

## Example 'Power and Conflict' Questions

### How to use this resource:

A useful revision activity is to practice planning a response to an exam question. Use the blank planning sheet to plan a response to a question of your choice.

You could also practice writing up parts of an essay or a whole essay and self-assessing your work using the checklist in the Study Skills booklet.

Practice makes perfect!

### Sample Question 1

1. Compare the ways poets present ideas about mental conflict in 'War Photographer' and in one other poem from 'Power and conflict'.

#### War Photographer

In his dark room 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

## Sample Question 2

2. Compare the ways poets present peoples' feelings about conflict in 'Kamikaze' and one other poem.

Kamikaze

Her father embarked at sunrise  
with a flask of water, a samurai sword  
in the cockpit, a shaven head  
full of powerful incantations  
and enough fuel for a one-way  
journey into history

but half way there, she thought,  
recounting it later to her children,  
he must have looked far down  
at the little fishing boats  
strung out like bunting  
on a green-blue translucent sea

and beneath them, arcing in swathes  
like a huge flag waved first one way  
then the other in a figure of eight,  
the dark shoals of fishes  
flashing silver as their bellies  
swivelled towards the sun

and remembered how he  
and his brothers waiting on the shore  
built cairns of pearl-grey pebbles  
to see whose withstood longest  
the turbulent inrush of breakers  
bringing their father's boat safe

– yes, grandfather's boat – safe  
to the shore, salt-sodden, awash  
with cloud-marked mackerel,  
black crabs, feathery prawns,  
the loose silver of whitebait and once  
a tuna, the dark prince, muscular, dangerous.

And though he came back  
my mother never spoke again  
in his presence, nor did she meet his eyes  
and the neighbours too, they treated him  
as though he no longer existed,  
only we children still chattered and laughed

till gradually we too learned  
to be silent, to live as though  
he had never returned, that this  
was no longer the father we loved.  
And sometimes, she said, he must have wondered  
which had been the better way to die.

Beatrice Garland

### Sample Question 3

3. Compare the ways in which the effects of conflict are portrayed in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' and one other poem.

#### Charge of the Light Brigade

Half a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
    Rode the six hundred.  
"Forward, the Light Brigade!  
Charge for the guns!" he said.  
Into the valley of Death  
    Rode the six hundred.

#### II

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"  
Was there a man dismayed?  
Not though the soldier knew  
    Someone had blundered.  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die.  
Into the valley of Death  
    Rode the six hundred.

#### III

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
    Volleyed and thundered;  
Stormed at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,

Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of hell  
Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flashed all their sabres bare,  
Flashed as they turned in air  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
All the world wondered.  
Plunged in the battery-smoke  
Right through the line they broke;  
Cossack and Russian  
Reeled from the sabre stroke  
Shattered and sundered.  
Then they rode back, but not  
Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
Volleyed and thundered;  
Stormed at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell.  
They that had fought so well  
Came through the jaws of Death,  
Back from the mouth of hell,  
All that was left of them,  
Left of six hundred.

VI

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

All the world wondered.  
Honour the charge they made!  
Honour the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred!

Alfred Lord Tennyson

#### Sample question 4

4. Compare the ways poets present the effects of violence in 'Remains' and in one other poem.

##### Remains

On another occasion, we got sent out  
to tackle looters raiding a bank.

And one of them legs it up the road,  
probably armed, possibly not.

Well myself and somebody else and somebody else  
are all of the same mind,  
so all three of us open fire.

Three of a kind all letting fly, and I swear

I see every round as it rips through his life –

I see broad daylight on the other side.

So we've hit this looter a dozen times  
and he's there on the ground, sort of inside out,

pain itself, the image of agony.

One of my mates goes by  
and tosses his guts back into his body.

Then he's carted off in the back of a lorry.

End of story, except not really.

His blood-shadow stays on the street, and out on patrol

I walk right over it week after week.

Then I'm home on leave. But I blink

and he bursts again through the doors of the bank.

Sleep, and he's probably armed, and possibly not.

Dream, and he's torn apart by a dozen rounds.

And the drink and the drugs won't flush him out –

he's here in my head when I close my eyes,

dug in behind enemy lines,



not left for dead in some distant, sun-stunned, sand-smothered land  
or six-feet-under in desert sand,

but near to the knuckle, here and now,  
his bloody life in my bloody hands.

Simon Armitage