped in a corner by 'Old Joe Meggarty, half-drunk and goggle-eyed'. Sibyl Birling, scandalised, asks 'surely you don't mean Alderman Meggarty?' An unsurprised Sheila tells her mother 'horrible old Meggarty' has a reputation for groping young women: the younger characters are either more knowledgeable or frank about the dark secrets of the city, whereas the older Birlings live in a dream world of respectability, or hypocritically turn a blind eye to any disreputable behaviour by supposedly respectable people.

The play begins with the characters' corrupt, unpleasant natures safely hidden away (a respectable group in a respectable home, enjoying that most respectable event, an engagement party); it ends with naked displays of hypocrisy. When it is confirmed that Goole is not really a policeman, Arthur, Sibyl and Gerald immediately regain an unjustified sense of outrage. 'Then look at the way he talked to me', Arthur Birling complains. 'He must have known I was an ex-Lord Mayor and a magistrate and so forth'. Once it is confirmed, in the play's penultimate twist, that there is no suicide lying on a mortuary slab, they forget the immoral, uncharitable behaviour they were recently accused of – things, remember, that they undoubtedly did – and begin talking about getting away with things.

Only Sheila and Eric recognise and resist this hypocritical behaviour. 'I suppose we're all nice people now!' Sheila remarks sarcastically. Earlier she broke off her engagement to Gerald, telling him 'You and I aren't the same people who sat down to dinner here'. Likewise, Eric angrily accuses his father of 'beginning to pretend now that nothing's really happened at all'. Priestley's vision is cautiously optimistic insofar as the youngest characters are changed by the Inspector's visit, while the older Birlings and Gerald appear to be too set in their beliefs to change them.

Eva Smith: Everywoman

The play leaves open the question of whether Eva Smith is a real woman (who sometimes uses different names, including Daisy Renton), or multiple people the Inspector pretends are one. There is no right answer here, and in terms of Priestley's message it is beside the point: because his socialist principles demand that everyone should be treated the same, in his opinion abusing one working-class woman is equivalent to abusing all working-class women. Eva Smith is, therefore, not an individual victim, but a universal one.

Poster for *An Inspector Calls* at the Leningrad Comedy Theatre, 1945

This helps explain the effectiveness of the play's final twist. Having discovered that Inspector Goole is not a real policeman, and that there is no dead woman called Eva Smith at the Brumley morgue, a phone call announces that a woman has killed herself, and an inspector is on his way to question the Birlings. The invented story Inspector Goole related has now come true. This seems a bizarre coincidence with which to end the play, but if we consider *An Inspector Calls* as a moral fable, and not as naturalistic theatre, it begins to seem much more like a logical, even inevitable, conclusion. The characters have been confronted with the error of their ways; some have repented, some have not. Now is the time for judgement, and for the

watching audience to ask themselves, according to Priestley's design, are any of these people like me?

Article: [An Inspector Calls: the message behind the new BBC thriller](#)
As Priestley's *An Inspector Calls* comes to BBC One, Tim Martin examines the biting message behind its cosy whodunnit façade

By [Tim Martin](#)

‘The way some of these cranks talk now, you’d think everybody has to look after everybody else, as if we were all mixed up like bees in a hive. Community and all that nonsense.’ The lines belong to Arthur Birling, the wealthy industrialist celebrating with his family as the curtain rises on [JB Priestley](#)’s *An Inspector Calls*, but the uncharitable sentiments obviously aren’t confined either to 1912, the year in which Priestley’s play is set, or to 1947, the year of its UK premiere (it first opened in Russia 70 years ago). Instead, this strange and didactic piece of theatre has lasted longer than anything else its author wrote, and its story about the moral audit of an upper-crust family continues to appeal to audiences well beyond those for whom it was originally conceived.

Besides the 1954 film with Alastair Sim and a clutch of periodic revivals on TV, *An Inspector Calls* has also been a Soviet-era Russian mini-series (*Inspektor Gull*, 1979), a madcap cinematic comedy set among the nouveau riche of Hong Kong (released in February) and, as of last year, has taken its place on the GCSE syllabus. Now it returns to the BBC in a new adaptation directed by Aisling Walsh, with David Thewlis as the mysterious Inspector Goole who turns the lives of the Birling family upside down.

In one sense, the appeal of *An Inspector Calls* is easy to understand. Set before the First World War but written and performed at the end of the Second, it came packaged from birth with a kind of comforting period remoteness, and its presentation is that of a classic drawing-room thriller in the Agatha Christie mould: as the Birlings are celebrating their daughter’s engagement over dinner, a policeman arrives to speak to them about the suicide, earlier in the day, of a pregnant woman. Every member of the family denies any connection with the victim, but, as the evening wears on, it becomes apparent that they have, knowingly or blindly, played a role in her downfall. The wealthy paterfamilias sacked her from his factory after a labour dispute, the daughter arranged to have her dismissed from a position as a shop assistant, and so on. Under the scrutiny of the appallingly candid Goole, whose performer Priestley insisted should “create an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness”, the mystery of her death is slowly solved.

If the conceit of *An Inspector Calls* is familiar, though, the execution is more unusual. Priestley began writing plays in the early Thirties, after a successful career as a novelist and essayist: his book *The Good Companions* (1929) won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, became a bestseller, and largely freed Priestley from financial worries thereafter.

Miranda Richardson as Sybil Birling, *An Inspector Calls* (Photo: BBC Pictures/Drama Republic)

Writing for the stage offered him the opportunity to experiment – and, particularly, to experiment with the dramatic possibilities of several then-fashionable theories of time. The first of these plays was *Dangerous Corner* (1932), in which a household of couples suffer an evening of brutally traumatic revelations before the play resets to the beginning and events take a different path.

By the time of *An Inspector Calls*, Priestley was fully at ease with a mystical dimension in his work that led the psychologist Carl Jung, a frequent correspondent, to praise his “superhuman faculty of looking at things with a straight and an inverted eye”. Not only does the play make use of one of his signature timeslips – as with *Dangerous Corner*, an adjustment to the flow of events in the final moments acts as a sort of closing twist to the play – it also strongly encourages metaphysical speculation about its central figure: is the implacably knowledgeable Goole merely an impostor, or the supernatural manifestation of some higher ethical court?

Naturally, opinions and stagings vary. Walsh’s production closes this loophole with a determinedly religious take on the character, but Stephen Daldry’s [influential National Theatre production](#) from 1992 (staged, like this year’s revival, after a general election that returned a Conservative government in the face of most predictions) seemed to present Goole as a manifestation of revolutionary consciousness, ferociously “inspecting” the unreflective privilege of the Birlings while a Greek chorus of voiceless masses loitered outside their house.

This doesn’t seem out of line with the play’s ambitions. The period setting and creaky detective plot serve several functions in *An Inspector Calls*, but one of them is surely a kind of snake-charming: because the play takes its place so unthreateningly in the theatrical tradition of the drawing-room thriller, its political aspect can be more easily dissimulated. As the action is located within the moral strictures of the detective story, it forces audiences to consider its drama of capital and social class as a sequence of decisions about personal morality.

This topic was one of Priestley’s preoccupations, and, by 1947, it had already contributed heavily to the success and failure of one of his most cherished projects. Beginning in May 1940, as the Phoney War came to an end and German troops pushed into the Low Countries and France, Priestley began a sequence of Sunday-night broadcasts on the Home Service that soon made him a national figure. Called the *Postscripts to the News*, they were artful and thoughtful pieces of morale-boosting propaganda, in which Priestley developed the persona of “Jolly Jack Priestley”, the straight-talking, unpretentious Yorkshireman who simply told the truth about Britain as he saw it.

“I have never pretended to be the victim of the artistic temperament, whatever that means,” began one talk. “I’m not very fond of the House of Commons – I don’t mean as a political institution, but as a place to spend an afternoon in,” began another. In his role as man of the people, Priestley rebutted Nazi propaganda as fanciful nonsense while praising the British fighting spirit, the hard work of the munitions factories, the fortitude of Britain’s politicians, and so on. “I am simply a private person giving his impression of what is happening,” he reflected in one talk. “No official tells me what to say. There are no strategy and tactics in the background, no propaganda campaign at all.”

The Postscripts had an incalculable effect on British morale in the period after Dunkirk, and onward throughout the Battle of Britain and the bombing raids on London. In 1941, however, the second series of broadcasts was brought to an end by the Minister of Information, Duff Cooper. Priestley maintained that this was because of his emphasis on [socialist values in rebuilding postwar Britain](#), though, as the historian Siân Nicholas has shown, the real reason is likely to have had more to do with the debate in government about the role of powerful personalities in wartime broadcasting.

No such strictures applied to the stage, though Priestley seems to have recognised the wisdom of complicating, if not concealing, his messages. Although the Inspector's final speech acquires a certain dramatic irony from the play's setting in 1912, its tone of Old Testament prophecy leaves little doubt that its author meant it for the ages. "We don't live alone," booms Goole before stalking from the stage. "We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other. And I tell you that the time will soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish."

This reads equally well as apocalyptic socialism, pacifist prophecy or imitation of Christ, and it is the cryptic motor that has powered *An Inspector Calls* through 70 years of changing culture. Long may it run.

An Inspector Calls Key words:

Sheila:

1. Spoilt,
2. Naïve,
3. Remorseful,
4. Compassionate,
5. Curious,
6. Influenced,
7. Angry,

Mr Birling:

1. Arrogant
2. Selfish
3. Proud
4. Materialistic
5. Capitalism

Inspector:

1. Omniscient
2. Powerful
3. God Like
4. Ghost
5. Moral Compass
6. Priestley's mouthpiece
7. Forceful
8. Frustrated
9. Spokesperson for the poor
10. Warning from the future

Eric – Key words:

1. Embarrassed
2. Awkward
3. Gluttonous (drinks to excess)
4. Frustrated
5. Immature
6. Guilty
7. Remorseful (feels regret)
8. Willing to change
9. Influence by the Inspector

Gerald- Key words:

1. Arrogant
2. Wealthy
3. Lustful (has an affair with Daisy Renton)
4. Lies
5. Unwilling to change
6. Shows some remorse

Mrs Birling:

1. Proud (in a negative way)
2. Lies
3. Uncaring
4. Lacks compassion (doesn't care for those who are less fortunate than her)
5. Unwilling to change or take responsibility

Analysing the play key words:

1. Capitalism
2. Socialism
3. Hierarchy
4. Patriarchy
5. Inequality
6. Equality
7. Moral Compass
8. Didactic – the play teaches the audience something/ promotes a certain message

Key themes:

1. Generation Gap
2. Truth v Lies
3. Responsibility
4. Social Class
5. Morality
6. The Supernatural
7. Time
8. Discrimination

Example Exam Question

Section A: Modern Prose or Drama

How does Priestley present the theme of discrimination within the play?

[30 marks] AO4 [4 marks]

Or

How does Priestley create tension at the end of Act One?

[30 marks] AO4 [4 marks]

****Please remember that you will NOT have a copy of the play and you WILL be expected to quote from throughout the play****

Bayonet Charge

Suddenly he awoke and was running – **raw**
In raw-seamed hot khaki, his sweat heavy,
Stumbling across a field of clods towards **a green hedge**
That dazzled with rifle fire, hearing
Bullets smacking the belly out of the air –
He lugged a rifle numb as a smashed arm;
The patriotic tear that had brimmed in his eye
Sweating like molten iron from the centre of his chest, –

In bewilderment then he almost stopped –
In what cold clockwork of the stars and the nations
Was he the hand pointing that second? He was running
Like a man who has jumped up in the dark and runs
Listening between his footfalls for the reason
Of his still running, and his foot hung like
Statuary in mid-stride. **Then the shot-slashed furrows**

Threw up a yellow hare that rolled like a flame
And crawled in a threshing circle, its mouth wide
Open silent, its eyes standing out.
He plunged past with his bayonet toward the green hedge,
King, honour, human dignity, etcetera
Dropped like luxuries in a yelling alarm
To get out of that blue crackling air
His terror's touchy dynamite.

Analyse me – Stanza One (language and structure):

Analyse me – Stanza Two (language and structure):

Analyse me – Stanza Three (language and structure):

Technique checklist and hints: Repetition; Enjambment; End stop; Caesura; metaphor; verbs; adjectives; adverbs; onomatopoeia; punctuation; simile; personification; alliteration; sibilance; symbolism; line length

Exam Question:

Compare the ways poets present ideas about fear in 'Bayonet Charge' and in **one** other poem from 'Power and conflict'. [30 marks]

Themes:

- Power
- Fear
- Death
- Identity
- War Vs Nature

Context:

- *Bayonet Charge* is perhaps unusual for a Ted Hughes poem in that it focuses on a nameless soldier in the First World War (1914-18).
- It describes the experience of 'going over-the-top'. This was when soldiers hiding in trenches were ordered to 'fix bayonets' (attach the long knives to the end of their rifles) and climb out of the trenches to charge an enemy position twenty or thirty metres away. The aim was to capture the enemy trench. The poem describes how this process transforms a soldier from a living thinking person into a dangerous weapon of war.
- Hughes writes about the elements and aspects of the natural world in much of his poetry. The poet Simon Armitage said that for Hughes, poetry was 'a connecting rod between nature and humanity'.

- It belongs among a group of poems dealing with the First World War, in which the poet's father and uncle fought. Hughes grew up believing that 'the whole region [West Yorkshire] was in mourning' for that War.

Key words:

- Frantic
- Morality
- Futility
- Irony
- Questioning
- In medias res
- Blind obedience
- Violence of man

Charge of the Light Brigade – Revision

Analyse me (language and structure):

*Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.*

Analyse me (language and structure):

*Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,*

Analyse me (language and structure):

*Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,*

Analyse me (language and structure):

Boldly they rode and well,

Analyse me (language and structure):

*Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them*

Analyse me (language and structure):

*When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!*

Technique checklist and hints: repetition, anaphora, metaphor, alliteration, rhetorical question.

Exam Question:

Compare the ways poets present ideas about the effects of war in 'Charge of the Light Brigade' and in **one** other poem from 'Power and conflict'. **[30 marks]**

Themes:

- **The heroism and glory of war**
- **Sacrifice**
- **Devastation of war**
- **Context:**
- **Britain and France feared Russia's ambition to spread its power southwards as the Turkish Empire collapsed. War broke out in 1854.**
- **In September, the Allies landed in the Crimea, in southern Russia, and besieged Sebastopol. In October the Russians attacked the British base at Balaclava. During this battle, the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade took place. The British cavalry commander mistook his orders to retake some guns held by the Russians. Instead he told his men to charge the main Russian position, which was at the head of a valley bristling with artillery. The 600 horsemen gallantly obeyed but two thirds of the force were killed or wounded. The Charge is the best known example of the heroism and stupidity of war.**

Keywords (ensure you know what these words mean and how they link to the poem):

- **Glory**
- **Heroism**
- **Commemoration**
- **Obedience**
- **Celebratory**
- **Courage**
- **Sacrifice**
- **Honour**

Checking Out Me History – Revision

Checking Out Me History

Dem tell me
Dem tell me
Wha dem want to tell me

Analyse me (language and structure):

Bandage up me eye with me own history
Blind me to me own identity

Dem tell me bout 1066 and all dat
dem tell me bout Dick Whittington and he cat
But Toussaint L'Ouverture
no dem never tell me bout dat

Analyse me (language and structure):

*Toussaint
a slave
with vision
lick back
Napoleon
battalion
and fi rst Black
Republic born
Toussaint de thorn
to de French
Toussaint de beacon
of de Haitian Revolution*

Analyse me (language and structure):

Dem tell me bout de man who discover de balloon
and de cow who jump over de moon
Dem tell me bout de dish ran away with de spoon
but dem never tell me bout Nanny de maroon

*Nanny
see-far woman
of mountain dream
fi re-woman struggle
hopeful stream
to freedom river*

Analyse me (language and structure):

Dem tell me bout Lord Nelson and Waterloo
but dem never tell me bout Shaka de great Zulu
Dem tell me bout Columbus and 1492
but what happen to de Caribs and de Arawaks too

Dem tell me bout Florence Nightingale and she lamp
and how Robin Hood used to camp
Dem tell me bout ole King Cole was a merry ole soul
but dem never tell me bout Mary Seacole

Analyse me (language and structure):

*From Jamaica
she travel far
to the Crimean War
she volunteer to go
and even when de British said no
she still brave the Russian snow
a healing star*

*among the wounded
a yellow sunrise
to the dying*

Dem tell me
Dem tell me wha dem want to tell me
But now I checking out me own history
I carving out me identity

Analyse me (language and structure):

Technique checklist and hints: Rhyme, rhythm, rhyming couplets, end rhyme, Caribbean dialect, abbreviated syntax, repetition, refrain, lyricism, metaphor, juxtaposition, violent imagery, enjambment.

Exam Question:

Compare the ways poets present ideas about power and authority in 'Checking Out Me History' and in **one** other poem from 'Power and conflict'. **[30 marks]**

Themes:

- **Power/ Lack of power**
- **Past/ Present**
- **Education / Knowledge / Retelling history**
- **Voice / Unheard**
- **Context:**
- **John Agard** was born in British Guiana (now called Guyana) in the Caribbean, in 1949. He moved to the UK in the late 1970s and is well known for **powerful and fun performances** of his work.
- He uses non-standard phonetic spelling (written as a word sounds) to represent his own accent, and writes about what it is like being black to challenge racist attitudes, especially those which are unthinking.
- This poem draws on Agard's experience to make us look at the way history is taught, and at how we conceive our identity as we learn about cultural traditions and narratives. It becomes clear that Agard had to follow a history curriculum biased towards whites, especially British whites, so that he learned about mythical, nursery rhyme characters instead of living black people from the past.
- He **challenges this view of history** and cites some major black figures to balance the bias and create a basis for his own identity.

Keywords (ensure you know what these words mean and how they link to the poem):

- Authoritarian
- Eurocentric
- Abbreviated syntax
- End rhyme
- Celebratory
- Critical
- Musical score

London - Revision

London

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.
And **mark** in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, **marks** of woe.

In **every cry of every Man**,
In **every Infants cry** of fear,
In **every voice**: in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro' **midnight streets** I hear
How the **youthful Harlots** curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse

WILLIAM BLAKE

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Technique checklist and hints: quatrains, alternate rhyme, imagery, religious imagery, metaphor, emotive language, juxtaposition, anaphora

Exam Question:

Compare the ways poets present ideas about emotional conflict in 'London' and in one other poem from 'Power and conflict' collection.

Themes:

- **Order/ chaos**
- **Conflict**
- **Fragility of life/vulnerability**

- **Innocence/experience**
- **Biblical imagery**
- **Urban Decay**
- **Freedom/entrapment**

Glossary:

- **Chartered** = shows the rights and privileges of the area/street
- **Woe** = sadness
- **Appalls** = appalled, disgusted, dismayed, can't believe it
- **Hapless** = unlucky/unfortunate
- **Harlots** = prostitute
- **Blights** = dying, wilting, diseased
- **Hearse** = black car which takes someone who has died to their burial

Context:

William Blake was a poet and artist who specialised in illuminated texts, often of a religious nature. He rejected established religion for various reasons. One of the main ones was the failure of the established Church to help children in London who were forced to work. Blake lived and worked in the capital, so was arguably well placed to write clearly about the conditions people who lived there faced.

In 1789, the French people revolted against the monarchy and aristocracy, using violence and murder to overthrow those in power. Many saw the French Revolution as inspirational - a model for how ordinary, disadvantaged people could seize power. Blake alludes to the revolution in *London*, arguably suggesting that the experience of living there could encourage a revolution on the streets of the capital.

Keywords (ensure you know what these words mean and how they link to the poem):

- Order /chaos
- Antithesis/juxtaposition
- Entrapment
- Heresy
- Immorality

Ozymandias – Revision

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
**Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,**
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, **stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;**
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
**My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare**
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Technique checklist and hints: Adjectives; sonnet; caesura; alliteration; personification; metaphor; verbs; exclamations; enjambment; hyperbole

Exam Question:

Compare the ways poets present ideas about power in 'Ozymandias' and in **one** other poem from 'Power and conflict'. [30 marks]

Themes:

- Power/ Abuse of power
- Time/ Legacy
- Conflict
- Death

Context:

Ozymandias is another name for one of Egypt's most famous pharaohs – Ramses II or Ramses the Great. He was a warrior king and a builder of temples, statues and monuments.

Shelley was critical of the royal family and monarchical government in England and sympathised with the ideals behind the French Revolution. 'Ozymandias' has been read by some as a condemnation of undemocratic or tyrannical government, reflecting Shelley's radical views.

The statue of Ozymandias (Ramses II)—a crumbling relic in Shelley's poem—was originally fifty-seven feet high. An inscription on it told onlookers, "I am Ozymandias, king of kings," and challenged them to perform greater works than he did, according to Diodorus Siculus, a Greek historian of the First Century BC.

.....Shelley's ridicule of the powerful Egyptian ruler and the pharaoh's arrogant boast on the pedestal was a veiled condemnation of the English government under King George III. Shelley abhorred oppressive monarchical government and favored revolution to overthrow it. He was inspired, in part, by the ideas of Thomas Paine, author of two documents that promoted the American Revolution: "Common Sense" and "Crisis."

.....In "Ozymandias," Shelley's focus on decay as the ultimate destiny of authoritarian rule was an oblique warning that Britain could expect the same if it did not change its ways.

Keywords (ensure you know what these words mean and how they link to the poem):

- **Tyrant**
- **Dictator**
- **Sonnet**
- **Allegory**
- **Romanticism**
- **Irony**

Storm on the Island – Revision

We are prepared: we build our houses squat,
Sink walls in rock and roof them with good slate.
This wizened earth has never troubled us
With hay, so, as you see, there are no stacks
Or stooks that can be lost. Nor are there trees
Which might prove company when it blows full
Blast: you know what I mean - leaves and branches
Can raise a tragic chorus in a gale
So that you listen to the thing you fear
Forgetting that it pummels your house too
But there are no trees, no natural shelter.
You might think that the sea is company,
Exploding comfortably down on the cliffs
But no: when it begins, the flung spray hits
The very windows, spits like a tame cat
Turned savage. We just sit tight while wind dives
And strafes invisibly. Space is a salvo,
We are bombarded with the empty air.
Strange, it is a huge nothing that we fear.

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Technique checklist and hints: Oxymoron, Simile, Alliteration, Tense, Short sentence, Enjambment

Exam Question:

Compare the ways poets present ideas about the power of nature in 'Storm on the Island' and in **one** other poem from 'Power and conflict'. [30 marks]

Themes:

- Man vs nature
- Sense of Community
- Isolation

Context:

- Our poet, Seamus Heaney, is an Irishman, so Heaney's surely witnessed his share of violent storms before, even if he didn't live right on the water. That's likely where the idea for "Storm on the Island" came about.
- This poem was included in Heaney's collection, *Death of a Naturalist*, from 1966. This book is full of natural imagery; check out "Blackberry Picking" or "Digging" from the same collection. Heaney pays very close attention to what is happening in nature, and in this particular collection he also draws from his own childhood growing up in Northern Ireland.
- **The first 8 letters of the poem spell: STORMONT**
- Stormont is the seat of the power sharing Northern Ireland Assembly brought about by the Good Friday agreement. This fused both sides of The Troubles together - Irish Nationalists (mainly Catholics) who want a united, independent Irish Republic and Unionists (mainly Protestants) who favour ongoing political union between Northern Ireland and Britain. The Assembly is currently in crisis following the resignation of the Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness. **COULD THE POEM BE ABOUT A DIFFERENT KIND OF STORM?**

Keywords (ensure you know what these words mean and how they link to the poem):

- **Brutality**
- **Vicious**
- **Insignificance**
- **Endless**
- **Inevitable**
- **Menacing**

Exposure – Revision

Analyse me (language and structure):

*“Watching, we hear mad gusts
tugging on the wire”*

Analyse me (language and structure):

*“Slowly our ghosts drag home: glimpsing the sunk
fires”*

Analyse me (language and structure):

“But nothing happens”

Analyse me (language and structure):

*“Sudden successive flights of bullets streak the
silence
Less deadly than the air that shudders black with
snow”*

Analyse me (language and structure):

*“Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds
that knife us ...”*

Analyse me (language and structure):

*“For God's invincible spring our love is made afraid;
Therefore, not loath, we lie out here; therefore were
born,
For love of God seems dying”*

Technique checklist and hints: repetition, anaphora, metaphor, alliteration, rhetorical question, imagery, personification

Exam Question:

Compare the ways poets present ideas about the power of nature in ‘Exposure’ and in **one** other poem from ‘Power and conflict’.

Themes:

- **Power of nature**
- **Sacrifice**
- **Despair**
- **War**
- **Futility**

Context:

- World War One began in 1914 and at first it was predicted that it would end swiftly. However, as both sides dug trenches across France and Belgium, the opposing armies became locked in a stalemate that neither side could break. By the winter of 1917 both sides had sustained massive losses and extreme cold weather made the misery even worse. It was said to be the coldest winter in living memory. The soldiers suffered from hypothermia and frostbite and many developed trench foot, a crippling disease caused by feet being wet and cold and confined in boots for days on end.
- Owen and his fellow soldiers were forced to lie outside in freezing conditions for two days. He wrote: “We were marooned in a frozen desert. There was not a sign of life on the horizon and a thousand signs of death... The marvel is we did not all die of cold.” It was against this background that Owen wrote *Exposure*.

Keywords (ensure you know what these words mean and how they link to the poem):

- **Forsaken**
- **Anarchic**
- **Isolation/Loneliness**
- **Helplessness**
- **Futility**
- **Foreboding**
- **Anxious**
- **Overwhelmed**
- **Chaotic**
- **Despairing**
- **Tiresome**
- **Weary**
- **Frustrated**

War Photographer - Revision

War Photographer

In his darkroom he is finally alone
 with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.
 The only light is red and softly glows,
 as though this were a church and he
 a priest preparing to intone a Mass.
 Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.

He has a job to do. Solutions slop in trays
 beneath his hands, which did not tremble then
 though seem to now. Rural England. Home again
 to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel,
 to fields which don't explode beneath the feet
 of running children in a nightmare heat.

Something is happening. A stranger's features
 faintly start to twist before his eyes,
 a half-formed ghost. He remembers the cries
 of this man's wife, how he sought approval
 without words to do what someone must
 and how the blood stained into foreign dust.

A hundred agonies in black-and-white
 from which his editor will pick out five or six
 for Sunday's supplement. The reader's eyeballs prick
 with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers.
 From the aeroplane he stares impassively at where
 he earns his living and they do not care.

CAROL ANN DUFFY

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Analyse me (language and structure):

Technique checklist and hints: regular verse, rhyming couplets, contrast, juxtaposition, religious imagery, metaphor, emotive words, adjectives, verbs, tone.

Exam Question:

Compare the ways poets present ideas about war in 'War Photographer' and in **one** other poem from 'Power and conflict'. [30 marks]

Poems to link to:

Poem	Similarities	Differences
London		
The Charge of the Light Brigade		
Exposure		

Storm on the Island		
Bayonet Charge		
Ozymandias		
Checking out me History		

Themes:

- **Order/ chaos**
- **Fragility of life**
- **Biblical imagery**
- **Horror of war**
- **Increasing indifference felt towards victims of war**

How does each theme link to “War Photographer” and the poem that you are going to compare it to?

Your ideas about themes:

Context:

Duffy was inspired to write this poem by her friendship with a war photographer. She was especially intrigued by the peculiar challenge faced by these people whose job requires them to record terrible, horrific events without being able to directly help their subjects.

Duffy perhaps shares an affinity with these photojournalists - while they use the medium of photography to convey certain truths about the human condition, she uses words and language to do the same job. Throughout the poem, Duffy provokes us to consider our own response when confronted with the photographs that we regularly see in our newspaper supplements, and why so many of us have become desensitised to these images.

By viewing this issue from the perspective of the photographer, she also reveals the difficulties of such an occupation. By the end of the poem, it is clear her subject straddles two vastly different worlds yet increasingly feels he belongs to neither

Keywords (ensure you know what these words mean and how they link to the poem):

- Order / chaos
- Aloofness/ sense of distance
- Peculiar position of photographer
- Indifferent response
- Past / present

How could you apply these words to the poem?

Links to more revision on this poem:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zsp82hv/revision/1>