

Ideas, attitudes, values, and beliefs about education

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Text two Comprehensive was written by Carol Ann Duffy, and was taken from her first major collection *Standing Female Nude*, which was published in 1985. Since becoming a mother, Duffy has become more interested in writing for, and about children. Comprehensive is a literary piece written in first person narrative that represents speech however, it is intended to be read silently. The poem deals with the ethnic minorities, and the attitudes of different children living in Britain. The first stanza is about a young girl from Africa, and she explains how she prefers Africa to England. We get the impression that this girl is not that happy living in England.

" We talk a lot about the things we used to do in Africa and then we are happy" (lines 6 and 7).

In the second stanza, the sentences are a lot shorter and harsher. It is about a 14yr old boy named Wayne who is from England, who we would stereotype as " White Trash". We get the impression from the sentence structure and the abrupt language used, that this boy is not very well educated. In fact, the young African girl in stanza one seems to have better English than the boy in stanza two due to better sentence structures that flow a lot more easier. This boy also shows in this stanza that he is racist. " Paki-bashing" (line 9) and " I don't suppose I'll get a job. It's all them coming over here to work" (lines 12 and 13) Here we see his prejudices, and how he is blaming " them" for him thinking he'll never have a job. Referring to these people as " them" shows how little he thinks of them.

We can link stanza two to stanza 4, which is about a girl from England who sees life as boring. The sentences here are stilted and the use of idiomatic

and colloquial language, gives the impression of the typical teenager, white trash stereotype displayed in the children written about from England. Also, linking to stanza 2, it is also subtly racist, " Marlon Frederic's nice but he's a bit dark" (line 23). Stanza 6 also links with 2 and 4, due to the racist prejudices displayed. Also, this person shows how he has been fed what he wants to be in the future, suggesting that children in England have no real dreams and ambitions of their own, so they live off what is expected of them. " I'm going into the Army. No choice really" (lines 36-37). But also, we see how this boy wants to emigrate and live in Australia. Although Australia is an English speaking country, he'll still be in exactly the same position as the ethnic minorities living in England (A pomme in an Aussie's Society).

From the stanzas which are about the children in the ethnic minorities, we see them all link together by the way they explain how happy they were when they lived in their place of origin. And how important it is for them to stay close to their families and loved ones. " Families face Mecca" (line 16) everyone coming together to pray!

The last stanza is about how family is very important to one boy, and also how difficult he is finding it to adjust to a strange school where he doesn't understand what his teacher is telling him " The teacher told us to drink our milk. I didn't understand what she was saying so I didn't get any milk" (lines 43-45). At the end of the last stanza, we see how this person is ambitious and has hope for the future, opposed to those who have grown up here.

Text three The Play Way was written by Seamus Heaney, the winner of the Noble Prize for literature in 1995. He became a full-time writer after studying

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and teaching at Queen's University in Belfast until 1972. The Play Way is taken from his first selection of poems, *Death of a Naturalist*, published in 1966.

The Play Way is a literary piece, written in first person narrative and scripted to be read aloud. The poem is about a more relaxed way of education, as suggested by the title. This poem is written in quatrains (equal 4 line stanzas), with enjambment to make the poem flow easily and seem more relaxed.

In the first stanza, he personifies the music "The music strides to challenge it" (line 3). In stanza 2, we see the generation gap between pupils and teacher. The children are not sure who Beethoven is, or what type of music he composed, as a child's perspective of music would be the type of music, which would appear mostly to them. "Can we jive?" (Line 8) is an expression we would link with the Rock 'n' Roll type of music, or in this case the type of music which appeals to the children.

We see that the music seems to have a magical quality for the teacher as it grabs the children's concentration. "... Working its private spell behind eyes that stare wide" (lines 13 and 14). Comparing this poem to Text 25, *The First Time*, by Evelyn Waugh, Paul (a teacher in the poem) had to get the class on his side, but was forced to use a more firmer method to gain the control he wanted which set the text firmly in its time. It shows *The Play Way* is a more modern and relaxed way of teaching. "Their blundering embrace of the free" (line 16) suggests that the lesson was a successful one.

In the last stanza, he describes how he sees progression in "New Looks" (line 19), and how they have sub-consciously, found out more about themselves "To fall into themselves unknowingly" (line 20).