

Answers

Cluster 1: Love and relationships

Answers to the AQA exam-style questions are indicative only and highlight the key things that should be included in your response. You may cover other points. It's how your answer is written and how it fits with the mark scheme that will determine the quality of your answer.

When We Two Parted, Lord Byron

p.10–13

p.11 Do it!



Emotion/feeling	Quotation
Despair	'In silence and tears'; 'Too deeply to tell'
Sorrow	'Truly that hour foretold/Sorrow to this'; 'In silence I grieve'
Horror at the depth of his emotions	'It felt like the warning/Of what I feel now.'
Guilt/shame	'And share in its shame'
Guilt/horror	'A shudder comes o'er me'
Anger/questioning	'Why wert thou so dear?'
Regret/bitterness	'Long, long shall I rue thee'
Resentful	'With silence and tears'

p.11 Stretch it!



The narrator begins by blaming the lover for becoming cold which is emphasised with the emotional distance suggested by 'Colder thy kiss'. The narrator feels the horror of his emotions as he sees the 'warnings' of the pain that will follow. He questions his love, 'Why wert thou so dear?' and knows that he will regret their relationship, blaming her for making him 'rue' her 'Too deeply to tell'. His final thought about the 'silence and tears' if they should meet in the future is resentful, for he blames the need for secrecy and her 'broken vows' for his grief.

p.12 Do it!



A further theme in the poem could be the theme of death. In the poem we are shown the death of a relationship. It is obvious that this is a one-sided parting, and the lover is described in images of death with a 'pale' and 'cold' cheek. The narrator's love is felt like grief, but because of the secrecy of their relationship he must grieve 'In silence'.

p.12 Stretch it!



One example of bitterness is 'They know not I knew thee,/Who knew thee too well'. 'They know not' – the people who are talking about the lover have no awareness of the relationship the narrator has with her, therefore the gossips are not guarded when they talk about the lover. The narrator bitterly refers to the secrecy of their relationship.

'Who knew thee too well' – the narrator bitterly reflects again on the secret and dishonest nature of the relationship, this time adding that he 'knew her too well'. This suggests that their relationship was an intimate and sexual one, yet because of the secrecy, no one can be aware of the depth of their bond.

p.13 REVIEW IT!



- 1 'Sever' suggests that the relationship has been cut away from the narrator against his will.
- 2 'Colder thy kiss' suggests that the relationship is dying and there is distance between them.
- 3 The lover's vows are 'all broken'.
- 4 The narrator 'shares' in the shame, then a 'shudder comes o'er' him.
- 5 The lover's name sounds the tolling of a funeral bell.
- 6 The poem's rhyme scheme is: ABABCD CD.
- 7 The message could be that our past loves never leave us.
- 8 Regretful/sorrowful/heartbroken
- 9 The narrator could mean that the lover does not have the weight of emotion or guilt; or the narrator could mean that the lover's reputation is damaged and lacks substance.
- 10 The narrator could mean that the lover is the subject of gossip and by the secret and illicit nature of their relationship, and that he must share in that guilt and shame.



p.13 AQA exam-style question

Compare how poets present heartbreak in 'When We Two Parted' and in one other poem from Love and relationships.

You might choose to compare 'When We Two Parted' with 'Walking Away'.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- how the narrator continues to grieve for the lover in 'When We Two Parted', and the ways that Byron reveals the narrator's heartbreak
- the two poems' focus on the relentlessness of heartbreak to suggest that time doesn't heal ('Gnaws' in 'Walking Away'/'tears' in 'When We Two Parted')
- the narrator's grief at being left by the lover in 'When We Two Parted', resulting in bitterness and regret
- parental love which means letting a child leave to set off on their own life in 'Walking Away'
- the tension between being left and letting go in both poems.

Love's Philosophy, *Percy Bysshe Shelley*

p.14–17

p.15 Do it!



The poem is written as if it is the middle of a conversation between the narrator and his lover. Although this is a conversation we are only shown the narrator's response, so it is a one-sided conversation at this point. It is as if the narrator and his lover are overlooking a scene in the natural world; the countryside where the narrator is pointing out the natural features that can be seen, in turn, to reinforce his argument: 'fountains...river...Ocean...mountains...waves...flowers'.

p.16 Do it!



The whole poem is based on a persuasive argument, therefore this implies that this is an argument that has been had before – and the narrator has been rejected. The careful listing of the natural elements – 'sunlight...moonbeams...' – is also reinforced by 'law divine'. The use of God's law reinforces that all elements of creation are joined, therefore, the narrator and his lover should also be joined ('Nothing in the world is single'). The narrator is bringing in his most forceful argument to convince his lover, suggesting that none of his arguments have worked in the past.

p.16 Stretch it!

The title 'Love's Philosophy' puts together two elements which, on the surface, seem like opposites. 'Love' can be seen as irrational and unpredictable in its nature, whereas 'Philosophy' suggests a logical and academic approach to an argument. Therefore, Shelley creates a tension between the head and the heart, thinking and feeling, as he draws together elements of the unpredictable natural world to back up his 'rational' argument for a kiss.

p.17 REVIEW IT!

- 1 The key idea is that in nature, elements join and connect. It is God's law to do so.
- 2 The key idea is that in nature, elements embrace and kiss.
- 3 Pleasurable
- 4 Shelley uses 'law divine' to show that this is God's will. It is part of God's plan so it is natural behaviour – therefore not sinful.
- 5 'the winds of Heaven' or 'the mountains kiss high Heaven' – the cosmos and Heaven will also connect.
- 6 For example: 'moonbeams kiss the sea', 'sunlight clasps the earth'.
- 7 The poem's rhyme scheme is ABABCD CD.
- 8 The dash suggests a break in thought as if the narrator is overcome with emotion – so much so that he blurts out his final question, 'what are all these kissings worth/If thou kiss not me?'.
- 9 It suggests that no flower would stand alone, lonely and isolated, when it is surrounded by its brother and sister flowers. It would not be natural or make sense, and it would be unforgivable for one flower to reject or show disrespect to another flower.
- 10 Nature can be seen as wild and unpredictable, just like love. Shelley shows how the natural world and the emotional world are connected by this unpredictability. The narrator's argument is that if all of these connections are happening in the natural world, why can't they show their love in the same way?

**p.17 AQA exam-style question**

Compare how poets present rejection in 'Love's Philosophy' and in one other poem from Love and relationships.

You might choose to compare 'Love's Philosophy' with 'When We Two Parted'.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- how the narrator builds a reasoned argument in 'Love's Philosophy' to persuade the lover, and the ways that Shelley uses persuasive devices to break down the rejection
- the two poems' focus on the respective lovers; in Shelley's poem the focus is to entice and persuade the lover, despite a rejection – so not accepting the rejection; in Byron's poem the focus is on sadness and regret following a rejection – yet an acceptance of that rejection
- the narrator's playful tone – established through imagery and rhythm in 'Love's Philosophy'; the change of tone in the final two lines
- the narrator's grief at being left by the lover in 'When We Two Parted', resulting in a tone of bitterness and regret
- the tension caused by being rejected but hopeful of getting what you want against being rejected and left alone.

Porphyria's Lover, Robert Browning

p.18–23

p.21 Do it!



Theme	Poem/explanation
Secrecy	'The Farmer's Bride': the young bride remains a mystery to her husband. Her silence makes her secretive.
Loyalty and honesty	'Letters from Yorkshire': the couple remain loyal and connected to each other despite being many miles apart.
Possession	'Climbing My Grandfather': in a sense, the narrator conquers his grandfather in the way a climber 'conquers' a mountain.
Nature	'Neutral Tones': the narrator finds his feelings echoed in the coldness of the natural world, the climate.

Other comparisons could be made.

p.22 Stretch it!



For example: 'The wind...did its worst to vex the lake.'

'Did its worst' is very colloquial: you dare someone to 'do their worst' to show that you are willing to withstand whatever malice they have in store for you. The phrase here, used as part of an extended personification of the wind as a spiteful force, is effective because it makes the wind sound petty and vengeful: it reinforces the narrator's presentation of the storm as something that is deliberately hindering his relationship with Porphyria.

p.23 REVIEW IT!



- Annoy, unsettle: the wind ruffles the surface of the lake.
- A 'gay feast': a lively, happy party
- He strangles her with her own hair.
- He opens her eyes, undoes the hair noose around her neck, and kisses her cheek.
- 'Too weak'; 'worshipped me'; 'mine, mine'
- Eight syllables; four are stressed
- He behaves in a sulky way at the beginning of the poem by 'allowing' himself to be cradled by Porphyria as though she has a lot of making up to do. At first he does not respond to her arrival even though he has apparently been longing for it. He also talks about her failure to come to see him as 'weakness' and 'pride' as though he is morally superior to her. He is trying to present himself as wronged.
- He doesn't. He assumes it is true.
- Because we can't trust his version of events and his explanation for Porphyria's feelings and actions. We can't trust him because we suspect he is insane.
- A number of interpretations are possible. For example:
He could be suggesting that either the narrator – or Browning – does not believe in God, and the fact that God does not prevent or object to such an evil crime might be offered as evidence of the non-existence of God.
OR
He could be implying that the narrator sees himself as more powerful than God who does not dare to 'say a word'. This is consistent with the narrator's belief that Porphyria worships him as though he is a god.

**p.23 AQA exam-style question**

Compare how poets present possessive feelings in 'Porphyria's Lover' and in one other poem from Love and relationships.

You might choose to compare 'Porphyria's Lover' with 'Before You Were Mine'.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- how the narrator possesses Porphyria and the ways that Browning reveals the narrator's possessive attitude
- the two poems' use of the word 'mine' to suggest a possessive attitude
- the extreme and chilling aspect of the narrator's attitude towards Porphyria
- the more humorous and affectionate version of possession implied in 'Before You Were Mine'
- the tension between being in control and freedom in both poems.

Sonnet 29 – 'I think of thee!', Elizabeth Barrett Browning**p.24–27****p.25 Do it!**

The extended metaphor of the tree and the vine is used to show the narrator's love within the sonnet. The lover is portrayed as a 'palm-tree', an exotic and sturdy tree of this time. Its religious connotations with Christ's entrance to Jerusalem also suggest her worship of the lover. The narrator's feelings and thoughts are wild and uncontrolled, 'straggling', and, like vines, her thoughts wind themselves around the lover until they hide 'the wood'.

p.25 Stretch it!

There is no 'right answer' to this question. Some points you might have included:

Agree with the viewpoint:

- The sonnet begins with immediate direct address, 'I think of thee!', showing obsession from the initial words.
- Her thoughts 'put out broad leaves' until he is completely hidden.
- She is afraid that she may create an idealised version of him.
- The use of exclamation marks shows the instability of her thoughts.

Disagree with this viewpoint

- 'I think of thee!': the immediate direct address of her lover creates a personal and intimate tone.
- She states she does not want an idealised version of him, for the real person is 'dearer, better!'
- The exclamation marks show her excitement with the love she feels for him.

p.26 Do it!

Come to me now – be present – and show me how much you love me.

p.27 REVIEW IT!

- 1 Love or love from afar
- 2 A palm tree and a vine
- 3 Palm trees were sturdy, strong and were seen as exotic. There are also religious allusions to the devotion of Christ's followers.
- 4 Her lover is 'dearer, better!' than in her mere thoughts and imaginations.
- 5 Wild and unruly
- 6 The tone is forceful, taking charge, rather than letting her thoughts take control.
- 7 Thinking via the logic of the poem
- 8 'And breathe within thy shadow a new air'
- 9 Her world is better with the lover in it. Notice the simplicity of the language. This love is fundamental to her being.

p.27 REVIEW IT!



10 For example:

- ‘Drop heavily down’ – the weight of her obsessive thoughts is reflected in the change of rhythm
- sibilance in ‘strong tree should/Rustle thy boughs and set thy trunk all bare’ mimics the sound of the rustling leaves
- use of the language of desire: ‘twine’, ‘bud’, ‘deep joy’.



p.27 AQA exam-style question

Compare how poets present obsession in ‘Sonnet 29 – “I think of thee!”’ and in one other poem from Love and relationships.

You might choose to compare ‘Sonnet 29 – “I think of thee!”’ with ‘Porphyria’s Lover’.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- how Barrett Browning uses the extended metaphor of the vine to show her thoughts as ‘wild vines’ and links to obsession
- how the narrator in ‘Porphyria’s Lover’ reiterates that ‘Porphyria worshipped me’ and that his repeated use of ‘made’ reinforces the narrator’s presentation of himself as a passive victim and links to the dark aspects of obsession
- how the narrator’s excitement about her love is presented through her desire to be with her lover rather than idealise him in ‘Sonnet 29 – “I think of thee!”’
- the sinister and chilling aspect of the narrator’s obsession with Porphyria ending in her death – ‘Her darling wish’
- the difference between obsession as overflowing love and care for one person and obsession as a sinister desire to control in the poems.

Neutral Tones, Thomas Hardy

p.28–31

p.30 Stretch it!



God seems to be punishing the world: he ‘chides’ it (tells it off) like an irritated parent. The sun, which was white in stanza one, is now ‘God-curst’. ‘Cursed’ is the opposite of ‘blessed’, which is what we normally associate with God. This word choice again suggests that God is hostile to the world – or the foolish people who live in it. Representing God as hostile, rather than as a source of salvation, reinforces the poem’s overall mood of hopelessness.

p.31 REVIEW IT!



- 1 Winter
- 2 Ash leaves
- 3 The partner’s smile
- 4 The poet has learned that love can’t be trusted because it is deceptive and will always cause pain and disappointment in the end.
- 5 ‘Keen’ suggests that the lessons learned are sharp and painful.
- 6 No
- 7 In each stanza, the first and last lines rhyme, as do lines two and three.
- 8 A riddle is something mysterious and hard to understand – a sort of puzzle. Hardy is suggesting that their relationship has become a ‘puzzle’ – they don’t understand each other, but the arguments never move on and so they are tedious (boring and pointless).
- 9 ‘Neutral’ suggests a lack of passion, something uncommitted. The tone of their communication is very controlled, repressed even. In decorating, a ‘neutral tone’ is one that will not excite or offend anyone: for example, grey or cream. A neutral tone lacks colour, just as their relationship now lacks passion.
- 10 The poem’s language style is relatively plain and therefore makes Hardy’s pessimism feel genuine rather than theatrical.

**p.31 AQA exam-style question**

Compare how poets present sadness and disappointment in 'Neutral Tones' and in one other poem from Love and relationships.

You might choose to compare 'Neutral Tones' with 'Eden Rock'.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- how a mood of sadness and disappointment is created in 'Neutral Tones'
- how both poems create clear, visual memories
- how both poets had not fully realised at the time the sad significance of the remembered episode
- the sense of 'ordinariness' in both poems and how this supports the mood of pathos
- how a sense of deception (and/or betrayal) runs through both poems.

Letters from Yorkshire, Maura Dooley**p.32–35****p.33 Do it!**

The narrator is explaining that their relationship is a platonic friendship rather than a romantic affair.

p.33 Stretch it!

The quotation reminds the reader not to assume that the views and experiences in the poem are necessarily the same as the poet's.

p.34 Do it!

A further theme could be 'growth'. The man's life is full of living things symbolised by the potatoes and the 'air and light' that is poured into the envelope through his words. Air and light are necessary for growth and his letters and messages cross the 'icy miles' into her life, bringing vibrancy to her life of 'blank' screens.

p.35 REVIEW IT!

- 1 February
- 2 'his knuckles singing'; 'reddened in the warmth'; 'breaking ice'; 'clearing a path through snow'
- 3 After seeing the lapwings, the man goes indoors to write to the narrator.
- 4 It means experiencing one season changing to another season. (In an office the narrator would not experience this so much.)
- 5 The narrator is possibly a writer or journalist.
- 6 'Icy miles'
- 7 The man and the woman communicate through letters. The pluralisation suggests there have been many letters.
- 8 'feeding words onto a blank screen'
- 9 There is a sense that the narrator longs for the world that she hears of as he sends her 'word' of his world. She questions whether his life is 'more real'.
- 10 Their relationship is the mystery at the heart of the poem. She says it is 'not romance', but they obviously have a close bond. There are many letters. Their 'souls' 'tap out' messages.

**p.35 AQA exam-style question**

Compare how poets present rural life in 'Letters from Yorkshire' and in one other poem from Love and Relationships.

You might choose to compare 'Letters from Yorkshire' with 'The Farmer's Bride'.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- how the narrator views rural life as 'more real' than her urban life in 'Letters from Yorkshire'
- how rural life is presented through the harsh and brutal hunting of the girl when she ran away ('We chased her, flying like a hare')
- the man's rural life is seen as at one with nature and the natural world in 'Letters from Yorkshire'; he sees 'the seasons/turning'; he wants to communicate the changes – the 'lapwings return' – and he immediately goes in to tell the narrator
- the farmer understands nature but does not understand the girl and his frustration with this is clear within the poem; the girl communicates with the 'beasts in stall' but will not communicate with the farmer – her husband
- how the rural setting is used in both poems to highlight the theme of identity; the man in 'Letters From Yorkshire' is content with his life and his world, the farmer in 'The Farmer's Bride' regrets his choice of bride, knowing it was wrong.

The Farmer's Bride, Charlotte Mew**p.36–41****p.39 Do it!**

Theme	Other poem	Why?
Youth and age	'Eden Rock'	The narrator feels separated from his parents in time and possibly he feels as though he has been abandoned.
Possession	'Before You Were Mine'	The narrator says her mother is 'hers'. Her birth has limited her mother's life in some ways.
Nature	'Neutral Tones'	The description of the natural world reflects the feelings of the speaker.
Distance	'Letters from Yorkshire'	By contrast, here communication overcomes distance and brings people closer.

p.41 Stretch it!

Some key points you might include in your paragraph:

- The rhyming couplets create a sense of urgency, leading to the dramatic revealing of the farmer's distress at the thought that he will never have children.
- Although the rhythm of these lines is not perfectly regular, the basic pattern of four stresses to each line does give the reading a 'beat' that supports its sense of drama and urgency.

p.41 REVIEW IT!

- 1 Two or three years ('Three Summers')
- 2 In the autumn
- 3 She is writing the poem in the words of the farmer, and so she is using his dialect.
- 4 'Should...have been abed'; 'chased her'; 'caught her'; 'fetched her home'; 'turned the key'; 'fast'
- 5 It is as though she is transfixed with terror. The simple description also suggests the natural simplicity of her beauty and reminds us of a wild animal.
- 6 Silent and reasonably efficient
- 7 The farmer thinks there is no point to Christmas without children to enjoy it, and he believes he will never have children.
- 8 Brown

p.41 REVIEW IT!

- 9 It partly depends on the reader, of course, but you should provide some evidence to justify your reaction. For example, you might feel sorry for the farmer because [a simple way to introduce evidence] he now thinks of her as a ‘poor maid’ which might indicate that he feels that she has been wronged and must be suffering emotionally even more than he is.
- 10 The use of repetition of these simple, familiar words expresses the farmer’s desperation and confusion. It is as though his emotion is so strong that he cannot calmly choose precise words: he has been overcome.

**p.41 AQA exam-style question**

Compare how poets present ideas about unequal relationships in ‘The Farmer’s Bride’ and in one other poem from Love and relationships.

You might choose to compare ‘The Farmer’s Bride’ with ‘Follower’.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- how the idea of an unequal relationship in which the farmer tries to oppress his bride is developed in ‘The Farmer’s Bride’
- how modern images of – and assumptions about – a farmer’s wife might clash with the version of that role we get in the poem
- how the father and son in ‘Follower’ are unequal, but their status is reversed at the end of the poem
- how the language used in the two poems creates the rural, farming environment as a backdrop to the relationships shown
- what the endings of the two poems suggest about the relationships into the future.

Walking Away, Cecil Day-Lewis**p.42–45****p.44 Stretch it!**

The poem continues to have an emotional appeal because it deals with a fundamental element of parenting – that one day your children will grow up and will need to ‘walk away’. The poem pinpoints that it is a parent’s responsibility to let go.

p.45 Do it! (top)

For example:

- 1 Introduces a significant memory.
- 2 Introduces the father’s concern.
- 3 Introduces growing up as painful.
- 4 Introduces the message: ‘letting go’.

p.45 REVIEW IT!

- 1 Autumn 18 years ago
- 2 On a school sports field
- 3 The father says it ‘Gnaws at my mind still’.
- 4 The boy is following others rather than his father. ‘Scattered’ suggests that their influence is unpredictable.
- 5 ‘Fledged’ describes a baby bird that is learning to fly.
- 6 Day-Lewis describes the son as: ‘hesitant figure, eddying away/like a winged seed’.
- 7 ‘Wrenched’ suggests being removed by force: violence.
- 8 The repeated use of ‘away’ adds to the melancholy tone of the poem.

p.45 REVIEW IT!



- 9 The poem's message is that letting go is an essential dimension of love.
- 10 The father remembers that the son was walking 'behind' a 'scatter' of boys as if he now has new influences and people to follow other than his father's influence. He is described as 'half-fledged' as if he is only just learning to fly and has not yet found his true path – 'finds no path where the path should be'. He is 'hesitant' and is not in control of his direction just like 'a winged seed' that is 'eddying away'.



p.45 AQA exam-style question

Compare how poets present parenthood in 'Walking Away' and in one other poem from Love and relationships.

You might choose to compare 'Walking Away' with 'Follower'.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- how the narrator presents the father's pain as he watches his son crossing the sports field in 'Walking Away'
- how the child admires his parent's expertise in 'Follower' and wishes to be like him when he grows older
- how both poems use natural images to represent parenthood; the son is a 'winged seed' moving away from his father in 'Follower'; in 'Follower' the boy stumbles in his father's 'wake'
- in 'Follower' there is a reversal at the end of the poem, where the father is reliant on the narrator and 'will not go away'
- in 'Walking Away', despite the pain, the father knows that the true test of parenthood is 'letting go'.

Eden Rock, Charles Causley

p.46–49

p.47 Do it!



- By 'this' he might mean that he had not expected 'heaven' to be the chance to relive a perfect moment from the past forever; for him that moment would be the picnic at Eden Rock.
- Perhaps 'this' is his sad realisation that he misses his parents so much that he longs to join them – even if he would have to die to do that.

p.47 Stretch it!



The meaning is open to your interpretation, but you should give some evidence to support your ideas. For example: the narrator recalls this perfect day with his parents as a sort of paradise, as suggested by Causley calling the place Eden Rock, Eden being – in the Bible – a paradise and the home of the first humans. It was a place of perfection.

Points you might cover in your answer:

- what had he previously thought that 'it would be like'? What has now occurred to him and surprised him?
- what do the words 'it' and 'this' refer to (mean)?
- what is his feeling at the end of the poem? Relieved? Delighted? Anxious?

p.48 Do it! (top)



Theme	Poem	Why?
Distance	'Letters from Yorkshire'	How in each case distance can be closed through communication or by longing.
Desire	'Singh Song!'	The yearning for reunion in 'Eden Rock' has urgency, as does the passionate desire of the husband and wife in 'Singh Song!' In both cases the characters try to overcome the barriers between them.
Memories	'Before You Were Mine'	Memories in both poems are presented vividly and accurately and photographically.

p.48 Do it! (bottom)



For example: 'trembling at his feet'; 'Her hair, the colour of wheat'; 'as if lit by three suns'.
Try to explain *how* Causley's language choices impact on the reader.

p.49 REVIEW IT!



- 1 Two years
- 2 A 'Genuine Irish tweed' jacket
- 3 A dress
- 4 The dress is sprigged, so it has patterns of flowers or leaves on it.
- 5 The parents are there for a picnic, presumably.
- 6 They beckon to get him to cross the stream to join them on their side.
- 7 In each stanza, lines one and three and two and four rhyme (ABAB).
- 8 Causley perhaps used half rhyme to quieten the poem as is suitable for a mood of personal memory about an event in the past.
- 9 It is hard to say what 'it' means in the final line, although death is one explanation: the narrator hadn't thought that the dead would be longing to have their loved ones join them. Perhaps 'it' is growing old and becoming increasingly affected by memories. A number of plausible explanations are possible.
- 10 In a radical interpretation, the narrator might be imagining his parents encouraging him to commit suicide to get back to them. On the other hand, the narrator might just be recalling his parents' words that day, and now finding new meaning in them: perhaps he is realising that 'crossing' (dying, getting old or simply letting go of the past) is much harder than his parents' words suggest.



p.49 AQA exam-style question

Compare how poets present attitudes towards parents (or a parent) in 'Eden Rock' and in one other poem from Love and relationships.

You might choose to compare 'Eden Rock' with 'Before You Were Mine'.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- the possible attitudes towards his parents shown by the narrator of 'Eden Rock'
- how the tone of 'Before You Were Mine' suggests different feelings towards the mother than are felt for the parents in 'Eden Rock'
- how language is used in 'Eden Rock' to create vivid pictures of the parents
- how vivid pictures of the mother are created in 'Before You Were Mine'
- what the endings of the two poems suggest about the parents, and any similarities or contrasts in what is suggested.

Follower, *Seamus Heaney*

p.50–53

p.53 Do it! (top)



For example:

- 1 Clear picture of father ploughing
- 2 Evidence of his expertise
- 3 He measures accurately without instruments
- 4 Heaney burdens his father
- 5 Ambition to be like father
- 6 Role reversal

p.53 REVIEW IT!



- 1 By clicking his tongue
- 2 He does it with just one 'pluck' of the reins.
- 3 He can measure by eye; he doesn't rely on measuring tools.
- 4 Riding on his father's back
- 5 'All I ever did'
- 6 He got in his father's way and made his job harder.
- 7 In each stanza, lines one and three and two and four rhyme (ABAB).
- 8 Heaney perhaps used half rhyme to hold back the pace of the poem as is suitable for a mood of personal memory about an event in the past.
- 9 It is shocking because it suggests that Heaney wants his father to go away, or has even asked him to do so. The shock comes from the feeling that Heaney's view of his father is the opposite of what it was earlier in the poem, and it seems harsh and ungrateful.
- 10 Partly because as a boy Heaney was always following his father around the farm. The title also makes a connection with religion and worship as followers are usually people who are won over by someone else's views and values, and see themselves as inferior to that leader. They look up to them and view them as a model.



p.53 AQA exam-style question

Compare how poets present family bonds in 'Follower' and in one other poem from Love and relationships.

You might choose to compare 'Follower' with 'Singh Song!'.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- how Heaney's admiration for his father is expressed in 'Follower'
- how the respect Heaney initially shows his father contrasts with how the wife in 'Singh Song!' treats the narrator's parents
- how the structure and language of 'Follower' reinforces the sense of a bond between father and son
- how the language in 'Singh Song!' creates a different, more rebellious attitude towards family duties and bonds
- what the endings of the two poems suggest about the strength of bonds and the strain these can come under.

Mother, any distance, *Simon Armitage*

p.54–57

p.55 Do it!



- 1 All of the images are tethered (held in place) in some way: the tape measure is held at the end and unravelled; the astronaut is tied on to the space ship by a cord; the kite flies in the air, held in place by the person on the ground; the anchor is let out to fix on to the seabed to hold the ship in place. Armitage uses these images to represent the link between the mother and son, like an umbilical cord in the womb.
- 2 For example: 'Anchor' – stable, holding in place; 'Kite' – freedom, airy.

p.55 Stretch it!



'To fall or fly' reflects the fact that being 'set free' into adulthood can result in successful independence ('flying'), or (temporary) failure ('falling'). In reality, becoming independent is a mixture of 'falling' and 'flying' and is often a matter of perception – how you feel about gaining independence.

p.56 Do it!

For example: 'your fingertips still pinch/the last one-hundredth of an inch'. The mother needs to release her grip on the tape measure, but she still holds on to the last tiny amount 'one-hundredth of an inch'. The tenuous nature of her hold on him is shown by 'fingertips' but these fingertips 'pinch', showing the pain associated with letting go for both the mother and son.

p.57 REVIEW IT!

- 1 His mother
- 2 'Any distance greater than a single span'
- 3 The mother
- 4 She is there at the start of everything, for example, his birth.
- 5 The son is moving into his first home and hasn't furnished it yet.
- 6 The mother represents the anchor. She is his stability and she is there to help him. He is the 'kite' who needs to be set free.
- 7 It has 15 instead of 14 lines.
- 8 It is about the love between a mother and her child rather than romantic love or love from afar.
- 9 The ellipsis signals the decisive movement towards freedom.
- 10 Armitage uses images of objects (for example, a kite) being held in place by a tape. This tether, representing the nourishment and support of the umbilical cord, is the tie that the narrator knows he must break. The tape is an extended metaphor that is 'still feeding out' between the mother and the son. In the end, the son knows that the mother must let him go, because 'something has to give'.

**p.57 AQA exam-style question**

Compare how poets present a struggle for growing independence in 'Mother, any distance' and in one other poem from Love and relationships.

You may choose to compare 'Mother, any distance' with 'Walking Away'.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- how the narrator presents his ties to his mother through tethered objects in 'Mother, any distance'
- how the narrator presents the father's pain as he watches his son crossing the sports field in 'Walking Away'
- both poems show breaking away within a loving relationship
- in 'Mother, any distance' there is a sense of excitement as the narrator makes his escape and prepares to launch into the 'endless sky'
- in 'Walking Away', despite the pain, the father knows that the true test of parenthood is 'letting go'.

Before You Were Mine, Carol Ann Duffy**p.58–61****p.59 Do it!**

It could be: 1 reference to a popular song in 1962 by Bobby Vee; 2 reference to the glitter ball used in dance halls at the time; 3 reference to many people watching her mother dance.

p.59 Stretch it!

The quotation could be seen as wry, teasing and/or humorous signalled by the 'eh?' at the end of the line. However, this line could be read as bitter/challenging as the narrator challenges her mother that she was happier before she had the baby.

p.60 Do it!



For example: memory

The narrator builds and re-imagines memories from her mother's youth. She wasn't there but maybe she has seen photographs or heard stories. In these memories her mother was happy and fun loving. The narrator also recreates memories of her own childhood. She is seen using her mother's 'high-heeled red shoes' as toys – they have now become 'relics' of her mother's lost youth. She remembers her mother teaching her dance steps on the way home from Mass – but it was on the 'wrong pavement'. Both of these more recent memories indicate that her mother's life was not as happy after the narrator was born.

p.61 REVIEW IT!



- 1 The mother
- 2 The mother's teenage friends
- 3 Marilyn Monroe – glamorous icon and movie star in 1950s
- 4 'your Ma stands at the close/with a hiding for the late one. You reckon it's worth it'
- 5 Mostly in Glasgow, Scotland
- 6 The mother was late home from the dance and is described as a 'bold girl'.
- 7 Cha Cha Cha
- 8 'I remember my hands in those high-heeled red shoes'
- 9 The narrator yearns for the 'bold girl winking in Portobello'. She describes her mother's 'glamorous love' that existed 'before you were mine' suggesting that the love, laughter and dancing were only there before she was born.
- 10 The poem has a conversational tone through the use of free verse which suggests it is part of an ongoing dialogue with the mother. However, the poem could be read as a eulogy (a celebratory speech used in funerals to praise a loved one). Some critics have picked up on 'your ghost clatters', interpreting this as a reference to the mother's death. It is more likely that this is a reference to the mother who was the 'bold girl' no longer existing – so being like a ghost – than it necessarily meaning that the mother has died.



p.61 AQA exam-style question

Compare how poets present the power of memories in 'Before You Were Mine' and in one other poem from Love and relationships.

You might choose to compare 'Before You Were Mine' with 'Neutral Tones'.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- how the narrator presents the mother's past as glamorous in 'Before You Were Mine'
- how the narrator presents the memory of the day that he realised his relationship had ended in 'Neutral Tones'
- how Duffy uses vibrant images to recreate the mother's past whereas Hardy uses cold and frozen images to show the death of the relationship
- in 'Before You Were Mine' at the end of the poem through the power of the memories, the narrator realises that the mother was at her happiest before she was born
- in 'Neutral Tones', in the present, the narrator reflects on the memory knowing that he has lost faith in love.

Winter Swans, Owen Sheers

p.62–65

p.64 Do it!



Many interpretations are possible, but try to decide how the image fits into the ideas of the poem as a whole and the effect it might have on the reader. For example, you might begin: The earth is ‘waterlogged’ and therefore heavy-going and ‘sucking them down’. This physical picture directly expresses the idea of a relationship that is ‘bogged down’, struggling to keep going. The soggy earth is ‘gulping for breath’, but it is easy for us to understand this as a metaphor for their relationship which can no longer breathe and is therefore dying.

p.65 Stretch it!



Possibly the physical shape is random and accidental. However, if you turn the page through ninety degrees you see the poem is a triangle, the lines lengthening towards the middle and then gradually shortening again. This gives the impression of movement from coldness and silence towards the arrival of the swans and the enlightenment – the lessons – they bring. That is the climax and apex of the poem, followed by a calming towards the quiet, satisfied conclusion.

p.65 REVIEW IT!



- 1 No
- 2 Nothing
- 3 The swans ‘tipping’ – putting their heads under the water
- 4 Icebergs
- 5 That they mate for life
- 6 That he and his partner’s hands have joined
- 7 ‘Like a pair of wings’ folding together after flight
- 8 You could name a number of aspects of the poem. They could include: allegory; the series of images about swans designed to teach the humans lessons; the narrative development from cold and apart to being together; the consistent (until the last stanza) three-line format of the stanzas.
- 9 Your answer depends on your careful interpretation of the poem. You might, for example, decide that Sheers wants the couple to learn from the grace of the swans and their loyalty to each other. The swans maintain their relationship by mirroring each other’s movements and by engaging in shared rituals.
- 10 You are welcome to your own interpretation, but do refer to evidence. The poem ends on an optimistic note: the couple have learned a lesson from the swans and perhaps now understand that relationships are valuable and worth saving and improving. On the other hand, the narrator does not sound completely committed: he didn’t deliberately join hands; it happened unconsciously – he just ‘noticed’ it happen. Also, although they are now ‘settled after flight’, we know that birds soon take off again.



p.65 AQA exam-style question

Compare how poets present separation and/or togetherness in ‘Winter Swans’ and in one other poem from Love and relationships.

You might choose to compare ‘Winter Swans’ with ‘Porphyria’s Lover’.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- how the structure of ‘Winter Swans’ shows the lovers’ move from separation towards togetherness
- how the narrator of ‘Porphyria’s Lover’ presents separation and its causes in the first half of the poem
- how the poets use nature to dramatise separation in both poems
- how the example of the swans and the way the lovers move together in ‘Winter Walk’ suggests equality in their relationship
- what the poets suggest about male/female relationships through the ‘togetherness’ achieved at the end of each poem.

Singh Song!, Daljit Nagra

p.66–71

p.69 Do it!



For example:

Theme	Other poem	Why?
Excitement and adventure	'Climbing My Grandfather'	Climbing is an activity of adventure and discovery. Climbing his grandfather is a process of discovery, an adventure.
Nature	'Neutral Tones'	The sun is harsh and represents punishment. By contrast, the moon in 'Singh Song!' promises freedom and romance.
Marriage	'The Farmer's Bride'	Forced, or arranged, marriage is central to the poem, but it leads to misery, while in 'Singh Song!' it ends in passion – but enjoyed secretly.
Secrecy	'When We Two Parted'	Secrecy ends in misery: the narrator cannot even acknowledge his past affair.

p.71 Do it! (top)



For example:

- 1 rhyme: 'clock'/'lock'; 'mop'/'shop'; 'cool'/'stool'
- 2 assonance: 'cut'/'pumps'; 'sari'/'sweeties'; 'say'/'baby'.

p.71 Stretch it!



This stanza needs to build towards a climax that the reader cannot predict. The repeated sounds in the stanza help this sense of quiet crescendo by giving the reader a set of stepping stones. Once the repeated sounds are a full rhyme ('cool'/'stool'), but this is quietened by having a line between the rhymes. The sounds give the stanza momentum, but the tone of the stanza is hushed, a bit like a chant or a spell being prepared and so the momentum must not be hurried. The half rhymes – including assonance – appear not just at the ends of lines but often within them as well. They help to create the stanza's quiet momentum. Here are some specific word pairings you might comment on: 'stairs'/'bars'; 'price'/'signs'/'brightey'; 'midnight'/'quiet'.

p.71 REVIEW IT!



- 1 He locks the door and goes upstairs to his wife.
- 2 Rowing through Putney
- 3 Singh
- 4 Sikhism: he is a Sikh.
- 5 Choose from: stale food; unripe food; closing the shop unexpectedly; not having his special offers in stock; not keeping his shop clean.
- 6 They sit behind the counter on silver stools.
- 7 The narrator's wife swears at his mum and mocks his dad by stumbling 'like a drunk', presumably in order to draw attention to his father's drinking.
- 8 Perhaps the narrator suggests that the wife is lethal, taking aim at anyone she disapproves of. Her stare is threatening, at least making people feel uncomfortable.
- 9 Daljit Nagra writes the narrator's words phonetically so that we can hear his accent. He also writes in the narrator's dialect which makes the narrator more 'real'. By alternating the narrator's account between amusing and enthusiastic, and dejected and resentful, we get a further sense of his personality.
- 10 Perhaps the narrator is emphasising the couple's secrecy: it is they who are whispering. He may be suggesting that the stairs are keeping the couple's secrets.



p.71 AQA exam-style question

Compare how poets present excitement and/or a sense of adventure in ‘Singh Song!’ and in one other poem from Love and relationships.

You might choose to compare ‘Singh Song!’ with ‘Climbing My Grandfather’.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- the risks taken by the narrator and his wife in ‘Singh Song!’
- how Andrew Waterhouse draws on the risks and ‘dangers’ of climbing to present his exploration of his grandfather in ‘Climbing My Grandfather’
- how the sense of danger and risk in ‘Singh Song!’ is aided by the humour and the song-like structure of the poem
- how the adventure in ‘Climbing My Grandfather’ reflects an attitude of respect for the grandfather, in contrast to the disrespect conveyed in ‘Singh Song!’
- how in both poems the narrators have or look forward to exciting achievement by the ends of the poems.

Climbing My Grandfather, Andrew Waterhouse

p.72–75

p.73 Do it!



- His shoes are ‘dusty and cracked’.
- His hand is ‘earth-stained’.
- His nails are ‘splintered’.
- The skin on his fingers is ‘thick’.
- His shoulder is ‘firm’.

p.73 Stretch it!



Literally – these shoes are sturdy and comfortable. It shows he looks for comfort rather than fashion.

Metaphorically – these shoes are classic and dependable. They show that he is a dependable presence in the boy’s life.

In ‘Before You Were Mine’, the mother’s shoes are ‘high-heeled red shoes’. These shoes represent glamour and sex-appeal, showing the mother’s life before the narrator was born.

p.75 Do it! (top)



Climbing vocabulary	Physical descriptions of the grandfather
‘I decide to do it free’	‘old brogues’
‘without a rope’	‘overhanging shirt’
‘an easy scramble’	‘belt’
‘trying to get a grip’	‘earth-stained hand’
‘overhanging’	‘nails/are splintered’
‘good purchase’	‘skin of his finger is smooth and thick’
‘glassy ridge’	‘a scar’
‘pull/myself up’	‘old stitches’
‘screed’	‘firm shoulder’
‘altitude’	‘loose skin of his neck’
‘summit’	‘smiling mouth’
	‘screed cheek’
	‘brown eyes’
	‘forehead’ with ‘wrinkles’
	‘thick’ ‘soft and white’ hair
	‘good heart’

p.75 REVIEW IT!



- 1 'overhanging shirt'; 'belt', woven trousers ('trousers/pushing into the weave'); 'old brogues'
- 2 He has an 'earth-stained hand', his shoes are 'dusty', his nails are 'splintered'.
- 3 He is 'trying to get a grip'; he has to 'pull' himself up; he is 'reaching' for the summit; he is 'gasping for breath'; he 'can only lie/watching clouds' when he reaches the top.
- 4 It is a sideways move on rock.
- 5 The grandfather is dependable and stable.
- 6 There are elements from the past that can hurt or wound.
- 7 Freedom and possibilities in the future
- 8 For example: 'pushing into the weave'; 'reaching for the summit'; 'gasping for breath' – use of dynamic verbs.
- 9 'Warm ice' is an oxymoron – a contradiction. Although the grandfather's hands may be cold, he is 'warm' in his heart.
- 10 The poem is written in one long stanza representing the mountain, the grandfather, that the narrator will climb.



p.75 AQA exam-style question

Compare how poets present family relationships in 'Climbing My Grandfather' and in one other poem from Love and relationships.

You might choose to compare 'Climbing My Grandfather' with 'Follower'.

Some main points you might develop in your answer:

- how 'Climbing My Grandfather' uses the extended metaphor of rock climbing to show his exploration of his grandfather and his past
- how the narrator in 'Follower' admires his father and sees him as a symbol of strength and reliability through the image of the sail
- how the narrator in 'Climbing My Grandfather' understands the difficulties in discovering aspects of his own and his grandfather's past
- the narrator's annoyance with his father in 'Follower' as he says that he will 'not go away'
- the difference between acceptance of family relationships in 'Climbing My Grandfather' and the rejection of those family relationships in 'Follower'.

Essentials

p.76–77

p.76 Do it!



- Plain, colloquial language: 'Porphyria's Lover', 'The Farmer's Bride', 'Eden Rock', 'Before You Were Mine', 'Singh Song!'
- References to the sun: 'Neutral Tones', 'Eden Rock', 'Walking Away'
- The creation of vivid and detailed visual images: 'Eden Rock', 'Follower', 'Before You Were Mine', 'Climbing My Grandfather'

Doing well in your AQA exam

p.78

p.78 Do it!



- You will find an example exam question at the end of the section on each of the fifteen poems in Cluster 1. When you prepare the question, make sure you use the method shown on page 78:
 - underline and very briefly explain to yourself the *key words*
 - choose and write down one poem you will compare with the named poem (you could write down two or three poems if they occur to you, and then choose one poem after you have re-read the named poem).

p.82 Do it!



Student A refers to the question and begins immediately to answer it using the words 'separation and distance' from the question. The second poem chosen is referred to. Understanding of the poets' methods is shown through an overview of this student's approach to separation and distance.

p.85 REVIEW IT!



- 40 minutes
- Section A: Your modern prose or play text, for example, *An Inspector Calls*, *Blood Brothers*, *Lord of the Flies*, and Section B: Unseen Poetry.
- 10 minutes
- You need to be certain what the question is asking you.
- You can use indirect quotations: you can paraphrase what the quotation is about; briefly mention what a narrator says or does; briefly mention an event in the poem.
- 30 marks
- You could advise them that it's better to know all of the poems well as that question might not be relevant to the question and the named poem on their exam paper.
- True, but a good introduction and conclusion can be very helpful.
- For example:
Compare how poets present the past in 'Before You Were Mine' and in one other poem from Love and relationships.
- For example:
'Before You Were Mine' compared with 'Walking Away':
 - the past as vibrant and glamorous as presented in 'Before You Were Mine'
 - the past as painful as presented in 'Walking Away'
 - use of language to show joy and excitement in 'Before You Were Mine'; use of language to show breaking away as random and haphazard in 'Walking Away'.
 - how memories from the past are re-created/re-imagined by the secondary characters in both poems, for example, the father and the child
 - how both poems show that the past can help us understand our relationships in our lives today.