**LIT-IN-ENG SS 1**

**THIRD TERM**

SCHEME OF WORK

**SCHEME OF WORK**

**WEEKS TOPIC**

1-2 Reading and Content Analysis of Non-African Poetry: “Do not Go Gentle into that Dark” by Dylan Thomas.

3-5 Reading and Content Analysis of Non-African Play: *Fences* by August Wilson.

6-7 Reading and Content Analysis of Non-African Poetry: “Good-Morrow” by John Donne.

8-10 Reading and Content Analysis of Non-African Play: *Look Back in Anger* by John Osborne.

11 Revision.

**REFERENCE**

* *Exam Reflection in Literature- in-English* by Sunday OlatejuFaniyi.
* *Exam Reflection in Literature-in-English (Prose and Drama)* by Sunday OlatejuFaniyi.
* *Fences* by August Wilson.
* *Look Back in Anger* by John Osborne.

**WEEK ONE**

**Reading and Content Analysis of Non-African Poetry: “Let me not Go Gentle into the Dark” by Dylan Thomas­, Content Analysis**

## 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 grieve 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.

Touching humans the most is the acceptance of unstoppable death. We all know that death will be our fate some day, but how we accept or how we deal with it is left to each individual. "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night," written by Dylan Thomas, emphasizes raging against death towards his dying father as he repeats this exhortation in the last line in every stanza. Imagery, sound, metrics, and tone, are used by Thomas to create the theme of his poem and what it means. Here is how the imagery of the poem develops the meaning of the poem. First of all, Thomas conveys resistance towards death with images of fury and fighting, as in "do not go gentle."

Thomas provokes these men into wanting more time and desiring the courage to fight back against the Grim Reaper. The "wise men" and the "wild men," regardless of character, deserve the opportunity to live into old age and accomplish what they set out to do. And the "wise men," who regret the fact that they didn't do the good deeds they were set out to do, and realizing that it was too late for them to do it. Thomas realizes it is human nature to take life for granted; until death approaches. Thomas wrote this poem for his father to tell him that there is so much more for him here, living, to do. The only way to deter death is through fury and frenzy. Death comes too quickly for most people and only with "rage" can death be defied. Here is a discussion of how the sound and metrics of the poem help convey that meaning.

“Poetry can break open locked chambers of possibility, restore numbed zones to feeling, recharge desire,” Adrienne Rich wrote in contemplating [what poetry does](https://www.brainpickings.org/2016/08/23/adrienne-rich-poetry-politics/). “Insofar as poetry has a social function it is to awaken sleepers by other means than shock,” Denise Levertov asserted in her piercing [statement on poetics](https://www.brainpickings.org/2017/01/05/denise-levertov-statement-on-poetics/). Few poems furnish such a wakeful breaking open of possibility more powerfully than “Do not go gentle into that good night” — a rapturous ode to the unassailable tenacity of the human spirit by the Welsh poet **Dylan Thomas** (October 27, 1914–November 9, 1953).

Written in 1947, Thomas’s masterpiece was published for the first time in the Italian literary journal BottegheOscure in 1951 and soon included in his 1952 poetry collection [In Country Sleep, And Other Poems](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B0007FC9IY/braipick-20). In the fall of the following year, Thomas — a self-described “roistering, drunken and doomed poet” — drank himself into a coma while on a reading and lecture tour in America organized by the American poet and literary critic John Brinnin, who would later become his [biographer of sorts](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B0018Y5CVE/braipick-20). That spring, Brinnin had famously asked his assistant, Liz Reitell — who had had a three-week romance with Thomas — to lock the poet into a room in order to meet a deadline for the completion of his radio drama turned stage play Under Milk Wood.

In early November of 1953, as New York suffered a burst of air pollution that exacerbated his chronic chest illness, Thomas succumbed to a round of particularly heavy drinking. When he fell ill, Reitell and her doctor attempted to manage his symptoms, but he deteriorated rapidly. At midnight on November 5, an ambulance took the comatose Thomas to St. Vincent’s Hospital in New York. His wife, Caitlin Macnamara, flew from England and spun into a drunken rage upon arriving at the hospital where the poet lay dying. After threatening to kill Brinnin, she was put into a straitjacket and committed to a private psychiatric rehab facility.

When Thomas died at noon on November 9, it fell on New Directions founder James Laughlin to identify the poet’s body at the morgue. Just a few weeks later, New Directions published [**The Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas**](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0811218813/braipick-20) ([public library](http://www.worldcat.org/title/collected-poems-of-dylan-thomas/oclc/366548&referer=brief_results)), containing the work Thomas himself had considered most representative of his voice as a poet and, now, of his legacy — a legacy that has continued to influence generations of writers, artists, and creative mavericks: Bob Dylan changed his last name from Zimmerman in an homage to the poet, The Beatles drew his likeness onto the cover of Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band, and Christopher Nolan made “Do not go gentle into that good night” a narrative centerpiece of his film Interstellar.

Upon receiving news of Thomas’s death, the poet [Elizabeth Bishop](https://www.brainpickings.org/tag/elizabeth-bishop/) wrote in an astonished [letter](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0374524459/braipick-20) to a friend:

It must be true, but I still can’t believe it — even if I felt during the brief time I knew him that he was headed that way… Thomas’s poetry is so narrow — just a straight conduit between birth and death, I suppose—with not much space for living along the way.

In another letter to her friend [Marianne Moore](https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/08/13/marianne-moore-camperdown-elm/), Bishop further crystallized Thomas’s singular genius:

I have been very saddened, as I suppose so many people have, by Dylan Thomas’s death… He had an amazing gift for a kind of naked communication that makes a lot of poetry look like translation.

The Pulitzer-winning Irish poet and New Yorker poetry editor Paul Muldoon writes in the 2010 edition of [**The Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas**](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0811218813/braipick-20):

Dylan Thomas is that rare thing, a poet who has it in him to allow us, particularly those of us who are coming to poetry for the first time, to believe that poetry might not only be vital in itself but also of some value to us in our day-to-day lives. It’s no accident, surely, that Dylan Thomas’s “Do not go gentle into that good night” is a poem which is read at two out of every three funerals. We respond to the sense in that poem, as in so many others, that the verse engine is so turbocharged and the fuel of such high octane that there’s a distinct likelihood of the equivalent of vertical liftoff. Dylan Thomas’s poems allow us to believe that we may be transported, and that belief is itself transporting.

“Do not go gentle into that good night” remains, indeed, Thomas’s best known and most beloved poem, as well as his most redemptive — both in its universal message and in the particular circumstances of how it came to be in the context of Thomas’s life.

By the mid-1940s, having just survived World War II, Thomas, his wife, and their newborn daughter were living in barely survivable penury. In the hope of securing a steady income, Thomas agreed to write and record a series of broadcasts for the BBC. His sonorous voice enchanted the radio public. Between 1945 and 1948, he was commissioned to make more than one hundred such broadcasts, ranging from poetry readings to literary discussions and cultural critiques — work that precipitated a surge of opportunities for Thomas and adrenalized his career as a poet.

At the height of his radio celebrity, Thomas began working on “Do not go gentle into that good night.” Perhaps because his broadcasting experience had attuned his inner ear to his outer ear and instilled in him an even keener sense of the rhythmic sonority of the spoken word, he wrote a poem tenfold more powerful when channeled through the human voice than when read in the contemplative silence of the mind’s eye.

**Critical Analysis**

The poem “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night”, by Dylan Thomas is a son’s plea to a dying father. His purpose is to show his father that all men face the same end, but they fight for life, nonetheless. “Old age should burn and rave at close of day,” (line 2) is almost the thesis for this poem. Thomas classifies men into four different categories to persuade his father to realize that no matter the life choices, consequences, or personalities, there is a reason to live. It is possible that Thomas uses these categories to give his father no excuses, regardless of what he did in life.

Wise men are the first group that Thomas describes. The first line in the stanza, “Though wise men at their end know dark is right,” (4) suggests that they know that death is a natural part of life and they are wise enough to know they should accept it. However, the next line reasons that they fight against it because they feel they have not gained nearly enough repute or notoriety. “Because their words had forked no lighting” (5) is Thomas’ way of saying that they want to hold on to life to be able to leave their mark, thereby sustaining their memory in history as great scholars or philosophers.

Thomas moves forward and describes the next group as good men. They reflect on their lives as the end approaches. “Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright,” (7) This line can be broken down into two parts. First’ good men are few now, as it says “the last wave by,” perhaps this is emphasis on the fact that Thomas believes his father to be a good man and that the world can still use him. Second, the line “crying how bright,” refers to men telling their stories in a limelight. They self-proclaim their works as good, but as Thomas goes on into the next line “their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,” (8) it describes men knowing that their deeds will not be remembered regardless of their seemingly significant achievements. Green bay refers to an eternal sea, which marks their place in history. After reflecting on the past, they decide that they want to live if for nothing more than to leave their names written down in history.

Wild men, however as the next group is revealed, have learned too late that they are mortal. They spent their lives in action and only realize as time has caught up with them that this is the end. “Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,” (10) exaggerates their experiences and how they have wasted away their days chasing what they could not catch. Even more so “caught and sang the sun,” refers to how these wild men lived. They were daredevils who faced peril with blissful ignorance. They wasted away their lives on adventures and excitements. The next line, “And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,” (11) refers to the realism of their own mortality. They grieve because they have caused much grief living their lives in folly. Even though the end is approaching, they will not give in because they want more time to hold on to the adventure of their youth and perhaps right a few wrongs that they have done.

Grave men, are the last group of men Thomas describes. “Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight,” (13) in this line his use of grave men has almost a double meaning, referring to men who are saddened as well as being physically near death. They feel the strains of a long life, and they know they are physically decaying. Their eyes are failing along with the rest of their body, however there is still a passion burning within their eyes for an existence, even if it is a frail state. “Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,” (14) is an expression that represent man’s struggle for survival. He is possibly offering that even in this frail state that his father could be happy living longer.

Finally, in the last stanza the intent is presented, Thomas is showing that all men no matter their experiences or situations fight for more time. He urges his father to do the same. “Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray,” (17) describes his pain and passion that are causing him to beg his father not to die. Thomas is watching his father fade and is begging for his father not to give in. It appears that his father has either peacefully surrendered himself, or rather that he has resigned himself to his fate.

Thomas starts the poem referring to wise men, then to good men, then changes pace to wild men, and finally fades out with grave men. One reason he uses this progression is to start with where he sees his father’s character lie, and then finally move toward what Thomas believes his father has resigned himself as. Thomas’ father was a military man and his father’s resignation to his current state is eating away at him. He suggests that every man needs to make his mark in life and his father has not done so. He is trying to postpone the inevitable by pleading for a little more time, feeling that his father is giving up, and maybe if he can prove to his father that no one gives up regardless of his or her disposition then his father will be able to get off his deathbed. His final plea to his father ends the poem, giving a passionate, but ultimately hopeless expression, “Do not go gentle into that good night / Rage, rage against the dying of the light.” (19)

The use of the metaphor “that good night” (1, 6, 12, 18) gives the impression that Thomas knew that death was right. He calls it that good night instead of another ghastly term for death. However, he also calls it “the dying of the light,” (3, 9, 15, 19) which suggest a peaceful surrender. He urges his father to rage against a peaceful end and endeavor to resist his demise. Thomas uses the words night and light as metaphors for death and life and alternate them to hammer home his point. Part of this poem seems to be almost a lighthearted when he declares “Old age should burn and rave at close of day,” (2) almost as if saying old people should be allowed to live long and complain as long as they do not give up. The purpose of his use of division into categories remains, however to emphasize the importance of living, leaving his father with an unmistakable argument…choose life.

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

1. Give a detailed content analysis of the poem.
2. Highlight the main points in the poem.

**GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. Critically analyse the content of the poem.
2. What do you know about the poem?

**READING ASSIGNMENT**

Read the content of the poem in *Exam Focus* and summarise.

**WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT**

1. Repetition is usually used in literacy works to \_\_\_\_ A assess B emphasize

C exaggerate D expose E modify

2. “She was found without her flower” is an example of \_\_\_\_ A alliteration B. allusion

C. apostrophe D. metaphor E simile

3. The figure of speech used in the statement “The village lost its beautiful structures, glory and its inhabitants to the inferno” is \_\_\_\_\_\_ Aanticlimax B antithesis C climax

D epigram E paradox

4. “The child is the father of the man” illustrates the use of \_\_\_\_\_A exaggeration

B metaphor C oxymoron D paradox E personification

5. Rhetorical questions are used in literary works to achieve the following EXCEPT \_\_\_\_\_

A creating awareness B drawing a point home C emphasizing a point D jettisoning the writer’s position E reinforcing a point

**THEORY**

Read the poem above and discuss the theme of death.

**WEEK TWO**

**Themes and Poetic Devices in the poem**

The [theme](https://literarydevices.net/theme/) of “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” is based on morality and transcendentalism. It laments the inevitability and necessity of death, encouraging old people to rise up against their death and fate. The poet’s [voice](https://literarydevices.net/voice/) is arguing that old people should not consent to die immediately. He links being alive with passion and deep emotions. Thomas’ “good men” and “wise men” resist dying gently, because they could not achieve what they might have achieved in their lives. Through the examples of different types of men, the poet affirms the importance of being alive. He believes that they should resist dying, if they have not truly lived their lives.

“Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” is a poem reflecting [Dylan Thomas](https://www.enotes.com/topics/dylan-thomas?en_action=content_body_click&en_label=%2Ftopics%2Fgo-gentle&en_category=internal_campaign)’s complex attitude toward his father, David John Thomas. The elder Thomas had been a schoolmaster in the grammar school that his son attended and had instilled in the young poet a love for the English of William Shakespeare and the Bible. He had himself written poems in his childhood and seemed to desire to create in his son the poet he had never succeeded in becoming. He had also become the model for the oracular reading voice that Thomas adopted for his own poetry.

That the younger Thomas held his father in high esteem appears clearly in the poem. The adjectives that the poet uses to characterize him are “wise,” “good,” “wild,” and “grave.” The first two are clearly laudatory, although in each case the virtue is mixed with disappointment that it had no wider effect on society. The wildness, however, adds a dimension unseen in the first two qualities: Its influence has somehow interfered with the poetic inspiration that it clearly comprehends. “Wild men” discover they “grieved” the “sun in flight.” This statement is ambiguous; it could mean that the father interfered with the flights of genius in himself or in others, including Dylan. It could also refer to the poet himself, whose wildness led to dissipation responsible for his own manifold problems—by psychological transfer, he may be applying this to his father.

His father’s gravity, however, is hardly characteristic of the son. Although the term suggests dignity worthy of respect, it connotes here a somberness that has been blind to human joy, something the poet had clearly experienced, as many of his poems indicate.

In the final stanza, the poet wants to wring from his father on his “sad height” a curse-blessing, somewhat in the mode of the biblical Jacob as he stole his birthright from Esau. In this case, the curse is the suffering rage the father must experience as he glimpses the glory of what might have been had he fulfilled his own promise; to some degree, he has transferred the rage to his son in the form of insecurity about his own achievement. The blessing is the genius he provided to his son—genius which he had himself fulfilled only vicariously—and supported with his strong sense of language and its power.

**LITERARY TECHNIQUES**

**Alliteration:***go, good* (first stanza); *though, their* (second stanza); *deeds, danced* (third stanza) *sang, sun* (fourth stanza); *learn, late* (fourth stanza); *see, sight* (fifth stanza); *blinding, blind, blaze* (fifth stanza). Note: *Go* and *gentle* do not alliterate; they have different consonant sounds.

**Assonance:***age, rave, day* (first stanza); *blaze, gay, rage* (fifth stanza)   
**Metaphor:***good night* compared to death (first stanza)   
*Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight* (fourth stanza). Implied comparison of achievement to catching the fire of the sun and to singing triumphantly.  
Two Metaphors: *words had forked no lightning* (second stanza). (1) Words are compared to the cause of forked lightning. (2) Lightning is compared to attention, notice—that is, the words had received no attention.   
Metaphor/Personification/Metonymy: old age . . . burn . . . rave. (Old age represents and is compared to a person)   
Metaphor/Personification: *frail deeds might have danced*  
**Oxymoron**: *good night* (first stanza). *Good death* is oxymoronic if one does not view death as good. The words *blinding sight* (fifth stanza) is also an example. Another is*fierce tears* (sixth stanza)   
**Simile**: *blind eyes could blaze like meteors* (fifth stanza)   
.

**Meter**

Except for the second one of Stanza 5, each line in the poem has ten syllables (five feet). The first syllable in a line is unstressed, the second is stressed, the third is unstressed, the fourth is stressed, and so on. Thus, the poem is in iambic pentameter.

**Type of Work, Stucture, and Rhyme Scheme**

“Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” is a villanelle, a form of poetry popularized mainly in France in the sixteenth century. It usually expressed pastoral, idyllic sentiments in imitation of the Italian villanella, a type of song for singers and dancers that centered on rural, peasant themes. When French writers such as Joachim du Bellay (1522-1560) and PhilipeDesportes (1546-1606) began writing villanelles, these poems did not have a fixed format. However, when Jean Passerat (1534-1602) wrote a villanelle whose format caught the fancy of critics, that format became the standard for all future villanelles. The format is as following: the number of stanzas are Six.

Lines in Each Stanza: Three in each of the first five stanzas, four in the last. A three-line stanza is called a tercet; a four-line stanza, a quatrain.   
Refrains: two lines, the first and third of the first stanza, must be repeated in the other stanzas. Here is the pattern: Line 1 of the first stanza is repeated as line 3 of the second stanza, as line 3 of the fourth stanza, and as line 3 of the sixth stanza. Line 3 of the first stanza is repeated as line 3 of the third stanza, line 3 of the fifth stanza, and line 4 of the sixth stanza.     
End Rhyme: **aba** in the first five stanzas; **abaa** in the last stanza.

**Imagery**

Experience comes to us through the senses. There are many different categories of sense experience. Imagery can be represented through language of sense experience. Generally, there are mainly seven kinds of imageries: visual imagery, auditory imagery, olfactory imagery, gustatory imagery, tactile imagery, organic imagery and kinesthetic imagery. Among them, visual imagery occurs most frequently in poetry. The imagery occurs mostly in the poem "*Do not Go Gentle into That Good Night*" is visual imagery.

In the second tercet, the speaker tells that "wise men at their end know dark is right, /Because their words had forked no lightening". Forked lightening is a kind of lightening that is in the line of light that divides into several smaller lines near the bottom. In this stanza, the speaker points out that wise men’s attitude towards death: they know death is inevitable and they are wise enough to continue to leave a mark in their life by "their words" before they could influence this world. The words of the wise men haven’t splitting the lightening reveals their failure to make some influence on the world.

In the third tercet, "Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright/Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay" also express their rage against death. The image "last wave by" vividly describes the last wave is about to crash the shore or die. The bay is green for it is brimmed with life, plants, and seaweeds. Last wave can be interpreted as this: the recent generation is like the wave about to crash onto the shore. When these good men are about to leave this world, they rage against death by "crying" their deeds may have danced brightly.

**Metaphor and Simile**

The first line of the first tercet, the poet uses night as a metaphor for death. Then "close of day" and "dying of the light", the synonymous phrases of night are repeated in the next two lines of the first tercet. Night is the end of one’s life and it represents death, while day is the lifespan of one’s life and it represents life. In the second tercet, the metaphor of night as death continues, but this time the poet uses dark which is closely related to night as a metaphor for death. In the third tercet, "the sun in flight" is a part of the extended metaphor in which day is a circle of life and the flying of sun represents the bright and beautiful part of life. "The sun in flight" also represents life is short and transient.

In the fifth tercet, the poet uses a simile in the second line of this tercet: "Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay". When those grave men are near death, though they could not see clearly, they still try their best to see the world. The poet compares blind eyes of grave men to meteors rather than extinguishing candles. This comparison is ill-matched, and the poet uses this ill-matched comparison on purpose to represent grave men’s attitude towards death: though they know they will die, they still see with twinkle in their eyes and see as much as they can before death.

**Symbol**

A symbol is a kind of image, for it exceeds the image in the richness of its connotations. Sometimes it’s difficult to distinguish image and symbol, but generally an image means only what it is and a symbol means what it is and something more, too. In the poem "*Do not Go Gentle into That Good Night*", the poet employs many symbols.

"Good night" in the first line of the first tercet symbolizes death or afterlife. At first readers may get puzzled when they read the apostrophe line "Do not go gentle into that good night", readers are confused that who the addressee is and why the speaker asks him to do that. The poet reveals the addressee is "my father" in the last tercet. It can be easily understood that the speaker’s father is dying and he wants to urge his father to fight against death. "Close of day" symbolizes end of life and "light" in the "dying of light" symbolizes life, spirit or soul.

"The sad height" in the last tercet symbolizes the closeness of death. After listing many different groups of people on the verge of death who fight against death rather than just accept their death obediently, the poet finally mentions his father who is standing at the metaphorical mountain which is the edge of the mortal world.

**Rhyme and Meter**

"*Do not Go Gentle into That Good Night*" is written in a villanelle form. Villanelles were traditional poetic form of French. They became popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s in English-language poetry. A villanelle is divided into nineteen lines which comprises five tercets and a quatrain. Usually, a villanelle is written in iambic pentameter and so is "*Do not Go Gentle into That Good Night*".

The rhyme scheme of this poem is ABA ABAABAABAABA ABAA. There are only two rhymes and there are two refrains. The refrains, the first line and the third line, are repeated four times in the poem: first line is repeated in the last line of the second and forth tercet and the last-to-second line of the sixth tercet, and the third line are repeated in the third line of the third and fifth tercet and the last line in the sixth tercet.

The use of repetition of the two refrains "Do not go gentle into that good night" and "Rage, rage against the dying of the light" is one effective device. The two refrains work musical miracles in the poem and keep emphasizing and deepening the theme of the poem. The first and third lines of the opening tercet alternate as a refrain in the four following tercets and the last two lines of the concluding quatrain. Such a demanding restriction requires poetic ingenuity to maintain a meaningful expression. Here the form provides the poet with a suitable framework for his four characteristic types-wise, good, wild, and grave men-and enables him to equate these types with his father’s character. This repetition expresses one of the major themes: one should not accept death without resistance.

**Sound and Meaning**

Poetry arranges words into patterns of sounds like music. The music of poetry may not be able to mean very much on its own, but it can certainly help make the poem’s meaning.

**Alliteration and Consonance**

Alliteration is the repetition of the initial consonant cluster in stressed syllables.

In the first line "Do not go gentle into that good night", the alliteration here is used to call attention to the words go and good which carry the alliteration, thus giving great emphasis to these words. Night symbolizes death here. Night has a negative connotation, and the poet adds an adjective good to balance this kind of negative effect.

In the fifth tercet "Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight/ Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay", the repeated /b/ sound echoes in the sense or meaning conveyed by the two lines. The connection among these three words forms a contrast: though grave men are losing their faculty of sight, they still use what they have to rage against death. The employment of alliteration here emphasizes the theme of the poem: do not accept death tamely.

Consonance is the repetition of the final consonant cluster in stressed syllables.

In the concluding quatrain "Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray", the repetition of /s/ sound constituted consonance which effectively unites the key words of this line and reinforces the mood of the speaker to urge his father to fight against death.

**Euphonies and Cacophonies**

The poet can reinforce meaning through sound by choose and group sounds into smooth and pleasant sounding (euphonious) or rough and harsh sounding (cacophonous). When the sounds of words work together in harmony, they create euphony which pleases both mind and ear. When the sounds of words do not work together, they create a harsh, discordant effect called cacophony.

There is a large amount of cacophonous consonant /r/ in this poem.

Rage, rage against…

Though wise men know at their end know dark is right.

Because their words had forked no lightening…

Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray.

Many monosyllabic words are ended with plosives like /d/, /t/ and /k/. The plosives are harsher and sharper in their effect.

E.g. That, night, old, light, end, dark, right, bright, wild, blind, sad, height.

All these kinds of cacophonous sounds cause a severe feeling. One of the most obvious sound features of this poem is that the poet uses a great amount of "long" vowels or diphongs like /ai/ and /ei/.

E.g. /ai/ night, dying, light, lightening, crying, wild, blinding, blind, eyes, like /ei/ day, age, rave, wave, frail, wage, against, late, grave, blaze.

These "long" vowels appear frequently in this poem. Through these vowels readers could feel that the speaker’s voice cracked with grief. Besides, the end rhymes of this poem are /ait/ and /ei/. These two rhymes link the key word of this poem "night" and "day", and "light" and "night". They also echo the life and death theme of this poem. The sound repetition responds to the theme of the poem, and the sound and meaning of "rave", "rage" and "against" shows the rebellious attitude toward death.

In the last tercert, the sibilance in the line: "Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray" feels softer and gentler. The speaker is pleading his father not to be surrendered to death and fight against death.

**GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. Discuss the major theme of the poem.
2. Comment on the poet’s use of simile and metaphor

**READING ASSIGNMENT**

Read the themes of the poem in *Exam Focus* and summarise them.

**WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT**

1. The clash of interest that originates from opposing forces in literature is A. climax.

B. denouement.C. conflict.D. aside.

1. A major character whose flaws combine with external forces that lead to his downfall is a

A. flat character.B. round character.C. romantic hero.D. tragic hero.

1. Which of the following is not a drama? A. Burlesque B. Resolution C. Pantomime

D. Opera

1. A literary work in which the characters and events are used as symbols is known as

A. characterization.B. allegory.C. metaphor.D. parallelism.

1. Characterization in a novel refers to the A. writer’s opinion of the characters. B. way the characters are revealed to the reader. C. characters and the way they behave. D. reader’s opinion of the characters.

**THEORY**

Write a brief biography on August Wilson.

**WEEK THREE**

**Reading and Content Analysis of Non-African Play: *Fences* by August Wilson, Plot Account.**

*Fences*is divided into two acts. Act One is comprised of four scenes and Act Two has five. The play begins on a Friday, Troy and Bono's payday. Troy and Bono go to Troy's house for their weekly ritual of drinking and talking. Troy has asked Mr. Rand, their boss, why the black employees aren't allowed to drive the garbage trucks, only to lift the garbage. Bono thinks Troy is cheating on his wife, Rose. Troy and Rose's son, Cory, has been recruited by a college football team. Troy was in the Negro Leagues but never got a chance to play in the Major Leagues because he got too old to play just as the Major Leagues began accepting black players. Troy goes into a long epic story about his struggle in July of 1943 with death. Lyons shows up at the house because he knows it is Troy's payday. Rose reminds Troy about the fence she's asked him to finish building.

Cory and Troy work on the fence. Cory breaks the news to Troy that he has given away his job at the local grocery store, the A&P, during the football season. Cory begs Troy to let him play because a coach from North Carolina is coming all the way to Pittsburgh to see Cory play. Troy refuses and demands Cory to get his job back.

Act One, scene four takes place on Friday and mirrors scene one. Troy has won his case and has been assigned as the first colored garbage truck driver in the city. Bono and Troy remember their fathers and their childhood experiences of leaving home in the south and moving north. Cory comes home enraged after finding out that Troy told the football coach that Cory may not play on the team. Troy warns Cory that his insubordinance is "strike one," against him.

Troy bails his brother Gabriel out of jail. Bono and Troy work on the fence. Bono explains to Troy and Cory that Rose wants the fence because she loves her family and wants to keep close to her love. Troy admits to Bono that he is having an affair with Alberta. Bono bets Troy that if he finishes building the fence for Rose, Bono will buy his wife, Lucille the refrigerator he has promised her for a long time. Troy tells Rose about a hearing in three weeks to determine whether or not Gabriel should be recommitted to an asylum. Troy tells Rose about his affair. Rose accuses Troy of taking and not giving. Troy grabs Rose's arm. Cory grabs Troy from behind. They fight and Troy wins. Troy calls "strike two" on Cory.

Six months later, Troy says he is going over to the hospital to see Alberta who went into labor early. Rose tells Troy that Gabriel has been taken away to the asylum because Troy couldn't read the papers and signed him away. Alberta had a baby girl but died during childbirth. Troy challenges Death to come and get him after he builds a fence. Troy brings home his baby, Raynell. Rose takes in Raynell as her own child, but refuses to be dutiful as Troy's wife.

On Troy's payday, Bono shows up unexpectedly. Troy and Bono acknowledge how each man made good on his bet about the fence and the refrigerator. Troy insists that Cory leave the house and provide for himself. Cory brings up Troy's recent failings with Rose. Cory points out that the house and property, from which Troy is throwing Cory out, should actually be owned by Gabriel whose government checks paid for most of the mortgage payments. Troy physically attacks Cory. Troy kicks Cory out of the house for good. Cory leaves. Troy swings the baseball bat in the air, taunting Death.

Eight years later, Raynell plays in her newly planted garden. Troy has died from a heart attack. Cory returns home from the Marines to attend Troy's funeral. Lyons and Bono join Rose too. Cory refuses to attend. Rose teaches Cory that not attending Troy's funeral does not make Cory a man. Raynell and Cory sing one of Troy's father's blues songs. Gabriel turns up, released or escaped from the mental hospital. Gabe blows his trumpet but no sound comes out. He tries again but the trumpet will not play. Disappointed and hurt, Gabriel dances. He makes a cry and the Heavens open wide. He says, "That's the way that goes," and the play ends.

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

What do you know about the author?

**GENERAL EVALUATION/REVISION QUESTIONS**

Analyse the plot of the work.

**READING ASSIGNMENT**

Read act 1 to 2 of the play and summarise.

**WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT**

1. “Here comes the princess, now heaven walls on earth”, illustrates the use of A. contrast. B. metaphor. C. metonymy. D. meiosis
2. An ode is usually a poem written for A. condemnation. B. celebration. C. instruction. D. entertainment.
3. The main character in a literary work is the A. antagonist. B. protagonist. C. narrator. D actor.
4. A sonnet may be divided into an octave and A. tercet. B. quatrain. C. sestet. D. septet.
5. “All hands on deck” is an example of A. metaphor. B personification. C. synecdoche D. simile

**THEORY**

Read the play and analyse themes.

**WEEK FOUR**

**CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERIZATION**

**TROY MAXSON**

The husband of [Rose](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/rose-maxson), and father to [Cory](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/cory-maxson) and [Lyons](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/lyons-maxson), Troy is the central character of Fences. Shaped by the effects racism has had on his life—by the struggles it created in his youth and the career ambitions that it thwarted, including his desire to be a baseball player—Troy lives in the shadow of what could, and what should, have been. The play can largely be described as charting how Troy’s actions, as they’re informed by his past, affect those around him: how his own shattered sense of hope ripples into and distorts the aspirations and dreams of those around him—how the racism of his world growing-up continues to express itself through Troy’s actions, indirectly shaping those of a new generation. As a result of Troy’s experiences, he has become a man who at once espouses and insists on rigid practicality in order to protect himself and his family from the world, even as he indulges (or can’t stop himself from indulging) in a kind of wild impracticality of his own as a way to escape or redress the unfairness he perceives as having thwarted his own life. This inner contrast – which to those around him can feel like hypocrisy – is evident in a variety of ways. For instance, Troy can’t see anything practical, or therefore worthwhile, in the professions (music and baseball, respectively) to which his sons Lyons and Cory each aspire. But at the same time, Troy’s affair with [Alberta](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/alberta) suggests that he’s perfectly willing to engage in something not grounded in practicality, but rather in pure pleasure divorced from the needs of his family. Similarly, Troy’s willingness to protest the unfair treatment of blacks in his workplace (they’re only hired to carry garbage, while whites are exclusively hired to drive the trucks), embodies a progressive view on the possibilities of race which mirrors the possibilities that his sons see for the future of race relations. But, in Cory’s particular case, he sees such possibilities as unrealistic (i.e., his belief that Cory will never succeed in professional football because black players aren’t given a chance). Troy’s inner conflict seems also to play out in the way he puts a fantastical spin on the reality of his past, such as telling fanciful tales about encounters he’s had with a personified form (the grim reaper or the devil) of death. These fantasies of Troy’s suggest that his past failures and suffering have pushed his mind, perhaps as a kind of involuntary self-defense, to favor imagination and fictional constructions over any consistent, constant consideration of his real past. Yet, while August Wilson seems concerned with highlighting this conflict and hypocrisy at the core of Troy’s character, he’s perhaps not condemning Troy personally. Rather, Wilson shows how Troy is the product of historical, racist forces beyond his control; he shows how Troy is a vehicle for these forces, for their reproduction and reinforcement on a new generation.

**Cory Maxson** - The teenage son of Troy and Rose Maxson. A senior in high school, Cory gets good grades and college recruiters are coming to see him play football. Cory is a respectful son, compassionate nephew to his disabled Uncle Gabriel, and generally, a giving and enthusiastic person. An ambitious young man who has the talent and determination to realize his dreams, Cory comes of age during the course of the play when he challenges and confronts Troy and leaves home. Cory comes home from the Marines in the final scene of the play, attempting to defy Troy by refusing to go to his funeral, but Cory changes his mind after sharing memories of his father with Rose and Raynell.

**Rose Maxson** - Troy's wife and mother of his second child, Cory. Rose is a forty-three year-old African American housewife who volunteers at her church regularly and loves her family. Rose's request that Troy and Cory build a fence in their small, dirt backyard comes to represent her desire to keep her loved-ones close to her love. Unlike Troy, Rose is a realist, not a romantic longing for the by- gone days of yore. She has high hopes for her son, Cory and sides with him in his wish to play football. Rose's acceptance of Troy's illegitimate daughter, Raynell, as her own child, exemplifies her compassion.

**Gabriel Maxson** - Troy's brother. Gabriel was a soldier in the Second World War, during which he received a head injury that required a metal plate to be surgically implanted into his head. Because of the physical damage and his service, Gabriel receives checks from the government that Troy used in part to buy the Maxson's home where the play takes place. Gabriel wanders around the Maxson family's neighborhood carrying a basket and singing. He often thinks he is not a person, but the angel Gabriel who opens the gates of heaven with his trumpet for Saint Peter on Judgment Day. Gabriel exudes a child-like exuberance and a need to please.

**Jim Bono**  - Troy's best friend of over thirty years. Jim Bono is usually called "Bono" or "Mr. Bono" by the characters in *Fences.* Bono and Troy met in jail, where Troy learned to play baseball. Troy is a role model to Bono. Bono is the only character in *Fences* who remembers, first-hand, Troy's glory days of hitting homeruns in the Negro Leagues. Less controversial than Troy, Bono admires Troy's leadership and responsibility at work. Bono spends every Friday after work drinking beers and telling stories with Troy in the Maxson family's backyard. He is married to a woman named Lucille, who is friends with Rose. Bono is a devoted husband and friend. Bono's concern for Troy's marriage takes precedent over his loyalty to their friendship.

**Lyons Maxson** - Troy's son, fathered before Troy's time in jail with a woman Troy met before Troy became a baseball player and before he met Rose. Lyons is an ambitious and talented jazz musician. He grew up without Troy for much of his childhood because Troy was in prison. Lyons, like most musicians, has a hard time making a living. For income, Lyons mostly depends on his girlfriend, Bonnie whom we never see on stage. Lyons does not live with Troy, Rose and Cory, but comes by the Maxson house frequently on Troy's payday to ask for money. Lyons, like Rose, plays the numbers, or local lottery. Their activity in the numbers game represents Rose and Lyons' belief in gambling for a better future. Lyons' jazz playing appears to Troy as an unconventional and foolish occupation. Troy calls jazz, "Chinese music," because he perceives the music as foreign and impractical. Lyons' humanity and belief in himself garners respect from others.

**RaynellMaxson** - Troy's illegitimate child, mothered by Alberta, his lover. August Wilson introduces Raynell to the play as an infant. Her innocent need for care and support convinces Rose to take Troy back into the house. Later, Raynell plants seeds in the once barren dirt yard. Raynell is the only Maxson child that will live with few scars from Troy and is emblematic of new hope for the future and the positive values parents and older generations pass on to their young.

**Alberta** - Troy's buxom lover from Tallahassee and Raynell's mother. Alberta dies while giving birth. She symbolizes the exotic dream of Troy's to escape his real life problems and live in an illusion with no time.

**Bonnie** - Lyons' girlfriend who works in the laundry at Mercy Hospital.

**Mr.Stawicki** - Cory's boss at the A&P.

**Coach Zellman** - Cory's high school football coach who encourages recruiters to come to see Cory play football.

**Mr.Rand**  - Bono and Troy's boss at the Sanitation Department who doubted that Troy would win his discrimination case.

**Miss Pearl**  - Gabe's landlady at his new apartment.

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

1. Describe the main character in the work.
2. Contrast any two characters in the work.

**GENERAL EVALUATION/REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. Describe the main character in the work.
2. Describe two minor characters in the work.

**READING ASSIGNMENT**

Read the play and examine the use of irony.

**WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT**

1. “The star blinked and the wind wailed” is an example of \_\_\_\_\_ A. antithesis

B. euphemism C. metaphor D. parody E. personification

1. Pick out the odd item from the following\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ A. comedy B. octave C. Quatrain

D. sonnet E. sestet

1. “United we stand, divided we fall”, illustrates the use of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_A. anti-climax

B. antithesis C. climax B. irony E. sarcasm

1. The writer’s freedom to use words to suit his own purpose is called\_\_\_\_\_ A. author’s freedom B. author’s license C. poetic freedom D. poetic license E. writer’s license
2. The expression, “Before Idi Amin breathed his last he admonished his children to shun violence” is a/an \_\_\_\_ A. anecdote B. metaphor C. euphemism D. onomatopoeia

E. paradox

**THEORY**

Analyse Cory as a character in the work.

**WEEK FIVE**

**THEMES, LANGUAGE AND STYLE IN THE PLAY**

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| Blackness and Race RelationsTheme Analysis |

**Themes and Colours**

Set in Pittsburgh in the 1950s, Fences explores the experience of one black family living in the era of segregation and a burgeoning black rights movement, exposing, at the heart of its characters’ psychology, a dynamic between the inner world of a black community and the expanse of white power around it.

The [fence](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/symbols/the-fence) which [Troy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/b025e174-e747-48ee-9cd5-9a5d3a0d1ef7) gradually builds in front of his house serves as a symbol of segregation, as well as the general psychological need to build a fortress where a black ‘inside’ or interior can set itself off from the white-dominated world around it. From one angle, the fence represents the geographical effects of segregation in general: the fencing-off of blacks, the creation of ethnic insularity in certain neighborhoods, and it is a monument to this basic social division effected by white economic and political power. Yet Troy also builds the fence himself; it’s largely his own creation, though [Rose](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/rose-maxson) initially tasks him with building it. Rose wants the fence in order to set her and her family off from the outside world, to protect a private interior of their experience—lived, black experience—from an outside world threatening to invade it, and from the divisive effects which white power inflicts upon society. While the latter divides with the aim of controlling and limiting black prosperity and influence, the division effected by Troy’s fence is one of protection and an affirmation of the world within it.

Throughout the play, we also see how its characters are forced to define their world in terms of how it’s limited by a racist system of white social and economic power. We see that Troy’s workplace, for instance, is organized according to a racial hierarchy privileging whites, since exclusively white men are hired to drive the company’s garbage trucks, while black men are only hired as garbage collectors. Further, much of the characters’ speech relies on pointing out their status as people of color in order to describe their position in relation to white power.

Wilson’s play therefore, in part, concerns itself with depicting how racism governs and structures the everyday lives of its characters, in order to expose—through the concrete experiences of one family—racism’s many effects on the black American community of the 1950s at large. The meaning behind and need for the fence, and the play’s exposure of a black world in many ways defined by its oppression, are a scathing condemnation of the division and pain inflicted by white power. Fences gives a palpable reality to the abstract mechanisms of racism and white power—it reveals the pain of, as well as the aspirations and opportunities withheld from, its black characters. Through framing pain as being at the heart of almost all its characters’ lives, Wilson reveals the psychological complexity and intensely tiresome and tasking nature of navigating a racist world divided principally between white and black. At the same time, he reveals how that division divides blacks themselves through the pain it inflicts upon them (such as Troy’s conflict with [Cory](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/cory-maxson) over his desire to play football, since Troy’s parenting is informed by his past experience of discrimination in the world of sports).

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| Manhood and FathersTheme Analysis |  |

The play largely revolves around the turbulent relationship between [Troy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/b025e174-e747-48ee-9cd5-9a5d3a0d1ef7) and his children—particularly his relationship with [Cory](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/cory-maxson). Cory’s desire to assert his own manhood and determine his own future clashes with the authority Troy feels as a father. Further, Cory’s ambitions go against everything Troy thinks will be good and healthy for his son’s prosperity.

Cory evolves in the play from cowering in fear of his father to ultimately severing his ties with him in a gesture of ‘masculine’ hubris. While Cory grew up being incredibly passive and submissive to his father out of fear, he gradually starts acting out of his own self-interest (such as his pursuit of football) in his later teens. Troy actively denounces Cory’s attempts to define and pursue his own goals, and believes that Cory is obligated to absolutely bend to his way insofar as Cory lives under his roof. But this eventually pushes Cory to leave home and curse his father’s treatment of him and his mother. Earlier in the play, Troy describes a similar situation with his own father growing up. Troy’s father, while a tough man to live with, looked after his children, according to his account. But Troy, getting into a severe conflict with his father one day, left his father—like his own son—to go out on his own.

Perhaps as a symptom of his own struggles with leading a stable life as an independent man, Troy, in trying to protect Cory from similar struggles, seems to ultimately think that Cory’s desire to make his own decisions fundamentally contradicts their father-son relationship. It’s as if, in order for Cory to become a man—which would inevitably involve assuming independence from his father’s command—he must necessarily be at odds with his father.

Further, Wilson seems to be exposing us to one kind of ‘masculinity,’ one way it is constructed and defined—and how that construction is based in the social world around it as well as in the characters’ personal history. In this case, the masculinity is that of Troy, and can be interpreted as something of an archetype of a certain kind of working black father in the 50s.

This masculinity is defined by having defied one’s father in the past, endured poverty propped-up by a racist society, and failed to follow one’s dreams—but having nonetheless survived, stayed alive, and kept going, despite all the odds. In the eyes of their father, then, Cory and [Lyons](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/lyons-maxson) live comparatively privileged lives having been entirely provided for until they were grown. But, in the eyes of Troy’s sons—especially Cory—this isn’t enough. Cory doesn’t feel loved by his father, and can’t see how his father’s harshness is in anyway symptomatic of something larger than him and beyond his control. The play perhaps shouldn’t be read as siding with Troy’s treatment of his children and his decisions in raising them—rather, it tries to show, once again, how two worldviews clash in the father-son relation.

Wilson doesn’t seem to offer a clean-cut solution to escaping the cycle of misunderstanding, anger, and stuck-in-the-past-ness characteristic of men like Troy and their fathers. He does show, however, how they can have such incredible power in shaping the future of their children—e.g., Cory doesn’t get to go to college—and therefore the future generation. Additionally, Wilson shows how difficult it is to free oneself from such a father without totally severing the relationship.

Ultimately, Wilson’s decision to make the conflict between father and son the central pivot of the play underscores his desire to show how abstract forces of history—particularly white social and economic power—manifest themselves, through their racist exertion on peoples’ lives, in real, concrete, everyday lived black experience. The microscopic, psychological relationship between a father and his son is one of the most intimate venues for those more macroscopic forces, and as such, is very powerful to witness—it’s a venue with an educational power for white audiences.

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| MortalityTheme Analysis |  |

The topic of death appears throughout the play in various forms, both in the physical death of two characters ([Troy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/b025e174-e747-48ee-9cd5-9a5d3a0d1ef7) and [Alberta](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/alberta)), as well as in the stories told by Troy and through his brother[Gabriel](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/gabriel-maxson)’s obsession with the Christian afterlife.

Troy mentions the grim reaper (“[Mr. Death](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/symbols/mr-death)”) several times throughout the play, telling a story about how they once wrestled. Troy seems to believe that, while death is an unavoidable fate, one should try to go out with a fight. Troy says that he knew Death had the upper hand in their battle, but that he nonetheless wanted to make his death as difficult as possible to achieve. Further, the [fence](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/symbols/the-fence) can be read as a barrier to the inevitable onslaught of death. Troy mentions that the fence he builds is a way of keeping Death out of his life.

Gabriel, always thinking about judgment day, has perhaps just as strong an obsession with death as his brother. Gabriel’s obsession, however, is more loud and noticeable because it’s expressed in his manic, psychotic ideas about his supposed spiritual powers. Troy’s obsession with death is perhaps just as strong, however, for in a way it sustains him: Troy’s pride in having survived against all the odds—his father, intense poverty, personal failure—relies on death to fuel itself.

On the day of Troy’s funeral, Gabriel declares that Troy has successfully entered the gates of heaven. While this declaration may not indicate the opinions of other characters, it nonetheless ends the play, and is the final word on Troy’s death. Gabriel’s proclamation therefore has both a punctuality and an ambivalence; the play ends with the gates of heaven opening onto and usurping Troy’s fenced-off existence. Death ends the play by annihilating the in/out distinction effected by a fence, and Troy dies in an unfavorable status because of his adultery.

Wilson therefore seems to speak against Troy’s view of death, and how this view informs his approach to life and the lives around him. If we take Troy to view death as a force that should be fought against at all costs, to the extent that one should give up on taking any risks (such as [Cory](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/cory-maxson)’s football ambitions, in his mind) and even sacrifice one’s ability to give love and compassion to one’s family members as a result of that fight, then Wilson seems to speak against this.

By having Troy die unsatisfied and in low moral standing, Wilson suggests a couple of things. First, with regard to Troy’s adultery, he did take a risk—but one for himself, and which endangered his family, rather than a risk at least attempting to invest in his family (like letting Cory try out football and attend college, despite his uncertainty about its promise). Troy lets the pressure of death eat at him to such an extent that he seeks to find satisfaction in life (to defy and thwart that pressure) in an extreme form, somewhere outside the space he’s cultivated and fenced off for his family. Secondly, Troy is ultimately unhappy because of this decision to find satisfaction beyond his fence—he ruins his relationship with [Rose](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/rose-maxson), and Alberta dies because of the baby with which he impregnated her. This suggests that Troy’s constant struggle to defy death and win out against it—or at least his specific methods of doing so—is something which ultimately fails, and which hurts everyone who’s affected by that failure.

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| The FenceSymbol Analysis |  |

The fence that [Rose](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/rose-maxson) asks [Troy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/b025e174-e747-48ee-9cd5-9a5d3a0d1ef7) to build, and envisions as wrapping protectively around her family, can be read in a several ways. On one level, the division effected by the fence seems to echo the separation of people and social spaces central to the workings of segregation—an unjust practice pervading the time in which the play takes place. Yet, while Troy and [Cory](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/characters/cory-maxson)’s construction of a border around their home may resonate with the racial divide plaguing the society it pictures, it’s also an emblem of black courage and strength, and of the integrity of black lives and history. Rose yearns to fence-off and fence-in her family’s lives and the bond connecting them from a racist world of white dominance—from a society bent on delegitimizing black life and casting it as second-class. The fence therefore also speaks to the psychological need Rose and many like her felt, and still feel, to preserve an inner, private life against the brunt of an outside world where that life is rejected and made to conform to the mechanisms of white power.

The fence also seems to serve as a figure for Troy’s career, resembling the perimeter of a baseball stadium: the fence he strived, with his bat, to hit beyond. Despite Troy’s talent, his skin color barred him from any chance of a steady career in the white-dominated world of professional baseball. The fence of Troy’s career, therefore, was at once a marker of his skill whenever he hit a home run, as well as a border enclosing a world and a future he could never fully enter. Therefore, when Troy builds the fence for Rose, he’s building his own limit, his own arena—a limit not imposed upon him by forces of discrimination out of his control.

While it’s critical to read the fence as a symbol of race division and how it affects the Maxson family, the motivation to build it can also be read as stemming from Rose’s sheer, maternal desire to protect and fortify her family. Additionally, Troy’s efforts to wall-off his home resonate with his ongoing conflict with “[Mr. Death](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/fences/symbols/mr-death).” By fortifying the perimeter of his home, Troy gestures towards his desire to dam-up any lethal forces assailing him from the outside world.

## Dramatic Devices

[August Wilson](https://www.enotes.com/topics/august-wilson?en_action=content_body_click&en_label=%2Ftopics%2Ffences&en_category=internal_campaign) introduces his audience to the primary conflict in Fences at the very beginning of the play. All the characters are introduced in act 1, and their interrelationships are explained; the conflict between father and son is imminent. In Troy’s stubborn effort to prevent his own harsh history from repeating itself with his son Cory, Troy imposes his legacy on Cory’s dreams and aspirations. Heinous and misguided as Troy’s anger is, it does not seem irrational, because Wilson makes the audience understand the facts of Troy’s life. In a gripping speech (act 1, scene 4), Troy takes the audience along every painful mile of his “walking blues.” Fleeing from the rural racism of the South only to encounter the impoverished slums of the North, Troy Maxson epitomizes the African American males of his generation who were psychologically scarred by their social status: They were neither slaves nor free men.

Act 2, scene 1, further complicates the conflict between Troy and Cory, as Wilson creates conflict among other characters. The turning point of the play occurs when Rose attacks Troy for crossing her boundaries. This crucial moment changes the direction of the action and paves the way for the complications to unwind. The process by which Cory and the others reconcile themselves with Troy—and retrieve the pride he lost—is manifested in the play’s affecting denouement: It can only be accomplished after Troy’s death. Though the conclusion aims to reestablish a stable situation so that the drama may end, the audience is left with feelings of ambivalence. This ambivalence is the hallmark of Wilson’s achievement; he makes the audience understand Troy Maxson’s behavior without ever resorting to sentimentalizing him.

While Wilson’s tableau-like staging could serve any front-porch play, his clever use of the fence is another way in which the play achieves its effect. The fence provides a silent commentary on the action taking place all around it. Almost all August Wilson’s humor, poetry, and social observation somehow center on the fence. The tensions created by the image of the fence heighten the play’s conflict and invite the audience to participate in an emotional identification with the characters, who demand that the audience take sides in their disagreements.

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

How does the author use symbol in the work?

**GENERAL EVALUATION**

1. Analyze three main themes in the work
2. Discuss the use of irony in the work.
3. Discuss the language of the work.

**GENERAL EVALUATION/REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. Discuss the use suspense in the work.
2. Discuss the style of the work.

**READING ASSIGNMENT**

How does the play end.

**WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT**

1. Repetition is usually used in literacy works to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ A. assess B. emphasize

C. exaggerate D. expose E. modify

2. “She was found without her flower” is an example of \_\_\_\_\_\_ A. alliteration B. allusion C. apostrophe D. metaphor E. simile

3. The figure of speech used in the statement “The village lost its beautiful structures, glory and its inhabitants to the inferno” is \_\_\_\_ A. anticlimax B. antithesis C. climax

D. epigram E. paradox

4. “The child is the father of the man” illustrates the use of \_\_\_\_\_\_

A. exaggeration B. metaphor C. oxymoron D. paradox E. personification

5. Rhetorical questions are used in literary works to achieve the following EXCEPT \_\_\_\_\_ A. creating awareness B. drawing a point home C. emphasizing a point D. jettisoning the writer’s position E. reinforcing a point

**THEORY**

Discuss the use of contrast in the work.

**WEEK SIX**

**Reading and Content Analysis of Non-African Poetry: Good-Morrow by John Donne**.

# The Good-Morrow

## [John Donne](https://www.poets.org/node/45811), 1572 - 1631

I wonder by my troth, what thou and I

Did, till we loved? Were we not wean’d till then?

But suck’d on country pleasures, childishly?

Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers’ den?

‘Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be;

If ever any beauty I did see,

Which I desired, and got, ‘twas but a dream of thee.

And now good-morrow to our waking souls,

Which watch not one another out of fear;

For love all love of other sights controls,

And makes one little room an everywhere.

Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone;

Let maps to other, worlds on worlds have shown;

Let us possess one world; each hath one, and is one.

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,

And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;

Where can we find two better hemispheres

Without sharp north, without declining west?

Whatever dies, was not mix’d equally;

If our two loves be one, or thou and I

Love so alike that none can slacken, none can die.

## Analysis of The Good-Morrow Stanza by Stanza

**Stanza 1**

Knowing that the title means good morning (Good-Morrow is archaic, an old fashioned way of greeting someone. Donne liked to join some of his words with a hyphen) the reader has a clue that the scene is set early in the day.

The first line takes the reader into the mind of the first person speaker, who is either asking himself or his lover a puzzling question. Note the language, it's 17th century English, so thou means you and by my troth means in all honesty or truth.

The first line runs on into the second (enjambment) and the caesurae (pauses caused by punctuation) ensure that the reader cannot go too quickly through these words. This is a carefully phrased question.

And that small phrase Did, till we loved?is important because it gives sense to the previous line and sets the poem off proper. Just what kind of existence did the pair have before they became lovers, before they fell in love?

It's a question many lovers have asked because when two become firmly entrenched in love it's as if the time previous to their meeting holds no value. They never lived, they didn't do anything meaningful.

Were we not weaned till then? To be weaned is to be influenced from an early age; to be a baby or an infant gradually given adult food whilst coming off a diet of mother's milk. The speaker is implying that they were infants before they loved.

The third line reinforces this sense of childish existence the two had to go through. The country pleasures are either crude sensualities or immature sexual pleasures, mere surface experiences.

Or they lived life asleep as it were. The allusion is to the Seven Sleepers, Christian youths who fled from the Roman emperor Decius (249-251) and were sealed in a cave. They slept for nearly two hundred years so the story goes, waking up in a world where Christianity had taken hold.

So the implication is that these two lived as if asleep until they fell in love and woke up - their love became a kind of new religion for them.

These four lines, with alternate rhymes, form a quatrain. The end three lines consolidate meaning, have the same end rhymes and have that final hexameter, a longer line.

Twas so; ...the speaker confirms that, yes, before they were lovers any pleasures were not real; it was as if they were infants asleep, not really awake but merely dreaming.

And Donne being Donne he goes on to say that his desires were fulfilled - he got what he wanted out of beauty - but even that wasn't real, it was only a dream.

## Analysis of The Good-Morrow Stanza 2

**Stanza 2**

Having concluded in the first stanza that the lovers weren't really alive, or hadn't done anything, until they fell in love and became aware, the speaker wishes both of them a good morning as they wake.

There is no fear in their relationship; they are totally devoted, 100% in love, which is the be all and end all. They see the world through their love, through love.

And makes one little room an everywhere....the room the lovers are in is small, a microcosm, yet because their love is universal, it goes everywhere their love goes, and is whole, a macrocosm.

This line reflects the Renaissance idea that an individual held within them the universe.

The last three lines of this stanza are related to exploration of new worlds. Donne's use of metaphor is cutting edge for his time - explorers were discovering new terrestrial worlds using the latest maps, and astronomers were beginning to seriously chart the stars.

The known world was expanding rapidly. Donne connects this fact with the world the lovers have created.

Let us possess one world (in some versions this is our world)...the speaker affirms that they have their individual worlds but their love world they possess, they totally own a whole new world which they are free to explore.

## Analysis of The Good-Morrow Stanza 3

**Stanza 3**

In the third stanza the speaker initially gets close up and personal.

Donne's fascination with reflections and imagery comes to the fore. As the lovers gaze into each other's eyes they see each other reflected. Evidence of more bonding, of two becoming one.

The lovers are true and plain - they don't have to pretend or show off or be fancy - in front of one another.

The speaker reverts to questioning again, as in the first stanza, and asks Where can we find two better hemispheres (semi-circles) ...which could be their eyes and faces.

Without sharp North....the cold north, relating to a cold relationship

without declining West...the sun sets in the west, end of the day, end of a relationship.

So the speaker in these four lines reinforces the idea that the lovers are a single entity; their relationship isn't cold or about to end, it is warm and rising.

Whatever dies was not mixed equally....In medical theory of the time death was thought to be the result of imbalances in the body's elements.

If our two loves...the speaker suggests that their two loves are not at all imbalanced, their loves are so alike that they can never die.

This is an idealistic end to the poem but Donne's original take on what love is remains with us today in popular musical lyrics for example.

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

1. Comment on the content of the poem.
2. Assess the poem as a metaphysical work..

**GENERAL EVALUATION/REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. How does it capture the main idea?
2. What are the dominant ideas in the poem?

**READING ASSIGNMENT**

Read the poem in *Exam Focus* and discuss the themes.

**WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT**

1. \_\_\_\_ is the location of the action of the plot. A. Setting B. Narrative technique C. point of view D. Characterisation
2. A ballad is essentially a \_\_\_ poem. A. descriptive B. dramatic C. pastoral D. narrative
3. The first four lines of Shakespearean sonnet rhyme A. abcd. B. abba. C. abab. D. cdcd.
4. A story in which characters or actions represent abstract ideas or moral qualities is A. an epic. B. a legend. C. an allegory. D. a satire.
5. The use of imagery in prose or verse A. appeals to the senses. B. develops the plot. C. creates confusion. D. obscures meaning.

**THEORY**

Comment on the poem.

**WEEK SEVEN**

**THEMES AND POETIC TECHNIQUES IN THE POEM**

“The Good Morrow” is a specially envisioned love poem which is celebrated by modern readers because of its **contemporary take on love**. Before going through the **critical analysis of Good Morrow**, it needs to be understood that Love has been defined here as a state of eternal bliss where the body and the soul are not divorced but work as a single orchestrated unit to offer a divine experience to the lovers. Donne has developed this theme by a blend of dramatic progression of thoughts and intensity of feelings. The poem emphasizes upon a spiritual awakening after the lovers wake up from their carnal past which awards “The Good Morrow” with titular justification.

The thematological exploration of the main body of the poem brings to our notice its trio-partite structure where the first part sheds light upon the past of the lovers which was riddled by their encounters with make-believe beauties. The lovers indulged in these meaningless liaisons to make up for the absence of a true love which concertize every abstract entity of human desire. Donne has compared that past to “snorting” in “seven sleeper’s den” and “weaning” on “country’s pleasures childishly” in two separate metaphysical conceits to express his passionate contempt and rejection. The poet’s disgust however diffuses when he realizes that his carnal past led to his divine present which paves way for the second element of the theme.

The **theme for the second part of Good Morrow** begins in the manner of a traditional aubade – “And now good morrow to our waking souls” where the physical act of waking up has been compared to a spiritual awakening. This is where the title of the poem is viewed in an intricate relationship with the theme. “Good Morrow” refers to the lovers’ acknowledgement of their divine present where the binarization of platonic and physical has crumbled to give a totality of experience that blinds the lovers to the world around as they are completely encapsulated in their “little room”. It is worth noticing here that the “morrow” would not have arrived without the lovers’ act of physical union in the preceding night which establishes that the way to spiritual love is through material fulfillment and not by dismissing the latter. It is this union of sexual and philosophical love as a unified sensibility which is important for a “Good morrow” in the lives of the lovers. The relationship which the poet shares with his beloved is based on the fundamentals of assurance and trust. There is perfect mutuality between the lovers but this mutuality never infringes their individuality – “Each hath one and is one”

The third part of the poem gives us a glimpse of the lovers’ futures which the poet believes will stretch till eternity. This is because he has awarded their love the quintessence of the fifth element of nature owing to its purity. This purity has vested the poet’s love with the powers of immortality such that it can counter and surmount all the destructive effects of death.

Thus we see that by establishing a link between the past, present and the future of the lovers, Donne has succeeded in developing the theme of the spiritual and emotional greatness of a perfectly passionate secular love. The title suggests that a spiritual awakening in love that has been triggered by physical union is responsible for the quintessence of true love.

**The Metre (Meter in American English) of The Good-Morrow.**

*The Good-Morrow* has a basic iambic pentameter template, that is, there are five regular beats and ten syllables in each line except for the last line of each stanza which has twelve, so count as hexameters.

* But there odd exceptions here and there - some lines with an extra beat for example (11 syllables), others with trochees, spondees and anapaests, which alter rhythm and so bring added interest for the reader.
* The syntax (the way clauses and grammar work together) is also complex in some places. Extra pauses are needed here and there which together with enjambment mixes up the rhythm within the lines.

Let's get close up to the metrical beat with a full analysis line by line:

I **won /** der, **by /** my **troth**, / what **thou** / and **I**  
**Did**, till / we **loved**? / **Were** we / not **weaned /** till **then**?   
But **sucked /** on **count /** ry**pleas /** ures, **chil /** dishly?  
Or **snor /** ted **we /** in the **Sev /** en **Sleep /** ers’**den**?   
**’Twas** so; / but **this, /** all **pleas /** ures**fanc /** ies**be**.   
If **ev /** er**an /** y **beau /** ty **I** / did **see**,   
Which **I /** de**sired, /** and **got, / ’twas** but / a **dream /** of **thee**.   
  
And **now** / good-**mor /** row **to /** our **wa /** king **souls**,   
Which **watch /** not **one /**a**noth /** er**out /** of **fear**;   
For **love, /** all **love /** of **oth /** er**sights /** con**trols,**  
And **makes /** one **lit /** tle**room /** an **eve /** ry**where**.   
Let **sea- /** dis**cove /** rers**to** / **new** worlds / have **gone,**  
Let **maps /** to **oth /** ers, **worlds /** on **worlds /** have **shown,**  
Let **us /** pos**sess /** one **world**, / **each** hath / **one**, and / **is** one.   
  
My **face /** in **thine / eye**, **thine /** in **mine /** ap**pears,**  
And **true /** plain **hearts /** do **in /** the **fa /** ces**rest**;   
Where **can /** we **find /** two **bet /** ter**hem /** i**spheres**,   
With**out /sharpnorth, /** with**out /**de**clin /** ing**west?**  
What**ev /** er**dies**, / was **not /** mixed **e /** qual**ly;**  
If **our** / two **loves /** be **one**, / or, **thou /** and **I**   
Love **so /** a**like**, / that **none /** do **slack /** en, **none /** can **die.**

There are 13 lines of pure iambic pentameter ( 1,6, 8-13, 16,17,19,20) with a regular da**DUM**da**DUM** beat.

The second stanza has six of them but Donne's syntax, use of punctuation and diction, is creative enough to disturb the plodding rhythm and adds tension and interest for the reader.

Note that in all stanzas the end line is longer, forming a hexameter (six feet) which underlines what has gone before.

The first stanza has only two lines of pure iambic pentameter so is the most mixed when it comes to rhythm and beat. The syntax too is complex, with many commas and sub-clauses. Each question posed by the speaker also has a tendency to slow the reader down, which reflects the careful reflection shown by the hesitant speaker.

**The Literary Devices in The Good-Morrow**

There are several literary devices in The Good-Morrow, including:

**Alliteration**

When two or more words in close proximity begin with the same consonant:

*were we not weaned...*

*snorted we in the Seven Sleepers'...*

*Which watch not...*

**Assonance**

When two or more words in a line have the same vowel sounds:

*sucked on country...*

*Seven Sleepers' den...*

*all love of other...*

*tine in mine...*

*true plain hearts do...*

**Caesura**

A pause in a line caused by punctuation, where the reader has to pause. There are several in this poem, typified in line 14, where there are two:

*Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one*.

**The Structure/Form of The Good-Morrow.**

*The Good-Morrow* is a three stanza poem, each stanza having 7 lines (heptet).

The rhyme scheme is unusual :**ababccc**the first four lines of each stanza working together in alternate pairs, the last three lines being a conclusion or affirmation. All twenty one lines have mostly full rhyme, except for these near rhymes: *I/childishly...fear/where...gone/shown..equally/I.*

**EVALUATION QUESTION**

Examine the theme of love in the work.

**GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. Highlights the poetic devices used in the poem.
2. Comment on the mood and tone of the poem.

**READING ASSIGNMENT**

Read the themes of the poem in *Exam Focus* and summarise.

**WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT**

1. In literary work, verbal irony refers to aA. device in which the speaker means the opposite of what he says. B. situation in which a character speaks or acts against the trend of events. C. difficult situation which defies a logical or rational resolution. D. device in which the actor on stage means exactly what he says.
2. In the theatre, words spoken by a character that are meant to be heard by the audience but not by the other characters on stage is called A. aside. B. soliloquy. C. acoustic. D. tone.
3. A poet’s use of regular rhythm is known as A. allegory. B. assonance. C. metre. D. onomatopoeia.
4. A literary genre which directly imitates human action is A. drama. B. comedy. C. prose. D. poetry.
5. The main aim of caricature is to A. describe. B. expose. C. emphasize. D. ridicule.

**THEORY**

Analyse the metaphysical features of the work..

**WEEK EIGHT**

**TOPIC: READING AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF NON-AFRICAN DRAMA: LOOK BACK IN ANGER BY JOHN OSBOURNE**

[*Look Back in Anger*](https://www.gradesaver.com/look-back-in-anger) begins in the attic flat apartment of [Jimmy Porter](https://www.gradesaver.com/look-back-in-anger/study-guide/character-list#jimmy-porter) and [Alison Porter](https://www.gradesaver.com/look-back-in-anger/study-guide/character-list#alison-porter). The setting is mid-1950's small town England. Jimmy and Alison share their apartment with [Cliff Lewis](https://www.gradesaver.com/look-back-in-anger/study-guide/character-list#cliff-lewis), a young working class man who is best friends with Jimmy. Cliff and Jimmy both come from a working class background, though Jimmy has had more education than Cliff. They are in business together running a sweet-stall. Alison comes from a more prominent family and it is clear from the beginning that Jimmy resents this fact.

The first act opens on a Sunday in April. Jimmy and Cliff are reading the Sunday papers while Alison is ironing in a corner of the room. Jimmy is a hot tempered young man and he begins to try and provoke both Cliff and Alison. He is antagonistic towards Cliff's working class background and makes fun of him for his low intelligence. Cliff is good natured and takes the antagonism. Jimmy attempts to provoke his wife, Alison, by making fun of her family and her well-heeled life before she married him. Jimmy also seems to display a nostalgia for England's powerful past. He notes that the world has entered a "dreary" American age, a fact he begrudgingly accepts. Alison tires of Jimmy's rants and begs for peace. This makes Jimmy more fevered in his insults. Cliff attempts to keep peace between the two and this leads to a playful scuffle between the two. Their wrestling ends up running into Alison, causing her to fall down. Jimmy is sorry for the incident, but Alison makes him leave the room.

After Jimmy leaves, Alison confides to Cliff that she is pregnant with Jimmy's child, though she has not yet told Jimmy. Cliff advises her to tell him, but when Cliff goes out and Jimmy re-enters the room, the two instead fall into an intimate game. Jimmy impersonates a stuffed bear and Alison impersonates a toy squirrel. Cliff returns to tell Alison that her old friend, [Helena Charles](https://www.gradesaver.com/look-back-in-anger/study-guide/character-list#helena-charles), has called her on the phone. Alison leaves to take the call and returns with the news that Helena is coming to stay for a visit. Jimmy does not like Helena and goes into a rage in which he wishes that Alison would suffer in order to know what it means to be a real person. He curses her and wishes that she could have a child only to watch it die.

Two weeks later, Helena has arrived and Alison discusses her relationship with Jimmy. She tells of how they met and how, in their younger days, they used to crash parties with their friend Hugh Tanner. Jimmy maintains an affection for Hugh's mother, though his relationship with Hugh was strained when Hugh left to travel the world and Jimmy stayed to be with Alison. Jimmy seems to regret that he could not leave, but he is also angry at Hugh for abandoning his mother. Helena inquires about Alison's affectionate relationship with Cliff and Alison tells her that they are strictly friends.

Cliff and Jimmy return to the flat and Helena tells them that she and Alison are leaving for church. Jimmy goes into an anti-religious rant and ends up insulting Alison's family once again. Helena becomes angry and Jimmy dares her to slap him on the face, warning her that he will slap her back. He tells her of how he watched his father die as a young man. His father had been injured fighting in the Spanish Civil War and had returned to England only to die shortly after. Alison and Helena begin to leave for church and Jimmy feels betrayed by his wife.

A phone call comes in for Jimmy and he leaves the room. Helena tells Alison that she has called Alison's father to come get her and take her away from this abusive home. Alison relents and says that she will go when her father picks her up the next day. When Jimmy returns, he tells Alison that Mrs. Tanner, Hugh's mother, has become sick and is going to die. Jimmy decides to visit her and he demands that Alison make a choice of whether to go with Helena or with him. Alison picks up her things and leaves for church and Jimmy collapses on the bed, heartbroken by his wife's decision.

The next evening Alison is packing and talking with her father, [Colonel Redfern](https://www.gradesaver.com/look-back-in-anger/study-guide/character-list#colonel-redfern). The Colonel is a soft spoken man who realizes that he does not quite understand the love that exists between Jimmy and Alison. He admits that the actions of him and his wife are partly to blame for their split. The Colonel was an officer in the British military and served in India and he is nostalgic for his time there. He considers his service to be some of the best years of his life. Alison observes that her father is hurt because the present is not the past and that Jimmy is hurt because he feels the present is only the past. Alison begins to pack her toy squirrel, but then she decides not to do so.

Helena and Cliff soon enter the scene. Alison leaves a letter for Jimmy explaining why she has left and she gives it to Cliff. After Alison leaves, Cliff becomes angry and gives the letter to Helena, blaming her for the situation. Jimmy returns, bewildered that he was almost hit by Colonel Redfern's car and that Cliff pretended not to see him when he was walking by on the street. He reads Alison's letter and becomes very angry. Helena tells him that Alison is pregnant, but Jimmy tells her that he does not care. He insults Helena and she slaps him, then passionately kisses him.

Several months pass and the third act opens with Jimmy and Cliff once again reading the Sunday papers while Helena stands in the corner ironing. Jimmy and Cliff still engage in their angry banter and Helena's religious tendencies have taken the brunt of Jimmy's punishment. Jimmy and Cliff perform scenes from musicals and comedy shows but when Helena leaves, Cliff notes that things do not feel the same with her here. Cliff then tells Jimmy that he wants to move out of the apartment. Jimmy takes the news calmly and tells him that he has been a loyal friend and is worth more than any woman. When Helena returns, the three plan to go out. Alison suddenly enters.

Alison and Helena talk while Jimmy leaves the room. He begins to loudly play his trumpet. Alison has lost her baby and looks sick. Helena tells Alison that she should be angry with her for what she has done, but Alison is only grieved by the loss of her baby. Helena is driven to distraction by Jimmy's trumpet playing and demands that he come into the room. When he comes back in, he laments the fact that Alison has lost the baby but shrugs it off. Helena then tells Jimmy and Alison that her sense of morality -- right and wrong -- has not diminished and that she knows she must leave. Alison attempts to persuade her to stay, telling her that Jimmy will be alone if she leaves.

When Helena leaves, Jimmy attempts to once again become angry but Alison tells him that she has now gone through the emotional and physical suffering that he has always wanted her to feel. He realizes that she has suffered greatly, has become like him, and becomes softer and more tender towards her. The play ends with Jimmy and Alison embracing, once again playing their game of bear and squirrel.

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

1. Give a detailed plot account of the play.
2. Comment on two major features of the plot.

**GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. Is the plot a simple on?
2. How does the work end?

**READING ASSIGNMENT**

Read themes of the poem in *Exam Focus* and summarise.

**WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT**

1. A speech in a play in which a character speaks his or her thought alone is A. a monologue. B. an aside. C. a soliloquy. D. an epilogue.
2. In Literature, repetition is used essentially for A. rhyme. B. suspense. C. allusion.

D. emphasis.

1. The pattern of a poem without reference to its content is referred to as the A. limerick.

B. metre.C. free verse. D. form

1. The performers in a play constitute the A. chorus. B. character. C. audience. D. cast.
2. A metrical foot in which a stressed syllable is following by an unstressed syllable is

A. iambic.B. spondaic.C. trochaic D. dactylic.

**THEORY**

Examine the drama above as a portrayal of domestic life.

**WEEK NINE**

**CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERISATION**

**THEMES**

# Look Back in Anger Character List

## Jimmy Porter

Jimmy Porter is the play's main character. He is the "Angry Young Man" who expresses his frustration for the lack of feelings in his placid domestic life. Jimmy can be understood as both a hero for his unfiltered expressions of emotion and frustration in a culture that propagated unemotional resignation. He can also be considered a villain for the ways in which his anger proves to be destructive to those in his life.

## Cliff Lewis

Cliff is a friend to both Jimmy and Alison. Cliff lives with them in their attic apartment. He is a working class Welsh man and Jimmy makes sure to often point out that he is "common" and uneducated. Cliff believes this is the reason that Jimmy keeps him as a friend. He is quite fond of Alison and they have a strange physically affectionate relationship throughout the play.

## Alison Porter

Alison Porter is Jimmy's wife. She comes from Britain's upper class, but married into Jimmy's working class lifestyle. The audience learns in the first act that she is pregnant with Jimmy's child. Jimmy's destructive anger causes her great strain and she eventually leaves him. Her child miscarries and she comes back to Jimmy to show him that she has undergone great suffering.

## Helena Charles

Helena Charles is Alison's best friend. She lives with them in their apartment while visiting for work. Helena is from an upper class family. She is responsible for getting Alison to leave Jimmy. She and Jimmy then begin an affair. Her sense of morality leads her to leave. She can be considered the play's moral compass.

## Colonel Redfern

Colonel Redfern is Alison's father. He represents Britain's great Edwardian past. He was a military leader in India for many years before returning with his family to England. He is critical of Jimmy and Alison's relationship, but accepts that he is to blame for many of their problems because of his meddling in their affairs.

# Look Back in Anger Themes

## The Angry Young Man

Osborne's play was the first to explore the theme of the "Angry Young Man." This term describes a generation of post-World War II artists and working class men who generally ascribed to leftist, sometimes anarchist, politics and social views. According to cultural critics, these young men were not a part of any organized movement but were, instead, individuals angry at a post-Victorian Britain that refused to acknowledge their social and class alienation.

[Jimmy Porter](https://www.gradesaver.com/look-back-in-anger/study-guide/character-list#jimmy-porter) is often considered to be literature's seminal example of the angry young man. Jimmy is angry at the social and political structures that he believes has kept him from achieving his dreams and aspirations. He directs this anger towards his friends and, most notably, his wife Alison.

**THEMES**

## The Kitchen Sink Drama

Kitchen Sink drama is a term used to denote plays that rely on realism to explore domestic social relations. Realism, in British theater, was first experimented with in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by such playwrights as George Bernard Shaw. This genre attempted to capture the lives of the British upper class in a way that realistically reflected the ordinary drama of ruling class British society.

According to many critics, by the mid-twentieth century the genre of realism had become tired and unimaginative. Osborne's play returned imagination to the Realist genre by capturing the anger and immediacy of post-war youth culture and the alienation that resulted in the British working classes. [*Look Back in Anger*](https://www.gradesaver.com/look-back-in-anger) was able to comment on a range of domestic social dilemmas in this time period. Most importantly, it was able to capture, through the character of Jimmy Porter, the anger of this generation that festered just below the surface of elite British culture.

## Loss of Childhood

A theme that impacts the characters of Jimmy and [Alison Porter](https://www.gradesaver.com/look-back-in-anger/study-guide/character-list#alison-porter) is the idea of a lost childhood. Osborne uses specific examples -- the death of Jimmy's father when Jimmy was only ten, and how he was forced to watch the physical and mental demise of the man -- to demonstrate the way in which Jimmy is forced to deal with suffering from an early age. Alison's loss of childhood is best seen in the way that she was forced to grow up too fast by marrying Jimmy. Her youth is wasted in the anger and abuse that her husband levels upon her.

Osborne suggests that a generation of British youth has experienced this same loss of childhood innocence. Osborne uses the examples of World War, the development of the atomic bomb, and the decline of the British Empire to show how an entire culture has lost the innocence that other generations were able to maintain.

## Real Life

In the play, Jimmy Porter is consumed with the desire to live a more real and full life. He compares this burning desire to the empty actions and attitudes of others. At first, he generalizes this emptiness by criticizing the lax writing and opinions of those in the newspapers. He then turns his angry gaze to those around him and close to him, Alison, Helena, and Cliff.

Osborne's argument in the play for a real life is one in which men are allowed to feel a full range of emotions. The most real of these emotions is anger and Jimmy believes that this anger is his way of truly living. This idea was unique in British theater during the play's original run. Osborne argued in essays and criticisms that, until his play, British theater had subsumed the emotions of characters rendering them less realistic. Jimmy's desire for a real life is an attempt to restore raw emotion to the theater.

## Sloth in British Culture

Jimmy Porter compares his quest for a more vibrant and emotional life to the slothfulness of the world around him. It is important to note that Jimmy does not see the world around him as dead, but merely asleep in some fundamental way. This is a fine line that Osborne walks throughout the play. Jimmy never argues that there is a nihilism within British culture. Instead, he sees a kind of slothfulness of character. His anger is an attempt to awaken those around him from this cultural sleep.

This slothfulness of emotion is best seen in the relationship between Alison and Cliff. Alison describes her relationship with Cliff as "comfortable." They are physically and emotionally affectionate with each other, but neither seems to want to take their passion to another level of intimacy. In this way, their relationship is lazy. They cannot awaken enough passion to consummate their affair. Jimmy seems to subconsciously understand this, which is the reason he is not jealous of their affection towards one another.

## The Rise and Fall of the British Empire

The character of [Colonel Redfern](https://www.gradesaver.com/look-back-in-anger/study-guide/character-list#colonel-redfern), Alison's father, represents the decline of and nostalgia for the British Empire. The Colonel had been stationed for many years in India, a symbol of Britain's imperial reach into the world. The Edwardian age which corresponded to Britain's height of power, had been the happiest of his life. His nostalgia is representative of the denial that Osborne sees in the psyche of the British people. The world has moved on into an American age, he argues, and the people of the nation cannot understand why they are no longer the world's greatest power.

## Masculinity in Art

Osborne has been accused by critics of misogynistic views in his plays. Many point to Look Back in Anger as the chief example. These critics accuse Osborne of glorifying young male anger and cruelty towards women and homosexuals. This is seen in the play in specific examples in which Jimmy Porter emotionally distresses Alison, his wife, and delivers a grisly monologue in which he wishes for Alison's mother's death.

Osborne, however, asserts that he is attempting to restore a vision of true masculinity into a twentieth century culture that he sees as becoming increasingly feminized. This feminization is seen in the way that British culture shows an "indifference to anything but immediate, personal suffering." This causes a deadness within which Jimmy's visceral anger and masculine emotion is a retaliation against.

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

1. Describe the main character in the work above.
2. Examine the work as a historical piece.

**GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. Discuss two themes in the work?
2. Prove that the work is a satire.

**READING ASSIGNMENT**

Read acts 1 to 3 of the drama and summarise.

**WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT**

1. A story which explains a natural phenomenon is A. legend B. parable. C. myth.

D. fiction.

1. A narrative in which characters and events are invented is A. fiction. B. epistolary.

C. autobiography.D. biography.

1. Lines and stanzas are to poetry as action and dialogue are to A. music. B. prose.

C. fiction.D. drama.

1. The performers in a play constitute the A. chorus. B. characters. C. audience. D. cast.
2. The types of literary work are A. eras. B. episodes. C. genres. D. cantos.

**THEORY**

Describe the main character in the work.

**WEEK TEN**

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| NewspapersSymbol Analysis |  |

Jimmy and Cliff read newspapers throughout Act 1 and Act 3, and they are a major visual feature in the apartment. Jimmy uses the newspaper as a symbol of his education. They are a way for him to mimic the habits of the upper class, university-educated elite. He repeatedly comments on what he is reading, sometimes using erudite vocabulary. He also uses newspaper articles as a way to belittle the intelligence of Cliff and [Alison](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/look-back-in-anger/characters/alison-porter), which is one of the tactics he employs to make himself feel smarter and more worthwhile. Yet, Jimmy’s relationship with newspapers also shows his ambivalent relationship to his educated status. He says that the newspapers make him “feel ignorant,” and he often mocks “posh” papers, which, in his mind, are out of touch with the real concerns of working class men like him. The newspapers in the apartment also form a “jungle,” showing that, in a working class environment, this status symbol becomes something that upper class characters like Alison would consider chaotic and dangerous. This reflects the way that greater social mobility has caused social upheaval in Britain.

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| PipeSymbol Analysis |  |

[Jimmy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/look-back-in-anger/characters/jimmy-porter)’s pipe is another example of an upper class symbol that [Jimmy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/look-back-in-anger/characters/jimmy-porter) uses instead to reflect his working class status. Pipes call to mind old, educated, university professors. Jimmy’s pipe is a way for him to dominate the scene and assert himself as a rebellious force in the world (and he uses his force largely to rail against upper class norms). His pipe smoke fills the room, and creates a smell that other characters come to associate with him. Alison says in the first act that she has “gotten used” to it, reflecting the way that she adapts her values and sensibilities depending on the context that she is in. [Helena](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/look-back-in-anger/characters/helena-charles) later says that she has grown to “like” the smell, reflecting the attraction that she feels to Jimmy, and also the fact that she retains more of a sense of self than Alison does in the same situation—Helena positively likes the smell, while Alison is merely “used” to it. While living with her parents in the third act of the play, the smell of pipe smoke reminds Alison of Jimmy, and soon after, she comes back to him. Once in the apartment, she absentmindedly cleans up the ashes from the pipe, reflecting the fact that she retains her upper class sense of respectability and order, even as she returns from her parents’ home to live in Jimmy’s world. The pipe thus becomes a litmus test of Helena and Alison’s relationship with Jimmy throughout the play.

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| Bear and SquirrelSymbol Analysis |  |

[Alison](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/look-back-in-anger/characters/alison-porter) and [Jimmy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/look-back-in-anger/characters/jimmy-porter)’s bear and squirrel game gives them a way to access a simple affection for each other that they cannot achieve in normal life. The bear is associated with Jimmy, and the squirrel with Alison. The animals symbolize the fact that social norms and conventions interfere with the love that these two characters have for each other. Their relationship is a site of class and societal conflict, and this means that their love becomes fraught with anger and fighting. When they act like animals, whose only concerns are food, shelter, cleanliness, and sex, they can forget that conflict and feel a simpler version of love for each other. The fact that they keep stuffed animal versions of the bear and squirrel in the apartment reflects a childlike innocence that these characters find it difficult to maintain in their troubled world, but that they still hope for.

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| Church bellsSymbol Analysis |  |

The church bells symbolize a respectable middle class morality that [Jimmy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/look-back-in-anger/characters/jimmy-porter) finds oppressive. Helena subscribes to this version of morality, which posits that some things are clearly right, while others are wrong and “sinful.” Jimmy, on the other hand, believes that the rules of respectable society are something to struggle against. In his mind, it is moral to act in allegiance with his oppressed class, and to feel emotions as keenly and intensely as possible. The church bells chime from outside the window at various points in the play, reflecting the fact that these middle class rules are a fact of life in most of the world, and that they often intrude into the apartment, and into Jimmy’s life. He curses and yells when he hears them, reflecting his anger at this system of morality. Alison leaves for church with Helena in the middle of act 2, following Helena back into a middle class world.

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| TrumpetSymbol Analysis |  |

[Jimmy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/look-back-in-anger/characters/jimmy-porter)’s jazz trumpetcan be heard off stage at various points in the play. Jazz has traditionally been protest music, and is associated with the working classes. It symbolizes Jimmy’s desire to be a voice of resistance in society, but it also shows the futility of that dream. It serves largely to annoy and antagonize those around him, not to call a movement to attention. Like Jimmy’s [pipe](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/look-back-in-anger/symbols/pipe) smoke, the trumpet also allows Jimmy to assert his dominance non-verbally. He disrupts his domestic scene (playing the trumpet only inside), but makes little headway truly disrupting the world around him.

## Imagery

Two sound images from off-stage are used very effectively in *Look Back in Anger:* the church bells and Jimmy's jazz trumpet. The church bells invade the small living space and serve as a reminder of the power of the established church, and also that it doesn't care at all for their domestic peace. The jazz trumpet allows Jimmy's presence to dominate the stage even when he is not there, and it also serves as his anti-Establishment "raspberry."

# Contrast Alice and Helena

**Contrast Helena and Alice**

## Alison Porter

Alison Porter is Jimmy's wife. She comes from Britain's upper class, but married into Jimmy's working class lifestyle. The audience learns in the first act that she is pregnant with Jimmy's child. Jimmy's destructive anger causes her great strain and she eventually leaves him. Her child miscarries and she comes back to Jimmy to show him that she has undergone great suffering.

## Helena Charles

Helena Charles is Alison's best friend. She lives with them in their apartment while visiting for work. Helena is from an upper class family. She is responsible for getting Alison to leave Jimmy. She and Jimmy then begin an affair. Her sense of morality leads her to leave. She can be considered the play's moral compass.

# The Language In Look Back in Anger

The language in look back in anger is different compared to its contemporaries. The language is realistic; the characters are able to say what they would say in that situation in real life. In a way the writer John Orsborne had no limits because if something had to be real it needed everything to be realistic. Orsborne uses his characters as a mouth piece to examine the reality of life in the 1950s in Britain.

At the start of the play there seem to be a lot of exposition from the characters to describe themselves or tell us about the situation. For example ” James Porter, aged twenty five, was bound over last week after pleading guilty to interfering with a small cabbage and two tins of beans on his way home from the Builders Arms.” This tells us Jimmy’s age and that he likes going to the pub, and shows that Cliff seems to have a sense of humour. The exposition goes on throughout the play. We see this when jimmy is talk about Alison family and what was happening to his dying father when he was 10. The colonel has his share in exposition when he’s talking to his daughter Alison about the past. “It was March 1914, when left England, and, apart from leaves every ten years or so, “the information Osborne constantly provides us with about each characters past helps the audience understand their personalities.

In this play Orsborne uses dramatic irony. For example jimmy has some lines of dramatic irony, for example when he says to Alison “if you could have a child, and it would die.” This is ironic because towards the end of the play Alison has a miscarriage. Although Jimmy wanted her to go through this sort of pain he is affected in a way he never expected. The other ironic line Jimmy has is when Helena tells him that his got a phone call and he says ” well, it can’t be anything good, can it?” this is ironic because as he gets the message from the call that Hugh’s mother has had a stroke. Jimmy at some extent is a product of what has happened to him during his life.

The play involves a lot of emotion. Jimmy chief motivating emotion is anger through out the play until the end when he embraces Alison, this is no doubt it is the characters most vulnerable point in the whole play.

The pauses are very important in the play because they make the moments of tension more effective, and shows us the emotion of most of the characters. For example when Alison tells cliff she’s pregnant.

Alison: you see- (hesitates) I’m pregnant.

Cliff: (after a few moments) I will need some scissors.

Alison: They re over there.

Cliff: (crossing to the dressing table) that’s something, isn’t it? When did you find out?

At this point it shoes that Cliff is troubled about this, that’s why he asks for the scissors just to hide his feelings for her. Another point which we worked on in class is when Alison arrives at the end of act 3 scene 1; there is a big pause before she says anything.

Alison: (quietly) Hullo.

Jimmy: (to Helena, after a moment) friend of yours to see you.

After saying the line he leaves the room and the two women are left staring at each other. This is obviously this is a cliff hanger ending to the scene, there is tension between the two women.

Osborne has included several monologues in the play. Jimmy is the character with most of the monologues. In the majority of his monologues his objective is to provoke the others but the desperately try to ignore his taunts. His main objective usually is to irritate his wife Alison that it could lead to an argument. From the beginning of Act 1he is constantly trying to make his wife angry, he finally succeeds when she gets burnt with an iron and she tells him violently to get out.

Alison: Get out!

Jimmy: (her head shaking helplessly) clear out of my sight.

This s the first time that Alison is actually showing that she is angry with jimmy. Even though the fight that caused the accident was between him and Cliff.

The monologue that I worked on in class was from act 2 scene 1 when Alison is about to go to church with Helena and jimmy is not in favour of her decision. In this monologue I had to think of the emotions which where associated with jimmy at the time, and I had to picture they way he would talk and act to these emotions. At the start of the monologue he is motivated and wants every one to see how he feels and as he goes on he loses his inspiration because he knows that no one is paying any attention to him.

The emotion and realism in the language makes the play very realistic because it helps the audience understand the situation the characters are in and helps the audience make a good mental judgement of the characters.

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

1. Discuss the use of imagery in the play.
2. Discuss the use of symbol in the play.

**GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. Examine the roles of the protagonist in the play.
2. Comment on the dramatic techniques employed in the play.

**READING ASSIGNMENT**

Read the last act of the play and explain how it ends.

**WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT**

1. A fable is a story in which A. allegations are made about characters. B. animals or things are used as characters. C. there is an important setting. D. the story is told in poetic form.
2. The juxtaposition of two contrasting ideas in a line of poetry is A. euphemism.

B. synecdoche.C. catharsis.D. oxymoron.

1. Drama is the representation of a complete series of actions by means of A. movement and gesture for the screen and audience. B. speech, movement and gesture for the stage only. C. speech, movement and gesture for the stage, screen and radio. D. movement only.
2. Identify the odd item. A. Poetry B. Prose C. Melodrama D. Drama
3. “All the world is a stage,” is an example of A. metaphor. B. paradox. C. allusion.

D. personification.

**THEORY**

Examine any theme of your choice in the play.