

## Unseen poetry questions to test yourself!

For each one, do the following:

Remind yourself of the Assessment Objectives for this question:

### Assessment Objectives (AOs)

<b>AO1</b>	<p>Read, understand and respond to texts.</p> <p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response</li> <li>• use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.</li> </ul>
<b>AO2</b>	<p>Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.</p>



Remind yourself of the mark scheme for this question:

Mark	AO	Typical features	How to arrive at a mark
Level 6 <i>Convincing, critical analysis and exploration</i> <b>21–24 marks</b>	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical, exploratory conceptualised response to task and text</li> <li>• Judicious use of precise references to support interpretation(s)</li> </ul>	<p><b>At the top of the level</b>, a candidate's response is likely to be a critical, exploratory, well-structured argument. It takes a conceptualised approach to the task supported by a range of judicious references. There will be a fine-grained and insightful analysis of language and form and structure supported by judicious use of subject terminology.</p> <p><b>At the bottom of the level</b>, a candidate will have level 5 and be starting to demonstrate elements of exploratory thought and / or analysis of writers' methods.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of writer's methods with subject terminology used judiciously</li> <li>• Exploration of effects of writer's methods on reader</li> </ul>	
Level 5 <i>Thoughtful, developed consideration</i> <b>17–20 marks</b>	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoughtful, developed response to task and text</li> <li>• Apt references integrated into interpretation(s)</li> </ul>	<p><b>At the top of the level</b>, a candidate's response is likely to include be thoughtful, detailed and developed. It takes a considered approach to the task with references integrated into interpretation; there will be a detailed examination of the effects of language and/or structure and/or form supported by apt use of subject terminology.</p> <p><b>At the bottom of the level</b>, a candidate will have level 4 and be starting to demonstrate elements of thoughtful consideration and / or examination of writers' methods.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examination of writer's methods with subject terminology used effectively to support consideration of methods</li> <li>• Examination of effects of writer's methods on reader</li> </ul>	

Level 4 <i>Clear understanding</i> 13–16 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear, explained response to task and text</li> <li>• Effective use of references to support explanation</li> </ul>	<p><b>At the top of the level,</b> a candidate's response is likely to be clear, sustained and consistent. It takes a focused response to the task which demonstrates clear understanding. It uses a range of references effectively to illustrate and justify explanation; there will be clear explanation of the effects of a range of writer's methods supported by appropriate use of subject terminology.</p> <p><b>At the bottom of the level,</b> a candidate will have level 3 and be starting to demonstrate elements of understanding and / or explanation of writer's methods.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear explanation of writer's methods with appropriate use of relevant subject terminology</li> <li>• Understanding of effects of writer's methods on reader</li> </ul>	
Level 3 <i>Explained, structured comments</i> 9–12 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some explained response to task and text</li> <li>• References used to support a range of relevant comments</li> </ul>	<p><b>At the top of the level,</b> a candidate's response is likely to be explanatory in parts. It focuses on the task with a range of points exemplified by relevant references from the text; there will be identification of effects of a range of writer's methods supported by relevant use of subject terminology.</p> <p><b>At the bottom of the level,</b> a candidate will level 2 and be starting to explain and / or make relevant comments on writer's methods.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explained/relevant comments on writer's methods with some relevant use of subject terminology</li> <li>• Identification of effects of writer's methods on reader</li> </ul>	

Level 2 <i>Supported, relevant comments</i> 5–8 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported response to task and text</li> <li>• Comments on references</li> </ul>	<p><b>At the top of the level,</b> a candidate's response is likely to be relevant and supported by some explanation. It will include some focus on the task with relevant comments and some supporting references from text. There will be identification of effects of deliberate choices made by the writer with some reference to subject terminology.</p> <p><b>At the bottom of the level,</b> a candidate will have level 1 and be starting to focus on the task and /or show awareness of the writer making choices.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of writers' methods</li> <li>• Some reference to subject terminology</li> </ul>	
Level 1 <i>Simple, explicit comments</i> 1–4 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple comments relevant to task and text</li> <li>• Reference to relevant details</li> </ul>	<p><b>At the top of the level,</b> a candidate's response is likely to be narrative and/or descriptive in approach. It may include awareness of the task and provide appropriate reference to text; there will be simple identification of method with possible reference to subject terminology.</p> <p><b>At the bottom of the level,</b> a candidate's response will show some familiarity with the text.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of writer making deliberate choices</li> <li>• Possible reference to subject terminology</li> </ul>	
0 marks	Nothing worthy of credit/nothing written		

Then, for each question:

- Highlight the key words from the question, then read the title and the poem carefully thinking about words and phrases **that are relevant to the question**
- Make sure that you establish what the poem is about and **DON'T PANIC!** Before you begin to think about planning an answer to the question



Next, consider these questions:

- What are the main ideas of the poem?
- What is the tone of the poem? (mood)
- How does the poet feel?
- How does the poet make you (the reader) feel?
- What words and phrases from the poem are relevant to the question?
- Do they include any language or structural devices? If so, highlight them!
- What is the effect of these language and structural devices on the reader?
- Why was the poem written?
- What are the writer's intentions?
- What is the poem's message?



Language, Structure and Form: what to look for:

Language	Structure	Form
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Similes</li> <li>○ Metaphors</li> <li>○ Alliteration</li> <li>○ Onomatopoeia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Repetition</li> <li>○ Stanzas</li> <li>○ Rhyme Scheme (irregular, regular?)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ballad</li> <li>○ Sonnet</li> <li>○ Free Verse</li> <li>○ Humorous</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assonance</li> <li>○ Imagery</li> <li>○ Hyperbole</li> <li>○ Oxymoron</li> <li>○ Personification</li> <li>○ Symbolism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rhythm</li> <li>○ Beat</li> <li>○ Iambic Pentameter</li> <li>○ Caesura</li> <li>○ Enjambment</li> <li>○ Rhyming Couplet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lyrical</li> <li>○ Narrative</li> <li>○ Epitaph</li> </ul>
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Finally, now you are a master of planning: complete the response! There should be at least three sides to give the examiner as much opportunity to give you as many marks as possible.

Finally ~~express~~ **ASSESS YOURSELF!**

Read through your response, have you:



- ✓ Demonstrated a good understanding of the ideas raised in the poem?
- ✓ Commented on the poet's use of language?
- ✓ Commented on the poet's use of structure?
- ✓ Used relevant examples to support your ideas?
- ✓ Referred to the question throughout the response?
- ✓ Written an extended response?
- ✓ Proofread and spelt keywords accurately?

Finally, complete a 'WWW' and 'EBI' for your response. Or, if you are revising in pairs, use it to peer assess. If you feel confident with the mark scheme, give yourself a mark. Remember, your teacher will be more than happy to read your essays/plans, however, it is always best for you to have a read through and judge your own ability first – it'll really help you in the exam!

If you are still struggling to understand the poems. Here are some helpful guides:

<p>Reading</p> <p>Read the poem through three times.</p>	<p>First ideas</p> <p>What do you think the poem is about?</p>	<p>Mood (purpose)</p> <p>Is the poem meant to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• funny</li> <li>• scary</li> <li>• serious</li> <li>• interesting</li> <li>• happy</li> </ul> <p>or something else ...?</p>	<p>Quotation</p> <p>Find a quotation that shows the mood of the poem:</p>
<p>Words / language</p> <p>Which are used in your poem?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• repetition</li> <li>• command</li> <li>• simile</li> <li>• metaphor</li> <li>• alliteration</li> </ul> <p>Give an example of one language feature you ticked.</p>	<p>Words</p> <p>Pick out an interesting word or phrase</p> <p>Why is this a good word or phrase to use?</p>	<p>Structure</p> <p>How many verses are there?</p> <p>How does the poem change?</p>	<p>Opinion</p> <p>What do you like/dislike about the poem?</p>

## How to analyse and Unseen text

<b>A</b> ttitude	Why was it written? Themes? Messages? Tone? Mood?
<b>L</b> anguage	Techniques? Effect on the reader?
<b>S</b> tructure	Techniques? Effect on the reader?
<b>O</b> wn opinion	The poem's/text's effect on the reader/listener/you?



### AQA Literature 8702 Paper 2: Section C: Question 2: Comparison

Hungry for more? If you want to practise the final question of the Paper 2 exam for Literature, which is worth 8 marks, go through the extensive collection of poetry attached and compare the poet's attitudes, ideas and methods for presenting their themes. Start with the poems which consider the same themes.

## One Art

The art of losing isn't hard to master;  
so many things seem filled with the intent  
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster  
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.  
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

Then practice\* losing farther, losing faster:  
places, and names, and where it was you meant  
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or  
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.  
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,  
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.  
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.

– Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture  
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident  
the art of losing's not too hard to master  
though it may look like (Write it!) like disaster.

## Elizabeth Bishop

\*practice – Please note the American spelling. English spelling: practise

2	7	.	1
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 In 'One Art,' how does the speaker convey their feelings about the subject of loss?

[24 marks]

### **The Wild Swans at Coole\***

The trees are in their autumn beauty,  
The woodland paths are dry,  
Under the October twilight the water  
Mirrors a still sky;  
Upon the brimming water among the stones  
Are nine-and-fifty swans.

The nineteenth autumn has come upon me  
Since I first made my count;  
I saw, before I had well finished,  
All suddenly mount  
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings  
Upon their clamorous\* wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,  
And now my heart is sore.  
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,  
The first time on this shore,  
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,  
Trode with a lighter tread.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,  
They paddle in the cold  
Companionable streams or climb the air;  
Their hearts have not grown old;  
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,  
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water,  
Mysterious, beautiful;  
Among what rushes will they build,  
By what lake's edge or pool  
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day  
To find they have flown away?

W. B. Yeats

2	7	.	1
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In 'The Wild Swans at Coole,' how does the poet present his feelings about the swans in this poem?

[24 marks]

## The Rear-Guard

*(Hindenburg Line, April 1917)*

Groping along the tunnel, step by step,  
He winked his prying torch with patching glare  
From side to side, and sniffed the unwholesome air.

Tins, boxes, bottles, shapes too vague to know,  
A mirror smashed, the mattress from a bed;  
And he, exploring fifty feet below  
The rosy gloom of battle overhead.

Tripping, he grabbed the wall; saw someone lie  
Humped at his feet, half-hidden by a rug,  
And stooped to give the sleeper's arm a tug.  
'I'm looking for headquarters.' No reply.  
'God blast your neck!' (For days he'd had no sleep.)  
'Get up and guide me through this stinking place.'

Savage, he kicked a soft, unanswering heap,  
And flashed his beam across the livid\* face  
Terribly glaring up, whose eyes yet wore  
Agony dying hard ten days before;  
And fists of fingers clutched a blackening wound.

Alone he staggered on until he found  
Dawn's ghost that filtered down a shafted stair  
To the dazed, muttering creatures underground  
Who hear the boom of shells in muffled sound.

At last, with sweat of horror in his hair,  
He climbed through darkness to the twilight air,  
Unloading hell behind him step by step.  
Siegfried Sassoon

2	7	.	1
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 In 'The Rear-Guard,' how does the poet present his ideas about the soldier's journey?

[24 marks]

### **In Mrs Tilscher's class**

You could travel up the Blue Nile  
with your finger, tracing the route  
while Mrs Tilscher chanted the scenery.  
"Tana. Ethiopia. Khartoum. Aswan."  
That for an hour,  
then a skittle of milk  
and the chalky Pyramids rubbed into dust.  
A window opened with a long pole.  
The laugh of a bell swung by a running child.

This was better than home. Enthralling books.  
The classroom glowed like a sweetshop.  
Sugar paper. Coloured shapes. Brady and Hindley  
faded, like the faint, uneasy smudge of a mistake.  
Mrs Tilscher loved you. Some mornings, you found  
she'd left a gold star by your name.  
The scent of a pencil slowly, carefully, shaved.  
A xylophone's nonsense heard from another form.

Over the Easter term the inky tadpoles changed  
from commas into exclamation marks. Three frogs  
hopped in the playground, freed by a dunce  
followed by a line of kids, jumping and croaking  
away from the lunch queue. A rough boy  
told you how you were born. You kicked him, but stared  
at your parents, appalled, when you got back  
home

That feverish July, the air tasted of electricity.  
A tangible alarm made you always untidy, hot,  
fractious under the heavy, sexy sky. You asked her  
how you were born and Mrs Tilscher smiled  
then turned away. Reports were handed out.  
You ran through the gates, impatient to be grown  
the sky split open into a thunderstorm.

### **Carol Anne Duffy**

2	7	.	1
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In 'In Mrs Tilscher's Class,' how does the poet present ideas about childhood memories?

[24 marks]

### **Fantasy of an African Boy**

Such a peculiar lot  
we are, we people  
without money, in daylong  
yearlong sunlight, knowing  
money is somewhere, somewhere.

Everybody says it's big  
bigger brain bother now,  
money. Such millions and millions  
of us don't manage at all  
without it, like war going on.

And we can't eat it. Yet  
without it our heads alone  
stay big, as lots and lots do,  
coming from nowhere joyful,  
going nowhere happy.

We can't drink it up. Yet  
without it we shrivel when small  
and stop forever  
where we stopped, as lots and lots do.

We can't read money for books.  
Yet without it we don't  
read, don't write numbers,  
don't open gates in other countries,  
as lots and lots never do.

We can't use money to bandage  
sores, can't pound it  
to powder for sick eyes  
and sick bellies. Yet without  
it, flesh melts from our bones.

Such walled-round gentlemen  
overseas minding money! Such  
bigtime gentlemen, body guarded  
because of too much respect  
and too many wishes on them:

too many wishes, everywhere,  
wanting them to let go  
magic of money, and let it fly  
away, everywhere, day and night,  
just like dropped leaves in wind!

**James Berry**

2	7	.	1
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In 'Fantasy of an African Boy,' how does the poet present ideas about the significance of money?

[24 marks]

## The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

## Robert Frost

2	7	.	1
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 In 'The Road Not Taken,' how does the poet present ideas about the importance of making decisions?

[24 marks]

## Island Man

Morning

and island man wakes up  
to the sound of blue surf  
in his head  
the steady breaking and wombing

wild seabirds  
and fishermen pushing out to sea  
the sun surfacing defiantly  
from the east  
of his small emerald island  
he always comes back groggily groggily

Comes back to sands  
of a grey metallic soar  
to surge of wheels  
to dull North Circular\* roar

muffling muffling  
his crumpled pillow waves  
island man heaves himself

Another London day

## Grace Nichols

2	7	.	1
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 In 'Island Man,' how does the poet present ideas about place?

[24 marks]

### **An Old Woman**

An old woman grabs  
hold of your sleeve  
and tags along.

She wants a fifty paise coin.  
She says she will take you  
to the horseshoe shrine.

You've seen it already.  
She hobbles along anyway  
and tightens her grip on your shirt.

She won't let you go.  
You know how old women are.  
They stick to you like a burr.

You turn around and face her  
with an air of finality.  
You want to end the farce.

When you hear her say,  
'What else can an old woman do  
on hills as wretched as these?'

You look right at the sky.  
Clear through the bullet holes  
she has for her eyes.

And as you look on  
the cracks that begin around her eyes  
spread beyond her skin.

And the hills crack.  
And the temples crack.  
And the sky falls

With a plate-glass clatter  
Around the shatterproof crone  
who stands alone.

And you are reduced  
to so much small change  
in her hand.

**Arun Kolatkar**

2	7	.	1
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In 'An Old Woman,' how does the poet create sympathy for the old woman?

[24 marks]

## **Blessing**

The skin cracks like a pod.  
There never is enough water.

Imagine the drip of it,  
the small splash, echo  
in a tin mug,  
the voice of a kindly god.

Sometimes, the sudden rush  
of fortune. The municipal pipe bursts,  
silver crashes to the ground  
and the flow has found  
a roar of tongues. From the huts,  
a congregation : every man woman  
child for streets around  
butts in, with pots,  
brass, copper, aluminium,  
plastic buckets,  
frantic hands,

and naked children  
screaming in the liquid sun,  
their highlights polished to perfection,  
flashing light,  
as the blessing sings  
over their small bones.

**Imtiaz Dharker**

2	7	.	1
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 In 'Blessing,' how does the poet present ideas about poverty and wealth?

[24 marks]

### **For Heidi with Blue Hair**

When you dyed your hair blue  
(or, at least, ultramarine  
for the clipped sides, with a crest  
of jet-black spikes on top)  
you were sent home from school

because, as the headmistress put it,  
although dyed hair was not  
specifically forbidden, yours  
was, apart from anything else,  
not done in the school colours.

Tears in the kitchen, telephone-calls  
to school from your freedom-loving father:  
'She's not a punk\* in her behaviour;  
it's just a style.' (You wiped your eyes,  
also not in a school colour.)

'She discussed it with me first –  
we checked the rules.' 'And anyway, Dad,  
it cost twenty-five dollars.  
Tell them it won't wash out –  
not even if I wanted to try.'

It would have been unfair to mention  
your mother's death, but that  
shimmered behind the arguments.  
The school had nothing else against you;  
the teachers twittered and gave in.

Next day your black friend had hers done  
in grey, white and flaxen yellow –  
the school colours precisely:  
an act of solidarity\*, a witty  
tease. The battle was already won.

**Fleur Adcock**

2	7	.	1
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 In 'Heidi with Blue Hair,' how does the poet present ideas about individuality?

[24 marks]

### Still I Rise

You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may tread me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?  
Why are you beset with gloom?  
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells  
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,  
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?  
Don't you take it awful hard  
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines  
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?  
Does it come as a surprise  
That I dance like I've got diamonds  
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
I rise  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I rise  
I rise  
I rise.

Maya Angelou

2	7	.	1
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In 'Still I Rise,' how does the poet present ideas about determination and injustice?

[24 marks]

## O Captain! My Captain!

Captain! My Captain! Related Poem Content Details

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;  
    But O heart! heart! heart!  
    O the bleeding drops of red,  
    Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
    Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,  
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;  
    Here Captain! dear father!  
    This arm beneath your head!  
    It is some dream that on the deck,  
    You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,  
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,  
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;  
    Exult O shores, and ring O bells!  
    But I with mournful tread,  
    Walk the deck my Captain lies,  
    Fallen cold and dead.

Walt Whitman

2	7	.	1
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 In 'O Captain! My Captain!' how does the poet present ideas about loyalty?

[24 marks]

## **Invictus**

Out of the night that covers me,  
    Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
    For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
    I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
    My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
    Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
    Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
    How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
    I am the captain of my soul.

**William Ernest Henley**

2	7	.	1
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 In 'Invictus,' how does the poet present ideas about fate and determination?

[24 marks]

### Alpine Letter

Love? If you'd asked me yesterday, I'd say  
love is a saw that amputates the heart.  
I'd call it my disease, I'd call it plague.  
But yesterday, I hadn't heard from you.

So call it the weight of light that holds one soul  
connected to another. Or a tear  
that falls in all gratitude, becoming sea.  
Call it the only word that comforts me.

The sight of your writing has me on the floor,  
the curve of each letter looped about my heart.  
And in this ink, the tenor of your voice.  
And in this ink the movement of your hand.

The Alps, now, cut their teeth upon the sky,  
and pressing on to set these granite jaws  
between us, not a mile will do me harm.  
Your letter, in my coat, will keep me warm.

### Ros Barber

2	7	.	1
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 In 'Alpine Letter,' how does the poet present ideas about love?

[24 marks]

## Piano

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;  
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see  
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling  
strings  
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she  
sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song  
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong  
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside  
And hymns in the cozy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour  
With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour  
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast  
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the  
past.

**D. H. Lawrence**

2	7	.	1
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 In 'Piano,' how does the speaker present ideas about the significance of memories?

[24 marks]

## Telephone Conversation

The price seemed reasonable, location  
Indifferent. The landlady swore she lived  
Off premises. Nothing remained  
But self-confession. "Madam", I warned,  
"I hate a wasted journey – I am African."  
Silence. Silenced transmission of  
Pressurized good-breeding. Voice, when it came,  
Lipstick coated, long gold-rolled  
Cigarette-holder pipped. Caught I was, foully.  
"HOW DARK?" ...I had not misheard..."ARE YOU LIGHT  
OR VERY DARK?" Button B. Button A\*. Stench  
Of rancid breath of public hide-and-speak.  
Red booth. Red pillar-box. Red double-tiered  
Omnibus squelching tar. It was real! Shamed  
By ill-mannered silence, surrender  
Pushed dumbfoundment to beg simplification.  
Considerate she was, varying the emphasis –  
"ARE YOU DARK? OR VERY LIGHT?" Revelation came.  
"You mean – like plain or milk chocolate?"  
Her accent was clinical, crushing in its light  
Impersonality. Rapidly, wave-length adjusted,  
I chose. "West African sepia" – and as afterthought,  
"Down in my passport." Silence for spectroscopic  
Flight of fancy, till truthfulness changed her accent  
Hard on the mouthpiece. "WHAT'S THAT?" conceding  
"DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS." "Like brunette."  
"THAT'S DARK, ISN'T IT?" "Not altogether.  
Facially, I am brunette, but madam, you should see  
The rest of me. Palm of my hand, soles of my feet  
Are a peroxide blond. Friction, caused –  
Foolishly, madam – by sitting down, has turned  
My bottom raven black – One moment, madam! – sensing  
Her receiver rearing on the thunderclap  
About my ears – "Madam," I pleaded, "wouldn't you rather  
See for yourself?"

## Wole Soyinka

2	7	.	1
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 In 'Telephone Conversation,' how does the poet present ideas about attitudes towards race?

[24 marks]

### Once Upon a Time

Once upon a time, son,  
they used to laugh with their hearts  
and laugh with their eyes;  
but now they only laugh with their teeth,  
while their ice-block-cold eyes  
search behind my shadow.

There was a time indeed  
they used to shake hands with their hearts;  
but that's gone, son.  
Now they shake hands without hearts  
while their left hands search  
my empty pockets.

'Feel at home'! 'Come again';  
they say, and when I come  
again and feel  
at home, once, twice,  
there will be no thrice –  
for then I find doors shut on me.

So I have learned many things, son.  
I have learned to wear many faces  
like dresses – homeface,  
officeface, streetface, hostface,  
cocktailface, with all their conforming smiles  
like a fixed portrait smile.

And I have learned, too,  
to laugh with only my teeth  
and shake hands without my heart.  
I have also learned to say, 'Goodbye',  
when I mean 'Good-riddance';  
to say 'Glad to meet you',  
without being glad; and to say 'It's been  
nice talking to you', after being bored.

But believe me, son.  
I want to be what I used to be  
when I was like you. I want  
to unlearn all these muting things.  
Most of all, I want to relearn  
how to laugh, for my laugh in the mirror  
shows only my teeth like a snake's bare fangs!

So show me, son,  
how to laugh; show me how  
I used to laugh and smile  
once upon a time when I was like you.

**Gabriel Okara**

2	7	.	1
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In 'Once Upon a Time,' how does the speaker present their feelings about the effects of age?

[24 marks]

### **A Mother in a Refugee Camp**

No Madonna and Child could touch  
Her tenderness for a son  
She soon would have to forget. . . .  
The air was heavy with odors of diarrhea,  
Of unwashed children with washed-out ribs  
And dried-up bottoms waddling in labored steps  
Behind blown-empty bellies. Other mothers there  
Had long ceased to care, but not this one:  
She held a ghost smile between her teeth,  
and in her eyes the memory  
Of a mother's pride. . . . She had bathed him  
And rubbed him down with bare palms.  
She took from their bundle of possessions  
A broken comb and combed  
The rust-colored hair left on his skull  
And then – humming in her eyes – began carefully to part it.  
In their former life this was perhaps  
A little daily act of no consequence  
Before his breakfast and school; now she did it  
Like putting flowers on a tiny grave.

**Chinua Achebe**

2	7	.	1
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 In 'A Mother in a Refugee Camp,' how does the poet present ideas about loss?

[24 marks]

### **Do not go gentle into that good night**

do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

**Dylan Thomas**

2	7	.	1
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 In 'Do not go gentle into that goodnight,' how does the poet present ideas about Death?

[24 marks]

**First they came...**

First they came for the Communists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Communist  
Then they came for the Socialists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Socialist  
Then they came for the trade unionists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a trade unionist  
Then they came for the Jews  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Jew  
Then they came for me  
And there was no one left  
To speak out for me

**Unknown**

2	7	.	1
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 In 'First they came,' how does the poet present their ideas about speaking out against injustice?

[24 marks]

## Not My Business

They picked Akanni up one morning  
Beat him soft like clay  
And stuffed him down the belly  
Of a waiting jeep.

What business of mine is it  
So long they don't take the yam  
From my savouring mouth?

They came one night  
Booted the whole house awake  
And dragged Danladi out,  
Then off to a lengthy absence.

What business of mine is it  
So long they don't take the yam  
From my savouring mouth?

Chinwe went to work one day  
Only to find her job was gone:  
No query, no warning, no probe –  
Just one neat sack for a stainless record.

What business of mine is it  
So long they don't take the yam  
From my savouring mouth?

And then one evening  
As I sat down to eat my yam  
A knock on the door froze my hungry hand.

The jeep was waiting on my bewildered lawn  
Waiting, waiting in its usual silence.

## Niyi Osundare

2	7	.	1
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 In 'Not My Business,' how does the poet present their ideas about speaking out against injustice?

[24 marks]