

Year 10: Summer Booklet

GCSE English Literature

*Your own personalised, unparalleled, hand-crafted
guide to tackling and surviving Unseen Poetry from
your trusty English department!*



Unseen Poetry

What even is it?

We all know GCSE English Literature is broken into **two papers** aptly named *Paper 1* and, you guessed it, *Paper 2*.

Paper 1 covers *Shakespeare and the 19th Century novel*.

Paper 2 covers *Modern Texts and Poetry*.


Section C of *Paper 2* is the *Unseen Poetry* section which is worth 32 marks in total (more than the anthology poetry section!), but we're going to be focusing on just the 24 mark question.

What skills do I need?

The great part about this section is that you already have the skills you need: you'll be making fabulous inferences and finding quotes to back up your ideas (**AO1**) and then analysing and exploring *how* the poets use language, form, and structure to create effects and meanings by using subject terminology (**AO2**).

Basically, everything you have done throughout your time in English from Year 7 until now: you are given a text of some sort to read and peruse; afterwards we write about the choices the writer has made and what this may suggest to us as linguists.

We definitely want to stress that there is **no mark for context (AO3) in this section!** The poems are *unseen*, therefore the examiners will not expect background knowledge about the poem or the contexts they were written in — you've never seen them before, so of course, you would not have revised that.



This is also true for GCSE English Language, so treat it like one of those questions! Read, infer, analyse.

Why do I need a booklet?

Lockdown has not been easy for anyone and we want you to know that we're putting as much support in place as possible to support you through Year 11 and your GCSE exams next year. This booklet will be a guide to an element of the exam that is full of transferable skills that will help with every topic across English Literature *and* English Language.

The Question

What does it look like?

This is a 24 mark question and will be about **one** poem you've (most likely) never seen before.

There is also an 8 mark question which is about comparison of method, but that's a story for another time...

This question will always be about something referenced in the poem, so that's your first hint for annotation. If you're asked about how regret is presented, look for references to regret!

You will always be asked how does the poet 'present' something, but that's all you know.

What should I do first?

Read and understand the question. Simple.

Many people might think you should read the poem first, but we also want you to know that exams are as much about timing and organisation as they are about knowing how to analyse.

Therefore, we really recommend you highlight/underline/circle/however you'd like the **keywords** in the question. We've highlighted the keywords in the question below:

*How does the poet **present** his **feelings** about **growing old**?*

Using those three keywords, we would know we'd be looking at a poem about age and growing old, and that the poet will be presenting how they feel about this. We can already have our ideas building as we read the poem.

How should I structure my answer?

PETAL paragraphs are great, and if you have all five of those elements in each point you make, then you are good to go! Some of you will want to stick to the **PETAL** structure, and some of you will want to start to write in your own format.

Either structure to analytical writing is absolutely fine as long as you have a **point**, **evidence** to prove that point, **terminology**, **analysis** of that evidence using the terminology and what it symbolises and suggests, and finally a **link**.

SMILE

No, really!

SMILE is an easy way to annotate and understand a poem. We've added in several ideas you might want to consider. This is the part for '**what**' questions through our annotations. When it comes to writing, we move onto the '**how**' questions.



structure

How many stanzas are there?

Are the lines uniform?

How many lines do the stanzas have?

Is there a rhyming scheme?

Are the stanzas uniform (similar lengths, for example)?

Is there enjambment (this could be in *Structure* or *Language*)?



meaning

What do you think the poem is about?

What else *could* the poem be about?

What is the purpose of this poem (what does it want to achieve by being read)?



imagery

What are the *key* images created in the poem?

Are there any repeated images or patterns created through the imagery?

What sensory description is used to create the images?



language

Check the **Glossary** at the back of this booklet for specific examples!

What lexical classes are used (concrete noun, modal verb, preposition, and so on)?

What poetic techniques are used?

What linguistic techniques are used?

What structural techniques are used?

What semantic fields are created?



effect on reader

Is sympathy created by the poet for the reader?

Is empathy created by the poet for the reader?

How does the poet want us to feel?

Poem #1

SMILE

How does 'Getting Better?' present ideas about the impact of divorce?

Getting Better?

Watts

Immediately, the rhetorical question in the title is something we can focus on and begin the understanding that there is an uncertainty from the poet.
How might this holistically represent and symbolise the poet's feelings?

This is the first poem we'll be looking at, and for this one we're giving you a lot of support to help you get started.

Your three steps with *Unseen Poetry* are:

1. read and understand the question;
2. read the poem with the question focus in mind and annotate **as you go**;
3. narrow down your annotation to the most relevant parts that would make the most effective points

The alcohol. The fighting. It was hard to take seeing them like this.
The late nights. The tears. Me waiting for all of this to end.
I didn't want to hear it, but I knew it was coming.
When it only got worse I knew I couldn't keep running.
Then the day came when they both sat us down.
They said 'I'm so sorry but we're over now.'
I cried and ran to my room through my tears it was hard for me to see.

The hurt in my heart made it hard for me to breath.
The next day dad left. He cried when he hugged me and said 'See you soon. I will call you later, and I will always love you.'

I took it the hardest. I was full of sadness and hate.

I tried to forget I didn't need the pain.

Mum treats me different now. I look just like him.

I ignore them and close myself off. I don't let anyone in.

No-one knows my pain. I don't let them. I'm just glad we can still see him.

People ask 'When will you open up and tell me how you feel?' I tell them never.

'Cause acting like it never happened helps it get better?

Anaphora. The repetition of the determiner

'The' makes the exposition (opening) of the poem clearly focused on a negative experience.

Possible empathy for the reader.

Continuous verb 'running' has of strenuous effort and something that cannot be upheld eternally. It's almost like the emotional effects are becoming physical.

The only example in the entire poem and it's found on a line about crying and running from the news of the divorce. Perhaps represents the longevity of the pain: it follows on and continues.

Places the poet in a unique circumstance and gives an extreme that suggests emotional hurt and turmoil.

Helps create empathy or sympathy for the poet by using a of melancholy emotion.

The drastic differences in the non-uniform line lengths may symbolise a lack of consistency in the poet's life, or a chaotic frame of mind.

The accent of the poet is used to create empathy and relatability for the reader. This poem is about everyday issues faced by everyday people.

The poet's experience has altered and now juxtaposes the past. This change in tone may suggest a change in mindset of the poet after their parents' divorce.

Breaks up the line and adds in pauses that almost force us to take in their message or expression specifically.

We've created some annotations for you (but we do suggest you add some of your own ideas, too!) and you need to match up the blanks in the annotations to the list at the bottom of this page - we've done one for you.

You should also try and categorise each annotation into its **SMILE** category so that you can become more familiar with what to look for.

Connotations

Emotive language

Caesura

Superlative

Anaphora ✓

Enjambment

Colloquial language

Juxtaposition

Semantic field

Volta

Dialect

Metaphor

Mark Scheme

As teachers, we know mark schemes can be really complicated (and boring) so we've come up with this student-friendly version for you to understand how you will be assessed in your GCSE English Literature exams.

Examiners work from the bottom, up. They start you on zero and *find marks*, rather than starting with full marks and taking away.

Level 6 Convincing, critical

The response has a clear concept of what the poet is trying to achieve by writing the poem. Poems are about expression, and this response knows that and explains it convincingly. There is the idea of a message being given from the poem to the reader.

This response will also use many zoomed in examples of techniques or patterns and link them together to help explain and justify their concept of what the poem is about. They fully explore the ideas and don't leave any stone unturned. The focus is on the poem being a meaningful text written for a purpose.

Level 5 Thoughtful, developed

The response is not just a 'this is what this means' type of essay. They might be starting to look from different perspectives, points of view, and interpretations. There are clear connections between points and it is not several unlinked points, but instead a more fluid argument without being certain about ideas. They give suggestions and possibilities.

These responses are clearly well thought out and zoom into really specific things the poet does and links them to zoomed out ideas, themes, and purposes of the poem: the analyses are much more abstract.

Level 4 Clear understanding

The response clearly understands the poem and the question. Their explanations are complete and don't leave any ideas unexplained. The response knows the poem is a purposeful construction by a poet – they are fully aware that the poem was written to present a particular idea.

There is a 'Clear Understanding' when it comes to words, techniques, and themes that are quoted and they are explained with reference to symbols and connotations. It will also explain the poet's choices and how it might link to a possible purpose of the poem. It is zooming out from just the text alone.

Level 3 Explained, structured

The response is generally relevant to the question and shows a sense of the poet doing things on purpose and sometimes even identifies effects of more than one deliberate thing the poet has included. The explanations are good, but need more detail to demonstrate a really clear understanding.

There might be references to bigger ideas and themes but doesn't zoom outside of the poem; they mainly focus on the content and words in the poem, not how it was made or why.

Level 2 Supported, relevant

The response has the beginnings of a point of view about the poem. They don't just see it as a text, but start to see it as something written by someone else for a particular reason.

There might be a few references to something the poet has done on purpose, like 'these words make the poem seem sad and make it gloomy'.

Level 1 Simple, explicit

The response is simplistic and might even just retell what the poem is about without actually talking about any choices the poet has made and what they might mean.

There might sometimes be vague references or quotes but no understanding that the poem was created by a writer with an intention or comments on method, or if there are, very simple comments.

Poem #1 WAGOLLS

(What A Good One Looks Like)

The poet presents the reality of the wider impact that divorce has on others. The poet uses several examples of emotive language which altogether form a melancholy semantic field. Abstract nouns such as 'pain' and 'sadness' may suggest the poet feels that divorce can also impact those nearby; it's as if it causes emotional 'pain' for family and friends, too. The reader may sympathise with this, either from the poet's perspective, or from those that have divorced, and therefore attempt to understand how damaging divorce can be for those others surrounding the divorce. Overall, the negative semantic field helps the reader sympathise with the emotional sorrow.

Emotional pain and confusion are presented as unnoticed inevitabilities of parental divorce. From the title of the poem 'Getting Better?', down to the same rhetorical question being repeated in the final line 'get better?', it's as if the poet almost forces the reader to recognise that society has not remembered to care for those outside the individuals in the divorce. There is an implication that emotional confusion can have lasting effects and this is demonstrated through the volta of tense in the poem: the first ten lines speak of the past experiences of the poet, but then alters to present tense to show the current effects of the past. The poet is requesting that the reader understand this abstract idea of consequence on those around you for the decisions you make and the care you give after these decisions.

L4 **WWW** — This response explains their points well and always completes any idea they bring forward. Their use of subject terminology is accurate; it is thorough as well as throughout the paragraph.

This response is also very aware that the poem was written for a purpose other than just to entertain; it has a meaning that is hinted to in the response.

EBI — This response is quite rigid to the PETAL paragraph structure which is great, but to improve further they would need to start to move away from just restricting to PETAL structures. They could definitely go further with their explanations and *develop* their ideas more, but the ideas they bring up are explained.

L5 **WWW** — This response is really precise with its choice of quotes and even references the title of the poem and links it to how the poet uses a similar structure to the title in the final line. They are absolutely aware that this poet has written this poem with a message in mind for their reader.

This response gives several separate references and pieces of terminology and links them all to the original point very smoothly. This is a response where there is more than *clear understanding*, but is now *developed*.

EBI — To push into *convincing and critical*, this response would need to zoom out of the poem further and discuss the purpose of poetry itself, and where this poet attempts to place their reader.

The response would also need to be more conceptual and talk more about the bigger, holistic, abstract ideas that are referenced in the poem.

Poem #2



How does 'Finding Peace' present the effects of war?

Finding Peace

Baumgartner

This is a poem with a clear message about the effects of war with clear dark language throughout. How might the poet try to handle the topic for those who haven't experienced war?

Turmoil covers my eyes and my heart.

It never leaves me in day or dark.

Combat changed me to this way.

Hate and death seem to be with me to stay.

I yearn for peace for just a little while

To free my soul from further trial.

The faces of death haunt my dreams.

I pray for peace from all these things.

God, take me home if it is the only way.

Please give peace for just a day.

As before, your three steps with *Unseen Poetry* are:

1. read and understand the question;
2. read the poem with the question focus in mind and annotate **as you go**;
3. narrow down your annotation to the most relevant parts that would make the most effective points

This time we've added some questions next to a few parts of the poem you may wish to annotate, to help you get thinking. Of course, you should also add in your own ideas to parts we haven't pointed to, too.

What can we say about the title?

Why has the poet chosen to use a military term 'combat' and not 'fighting' or something as simple?

If they are 'yearning' for peace, what does that say about their mental state?

How does this influence our understanding of their experiences?
Why do some people pray to god?

Once you've answered these questions and annotated those ideas using the **Glossary** at the back of this booklet, **you should add your own annotations using SMILE.**

Poem #2 WANILLS

(needs improvement)

L3

WWW — This is a response that does answer the question. It includes specific quotes and discusses their relevance and importance to the point the response is making. There is a structure to the point and they include all the elements of PETAL. There is accurate use of one piece of terminology and an explanation of why that terminology is used.

EBI — This response would need to link together ideas and explicitly reference the purpose of the poem. This response is very focused on the poem itself and does not reference the **point** of the poem being written and/or published for others to read.

To push into *clear understanding* this response would need to link together its ideas and zoom out more from the poem. Perhaps including another quote that proved the same point would be useful, or even referencing abstract ideas and concepts and not just the literal ideas in the poem.

The poet describes the effects of war as something that can't be changed. This is shown through the quote 'I pray for peace' which implies that the poet wants 'peace' and that they think the only way to get it would be to pray to a god, something seen as having the most power possible. The alliteration 'pray for peace' makes us focus on the words 'pray' and 'peace' because they are seen as important for the poet to get over their trauma and therefore come to peace with the experiences they had. Altogether, the effects of war are seen as damaging and dangerous on and off the battlefield.

The effects of war are presented as scary afterwards as well at the time. One quote to show this is 'It never leaves me in day or dark' and the word 'dark' means it is sad and frightening because things that are dark are often not good and are not what you want to experience. Maybe the poet wants you to feel sad and sorry for people who have to go to war.

Challenge yourself by taking one, or both, of these 'needs improvement' paragraphs and turning them into WAGOLLS!

L2

WWW — This response does include a relevant quote and begins to show understanding of the poem's topic and why it has been written. The effects of the poem are partially referenced.

EBI — This response needs to be more explanatory and really go into the ideas that it hints towards. The quote it chooses is relevant, but they only mention one of the words in the entire quote so the longer quote is not necessary.

To push into *explained, structured* this would need to go into more of the **how** it is 'sad and frightening' and **why** the poem wants the reader to feel sorry for those who fight in war zones. Finally, there is a clear lack of terminology that would need to be included.

Poem #3



How does 'Feeling' present attitudes towards the COVID pandemic?

Feeling

McShane

I don't know how I'm feeling.
I think I feel all right.
I'm busy doing nothing
From morning until night.

I don't know how I'm feeling.
I left the house today.
I went to do some shopping.
I sang along the way.

I don't know how I'm feeling.
Today I'm not too sure.
The numbers keep on climbing.
Will they find a cure?

I don't know how I'm feeling
When I stand and clap so loud.
So grateful, happy and so sad
In the isolated crowd.

I don't know how I'm feeling.
I saw the news today
But only very briefly.
Why won't it go away?

The three steps with *Unseen Poetry* are:

1. read and understand the question;
2. read the poem with the question focus in mind and annotate **as you go**;
3. narrow down your annotation to the most relevant parts that would make the most effective points

This time you're on your own! Use the **Glossary** at the back of this booklet along with your own knowledge to annotate any ideas you have about this poem in relation to the question asked.

Do you know how you're feeling?
You know that it's okay
To sit and cry and wonder,
To want a better day.

Let's just hold this feeling
Of love, of light, of hope.
Let's relish all the quiet.
Be proud of how you cope.

I don't know how I'm feeling.
I think I want to cry.
I don't - I make a coffee
And stare out at the sky.

You know that deep down feeling
Of joy, of loss, of pain,
The love, the sadness and the hurt.
You'll be okay again.

One day we'll get that feeling -
Was all this even real?
Hold onto that feeling.
In time we will all heal.

Use the focus of the annotations for the previous two poems to help you get started.
What could you say about the **anaphora** of the first lines of the stanzas?
How might the two halves of the poem be defined?

Your Turn!

Use this space to plan a **three point response** to the question on our final poem. You should then write the response on a separate sheet or in your book. A full point may need to go over one paragraph in length, so think of the amount to write in terms of how many points you make, not the paragraphs.

Glossary

Adjective	Describes a noun 'green' 'beautiful' 'iconic'	Emotive language	Language strongly associated with emotions 'hate' 'freedom' 'disaster'
Adverb	Describes a verb or adjective 'sneakily' 'soon' 'always'	Empathy	Understanding feelings based on experience
Alliteration	Repetition of the same sound at the start of consecutive words 'naughty g nome' 'beautifully b lue'	Enjambment	Lines that continue onto the next line or stanza without punctuation or pause
Anaphora	Repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of consecutive clauses	Extended metaphor	Several metaphors that are linked together throughout a text that form a bigger, holistic metaphor
Antonym	Opposite in meaning to another word 'dark/light' 'fearful/confident'	Form	Overall structure or pattern of poetry, some with particular rhyming schemes or line lengths
Assonance	Repetition of the vowel sound within nearby words in a text 'with its le aping and dee p, cool murmur'	Full rhyme	Also called perfect rhyme: sound is identical in rhyming words ' fat cat '
Caesura	Pause within a line, usually shown through punctuation 'I'm nobody. Who are you?'	Genre	Style of poem with a similar type of subject matter, form, and style Love poetry, slam poetry, comedic poetry
Colloquial language	Specific regional or social accent 'y'all come back now, ya' hear?'	Holistic	Bigger picture of a theme/idea Romeo & Juliet's holistic is 'love overcoming hate'
Conjunction	Connects clauses 'throughout' 'whereas' 'however' 'and'	Hyperbole	Exaggeration not meant to be taken literally 'it went on forever ' ' endless sky'
Consonance	Repetition of similar consonant sounds in nearby words 'Sammy was clammy'	Iamb	Unstressed syllable followed by stressed 'what light through yonder window breaks '
Connotation	Symbolic or abstract association with a word 'rose/love' 'ocean/unpredictability'	Imagery	Language used to create an image 'the car is burgundy and smells of pear '
Couplet	Two successive lines in a poem that often rhyme together	Internal rhyme	Rhyme within a line 'stars never rise with bright eyes '
Determiner	Determines what is being spoken about ' the door' ' all people'	Irony	Goes against the expectation High-five was invented by a man with four fingers

Glossary

Juxtaposition	Two opposite ideas or images <i>'good/evil' 'sunrise/sunset'</i>	Quintain	Five-line stanza <i>'green' 'beautiful' 'iconic'</i>
Litotes	Purposeful understatement <i>'not half bad'</i>	Repetition	Word, phrase, or structure that is repeated at least once
Metaphor	Describes something as literally something else <i>'he was a monster' 'it was heaven'</i>	Rhetorical question	Questions that don't require, or want an answer <i>'could it be I'll never see him again?'</i>
Noun	Place, object, thing <i>'honour' 'pencil' 'Nottingham'</i>	Rhyme	Correspondence of vowel sounds between words or ends of words <i>'the dog ran into the fog'</i>
Onomatopoeia	Words that sound like what they describe <i>'howl' 'whoosh' 'bang'</i>	Rhythm	Particular pace or pattern of sounds <i>'rat-a-tat-tat with a rat-a-tat-tat'</i>
Oxymoron	Verb or noun that's described as the opposite <i>'deafening silence' 'slowly running'</i>	Sibilance	Similar to alliteration, but only for 's' or 'sh' sounds <i>'shifting slyly, shaking its shell'</i>
Pathetic fallacy	Weather reflecting the mood <i>'dark clouds above the dismal scene'</i>	Simile	Compare something being similar using like or as <i>'it was like being at a football match'</i>
Personification	Gives living qualities to inanimate things <i>'trees waved' 'quill danced'</i>	Stanza	Group of lines that form one part of a poem; a poetic version of a paragraph, almost
Plosive	Potent sound created by building up air in the mouth and then released <i>'tomb' 'burst'</i>	Superlative	Highest degree or amount of something <i>'most beautiful' 'rudest' 'best' 'largest'</i>
Pragmatic	Underlying and between-the-lines meaning that doesn't match the literal <i>'who do you think you're talking to?'</i>	Tercet	Three-line stanza
Preposition	Describes the position of something <i>'in' 'through' 'around' 'between'</i>	Theme	Idea or concept that reoccurs throughout <i>'power' 'redemption' 'fate' 'regret'</i>
Pronoun	Replaces a noun <i>'it' 'they' 'we' 'us' 'I' 'my'</i>	Tone	Character or mood created by the language <i>'it was a dank office' has a dark tone</i>
Prosody	Pattern of a particular rhythm, structure and/or sound	Verb	Action, state, or occurrence <i>'is' 'arrived' 'must'</i>
Quatrain	Four-line stanza	Volta	Drastic change in mood, tone, or topic in a poem