

CCEA Identity Poetry Knowledge Organiser

Sonnet 29 by William Shakespeare		Dover Beach by Matthew Arnold		Invictus by William Ernest Henley	
Themes: Self-worth, acceptance, loneliness, love	Tone: Melancholic then hopeful	Themes: Struggle with change, love, faith and doubt, industrialism and science	Tone: Tranquillity initially, then uncertainty and resignation.	Themes: Resilience, strength of the human spirit, triumph over adversity, autonomy.	Tone: Resolute, defiant, determined.
Content, meaning and purpose: -The speaker expresses feelings of inadequacy and despair, feeling abandoned by fortune and society. -Through the imagery of nature and society, the sonnet explores the speaker's sense of alienation. -The volta in the final couplet towards thoughts of the beloved demonstrates the transformative power of love and the ability to find solace in personal relationships.	Context: -Born 1564, died 1616 -Shakespearean sonnets are often written in the context of courtly love, where themes of love, beauty, and rejection are explored. -This sonnet is part of Shakespeare's collection of 154 sonnets, which are renowned for their exploration of human emotions and experiences. -Shakespeare's reputation suffered when Robert Greene called him an "upstart crow".	Content, meaning and purpose: -The speaker reflects on the changing world around him, particularly the decline of religious faith and the rise of industrialisation and scientific progress. -Through vivid imagery and metaphor, the poem explores themes of love, faith, doubt, and the human condition. The purpose of the poem is to express the speaker's existential crisis and to provoke reflection on the nature of faith, love, and humanity in a rapidly changing world.	Context: -Born 1822, died 1888 -Written in 1851 -Reflects the societal and cultural upheaval of the Victorian era, including the impact of the Industrial Revolution, advancements in science, and the decline of traditional religious beliefs. Arnold's own experiences, including his honeymoon in Dover, may have influenced the poem's themes and imagery.	Content, meaning and purpose: -The poem explores the strength and resilience of the individual when faced with adversity, conveying a message of empowerment and self-reliance. -The word 'invictus' is Latin for 'unconquered' or 'undefeated', encapsulating the poem's message.	Context: -Born 1849, died 1903 -Written in 1875 -'Invictus' reflects the author's personal struggles and experiences, particularly his battle with tuberculosis and the amputation of his leg.
Key language features: - Simile: "Like to the lark at break of day arising" emphasises the speaker's newfound sense of hope when thinking of their beloved. - Metaphor: "For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings" suggests that the thought of the beloved brings emotional riches and comfort, highlighting the transformative power of love. - Personification: "When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes" enhances the sense of alienation and despair experienced by the speaker, as if the forces of luck and societal judgment are actively working against them.	Form and structure: -Sonnet 29 follows the traditional structure of a Shakespearean sonnet, comprising three quatrains and a final couplet. -The rhyme scheme is ABABCDCEFEFGG. -The volta, or turn, occurs in the final couplet where the speaker's mood shifts from despair to hopefulness. -Iambic pentameter is employed throughout, lending the sonnet a rhythmic and melodious quality.	Key language features: - Metaphor: "Sea of Faith" symbolises eroding religious certainty. - Imagery: "Darkling plain," "withdrawing roar" evoke desolation. - Personification: "the grating roar" enhances the menacing, ominous presence of the sea. - Alliteration: "Melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" emphasises the solemn and continuous retreat of faith. - Parallelism: "Sophocles long ago / Heard it on the Aegean" links past and present, emphasising the timeless nature of human struggle.	Form and structure: -Dramatic monologue -"Dover Beach" is written in free verse, allowing Arnold to experiment with rhythm and structure to reflect the poem's themes of uncertainty and flux. -The poem consists of four irregularly structured stanzas, with varying line lengths and no consistent rhyme scheme. -This form mirrors the speaker's inner turmoil and the unpredictable nature of the changing world.	Key language features: - Metaphor: The metaphor of the "night" symbolises life's hardships, while the "pit" represents the profound darkness and challenges faced by the speaker. - Personification: Circumstance is personified as having a "clutch," conveying its oppressive and menacing nature. - Alliteration: The repetition of the harsh "b" sound in "bloody... but unbowed" emphasises the speaker's resilience and determination.	Form and structure: -"Invictus" is structured with four quatrains, each with a regular syllable count and alternate rhyme scheme (i.e. ABAB), reflecting the stability and power of the human will. -mostly written in iambic tetrameter. This means each line has four 'feet' (units of two syllables), and the stress falls on the second syllable of each foot.
The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost		Piano by D.H. Lawrence		Prayer Before Birth by Louis MacNeice	
Themes: Choices and regret, individualism, uncertainty, narrative	Tone: Reflective, contemplative, ironic	Themes: Childhood, memory, music, past v present identity	Tone: Nostalgic, reflective, yearning	Themes: innocence versus corruption, vulnerability, fear, religion, technological advances.	Tone: dark, urgent, desperate, fearful, pleading
Content, meaning and purpose: -The poem delves into the complexity of decision-making and the impact of choices on one's life trajectory, prompting readers to consider the paths they have taken and the roads left unexplored. -The speaker walks through a wood and stops at a junction. He examines both closely, then chooses one, but acknowledges that it is no better or worse than the other. In the final verse, the speaker suggests that the road he walked will have significantly impacted his life.	Context: -Born 1874, died 1963 -Written in 1915 during WWI -Frost's friendship with British poet Edward Thomas played a significant role in inspiring "The Road Not Taken." Frost sent it to Thomas, intending it as a playful jab at Thomas' indecisiveness, but it took on deeper meaning following Thomas's tragic death in WWI. Frost's poem reflects on decision-making and the impact of choices, inspired by Thomas and the uncertainties of life during wartime.	Content, meaning and purpose: -"Piano" explores the speaker's reminiscence of childhood memories triggered by the sound of a woman playing the piano. The warmth and comfort of the past is contrasted with the harsh reality of the present. -The poem highlights the influence of music in shaping identity, evoking longing for a lost time. It underscores the internal conflict between past and present identity. -Lawrence aims to evoke a sense of nostalgia in the reader while exploring the transformative power of music and its role in shaping personal identity.	Context: -Born 1855, died 1930 -Written in 1913 -Lawrence's upbringing in a working-class family and exposure to music, particularly his mother Lydia's piano playing are the themes of the poem. -Lawrence's personal experiences with music and its emotional resonance in his life contribute to the authenticity of the poem's portrayal of memory.	Content, meaning and purpose: -The poem portrays the fears and anxieties of an unborn child, who pleads for protection from the potential harm and corruption of the world they are about to enter. It serves as a prayer-like plea for guidance, purity, and salvation amidst the chaos and uncertainty of life.	Context: -Born 1904, died 1963 -Written in 1944 during WWII -Louis MacNeice, born in Belfast during a tumultuous period, drew inspiration from his experiences and the socio-political climate of his time. -The poem was written during World War II, reflecting the pervasive fear and moral upheaval of the era.
Language: - Extended metaphor: The two roads symbolise choices in life, while the description of the paths as equally worn underscores the uncertainty of decision-making. - Irony: The speaker's retrospective analysis imbues their choice with significance that it may not have had at the time, highlighting the ironic nature of decision-making. - Narrative Technique: Through storytelling, the speaker shapes their life's narrative, emphasising the significance of the chosen path in retrospect.	Form and structure: -The poem is structured with four stanzas of five lines each, employing a consistent rhyme scheme (ABAB) and iambic tetrameter rhythm. This regular structure enhances the poem's narrative flow and reflective tone.	Language: - Sensory imagery: "Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me" creates a serene nostalgia, allowing readers to immerse themselves in the moment, creating intimacy. - Personification: "In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song" personifies music as having a subtle yet irresistible control. "Betrays me back" adds a sense of agency to the abstract concept of song. - Visual Elements: "A child sitting under the piano" visualise and empathise with the emotional experience.	Form and structure: -Lyric poem; first person narrative -Structured into three quatrains -Regular rhyme scheme of rhyming couplets (AABB CCDD EFFF) -Concise and carefully chosen vocabulary -Reflects the musicality of the subject matter	Language: - Metaphor: "bloodsucking bat" symbolises malevolent threats to safety and innocence. - Imagery: "black racks rack me," "blood-baths roll me" images of torture & violence intensify speaker's fears. - Personification: "sky to sing to me," "birds ... to guide me" nurturing and protective qualities, offering solace to the vulnerable speaker. - Alliteration: "strong drugs dope me," "wise lies lure me": deceptive and coercive forces.	Form and structure: -"Prayer Before Birth" is a dramatic monologue characterised by irregular verse structure and a free verse form. -The irregularity creates a sense of urgency and mirrors the chaotic nature of the speaker's fears. -The use of irregular rhyme scheme and irregular stanza lengths adds to the poem's emotional intensity and unpredictability.
I Remember, I Remember by Philip Larkin		Catrin by Gillian Clarke		Belfast Confetti by Ciaran Carson	
Themes: Identity and belonging, disillusionment, reflection and self-discovery	Tone: bitterness and cynicism, resignation	Themes: motherhood and parenting, identity, separation, conflict	Tone: reflective, emotional, personal	Themes: violence and conflict, identity, political unrest	Tone: tense, urgent, fragmented, disorientated and uncertain
Content, meaning and purpose: -The poem reflects on the speaker's childhood and adolescent experiences in Coventry, highlighting the discrepancy between their actual experiences and idealised notions of childhood. -Larkin uses the speaker's train journey through England and the sudden realisation of being back in Coventry as a catalyst for reflecting on past memories and emotions. -The purpose of the poem is to explore themes of identity, disillusionment, and self-discovery, while also questioning the nature of memory and nostalgia.	Context: -Born 1922, died 1985 -Written in 1954 -"I Remember, I Remember" is part of Larkin's second collection, "The Less Deceived." -Larkin was known for his frank, stark, and often bleakly pessimistic view of the world, exploring themes of loneliness, disillusionment, and mortality. -The poem reflects Larkin's personal experiences and feelings about his childhood and upbringing in Coventry. -Uses Thomas Hood's poem of the same name as inspiration, although Larkin takes contrasting POV.	Content, meaning and purpose: -"Catrin" explores the nature of the mother-daughter relationship, focusing on moments of conflict, struggle, and reconciliation. These moments exist for the speaker most vividly in childhood and when the child is older and seeking greater freedom in the relationship. -Both mother and daughter experience the challenges of separation and individuation. -Clarke's purpose is to capture the universal experiences and emotions of motherhood, while also offering insight into the unique dynamics of her own relationship with her daughter.	Context: -Born 1937 (still alive) -Written in 1978 -Gillian Clarke's personal experience as a mother shapes the context of the poem, as she draws on her own emotions and memories to explore the themes of motherhood and identity. -The poem reflects broader social and cultural attitudes towards motherhood and parenting, as well as the challenges of raising children and letting them go as they grow older.	Content, meaning and purpose: -Through the metaphor of punctuation, the poem depicts the aftermath of a bomb explosion in Belfast. -The scattered punctuation marks symbolise the debris and violence resulting from the explosion. -The speaker's struggle to complete a sentence reflects the difficulty of expressing the trauma and chaos of the situation. -Questions about identity and direction highlight the disorientation and uncertainty faced by the speaker.	Context: -Born 1948, died 2019 -Written in 1989 during the Troubles in Northern Ireland -Ciaran Carson was born in Belfast and experienced the Troubles first-hand. -The Troubles refer to the decades-long conflict in Northern Ireland between nationalist and unionist groups.
Language: - Emotive imagery: "splendid family" idealised image contrasts with the speaker's isolation and discontent. - Visual imagery: "boys all biceps and the girls all chest," "bracken": vivid images of typical childhood experiences and desires, highlighting speaker's lack of fulfilment. - Alliteration: "boys all biceps" emphasises bitterness and envy at those who had a more fulfilling adolescence. - Repetition of negations ("no," "not," "never") throughout the poem creates a pattern that emphasises the speaker's disillusionment with his childhood experiences, reinforcing the theme of missed opportunities and unfulfilled desires.	Form and structure: -The poem consists of seven quatrains (five-line verses) and a single-line verse at the end, with irregular rhyme scheme and stanza structure. -Larkin's use of regular verse structure contrasts with irregular rhyme scheme, reflecting the spontaneity of the speaker's reflections and emotions. -The conversational tone and enjambment create a sense of movement and immediacy, enhancing the emotional impact of the poem and the sense of the motion of the train journey.	Language: - Metaphor: The imagery of the "tight red rope of love" symbolises the strong bond between mother and child, as well as the struggle for autonomy and separation. - Imagery: Vivid descriptions such as "hot, white room," "straight, strong, long brown hair," and "glass tank clouded with feelings" evoke powerful images that enhance the emotional impact of the poem. - Enjambment: Creates a sense of a continuous memory and reflection. 13 of the 17 lines of stanza one, and 7 of the 12 lines of stanza two flow straight into the next line.	Form and structure: -Free verse: The poem is written in free verse, allowing for fluidity and flexibility in the expression of emotions and ideas. -Irregular stanza length: The poem consists of two stanzas of irregular length, reflecting the shifting nature of the mother-daughter relationship over time.	Language: - Metaphor: The scattered punctuation marks represent the debris and violence of the explosion. - Imagery: The poem evokes vivid imagery of chaos, violence, and disorientation through its descriptions. - Questions: The repetition of confused questions adds to the poem's confusion, intensity and urgency. - Symbolism: Street names and military equipment symbolise the conflict and militarised atmosphere of Belfast during the Troubles.	Form and structure: -The poem is structured in free verse, reflecting the chaotic and fragmented nature of the subject matter. -The irregular line lengths and enjambment contribute to the sense of disorientation and unpredictability. -The use of punctuation as a central motif reinforces the thematic focus on chaos and violence.



In Mrs Tilscher's Class by Carol Ann Duffy			Kid by Simon Armitage		Here by R.S. Thomas	
Themes: childhood innocence, growth, loss of innocence Content, meaning and purpose: -The poem explores the fond memories of primary school and the rough awakening of adolescence, highlighting the transformative power of education and the loss of childhood innocence. -It serves to evoke emotions and reflections on the journey from innocence to experience, emphasising the importance of education and the role of teachers in shaping our identities.			Themes: identity, betrayal, independence, relationships Content, meaning and purpose: -Robin addresses Batman directly with feelings of betrayal and resentment. Robin recounts how Batman ordered him to grow up and then abandoned him, leading Robin to find his own identity apart from Batman. The poem ends with Robin asserting his independence and superiority over Batman. -The poem explores themes of identity, betrayal, and independence, highlighting Robin's journey to find his own identity and assert his autonomy. -Armitage uses "Kid" to subvert traditional narratives and explore the dynamics of power and authority in relationships. By giving voice to Robin and challenging Batman's authority, Armitage invites readers to reconsider established power dynamics.		Themes: identity, guilt, faith and doubt Content, meaning and purpose: -"Here" explores the speaker's introspective journey of self-discovery and realisation of their true identity. -The speaker reflects on past actions, heritage, and beliefs, grappling with guilt, doubt and uncertainty. -The poem raises profound questions about faith, divine communication, and the existence of a higher power, prompting readers to contemplate the complexities of human existence and morality.	
Key language features: -Simile: "The classroom glowed like a sweet shop." Creates a vivid image of excitement and colourfulness. Personification: "The laugh of a bell swung by a running child." Adds playfulness and liveliness to the atmosphere. Metaphor: "the inky tadpoles changed from commas into exclamation marks." Symbolises growth and maturation of students' writing skills. Alliteration: "the heavy, sexy sky." Evokes a sensual and intense atmosphere of adolescence.			Form and structure: -The poem is structured into four stanzas of varying lengths, with irregular rhyme and rhythm, reflecting the unpredictability and uneven nature of growing up. -The shift from playful reminiscence to sombre reflection is mirrored in the changing tone and structure of the poem, highlighting the journey from childhood to adolescence.		Form and structure: -Written as a dramatic monologue, with Robin addressing Batman directly. -Utilises enjambment to create a conversational tone and flow. -Features a monorhyme scheme with every line ending in an "er" sound. -Incorporates trochaic pentameter to establish rhythm and pace. -Employs vivid imagery and language devices, such as metaphor and alliteration, to enhance meaning and evoke emotions.	
Themes: identity, conflict, family dynamics, place Content, meaning and purpose: -Describes the dockers' appearance, attitudes, and actions as that of a hardened and intolerant individual. -The atmosphere in a Belfast pub shows tensions and prejudices simmering beneath the surface. -The final stanza hints at the dockers' behaviour at home, suggesting a troubled and volatile family dynamic. -Destructive nature of prejudice, sectarianism, intolerance and division, warning of consequences of entrenched hatred and violence, for both individuals and society.			Themes: identity, inheritance, separation, family, hope Content, meaning and purpose: -The influence of their parents' relationship and DNA on their identity is shown using symbolism of their hands. -Despite the separation of their parents, the speaker finds solace in the physical reminders of their lineage. -The poem emphasises the enduring impact of familial relationships and genetics on one's sense of self. -Sparks introspection on the complex interplay between family, identity, and personal history. -To highlight the universal experience of grappling with one's origins and familial connections.		Themes: love, ballet, memory and nostalgia Content, meaning and purpose: -The speaker reminisces on a past romantic relationship and the choice to break up and go their separate ways rather than "live a lie" in an engagement and marriage. -Through references to ballet and imagery associated with grace and beauty, the poem adds layers of depth to the exploration of love and identity.	
Key language features: -Imagery: Heaney vividly describes the dockers' appearance and surroundings, using images like "The cap juts like a gantry's crossbeam" to evoke his rugged presence and the industrial setting. -Metaphor: Metaphorical language, such as comparing the dockers' beliefs to "Mosaic imperatives bang home like rivets," emphasises the inflexible nature of his worldview. -Assonance: "Speech is clamped in the lips' vice" creates a rhythmic effect and highlight the suppression of speech. -Conversational Tone: The poem's casual tone and colloquial language capture the dockers' attitudes and the working-class atmosphere in Belfast.			Form and structure: -Verse structure: four four-line stanzas, providing a concise and focused exploration of the dockers' character and the broader themes. -Unrhymed poem (irregular rhymes but no consistent pattern). -Informal Language: Heaney adopts an informal and colloquial language, contributing to the authenticity of the portrayal of working-class life in Belfast.		Form and structure: -Villanelle form with five three-line stanzas (tercets) followed by a four-line stanza (quatrain). Repetition of key lines ("My father's in my fingers, but my mother's in my palms" and "We know our parents make us by our hands") emphasizes the poem's central themes and creates a sense of continuity. Imperfect rhymes and enjambment contribute to the poem's musicality and emotional depth.	
Themes: identity, conflict, family dynamics, place Content, meaning and purpose: -Describes the dockers' appearance, attitudes, and actions as that of a hardened and intolerant individual. -The atmosphere in a Belfast pub shows tensions and prejudices simmering beneath the surface. -The final stanza hints at the dockers' behaviour at home, suggesting a troubled and volatile family dynamic. -Destructive nature of prejudice, sectarianism, intolerance and division, warning of consequences of entrenched hatred and violence, for both individuals and society.			Themes: identity, inheritance, separation, family, hope Content, meaning and purpose: -The influence of their parents' relationship and DNA on their identity is shown using symbolism of their hands. -Despite the separation of their parents, the speaker finds solace in the physical reminders of their lineage. -The poem emphasises the enduring impact of familial relationships and genetics on one's sense of self. -Sparks introspection on the complex interplay between family, identity, and personal history. -To highlight the universal experience of grappling with one's origins and familial connections.		Themes: love, ballet, memory and nostalgia Content, meaning and purpose: -The speaker reminisces on a past romantic relationship and the choice to break up and go their separate ways rather than "live a lie" in an engagement and marriage. -Through references to ballet and imagery associated with grace and beauty, the poem adds layers of depth to the exploration of love and identity.	
Key language features: -Imagery: Heaney vividly describes the dockers' appearance and surroundings, using images like "The cap juts like a gantry's crossbeam" to evoke his rugged presence and the industrial setting. -Metaphor: Metaphorical language, such as comparing the dockers' beliefs to "Mosaic imperatives bang home like rivets," emphasises the inflexible nature of his worldview. -Assonance: "Speech is clamped in the lips' vice" creates a rhythmic effect and highlight the suppression of speech. -Conversational Tone: The poem's casual tone and colloquial language capture the dockers' attitudes and the working-class atmosphere in Belfast.			Form and structure: -Verse structure: four four-line stanzas, providing a concise and focused exploration of the dockers' character and the broader themes. -Unrhymed poem (irregular rhymes but no consistent pattern). -Informal Language: Heaney adopts an informal and colloquial language, contributing to the authenticity of the portrayal of working-class life in Belfast.		Form and structure: -Villanelle form with five three-line stanzas (tercets) followed by a four-line stanza (quatrain). Repetition of key lines ("My father's in my fingers, but my mother's in my palms" and "We know our parents make us by our hands") emphasizes the poem's central themes and creates a sense of continuity. Imperfect rhymes and enjambment contribute to the poem's musicality and emotional depth.	
Identity Theme Clusters			Form Clusters		Past Paper Questions	
Childhood: In Mrs Tilscher's Class I Remember, I Remember Piano Catrin Prayer Before Birth	Place: Belfast Confetti Docker I Remember, I Remember Dover Beach The Road Not Taken	Growth and self-discovery: The Road Not Taken Here In Mrs Tilscher's Class Kid Invictus	Regular verse structure outside of a set form: Invictus The Road Not Taken Piano Here Docker	Free Verse: Dover Beach I Remember, I Remember Prayer Before Birth Belfast Confetti Catrin Kid In Mrs Tilscher's Class	All past paper questions continue the same, so only the first half of each option is pasted below. See bottom of the list for the remainder of the question. Look again at Genetics by Sinead Morrissey which deals with the theme of influences on identity ... Look again at Here by R. S. Thomas which deals with the theme of a sense of who you are ... Look again at Piano by D.H. Lawrence which deals with the theme of how childhood memories influence identity ... Look again at Belfast Confetti by Claran Carson which deals with the theme of how place influences identity ... Look again at Dover Beach by Matthew Arnold which deals with the theme of having doubts ... Look again at Invictus by William Ernest Henley which deals with the theme of difficult experiences ... Look again at Kid by Simon Armitage which deals with the theme of growing up ... Look again at Prayer Before Birth by Louis MacNeice which deals with the theme of facing danger Look again at Sonnet 29 by William Shakespeare which deals with the theme of discontent ... Look again at The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost which deals with the theme of looking back ...	
Memory: Piano I Remember, I Remember Effacé	Conflict: Docker Belfast Confetti Kid	Faith and doubt: Dover Beach Here Prayer Before Birth	Dramatic Monologue: Kid Dover Beach Prayer Before Birth	... and at one other poem from the IDENTITY anthology which also deals with the theme of (see above). With close reference to the ways each poet uses language, compare and contrast what the speakers in the poems say about (theme above). You should include relevant contextual material.		
Family relationships: Catrin Piano Genetics	Romantic love: Sonnet 29 Effacé	Sense of self: Invictus Here Effacé Sonnet 29	Sonnet: Sonnet 29 Effacé	Villanelle: Genetics		