

# Properties of a poem essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

----- UNIT QUESTIONS FROM THIS ACADEMIC

YEAR: ----- Short Stories: How are different cultures, attitudes and characters are expressed within the limits of a short story? ----- Othello: How might

interpersonal relationships be detrimental to one's status?

----- Nineteen Eighty-Four: How does an individual respond to societal manipulation and control?

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Poetry: How do poets use various literary devices such as imagery to convey emotions? ----- Holocaust Literature: What

impact can an individual have on a society as a whole?

----- \* These are the unit focus questions for this year and are not your examination questions!

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----- FOR THE EXAM:

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You will have a choice of four or five questions and will be required to select just one to answer. ----- All the questions will be very open thus allowing you options regarding which texts you have studied this year to use in your response. ----- Example:

----- Discuss how the theme of ' childhood' or ' war' is expressed in two of the works you have studied. (You might discuss the theme of childhood in a poem and a novel you have studied this year) .

Think about important themes that appear in each of the texts that you have

studied this year. 2. Consider significant characters and their role in the texts you have studied this year. 3. Remember that some questions might ask you to analyse different characters or themes from within same text – do not settle for revising just one character or one major theme in a text! 4. Remember you might be asked to analyse themes or characters from different texts – do not settle for focusing your revision on just one text you have studied this year! 5.

Take a look at the Unit Questions above to give you clues as to what your examination questions might address. 6. Think about whether the historical and social contexts of texts that you have read are significant in answering the question. 7. Think about how you would analyse an unseen poem. 8. It will not be possible to use direct quotations, unless you are given an excerpt for the exam, but we are still looking for close reference to the text. You have show the examiner that you know the text and can refer to language, themes, characters etc. within it. GENERAL TIPS

The examination is 2 hours long – you should spend about 30 minutes planning. PLANNING 1. Read through each question carefully and identify the question that you feel most prepared and confident to answer completely (e. g. there is no point selecting a question that requires discussing two themes when you have only revised one) 2. When you have selected your question, read it again carefully and underline the key words that explain exactly what is asked of you. 3. Draw a quick mind-map/spider diagram with the question in the centre to focus your thoughts. Write branching notes that relate to the answer.

Remember you can't write about everything and you will not receive marks for irrelevant information. 4. Write a numbered or bullet point plan that organises your mind-map ideas in a logical way. This plan should state what each of your paragraphs will be about and what close referencing from the text you will use to support any assertions you make. This is still in note form – abbreviations, shorted words etc.

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**WRITING YOUR RESPONSE** You are now ready to write your answer. You should spend about 1hr 20 minutes on your response. . Your introduction paragraph should address the question and give a brief overview of the content and structure of your answer. 6. Develop you response to the question using your plan (number 4 above) to guide your writing. You should use PETER (or any other helpful acronym e. g. PEE, PQC...) to help you explore the detail of the text: Point – state the point you are trying to prove Evidence – give evidence that supports your point by close reference to the text Technique – state any literary devices if relevant to your point Elaboration – develop and give deeper explanation to your point.

Explain the reason for the author/poet making this point or the reason for the author or poet using a literary device. Response – explain any emotions or ideas that are evoked in the reader from the point 7. Write a brief conclusion about the effect of the text as a whole in relation to the question.

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**CHECKING YOUR WORK** Miss this tip at your own peril! What you think you have written and what you have actually written can be two very different

things under exam constraints! Spend about 10 minutes reading over what you have written and correcting any mistakes.

Try not to scribble out your mistakes and instead just cross through with one line. Poem's structure: \* How effective is the opening and ending of the poem? \* Look at the organisation of the content in each stanza. \* Consider the speed and rhythm of the poem. \* Think about poet's use of enjambment (where lines run on without punctuation and without a break in the meaning) \* Think about poet's use of juxtaposition (ideas or concepts deliberately being placed or written close to each other to form a contrast between them) \* Identify any refrains (a repeated line, phrase, sentence etc. which appears throughout the poem. \* Look at the punctuation for any deliberate patterns \* Extended figure – apostrophe, simile, metaphor etc. which is developed throughout poem. Poem's meaning: \* What theme or themes does the poem address? \* Underline key words in the poem and make brief comments about these words \* Note key details in each stanza (what happens? what is being described? what are the feelings? what are the themes? \* Who is the poem addressed from and to? \* Note the poet's main feelings and ideas? \* What is the poet's attitude towards the subject? Identify the poem's overall literal meaning (from the precise definitions of the words) \* Identify the poem's overall non-literal meaning – the deeper meaning-. (from words, and groups of words, that exaggerate or alter the usual meanings of the component words) Poem's form: Quatrain – A stanza of four lines Couplet – A stanza of two lines Ballad – A ballad is a poem that usually tells a story that is similar to a folktale. It is often written in quatrains, and usually in lines that are

iambic trimeter (song form) Elegy – A poem that is sad and thoughtful, and often said in lament of a person who has died. Epic – A long narrative poem

Lyric – A poem that express the personal mood, feeling, or meditation of a single speaker. Narrative – A poem that tells a story Sonnet – In general,

sonnets have 14 lines with iambic pentameter. Free verse – irregular lines and not regular metre Or is it just written in six, four line stanzas with the

first and fourth lines of each stanza rhyming (ABCA)? ...etc. Identifying the

properties of a poem Identify imagery in the poem (literary devices) \* similes

\* metaphors \* personification Identify words that appeal to the senses: \*

Words that appeal to sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Other literary

devices to consider: \* Is there irony? the result of an action or situation is the reverse of what is expected e. g. " Water, water, everywhere, Nor any drop

to drink' -Ancient Mariner) Identify sound in the poem (some of these are

literary devices) \* alliteration \* assonance (repetition of the vowel sound in words placed close together) \* onomatopoeia \* rhyme \* rhythm (created by

the sound and the length of words or lines e. g. you might think in the poem

that a line should be read particularly fast) REMEMBER Identifying the

properties of your poem is the easy bit. The difficult task is using what you have identified to write a plan and then an effective commentary.

Identify the mood of the poem: \* Think about the atmosphere of the poem

(e. g. joyful, sad, frightening) \* Think about the tone of voice in which a word or line might be spoken – the tone can change throughout the poem \* Look

for changes in mood and tone as you read the poem. ORGANISING YOUR

POETRY COMMENTARY How you structure your commentary is really up to you, but remember examiners are looking for your commentary to meet the

<https://assignbuster.com/properties-of-a-poem-essay/>

specifications of the Language A Assessment Criteria – make sure you understand what we are assessing you on by checking this criteria before the exam.

If you do need some help organising your ideas, below is a structure that you can adapt and use: Introduction (Para 1) Include the title of the poem, name of poet and short introduction to the overall literal meaning of the poem.

Briefly introduce the significant theme the poet is expressing and what, if any, important images, words or symbols the poet uses to reinforce his/her ideas? Subject matter (Para 2) What event, situation or experience does the poem describe? Who is the speaker? What is the time-setting? What is the place setting? Purpose, theme or message (Para 3)

What is the poet's purpose in writing this – what message, ideas, themes are communicated? Emotion, mood or feeling (Para 4) What is the poem's tone? Does the tone shift? What is the poet's attitude toward the subject? What is the predominant mood of the poem? Does the mood change? What emotion does the poet seek to evoke in the reader? Craftsmanship or Technique (this part looks at the specific skills the poet has used to create his/her poem) \*

Structure (Para 5) – how is the poem structured? Does it have a conventional structure such as a sonnet, or an ode?

Does it have stanzas with a regular number of lines, or any other interesting features of structural design? Can you identify the type of poem – sonnet, free verse, ballad, etc.? Is the poem lyric, dramatic, narrative, or a combination? How can you tell? \* Imagery (Para 6) – Are there any striking examples of figurative language used? What things are compared (similes,

metaphors, personifications or symbols) in the poem? Are their analogies or conceits? What is their effect? \* Language (Para 7) – How would you describe the poet's use of words – vivid, striking, effective or colourless and predictable?

What visual images are brought to mind? What sensations does the poem evoke: sound, touch, smell, taste, movement, etc.? What words are used in surprising or imaginative ways? Look for puns. Are there any inverted word orders or sentences? What would be the usual order? What purpose is served by the inversion? Is the language appropriate to subject and/or theme? What effect does the language have on the poem's achievement? \* Sound (Para 8)- Does the poem have any significant sound features? Is it musical? Does the poet use onomatopoeia, alliteration, or assonance? Does the poem rhyme?

What are the effects of these features of sound on the achievement of the poem? \* Movement (Para 9) – Does the poem have a regular (slow or fast) rhythm? What is the effect of any rhythmic qualities? Conclusion (Para 10) Pull all the information together into a summary. What is the impact of the whole poem? Does it successfully achieve the poet's purpose or is it flawed in some serious way? REMEMBER – EVERY point you make throughout the commentary must be supported with reference to the text and deeper analysis = use PETER or one of his relatives to help with this. “ It Was Long Ago” y Eleanor Farjeon I'll tell you, shall I, something I remember?

Something that still means a great deal to me. It was long ago. A dusty road in summer I remember, A mountain, and an old house, and a tree That stood, you know. Behind the house. An old woman I remember In a red shawl



with a grey cat on her knee Humming under a tree. She seemed the oldest thing I can remember, But then perhaps I was not more than three. It was long ago. I dragged on the dusty road, and I remember How the old woman looked over the fence at me And seemed to know How it felt to be three, and called out,

I remember ‘ Do you like bilberries and cream for tea? ‘ I went under the tree And while she hummed, and the cat purred, I remember How she filled a saucer with berries and cream for me So long ago, Such berries and such cream as I remember I never had seen before, and never see To day, you know. And that is almost all I can remember, The house, the mountain, the grey cat on her knee, Her red shawl, and the tree, And the taste of the berries, the feel of the sun I remember, And the smell of everything that used to be So long ago, Till the heat on the road outside again I remember,

And how the long dusty road seemed to have for me No end, you know. That is the farthest thing I can remember. I won't mean much to you. It does to me. Then I grew up, you see. African Beggar by Raymond Tong Sprawled in the dust outside the Syrian store, a target for small children, dogs and flies, a heap of verminous rags and matted hair, he watches us with cunning, reptile eyes, his noseless, smallpoxed face creased in a sneer. Sometimes he shows his yellow stumps of teeth and whines for alms, perceiving that we bear the curse of pity; a grotesque mask of death, ith hands like claws about his begging-bowl. But often he is lying all alone within the shadow of a crumbling wall, lost in the trackless jungle of his pain, clutching the pitiless red earth in vain and whimpering like a stricken animal. Analysis “ The African Beggar”| Tone: repulsion; dislike. Then changes to pity; sympathy|

Mood: futility; desolation| Theme: desolation of humanity's subsistence: the utter helplessness of humanity in the face of adversity, as well as our own neglect of self and others| Stanza One: Introduces beggar as a repulsive outcast; a thing. How? | •| " sprawled in the dust... → beggar is treated immediately like a thing that has been thrown out - suggests shabby, lawless being. | •| " target... " → (metaphor) beggar continues to be described as a thing - a convenience for others to use; singled out as an object for attack. " Dogs" and " flies" solidly establishes sub-human existence of beggar; " flies" suggest filth, a disease. That he is a target suggests his passiveness and helplessness. | •| " heap of verminous rags and matted hair" → (metaphor) image of beggar is sustained as a thing : " verminous" is associated with the " flies", " matted hair: is associated with filth, dust, neglect of physical hygiene. | " he watches with cunning reptile eyes" → (metaphor) a dramatic contrast: how can an inhuman bag of bones be capable of subtle and crafty scheming? Likened to an image of a " reptile" - like a snake, he watches, waiting for his prey. The pronoun " he" is used to remind us that this is a person and our revulsion is emphasised, for how can a human being be like this? | •| " noseless, smallpoxed face creased in a sneer" →" noseless", " smallpoxed" suggests disease, leprosy which adds to the beggars repulsiveness. " Sneer" carries suggestion of the cunning reptile. To " sneer" shows arrogance. Stanza Two: Although the poet sustains the image of the beggar as a repulsive outcast, he introduces the sub-theme - our neglect and inadequacies in dealing with the problem of human neglect. How? | •| " yellow stumps of teeth" → (metaphor) physical ugliness is emphasised; " yellow" is colour of disease and decay, rotten. Image of " stumps" is more appropriate for an animal than a human being. | •| "

whines" → (metaphor) cringing sound associated with animals. | •| "perceiving that we bear the curse of pity" → poet leaves the description of the beggar and comments on the general attitude to poverty and disease. The curse of pity" : " curse" suggests bad; " pity" suggests " good". We don't want to know about it, but if we do we should show pity and offer our help. | •| " grotesque mask of death" → (metaphor) physical deformity and sub-human existence of beggar is emphasised. How can this thing/animal be really alive? " Mask of death" symbolises the " face of death" - an image of death staring at us. | •| " with hands like claws about his begging bowl" → (simile) image is of a skeleton; death-like hands clinging to his only source of existence (the begging bowl). | Stanza Three: Theme of suffering.

Our feelings change from repulsion to sympathy. How? | •| " lying all alone" → no longer " sprawled" but " lying" on the ground. The tone here is one of quietness - " all alone" suggests that he is no longer the target for others. It is the time to be aware of his suffering. | •| " shadow of a crumbling wall" → " shadow" suggests absence of light; darkness. Image of loneliness with the shadow of death near. " crumbling" suggests decay and ruin; the lack of a home. | •| " lost in the trackless jungle of his pain" → (metaphor) pain racks his entire body, so much that it consumes his total energy. Trackless jungle" suggests the amount of pain - endless - filling and crammed into every part of his body. No escape from this pain. | •| " clutching the pitiless red earth in vain" → (personification) " clutching" suggests the beggar's desperation. " Red" personifies the blood of life, nourishment, energy and strength, and " earth" is the sole source of humanity's existence. Even the earth is without pity. All " in vain" - there is no solution, no help. | •| " whimpering like a

stricken animal" → (simile) emphasises the beggar's total suffering; his total defeat. | |

Analysis for " It was Long Ago" | " It Was Long Ago", a simple poem by Eleanor Farjeon, records the poet's earliest memory, an incident that occurred when she was around three years old. While she was walking along a dusty road, she saw an old lady sitting under a tree. The lady invited her over and gave her bilberries and cream to eat, a ' feast' that the poet recalls with pleasure. | Subject-matter| At first glance the poem may appear to have no serious purpose other than the, recording of an early memory, but the last lines suggest some additional significance.

The poet shows that this simple, pleasant memory means much to her because, ' then I grew up, you see'. We are reminded that ' growing up' is not always so pleasant. Sadly, being an adult can sometimes dull us so that we no longer appreciate the simple pleasures of life. | Purpose (Theme)| The poem is gentle and nostalgic. It seeks not only to recreate the scene for the reader, but to have him or her feel the child world goodness of the incident. The poet begins by asking our permission: ' I shall tell you, shall I, something I remember? In the manner of a small child, she regularly checks to see that we are attending, that we understand: ' You know'; ' You see'. Thus the poem has a confiding, warm feel to it. | Emotion (Mood)| The poem has an interesting, simple structure built around three line stanzas. Has the poet deliberately used three line stanzas as the most appropriate for a three year old? At any rate, the simple structure is certainly appropriate for the situation. Similarly the language and rhyming scheme are deliberately

simple. Words are uncomplicated, tending to be single syllables, with considerable repetition of words.

The first line in every stanza ends with the word ‘remember’, and there are only two other rhyme sounds ‘ee’ and ‘oh’, used absolutely regularly throughout the poem. The rhythm is gentle and slow, appropriate to the subject matter. Such structural economy and simplicity form a very appropriate vehicle with which to recreate a childhood memory. |

Craftsmanship • Structure • Language • Imagery • Movement • Sounds|

Throughout the recreation, the poet seeks to involve our senses. She introduces concrete objects (‘a mountain, an old house, and a tree’), and simple colours (‘in a red shawl with a grey cat’), to help us visualise the scene.

She invites us to hear the memory (‘and while she hummed, and the cat purred’), to taste it (‘... the taste of berries’), and feel it (‘the feel of the sun I remember’) as she draws upon her own sense memories. Thus, the memory is evoked for us in a much clearer way. | Summary| Through the poet’s skill in using appropriately simple words, structure and rhythm, to recreate her earliest memory, she successfully involves us in the poem. For all its simplicity, the poem has a gentle robustness to it. We share the uncluttered goodness of the incident and are left with some wistful longings for our own childhood. | | |