

# POWER AND CONFLICT POETRY

## LEARN SHEET

### OZYMANDIAS

- The poem is an ironic memorial to the ego of an ancient Pharaoh
- The statue represents the eventual end of power that everyone must suffer, especially the proud
- Power, like the statue, is lost to the sands, which represent time and the power of nature

**Context link:** *Written in 1819, it was inspired by the recent unearthing of part of a large statue of the Egyptian Pharaoh, Ramesses II. The Egyptian Pharaohs like Ramesses believed themselves to be gods in mortal form and that their legacy would last forever.*



### THE PRELUDE (EXTRACT)

- The poem is structured to show the contrast of the serene and peaceful start (where man and nature cooperate) to the dark and disturbing battle with nature

- The conflict between man and nature is caused by man's attempt to manipulate nature; nature has power over man

**Context link:** *William Wordsworth was a Romantic poet so he wrote poems about the world we live in which challenged people and the way they thought at the time. This extract is from a much larger poem, looking at the spiritual and moral development of a man growing up.*



### CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

- The repetition within the poem helps capture the galloping military rhythm. This indicates the conflict and power building through the poem itself.

- The poet is clearly distinguishing between the bravery of the men and the foolish 'blunder' of the orders and suggests the six hundred should be seen as heroes.

- The military language is mixed with religious allusion to suggest an epic scale, emphasising the risk and bravery.

**Context link:** *During a battle of the Crimean war, a miscommunication sent the light brigade charging head first into the cannons of the other side. It was a huge catastrophe and many died. The men were respected for following orders, even though they knew they may be wrong.*

### STORM ON THE ISLAND

- The cottage represents safety and calm and behind its walls the violence of the weather is undermined. It reflects a conflict between nature and man.

- The poet is able to communicate a sense of calm friendliness using asides and very recognisable imagery to describe the attack of the weather.

- The poet's suggestion of fear challenges the allocation of power, that we only give power to what we fear if we let it.

**Context link:** *Seamus Heaney was a poet in Ireland. He grew up in a farming community and many of his poems were about very normal and homely subjects. He uses a large number of agricultural and natural images in his work.*



### LONDON

- The poem is an ironic look at misery in the greatest city in the world.
- Blake's views are revolutionary for the time, challenging the idea that man is worth more than slavery.
- Blake challenges the establishment in their 'palaces' and 'churches' which are marked by the blood and blackening of good people.

**Context link:** *The poem is set during a time in England where there was poverty, child labour and a horrific war with France. Women had no rights, death rates from disease and malnutrition were high and the industrial revolution has resulted in many large oppressive factories.*

### MY LAST DUCHESS

- The poem is a dramatic monologue with the Duke of Ferrara arranging his new marriage but getting swept up talking about his former wife.

- The change in tone is used to show the sinister undertones and power struggle in the relationship; he is the only one truly at conflict here.

**Context link:** *Robert Browning was a poet in the 19th century. He left the country and went to Italy to marry fellow poet Elizabeth Barrett because of her over protective father. As a result they were both familiar with over controlling patriarchs. The poem is loosely based on the Duke of Ferrara.*



### EXPOSURE

- The poem defies the convention of war and looks at the weather assaulting the soldiers, not another army. This is to highlight the unknown horrors of war to people at home.

- The poet uses repetition and a consistent structure to create the static tone of the poem. The lack of change adds to the tone of despair.

- The alliteration is used to create a sense of atmosphere to the weather and to draw parallels to the violence of war and weather.

**Context link:** *Wilfred Owen was a soldier in World War 1. He died before the end of the war but during his time he saw the full horror of conditions on the front line. He was angry about the conditions soldiers had to live with.*

### BAYONET CHARGE

- The poem explores a soldier's charge through a mix of physical and emotional exploration.

- The language of the poem seems to juxtapose natural animal images and human machine, they are at conflict.

- The mix of caesura and enjambment in the poem adds a chaotic tone to show the confusion of war and the inner turmoil of the soldier.

**Context link:** *The poet, Ted Hughes, was a former RAF serviceman and includes a great amount of natural and historical ideas in his poems and he often looks at man's impact on nature.*



### REMAINS

- The poem explores the events in a soldier's life which in turn trigger PTSD. It is worth noting the memory hurts him more than the event itself.

- The colloquial nature of the speaker's voice is used to create a sense of heightened realism to the piece.

- The poet suggests a conflict in the speaker's mind, an avoidance of the reality of what happened which haunts him.

**Context link:** *Post traumatic stress and mental illness is very common in soldiers who struggle to come to terms with some part of their duty, normally a horrific memory of killing or being in danger which gives them nightmares and panic attacks as well as depression and sometimes suicidal tendencies.*

## POPPIES

- The relationship in the poem provides a deeper level of empathy and a personal view.
- The poem uses a range of devices to capture the speaker's sad and reflective tone.
- The poem uses contrasting language and ideas to emphasise the conflict and turmoil of the mother.

**Context link:** The poem is based very heavily around the idea of Poppies as memorials and therefore the idea of memory.



## WAR PHOTOGRAPHER

- The poem contrasts rural England with warzones to emphasise the gulf between the public and the warzones.
- Bitterness and regret is conveyed in key rhyming couplets and sections to highlight his difficulty dealing with the experiences.
- The ordered structure reflects the precision of his job which contrasts strongly with the chaos of his experiences.

**Context link:** The poem explores the contrast between the war zones and safety of being back home and the way people fail to understand the truth. War photographers do a dangerous job and many are killed and injured.

## TISSUE

- The poet explores the characteristics of tissue and applies it to a world at conflict with the people who have made it.
- The poet addresses some of the larger issues; greed, pride etc and how we have built our world around them, at odds with our own existence.

**Context link:** Imtiaz Dharker is a poet and film maker. She has Pakistani origins and was raised in Glasgow. A great number of her poems look at issues such as religion, terrorism and global politics/identity.



## THE EMIGREE

- The speaker's view of the city is idyllic and with confused metaphors linked with positive natural images.
- The speaker is struggling to reconcile the two identities of the city, however this causes conflict within the speaker.
- The city is personified as reflects the nature of herself, her personality and growth.

**Context link:** Emigree relates to the word emigrate, the idea that a person goes and settles in another country, sometimes not feeling welcome to return. The poet bases many of the ideas on modern examples of emigration from countries like Russia or the Middle East where people are fleeing corruption and tyranny.



## CHECKING OUT ME HISTORY

- The poet shows the conflict between cultures and the need to forge his own identity by embracing his Caribbean heritage.
- The poet looks not just at his own ethnicity but all those groups who are overlooked in favour of the 'white British' contemporaries.

Highlighting the conflict in this 'false' history that has been taught  
**Context link:** The poem gives examples of powerful black figures from history, often involved in conflicts themselves in one way or another.



## KAMIKAZE

- The poem contrasts the narrator and daughter's voices in order to build a more personal and human tone to the poem as well as the pilot's story.

-The use of rural fishing imagery contrasts the war based context and links the pilot to the fish inevitably caught and subject to fate.  
**Context link:** Kamikaze pilots were expected to use up all their weapons and then suicide by flying into their targets as a final act of destruction. It was considered a great honour in Japan to die for your country.

- Simile
- Metaphor
- Personification
- Pathetic fallacy
- Onomatopoeia
- Sibilance
- Assonance
- Consonance
- Alliteration
- Rhyme
- Rhythm
- Juxtaposition
- Contrast
- Imagery
- Repetition
- Rhetorical question
- Stanza
- Line
- Sonnet
- Blank verse
- Dramatic monologue
- Regular
- Irregular
- Enjambment
- Anaphora
- Hyperbole
- Caesura

## ANSWERING THE QUESTION:

- ✓ You will be asked one question
- ✓ You will be given one poem to discuss
- ✓ You must choose another poem to compare it to
- ✓ Use quotations
- ✓ Include terminology
- ✓ Explain the effect of the writer's techniques
- ✓ Compare the poems and their link to the theme of power/conflict



## REVISION TIPS:

- Create Venn Diagrams comparing each pair of poems
- Create groups that the poems fit in to
- Learn key quotations for each poem
- Write mock exam questions and plan your responses
- Revise poetic devices and key terminology
- Summarise each poem in a sketch and label with quotations